

Fictional narrative and Social Sciences teaching¹

A narrativa de ficção e o ensino de Ciências Sociais

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ABSTRACT

The article presents reflections from a research and teaching project with high school students from a professional education institution. The paper discusses the role of fictional narratives in Social Sciences teaching as a way of enabling a shift away from a knowledge regime based on a representational model and on learning as the transmission of mental content. It sets out from the observation that this model is insufficient to account for the complexity of teaching practice, especially in face of its contemporary challenges. To illustrate this point, the article presents a pedagogical experience in which students were invited to write fictional narratives and to come into contact with different kinds of productions as part of the curricular activities of the Sociology course. This practice sought to induce an experience of inventive learning in correspondence with the creative potential of the territory in which these young people live. The investigation is ethnographic in orientation, involving the elaboration of fieldwork diaries and the analysis of students' written production.

Keywords: Social Sciences teaching. Fiction. Ethnography. Teaching-Learning.

RESUMO

O artigo apresenta reflexões oriundas de um projeto de pesquisa e ensino junto a estudantes do Ensino Médio de uma instituição de educação profissional. Busca-se discutir o papel da narrativa de ficção no ensino de Ciências Sociais como forma de operar um desvio com relação ao regime de

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conhecimento baseado no modelo da representação e na concepção de ensinar como transmissão de conteúdos. Parte-se da constatação de que este modelo se mostra insuficiente para dar conta da complexidade da atuação docente, especialmente frente a seus desafios contemporâneos. Para isso, é apresentada uma experiência pedagógica na qual os estudantes foram convidados a escrever narrativas de ficção e a ter contato com diferentes produções dentro das atividades curriculares da disciplina de Sociologia. Com essa prática, buscou-se produzir uma experiência de aprendizagem inventiva e em correspondência com as potencialidades de criação do território em que estes jovens vivem. A investigação tem orientação etnográfica, envolvendo a elaboração de diários de campo e a análise da produção escrita dos estudantes.

Palavras-chave: Ensino de Ciências Sociais. Ficção. Etnografia. Ensino-aprendizagem.

Introduction

During a high school Sociology class, a student commented to a colleague that he had shared an article on his Facebook profile, even though he knew it was fake. It was a critical text about the art exhibition “Queermuseu: cartographies of difference in Brazilian art”², shown in August 2017 in Porto Alegre, at the Santander Cultural Museum. A profusion of posts and comments on social networks, accusing the exhibition of promoting an apology for pedophilia and zoophilia, persuaded the museum to close it ahead of schedule. The critical text, which was passed on by the student, reproduced these accusations, although it presented images of artworks that were not part of the exhibition catalog. When the young man was asked about his reasons for sharing, he said that he knew that the artworks had not been in the Santander Museum. He even told me he was against the closure of the exhibition, since art should enjoy freedom of expression. However, he decided to pass the story on *for fun, just for sharing*, because he had bet with some friends to repass a certain number of posts per day.

The young man’s response calls into question all the effort I expended daily as a Sociology teacher, trying to present research evidence and theoretical concepts to inform the class debates and enable the students to think more critically. Though aware that the news was false, it seemed more important for the young man to belong to his group of friends on social network than to express his position or reflect on the consequences of spreading fake news.

2 More details about the case can be accessed in Mendonça (2017).

Rather than judging his alleged lack of commitment to the truth as adolescent nihilism, however, the episode is highlighted here as a catalyst to reflect on the very role of evidence in Social Sciences teaching. The example reveals how people disseminate fake news not just because they believe in the stories or lack discernment to identify the lie. Were that the case, it would be enough to provide the tools for young people to seek reliable data and good sources of information. By contrast, the act of passing on this kind of news seems to be related to the affirmation of other commitments – or other truths, which need to be better understood. Given this scenario, what is the current educative role of Social Sciences and Sociology teachers among young people in high school?

Inspired by this question, throughout 2017, a teaching and research project was carried out with high school students from the Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Rio Grande do Sul (IFRS) – at the Restinga Campus, in Porto Alegre. It set out from the need to understand more deeply how young people deal with the diversity of narratives and sources of information that permeate their daily lives, articulated with the demand to create pedagogical strategies that go beyond the simple presentation of data, theories and concepts. The aim was to inventively operationalize the principles of “strangeness” and “denaturalization” (BRASIL, 2006), as well as the “sociological imagination” (MILLS, 2001), the foundations of Social Sciences thought.

