Vibrant power, vibrant subjectivities: A storytelling approach to the study of power in education

Poder vibrante, vibrantes subjetividades: a abordagem de contação de histórias (*storytelling*) no estudo do poder na educação

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Abstract: This article constructs a framework for studying power through stories in education. Stories are presented as the practical ways in which subjectivities are made within a dispositive, which is theorized as where power becomes concrete. Stories serve two paradoxical roles. They actualize power but are also where power is resisted. The human subject is theorized as embodied living history, who lives and enacts discursive, spatial and material forces in new ways. A story is the living response to the human and non-human others with whom you are entangled in every moment. Therefore I argue that power and storytelling are closely connected and rely on each other. Used together, they provide a framework for capturing education as a vibrant, dynamic, living and plural space where multiple subjectivities are created and recreated at every moment within and across the confinements of power.

Keywords: power, dispositive, storytelling, subjectivity.

Resumo: Este artigo constrói um referencial para estudar o poder, na educação, por meio de histórias. Histórias são apresentadas como modos práticos nos quais subjetividades são produzidas dentro de um dispositivo, que é teorizado como o lugar onde o poder se torna concreto. Histórias assumem duas funções paradoxais. Elas atualizam o poder, mas são também o lugar onde se constroem resistências a ele. O sujeito humano é teorizado como corporificado em histórias vivas, que vive e produz forças discursivas, espaciais e materiais de novas maneiras. A história é a resposta viva para os "outros", humanos e não humanos, com quem o sujeito está envolvido em cada momento. Portanto, argumenta-se que o poder e a contação de histórias – *storytelling* – estão intimamente ligados e dependem um do outro. Utilizados em conjunto, proporcionam um referencial para considerar a educação como um espaço vibrante, dinâmico, vivo e plural, no qual múltiplas subjetividades são criadas e recriadas a cada momento, dentro e entre as tramas do poder.

Palavras-chave: poder, dispositivo, contação de histórias (*storytelling*), subjetividade.

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Introduction

Constructing a conceptual framework for studying power through stories in education is my aim in this article. Stories are presented as the practical ways in which subjectivities are made within a dispositive, which is theorized as where power becomes concrete and which is the notion that Foucault uses for the governing network of forces that are embedded in every situation (Foucault, 1980). Stories serve a double and paradoxical role. They actualize power but are also where power is resisted.

I use Boje's minimal description of *story* as a performance that involves "an exchange between two or more persons during which a past or anticipated experience is referenced, recounted, interpreted or challenged" (Boje, 1991, p. 111). The human subject is seen as embodied and living history, who continuously lives and enacts discursive, spatial, material and natural forces in new ways (Jørgensen and Strand, 2014). It follows that a story is the living response to the multiple human and non-human others with whom you are entangled in each and every moment. Stories do not mirror the others as little as stories mirror inner thoughts and emotions. Stories constantly rupture and transform the heritage from which they are made. Thus, stories always also mark a new beginning (Arendt, 1998, p. 177).

As a consequence, power and storytelling are closely connected and rely on each other. Together they provide a critical approach to educational practices. This approach captures education as a vibrant, dynamic, living and plural space where multiple subjectivities are created and recreated at every moment. It emancipates power analysis from being petrifying and homogenizing, without leaving aside the unpleasant question of what we are agents of, and what the dominating story lines imposed on us are.

The article is organized in the following way: Firstly, I introduce the overall thematic, which is the relationship between stories, power and education. This includes a brief overview of the ways in which narrative and stories have been used in social studies. Secondly, I introduce and discuss an important analytical term in Foucault's writings on power, namely the dispositive, which is where power becomes concrete. It denotes a dynamic living field of heterogeneous forces in movement and contest that is in play in every situation. Thirdly, I discuss the creation of subjectivity within a dispositive as storytelling, which is theorized as a differential enactment of forces. In particular I work out the relations between power and storytelling from Arendt's (1998) conception of action. Fourthly, I draw out the implications of using storytelling as part of a critical approach to the study of power in education.