For this purpose, I designed a pedagogical project that involved reading and writing fictional narratives within the activities of the discipline of Sociology, taught to four groups in the first year of high school. Fiction was chosen as the guiding thread of the work, on one hand, because of the substantial presence of fictional stories in the daily lives of the students and the possibility of dialoguing with them. On the other hand, fiction also makes it possible to complexify notions of true and false, enabling us to conceive different constructions of truth, leading us to problematize hegemonic ways of producing knowledge within the scope of Social Sciences. Methodologically, the project followed an anthropological approach, with an ethnographic orientation, through the writing of fieldwork diaries of the activities, as well as analyses of the students’ texts. As it has a commitment to research while simultaneously creating pedagogical strategies, the project unites research and teaching as means to explore what Tim Ingold calls the “experimental nature” of Anthropology. Going beyond mere description, the objective is to be with the people among whom we work “in search for answers to the fundamental questions of life” (INGOLD, 2015, p. 44).

The reflections and theoretical analyses take place in dialogue with authors who question the predominance of the cognitive policy of representation, as well as the concept of teaching as the transmission of mental content (INGOLD, 2010; KASTRUP, 2005; MATORANA, 2009). These authors help to problematize a

certain regime of knowledge – and its consequent pedagogical orientation – to which the Social Sciences are heirs, and which have shown to be insufficient in teaching practice in the face of contemporary challenges such as the one reported above. Social Sciences Teaching has been constituted as a field of studies only recently in Brazil, stimulated by the return of Sociology and Philosophy to high school curricula following the passing of Law 11.684/2006. Given its emergent characteristic, efforts are still necessary to overcome the tendency to transpose university pedagogies to high school contexts without taking into account the specificities of these subjects – an outcome of the long years of “insulation” of the Social Sciences within the academic world (SARANDY, 2012).

The situations narrated here are part of a specific high school context in the scope of the expansion and consolidation of the Federal Network of Vocational, Scientific and Technological Education, whose design integrates the recent history of Brazilian public education (BRASIL, 2008). In addition, the experiences come from a singular IFRS campus, located nearly 30 km from the center of Porto Alegre, the capital of the state of Rio Grande do Sul. The Restinga neighborhood, after which the campus is named, is one of the most populated districts in the city periphery, home to more than 60,000 regular residents. Its origin is linked to the forced removal of predominantly black communities that inhabited the central region of Porto Alegre until the 1960s (ZAMBONI, 2009). In this context, and given the challenges of guaranteeing the right to education, Sociology teaching was able to follow non-obvious paths, with the participation of young high school students, most of whom are inhabitants of the territory in question.

The crisis in the representational model and the opening to fiction

Some thinkers have called the moment in which we live the “post-truth era” (DUNKER; TEZZA; FUKS; TIBURI; SAFATLE, 2017), naming an environment of increasing polarization and collective enclosure within “bubbles” that mean subjects tend to receive and reiterate only opinions similar to their own, uninterested in dialogue or in any contradiction with the “facts”. However, this phenomenon can also be understood as the exhaustion of a certain regime of knowledge based on the divisions enacted by western modernity and in which we find ourselves entangled as “scientists of the social” (LATOURET, 2012). One expression of this relates to the representational or cognitivist model, which is based on the metaphor of the mind as a computer, presuming knowledge to be

a process of capturing and processing information (or representations) from an external and pre-existing world. In this scheme, to know is the ability to receive external information (input), store it, process it and provide adequate responses (output).

Proceeding from different theoretical currents, methods and concerns, thinkers exploring the learning process are seeking to escape from this model – which remains predominant in school education. Virginia Kastrup calls it “the policy of recognition”, the idea by which knowledge involves manipulating information that reaches the mind from a pre-given world. Against recognition, Kastrup proposes the exercise of a “policy of invention”, which presupposes the self and the world as “co-produced by action, in a reciprocal and inseparable way” (KASTRUP, 2005, p. 1276). In this latter perspective, the act of learning does not only consist of representing a reality, but refers to processes of subjectification and objectification, implying the “invention” of oneself and the world.