Storytelling and power

Fenton and Langley (2011, p. 1172) argue that narratives and stories can be used in order to conceptualize how strategies in organizations are practiced in everyday life. Narrative and storytelling can be conceptualized in education in a similar way, namely as the ways in which teachers, students, pupils, leaders, politicians and other subjects involved narrate or story education and bring education to life in the everyday of schools, classrooms, principals' offices, ministries and so forth.

Narratives and stories can thus also be seen as the practical ways in which power relations are actualized and living in education. This enactment constitutes at the same time resistance to power relations, which means that the educational subject—whether it is a teacher, pupil, student or policy maker—becomes the gathering point for complex crossings, intersections, and struggles of forces of power and resistance. I will return to this point later. First, I will make a brief overall introduction to narrative and storytelling.

Narrative and storytelling have made a significant impact in social science studies. In organization studies, they are popular devices for capturing how people make sense of and enact their everyday lives (Boje, 1991; Czarniawska, 1997; Rhodes and Brown, 2005). They find application in many areas. For example, narrative and stories are popular concepts for capturing how corporate subjects construct new policies, strategies and practices, and also for capturing how they construct their identities within such new circumstances.

In this article I will be concerned with a critical usage of narratives of stories, namely studying power in organizations with a particular eye for educational organizations. Such studies have a long history in social science studies in general. Here narratives and stories are often seen as giving voice to more differentiated and marginalized groups of people. More specifically, narrative and stories are means for mobilizing and raising the voices of the oppressed against the establishment, which in the modern world is accused of speaking a rationalist discourse.

This opposition between rational-scientific modes of knowing and narrative and storytelling is clearly unfolded in Benjamin's (1999) classical essay *The Storyteller*. He mourns the decline of storytelling in the modern age, which is taken over by a rationalist and capitalist discourse, where impersonal information is being cherished over the experiences that are passed from

mouth to mouth (Benjamin, 1999, p. 83-84). Storytelling is here associated with local craftsmanship, weavers, artisans, mariners, blacksmiths, etc., who, according to Boje (2008b, p. 98), were not just communicating their experiences but were engaged in moral reflexivity. These are opposed to modern men, who are only engaged in an impersonal way in parts of the working process.

Characteristics of modern working life thus become alienation, lack of responsibility and disengagement. The decline of proper storytelling is associated with an increasing rationalization of society. The latter is accompanied by a transformation of the economy from being based on local craft-arts towards the mass manufacturing factories of the industrial age to the corporation of today. The loss of storytelling is linked with the transformation of work—arts, crafts and so on—into simple labor, to use a distinction from Arendt (1998).

Nobel prizewinner in literature Toni Morrison has been compared with Benjamin's storyteller (Nutting, 1997). Morrison tells the forgotten stories of black slaves in North America. In her analysis of Toni Morrison's writings, Tally argues that Morrison's writings are exemplary in using storytelling to resist rationalist, scientific and objective forms of discourse where progress and technology seem to have left humankind morally bankrupt (Tally, 2001, p. 13). In Morrison's writings we are compelled to face the victims and sacrifices of imperial, colonial and 'white' domination. We witness the smashed and tormented bodies, destruction of families, and incredible violence that accompanied this domination. Her weapon for doing that is a particular dialogic storytelling, which is not being shot through with explanation (Benjamin, 1999, p. 89). The reader is always at work in terms of finding the connections and the overall patterns through the dialogues, conversations and the small stories that these entail.

By these literary devices storytelling becomes a weapon against rationalism, which understands truths monologically, and which can only be represented in impersonal propositions. In contrast, storytelling represents truths as conversation, which by its very nature requires many voices and points of view (Morrison *in* Tally, 2001, p. 14). Storytelling is thus the means of the oppressed, the marginalized and the forgotten. It is only natural that narrative and storytelling are popular among critical theorists of whatever kind: race theorists, educational theorists, feminist theorists and management theorists. This idea of using narrative and storytelling to give voice to minorities, oppressed and disadvantaged does not limit itself to the oppressive relationship between white and black, but can be transferred to the relationship between capital owners and laborers, state politicians and the

people, men and women, and every relationship where particular groups are marginalized and disadvantaged due to dominant discourses in society.

It is also within a critical tradition that this article inscribes itself. But it does not do so in the same way as presented above. I do not reproduce a dichotomy of the types center/periphery, dominant/oppressed, white/ black, men/women, science/narrative and so forth. I do not wish to reproduce the idea of some identifiable entity of power that seeks to govern and control people. Instead I use the famous dictum from Foucault, which states, "it is the moving substrate of force relations, which by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the latter is always local and unstable" (Foucault, 1998, p. 93).

It follows that there is no center. My approach instead emphasizes a distributed network of relations where all the knots and contacts points, no matter if it is government offices, OECD and PISA institutions, or privileged and disadvantaged schools and classrooms, all are local contexts, where relations of power are enacted, recreated, transformed and resisted. All actors are both agents and sufferers of power, but they speak from different positions and with a force that varies according to positions, relations and contexts.

I prefer this approach for several reasons. First of all, I wish to maintain an open approach to power, which is linked to another dictum, namely, that one must rather conduct an ascending analysis of power (Foucault, 1980, p. 99), where the overall patterns have to emerge from below. The patterns and assemblages of dominant/oppressed, in other words, have to emerge from a description of the multiple enacted stories, which emerge from different positions and under different circumstances.

This is linked to the second point. I wish to maintain a dynamic approach to power in the sense that storytelling is a way of capturing the complexities, nuances, varieties and changes in an unfolding power game. Foucault's concept of power targeted to open a social field, embrace its multiplicity and violence, come to terms with it, criticize it, destroy it or whatever we do with this kind of nuanced insights into a phenomenon's becoming.

This implies necessarily that there is no straight line between power and subjectivity, which is actually also one of the main reasons why I want to integrate storytelling within power analytics. It is related to one of the themes, which became clear in Foucault's lectures in his last years of his life, and which concerned the question of subjectivity. He argues that the question of power and the question of subjectivity were related but nonetheless distinct modes of inquiry (Foucault, 2011, p. 8-9). In other words, subjectivity cannot be reduced to power

23

and vice-versa. Instead, it is important to try to conceive of the dynamics between them.

This leads to the third point that we are ourselves agents in this power game and, as such, we researchers have also been produced by specific discursive and material conditions, which influence how we story and value particular phenomena. The framework of power and storytelling should be seen as an important part of overcoming your own becoming in the form of understanding yourself, and thereby others, in more nuanced and varied ways.

It follows that I do not embrace the notion of rationality as a particular evil force that destroys storytelling. Instead I see modern men as rationalized and technologized beings, who enact these forces in their everyday living. Forces of rationalization are not 'outside' or 'unnatural' but are ingrained parts of everyday storytelling alongside other forces.

In the next section I will delve more carefully into a description of Foucauldian power analysis and relate it to the specific social field of inquiry in this article, namely education. I will concentrate my description around a key concept in Foucault's work, namely the dispositive.

The dispositive of education

Foucault has made an important impact on critical studies in education. His work is largely seen as a way of understanding how modern societies target the living beings and make them the object of a body politic (Foucault, 1977, p. 26) that has the purpose of guiding subjects towards a proper living and being. A myriad of studies have shown how education has served and serves as one of the most important technologies for creating desirable subjects. In recent decades education has been the object of state politics to a hitherto unprecedented degree.

Education is as such part of a political economy, which we might label a scientifico-educational complex—inspired by Foucault's notion scientifico-legal complex (Foucault, 1977). This scientifico-educational complex encompasses a huge variety of concepts, ideas, discourses, knowledge, institutions, techniques, systems, methods, procedures, technologies, architectures and so forth, which are put to work on the educational body.