Tim Ingold also questions cognitivism and the idea of the transmission of representations. According to him, learning occurs through practical engagement with the environment, involving a process of tuning the perceptual system along with the environment – that is, an “education of attention” (INGOLD, 2010). In this sense, knowledge is not a precondition for skillful practice, but the emergent result of practicing, since it does not exist as a corpus of contents to be assimilated regardless of the activity involved in acquiring it. Adopting this alternate view, therefore, we can place in perspective the effectiveness of teaching practices based on the exposure to concepts, themes and theories without considering the practical engagement involved in the learning process.

Finally, Humberto Maturana adds to the search for alternatives to the cognitive model with his development of the idea of “objectivity-in-parentheses” to confront transcendent concepts of objectivity (MATURANA, 2009, p. 55). According to his view, the validity of a specific statement does not occur through simple correspondence to an external reality. When we agree with an explanation, what we accept is a reformulation of an experience from elements that satisfy the requirements of coherence that we propose beforehand. In science, in fact, an explanation is only valid when acceptable to a determined observer “who describes what he is going to explain, describes also what you have to do to have the experience that he wants to explain” (MATURANA, 2009, p. 55). In other words, I build (and live) a reality in which my explanations make sense. In this way, if I understand the spread of fake news as merely a lack of good sources of information, I am appealing to the idea of a transcendent objectivity, “without parentheses”. Put otherwise, I presume that there must be an independent reality and that I – as a social scientist or teacher – have more adequate means to access it. Conversely, assuming an “objectivity in parentheses”, I consider

the conditions of perception of the observer: in other words, the world that the student inhabits and that, at the same time, constitutes him.

From this perspective, opposing fake news with what we call “evidence” does not seem enough. Rather than insisting only on opposition and movements of unveiling, the scenario calls us to make some deviations, the exercise of fiction being one possible path. In this sense, rather than combatting an alleged lie, I propose to use fiction as a resource to approach knowledge. This displacement, however, does not mean an abandonment of the commitment to the truth, as Juan José Saer points out:

[...] fictions are not written to elude, due to immaturity or irresponsibility, the rigors that the treatment of ‘truth’ requires, but rather to highlight the complex character of the situation, a complexity in which treatment limited to the verifiable implies an abusive reduction and an impoverishment. In moving towards the unverifiable, fiction multiplies the possibilities of treatment to infinity. It does not deny a supposed objective reality, on the contrary, it is submerged in its turbulence, disdaining the naive attitude that consists in pretending to know beforehand how this reality conforms. It is not a limping before this or that ethics of truth, but the search for a slightly less rudimentary ethics (SAER, 2012, p. 3).

In the author’s view, fiction is a way to overcome the dichotomies between “false” and “true”, “objectivism” and “subjectivism” – Saer even defines fiction as a “speculative anthropology” (SAER, 2012, p. 6). It would thus help us break with the policy of recognition, paving the way for “inventive learning” (KASTRUP, 2005), deploying the idea that there is no preexisting reality, nor a ready-made subject. In this sense, the fictional narrative helps to show the processual characteristic of knowledge: it is not a matter of representing a fixed, finished world, but of accompanying a path of co-creation in which the self and the world are produced. Thus, we can conceive a notion of truth that is less static and more prone to movement – more conducive to “getting out of the bubble”. As Luis Artur Costa argues:

[...] fiction is another action that creates realities allowing us to complexify the plot of the real with the densification (multiplication) of the relationships that constitute it through fictional compositions and their special ability to catch the furtive movement of virtualities. [...] we pass from the mere description of the already seen to the problematization of

the visible, which allows us to multiply possible relations with the world, since we are no longer in the field of data, but in the field of creation, of the becoming of the virtual (COSTA, 2014, p. 559).

Transposing these ideas to a debate on education, we could argue that insofar as school education tends to focus on the exposition of contents and on the dichotomy between subject and world, it tends to present a ready-made reality to students, providing few spaces for engagement and invention. This fragmented environment reinforces the notion of non-responsibility towards the world – because, as since is already made, it does not depend on the action of subjects – corroborating the uncritical adherence to simplifying explanatory narratives. Following the shift provided by fiction, therefore, rather than just focusing on developing ways for students to obtain more accurate access to an external reality, we started to intervene pedagogically so that they could perceive themselves as co-producers of reality, inventing ways to inhabit it in this process and multiplying possible relationships with it.