It is within this dense network of devices that the educational subject appears. In his later writings, Foucault developed an important analytical term to describe this network of institutions, discourses and devices that are put to work on the living beings, namely the *dispositive*. This term has been the subject of considerable debate. Agamben and Deleuze have made important contributions to that debate in their essays entitled *What is an apparatus?* (Agamben, 2009) and *What is a dispositif?* (Deleuze, 1992). As seen from the title of Agamben's essay, the French term 'dispositif' is translated into apparatus in the English version. Deleuze's essay is translated as 'dispositif'. However, this translation consistently uses the term 'social apparatuses' with the term 'dispositif' in brackets. I prefer to use the term dispositive, which I think carries with it an important theoretical point, one which makes dispositive quite distinct from apparatus.

In my reading dispositive is closely associated to Foucault's conception of power in that the latter also describes a social field of heterogeneous forces in movement and contest. Foucault describes power as:

> (T)he multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies (Foucault, 1998, p. 92-93).

A dispositive is very similar in the sense that it should not be understood as a given and fixed thing, but as something that is constantly changing, drifting and on the move (Deleuze, 1992, p. 159). Dispositive plays a distinct role in Foucault's power analysis in that it describes, where power becomes concrete or where power becomes technical. In that sense dispositive can be seen as an attempt to fix the play of differential forces which characterize power in and around more specific devices or texts, which are put into operation with the purpose of governing and controlling the living beings of a particular organization or society.

Foucault describes dispositive (1980, p. 196) as a heterogeneous set that includes almost anything under its heading: "discourses, institutions, buildings, laws, police measures, philosophical propositions, and so on." Further, the dispositive is the network that is established between these elements. Finally he argues that the dispositive always has a strategic function and is located in a power relation. Thus, dispositive refers to a set of practices and mechanisms that has strategic intent in terms of the disciplining of the human body (Agamben, 2009, p. 11). A dispositive does not describe how life is lived in everyday life. Rather it describes the discourses, techniques, procedures, institutions, etc. that seek to

prescribe how things should be done (Turner, 2014).

I have now made the following statements concerning a dispositive:

- It is prescriptive.
- It is where power becomes concrete.
- It is made for guidance, management and/or control.
- It is targeted towards the living beings.
- It is a heterogeneous network of practical devices and guidelines but also institutions and agencies that govern their use.
- It is always embedded in power relations, which means that it is always embedded in a field of forces, which ultimately define its importance and relevance.

Translated into an educational context the dispositive includes the following list of discourses, systems, technologies and devices: educational policies, discourses about teaching and learning, applied teaching and learning models, applied pedagogical principles, curricula, pedagogical training and development of teachers' competencies, evaluation and assessment systems, conditioning spaces, technologies and artifacts for learning, accreditation standards, recruitment and career systems, reward systems and systems of punishment and so forth.

Dispositives are important organizers of life and seem to be everywhere, just like power. At the same time, they are also nowhere, just like power. Dispositive is where power becomes concrete. On the other hand, it is not very concrete at all. The power of an example may be helpful here. If we look at a procedure for assessment in education, it is in one sense very concrete. It describes a number of principles and steps to be taken in assessing students. This is very concrete. At the same time the naked writing of the procedure from which the grading should take place does not establish the beginning or the end of it. There are lots of principles, ideas, discussions and discourses embedded in the procedure, which are not very concrete but are intangible forces, which are however real for the persons involved in the concrete grading. And in the understanding, translation and application of that procedure a whole set of other relations are established to a professional discourse, to other teachers, to the students and to other stakeholders.

In that sense this assessment procedure becomes inscribed in a social field of forces in movement and contest with one another, which in the end also establishes the concrete importance and position of the procedure. In other words, a dispositive is both tangible and intangible and it is concrete and non-concrete. Thus, we cannot in any clear way define its boundaries, beginnings, middles and endings.

Dispositive is thus a term that seeks to describe what kinds of prescriptions for action, which are embedded in situations. Dispositive prescribes and pre-arranges by setting up a conditioning framework that privileges and rewards certain actions instead of others. But there is no straight line or relationship of determination from the prearrangement to its actualization. Instead, the actualization is contingent on these multiple dominant, less dominant or marginal forces, which makes certain actualizations more probable than others (Kendall and Wickham, 1999, p. 50-51; Jørgensen, 2007, p. 55-56).

This has many implications. I will mention two. The first one has to do with the discussion of whether apparatus or dispositive should be used. The point is that the French term 'dispositif' cannot simply be translated into apparatus because the latter's usage in Foucault's writings seems to presume a more linear cause-effect relationship than that of dispositive. Bussolini (2010, p. 93) argues that Foucault clearly distinguished between the terms 'appareil' and 'dispositif' where the former seems to a smaller subset of *dispositif* and one that is more state-centered and instrumental. Hence, apparatus does not cover the perpetually dynamic social field that Foucault sought to describe with the term *dispositif*, which is used to understand a multiplicity of heterogeneous forces in movement and contest (2010, p. 90).

This connects with the second implication, namely that dispositive has to be actualized or made (Deleuze, 1992, p. 161). We can thus add one more characteristic to the ones identified above.

- Dispositive always relies on a process of *subjectification* in order to be actualized.

Deleuze argues that a dispositive is an entangled multilinear ensemble of lines of visibility, lines of enunciation, lines of force and lines of subjectification (Deleuze, 1992, p. 159-160). The latter, however, plays an important part in his framework because they are where power is actualized in every moment. Power thus relies on the living beings, who are both the target of power and in whose speech and actions power is actualized. The living beings are at every moment transversed by relations of power but in their actions they also continuously bend the lines of power and transform them into something else. There is no straight line from power to action. In fact, subjectivity, because this is what is created in every moment, is also a line of escape (Deleuze, 1992, p. 161; 2006, p. 87).

This opens up for storytelling in power analysis. As noted above narratives and stories can be seen as the practical ways in which power relations are actualized and living. Narratives and stories are therefore also the practical ways in which people turn themselves into subjects. For Arendt stories are simply where we create our subjectivity among other men. She argues (1998,

25

p. 50) that storytelling is where inner emotions, passions, feelings and thoughts are transformed to fit them for public appearance. But this is however not at all a question of simple representation, but a question of action. By that token, she places storytelling at the heart of what it means 'to be' in the first place. I will deal more closely with this question in the next section.

Storytelling and agency

What I touch upon briefly above is that storytelling is about agency. Stories are thus a fundamental part of life, which implies that the discourse on narrative and storytelling share the same discussions and problems than other academic fields in terms of whether we should consider narratives and stories to be the effects of either cognitive processes of the mind (e.g. Bruner, 1996), or discursive or material-discursive processes (Barad, 2007; Strand, 2012; Jørgensen and Strand, 2014).

The important distinction is whether knowing and being originates in the human mind and where the individual is the fixed originator of meaning, or whether people are social, cultural and material products where knowing and being always has to be understood in *relation* to somebody (humans) or something (non-humans) (Deetz and Simpson, 2004). A power framework falls within the latter category since power is about how the other, human or non-human, inflicts her-/him-/itself on humans and influences conceptions, values and actions. It is however not as straightforward as that. There are differences in perceptions in regard to if there is space for agency and how we should understand this space for agency.

Hannah Arendt articulates these relations between power and agency clearly. For her action corresponds to human condition of plurality – that it is men, not man, who inhabit the world (Arendt, 1998, p. 7). It follows that plurality is the condition of political action because we are all the same in the sense that no one is ever the same as anyone else, who lives, had lived or will live (1998, p. 8). While work corresponds to man as the creator and user of objects and artifacts (1998, p. 7), action is where man becomes political and intentional among other men. Human plurality, which she calls the basic condition of speech and action, has a twofold character of sameness and distinctness. If men were not equal, they could neither understand their contemporaries and the men who came before, nor could they plan or try to foresee the future. If men were not distinct they would need neither speech nor action (1998, p. 175-176).