Fictionalizing life

Aligned with this theoretical debate, pedagogical exercises involving fiction were proposed within the scope of the Sociology course to four groups of first year high school students, in weekly classes lasting fifty minutes each. At first, the didactic proposal was not fully formulated. The project was focused on investigating the possibilities of working with fiction, relating it to the daily lives of students and to the theoretical formulations of the so-called classic authors of Sociology – Émile Durkheim, Karl Marx and Max Weber – sociologists regularly taught on the course programs at school. Inspired by Tim Ingold (2012) and by previous ethnographic research, I sought to “bring Sociology to life” (SCHWEIG, 2015), in correspondence with the movements that students were making, instead of beginning from a ready-made plan to be “applied”. In general, the first year of high school provides students with an initial contact with Sociology and Social Sciences as a school subject. As a starting point, therefore, we need to develop the “sociological imagination”, articulating the student’s individual biography with what Wright Mills calls the “public issues of social structure” (MILLS, 2001, p. 8).

From the very outset, the students welcomed the proposal and found the idea of studying Sociology through fiction plausible. In an initial observation, I discovered that many of them had the habit of reading and writing, fiction being very present in their lives. Some of them had the practice of creating stories and fanfics,³ as well as sharing these works on online platforms. When listing the characteristics of a good story, I heard from them: “*consider the hero’s journey; create a conflict; build complex characters; and include plot twists*”. These elements were registered and used as parameters for evaluating the stories they would produce. After an introduction,⁴ we talked about primary and secondary socialization and the different socializing agents that they identified in their trajectories. We then discussed possible paths we should follow to create the stories. They mentioned: “*analyzing good characters and good stories; research and experience with people who have interesting trajectories; studying archetypes and the ‘character arc’*”⁵. We thus had some guiding elements to begin our work.

We started with an investigation of their own socialization processes, searching for interesting trajectories. They were asked to write anonymously, on a sheet of paper, some elements that marked their lives. These texts were then swapped between classes so that the authors could not be identified. Redistributing the sheets randomly in groups, the students were asked to observe differences and similarities in the trajectories. This step was important as a means to discuss the social conditionings of the place where they live and their historical moment. The students noted the recurrence of remarkable events when comparing the different lives – such as the death of grandparents or the parents’ divorce – and the importance attached to the relationships with friends and to the person’s mother. Some reports of parental abandonment appeared, in addition to the importance of religion. After the analysis, each group was asked to pick one of the sheets – the one that most drew their attention – as the basis for the creation of a character. Working as a group, they would then write the first chapter of a story, which would gain new parts throughout the year. We agreed on a theme for the first chapter: **The socialization process of the character until fifteen years old.**

3 Fanfics are fictional narratives created by fans, consisting of the free creation of scenarios and plots involving well-known characters from literature, comics, cinema or television, as well as musicians and other artists.

4 This took place during the first classes and involved theatrical games that focused on the perception of the individual-group relationship and discussions based on audiovisual productions.

5 The website “Ficção em Tópicos” (SCHUTT, 2019) was an important resource for our research.

Hegemonic narrative patterns and possibilities for invention

On the last punch, the injured boy's best friend arrived, and not alone, but with Harry and the school principal. Finally, someone caught the 'perfect guys' doing something wrong (Story 1 - Chapter 1).

Marcos was my college colleague, the class 'nerd.' We always bullied him because he was so dedicated to his studies (Story 2 - Chapter 1).

The reading and writing habits of the young people facilitated their engagement in the proposed task. The texts produced were quite diverse and contained different complexities and extensions. In some narratives, the influence of hegemonic narrative patterns drew my attention. I related this to the type of fiction they consume and the forms of writing to which they are accustomed. Regarding the books that circulated among them, international bestsellers were the most common.⁶ In addition, the fanfics that many of them use to read and write were generally built around foreign characters, so their scenarios ended up being reproduced in their creations. Some conflicts or cases of bullying narrated by them seemed to take place in American schools, for example, as portrayed in films. Some of the students tended to reproduce stereotypes (*the popular student, the nerd*), as seen in the excerpts above. We then discussed the need to go beyond these labels in order to develop more interesting characters.

In addition, when mapping their audiovisual consumption habits, I noticed that the Netflix platform and its menu of films, series and documentaries seemed to dominate young people's free time. In our conversations, many of them recognized their tendency to *stay in the Netflix bubble*⁷ – If the production was not in its catalog, they would not try to find it. Furthermore, cinemas showing independent film were located in the city center and were not easily accessible. We therefore discussed how many of the productions they consumed followed certain patterns that were distant from the complexity of their own daily

6 Some of the most widely read were: "A Song of Ice and Fire" by George R. R. Martin (2010), and "The Fault in Our Stars" by John Green (2012).