Through word and deed we insert ourselves into the world, which is like a second birth where we confirm our existence. According to Arendt the impulse is neither necessity, nor work, nor the presence of others but the simple fact of responding to being alive. To act is for her to take an initiative, to begin (1998, p. 177). These new beginnings always happen against all probability laws, structures, mechanisms and so forth. They always happen in the 'guise of miracle' (Arendt, 1998, p. 178).

In other words it always happens in spite of the dominant forces of power. Action is where the dispositive is continuously transformed, disrupted and broken. Therefore power never reaches its purpose. At the same time as a dispositive needs action in order to be actualized, it is also a dispositive's worst enemy. And all it takes to disrupt and transform a dispositive is speaking men. No other human performance (labor or work) requires speech as much as action (1998, p. 179). Speech is not merely a matter of coordination or communication. It is about inserting yourself into the world by disclosing your intentions and who you are.

This disclosure takes place through storytelling. It is through stories that the doer discloses who he is and what his intentions are. These stories are always enacted in a web of human relationships. This implies that stories always relate to and are organized around what lies in-between people, the 'inter-est' (1998, p. 182). This in-between consists of physical worldly in-between – a world of things, objects and natural phenomena – which is however overlaid with an altogether different subjective and intangible in-between, which makes it no less real (Arendt, 1998, p. 183). Stories always take place in a concrete physical world as a response to others.

They in other words take place and are indeed fed by political multiplicity of speaking men. In stories the subject both confirms himself as one that belongs to these political communities at the same time as confirming his own distinctness and position within this political multiplicity. Arendt's theory of storytelling thus crosses and spans over storytelling as a subjective construction, and as a discursive or material-discursive effect. It is a celebration of agency at the same time that this agency is impossible without the discursive and material affordances, which make their concrete appearance in the form of human or non-human others.

So where does her conception of storytelling leave us? As noted Arendt speaks of the entanglement of stories, when she speaks of the webs of relationships. A story is thus under the influence of many different force relations. For Arendt this means that we can never be the sole author (1998, p. 184) of our own life stories. Actions always fall within an already existing web of relationships with its innumerable, conflicting will and intentions. In other words we are actors in stories that

others began and our actions affect the others with whom this person gets into contact.

Therefore a subject is both an *actor* in affecting others and a *sufferer* in being subjected to scripts and circumstances that other people begun. We suffer from our gender, our class, our educational background, the people we have encountered and encounter, the places where we come from and where we have lived and so forth. In this sense our identities are given to us. At the same time, we also act, affect and transform others within this material, social, cultural and political framework. It follows that we cannot deny our answerability and responsibility by claiming to be the victims and sufferers of what other people have done and are doing.

Furthermore her framework has consequences for how we may conceive of the concept of storytelling itself. Being a response to the human and non-human others our notion of it necessarily becomes situated and thus differentiated and fragmented. What follows is according to some of the most timid prospects that our subjectivity becomes wavering and loses its consistency because of the requirements to respond to constantly changing and drifting relations of power (Agamben, 2009). In any case our stories will not necessarily morph into a consistent narrative but will be much more varied, dynamic and on the move.

In any case, Arendt's position seems much more aligned with an emphasis on story rather than on narrative. Boje (2008a) and Jørgensen and Boje (2010) have argued for a clear distinction between narrative and living story. While narrative is considered relatively fixed, ordered, linear and monologic, a living story is dynamic, spontaneous, pluralistic and dialogic. Boje (2008a) proposes that narrative is like a tree trunk with a clear center and where more and more rings are added as time goes by. Living story is on the other hand rhizomatic where many different lines and forces become entangled with one another.

In organization studies narrative is often suggested as the dominant sense-making currency (Czarniawska, 1997; Cunliffe *et al.*, 2004). An important inspiration is hermeneutics and Ricoeur's famous statement that "... time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full meaning when it becomes a condition of human existence" (Ricoeur, 1984, p. 52). In his theory narrative is organized through a three-fold mimesis, which are three distinct modes of experience and where emplotment plays the mediating role between the stage of experience that precedes it (pre-understanding) and the stage that succeeds it (after-understanding) (1984, p. 53).

Boje argues in contrast that it is story, which is the dominating sense-making currency in organizations.

Story has however lived a more quiet life in organization studies. Boje offers a minimal description of *story* as a performance that involves "an exchange between two or more persons during which a past or anticipated experience is referenced, recounted, interpreted or challenged" (Boje, 1991, p. 111). As such a story is more dynamic, fluid and open. Derrida has argued, "...a story is at once smaller and larger than itself. It is entangled in a play with other stories, becomes part of the others, makes the others part of itself etc. And it is utterly different from its homonym narrative" (Derrida, 2004, p. 82).

Derrida thus speaks of an entanglement of stories that move and change in relation to one another, which is very similar to Arendt's notion of stories as being relational and being enacted in the webs of human relationships. Emphasis is on the discursive and material contexts and circumstances of which people are part in the sense that they offer the possibilities of what kinds of stories that can be told. This incorporates the concrete material affordances as important conditions for enacted stories.

It follows that stories are a lot more differentiated, dynamic, spontaneous, fragmented and always on the move (Jørgensen and Boje, 2010, p. 256). Rather than being organized around a rather stable plot structure, this position emphasizes that multiple forces are simultaneously running through stories and, further, these stories are always contracted, resisted and transformed in the moment of becoming. While narratives are seen as attempts to take charge of situations stories are floating, dynamic and they always resist monologic control.

People are hybrids of multiple and differentiated forces. The self is a rhizome and does not have the character of a trunk tree with a clear center with rings around it. A story does not deny the existence of dominant story lines or established narratives but they are to be considered only as a power takeover by a dominant language in a political multiplicity (Deleuze and Guattari, 2013, p. 6). The human subject is seen as embodied and living history; one who is continuously in the making and who lives and enacts discursive, spatial, material and natural forces in new ways (Strand, 2012; Jorgensen *et al.*, 2013; Jørgensen and Strand, 2014).

It follows that a story is the living response to the multiple human and non-human others with whom you are entangled in each and every moment. Therefore we also change our stories according to the people, spaces, situations and conditions that we meet along the way: "Do I contradict myself? Very well, then I contradict myself. I am large, I am multitude" (Walt Whitman, *in* Loy, 2010, p. 24)". Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same: Leave it to our bureaucrats and our police force to see that our papers are in order. At

27

least spare us their morality when we write" (Foucault, 1995, p. 17).

To sum up I will now define story and its relationships to power in the following way:

A story is a differential enactment of forces that takes place within the webs and relations of a dispositive. It is a concrete situated response to the human and non-human others present in the situation. It is performance during which a past or anticipated experience is referenced, recounted, interpreted or challenged. Stories are always in-the-making. They are performative way of being and becoming that is part of identity-in-the-making. Through stories people create their particular subjectivities in ways in which subjectivity and power become both actualized and transformed in the moment of becoming.

Next I will draw some implications in regard to the study of power in education.

Implications for the study of power in education

Deleuze (1992, p. 160-161) argues that the discovery of lines of subjectification was necessary for stopping dispositives from being caught up in unbreakable lines of force. This captures the role of storytelling. Stories are where power is actualized but are also where power is resisted. The enactment of stories is the site of new beginnings. It is the site of ruptures, discontinuities and change.

It follows that the educational subject is the site for differentiated and complex crossings, intersections and struggles of power relations that are continuously working on it and trying to configure it into particular ways of becoming. This heterogeneous network of forces consists as noted before of educational policies, teaching practices, pedagogical practices, governance structures and practices, curricula, assessment practices and so forth, which are penetrated and transcended by heterogeneous discourses and ideas about what education is about, and which speak with varying force according to different historical circumstances.

In recent decades education has become politicized in new ways with the entry of powerful agencies and institutions such as the OECD, PISA and the strong efforts that state agencies are exercising in order for education to achieve its purposes. This increased attention is not one-way but has to do with an increased attention in societies as a whole towards what education can offer. The number of stakeholders concerned with education seems to have multiplied.

It is within and from this differentiated and traversed field of forces that seek to story education in their own particular ways that the educational subject makes her

appearance. They mark their appearance through the enactment of new pedagogies, teaching practices, policies or through the reconstitution of existing ones. These traces are new moves into the field and create new conditions for other stakeholders. Storytelling is an important means to map these new beginnings.

Storytelling has direct implications for power analysis. First of all, the concept makes power more vibrant and alive by disclosing the multiple ways that power relations are enacted and resisted in practice through the formation of subjectivities. Mapping stories and interrelationships in education thus discloses the web of concrete positionings that people enact within this traversed field of forces.

Storytelling comes in very handy in power analysis, which otherwise often stiffens and becomes a closed circuit from which there is no escape. Often conclusions are written in advance and there is no hope of finding any revelation in the material. But this is a contrast to the original intention of Foucault's power analysis, which was to open up a social field, embrace it in its multiplicity, understand its tensions and struggles in order to criticize its hegemonic forces that seek to take charge over history and narrate it in particular ways. Storytelling invites us to write more differentiated and complex stories than the ones told by dominating relations of power and these stories are therefore natural critical forces against established networks of domination.

Storytelling may serve different roles in relation to the usual historical methods of archaeology and genealogy deployed by Foucault (1984, 1995). These historical methods rely on a great collection of source material – the archive – left behind by a particular historical period and culture. It is the researcher's tasks – through the meticulous procedures of archaeology and genealogy – to reconstruct the relations and patterns of forces that must emerge from below in order to perform an ascending analysis. Still however, these traces and texts only speak in particular ways and seem particularly mute in terms of how traces and texts are interconnected and interrelated.

Storytelling may serve an important role in filling in the blanks, the holes, the blind spots and what is not said in the archive. This is why more contemporary forms of power analysis relevant to organizations often combine the collection of documents with qualitative interviews (e.g. Flyvbjerg, 1991; Jørgensen, 2007). This procedure is of course only relevant if we abandon making the long historical journeys that characterized Foucault's own archaeologies and genealogies and concentrate on shorter periods of time.

This leads to the point that storytelling can be used together with archaeology and genealogy in a power

analytics of the contemporary. This combination has several advantages as I see it. Firstly, it is often in the relations between texts and other kinds of material traces that the transformations, ruptures and discontinuities happen. They are almost always found in between the lines and between the texts while central processes remain in the dark.

Secondly it is a way of avoiding that too much interpretation power is granted to the author of the research text. Storytelling highlights instead the importance of giving corporate subjects the possibility of speaking and emphasizes thus the importance of dialogue and conversation with the actors in the field. Dialogues and conversations are not natural parts of archaeology and genealogy, which instead emphasizes the importance of writing "wirkliche Historie" (Foucault, 1984, p. 87; Jørgensen, 2007, p. 66) by focusing on the concrete material traces of history, which in its very nature implies displacing the actor in favor of historical, geographical and material circumstances.

Having dialogues with actors in the field implies that interpretation power is handed over to the actors in the field. I do not think that this implies jeopardizing the purpose of archaeology and genealogy even if there is the problem that stories rationalize history from the point of the present. Rather I see it as trying to obtain a more appropriate balance between the concrete material world and the non-concrete immaterial world. It is the tension between these two "poles" which is interesting. It is not that we should choose one before the other. The alternative, which is not to ask the actors involved, is in any case far less attractive.

Ontologically this move implies at least a softening up of the position that people are mere effects of discourse or discursive practices, which dominated Foucault's thinking in relation to archaeology and genealogy. But I think he also made this move by introducing the concept of dispositive.

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29

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30