7 From the analysis of the production of a Netflix series, Alzamora, Salgado and Miranda (2017) demonstrate how the preferences and consumption habits of users are mapped using algorithms. This provide recommendations that tend to approximate users' past choices, creating a "bubble effect." The use of algorithms is reproduced in all social networks, including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

experiences. It was important for them to learn how the narratives they deal with on a daily basis shape their universes and imagination. In response to this need, and to provoke a sense of estrangement, we analyzed some independent audiovisual productions, comparing them with mass productions to induce the students to become sensitized to other aesthetic and narrative possibilities.⁸

In addition, we had the construction of characters who, within the initial proposal, embodied interesting elements of what it would be like to grow up in their neighborhood:

My name is Marcelo, I am 15 years old, I was born in Rio Grande and I currently live in Porto Alegre. I live with my mother, in a house behind my grandmother's house. My mother is called Tereza, she is 35 years old. My grandmother is called Vilma and she is 63. I never lived with my father. During my childhood, my mother always took me to church with her, nowadays I follow in her footsteps. My grandmother doesn't say a word about religion, so I can safely say that my mother followed this path alone. The support of our house comes from my mother's daily work. My grandmother, who is retired, sometimes helps us with the expenses. In my childhood I was very playful, I liked to climb trees and when I jumped down from them, it always hurt me. If I could go back in time, I would always look where I would fall (Story 3 - Chapter 1).

Other stories also sought to explore the complexity of the character's point of view, recounting his or her doubts and desires:

Maybe it was not my destiny to be a doctor. That must be why I recently chose to start my data processing course. Two very different things, aren't they? I realized a few days ago that a lot of what I was doing might be not because I liked it, but because I wanted to prove something else, but to whom? Why did I want to be a doctor? Just to say that I am one? Just to say that I passed the entrance exam for the most competitive contest? Did I want to make my mother proud? My sweet, struggling mother? The one who had done everything for her daughters, even after a so called

⁸ The experience of watching and talking about the films of the production company *Filmes de Plástico* from Contagem (Minas Gerais) was very interesting. The young people saw similarities and differences between the images of Contagem and the Restinga neighborhood itself. They also noted how the "stories of peripheries" tend to be stereotyped and simplified in soap operas and films.

“father” thought they were not enough any longer? Or did I want to show that bastard who we really were and that we were much better off without him? (Story 4 - Chapter 1).

Their cultural and consumption habits thus began to be problematized as their own productions became our material for analysis and study. On the day they brought a written chapter, we conducted a collective evaluation. Each group received the text from another group to read, along with a sheet containing the criteria they had initially suggested, so that they could evaluate the texts and make suggestions themselves. The groups then received feedback from their colleagues and some of them asked to redo the task to make improvements. This dynamic of analysis and evaluation among peers was repeated when each chapter of the story was delivered and was important to outlining the next steps.

Telling stories with the classic authors of Sociology

To inspire the second chapter of the story, I introduced Émile Durkheim to the students and focused on the concept of the *social fact*. Considering the characteristics of social constraint, generality and exteriority, each group was asked to choose a social fact that they considered relevant to the continuity of the character’s story. Each group would then be responsible for organizing a debate in class about the chosen social fact. We agreed that the activity aimed to bring together different experiences and points of view to make the story more complex and connected with their daily lives – moving away from cliché. To this end, we reserved a fifty-minute class for each group. Some of the chosen social facts were family, maternity, religion, education, gender, bullying, among others. The groups carried out preliminary research and compiled a script of questions to help mediate the debate and encourage an exchange of experiences. After the round of debates was concluded, they elaborated the second chapter of the story: **The character and the social fact**, exploring dimensions of social pressure on individuals:

His father was extremely irate, he poured out a series of offensive words about how he had not raised a son to be a “fag” and other things. His mother even tried to calm him down, but it didn’t work out very well.

[...] Finally they reached a solution, fortunately there was no physical violence, but the boy would have to leave his house that same night, because, in his father's words, "they couldn't sleep with a sinner under the same roof (Story 1 - Chapter 2).

I decided to face the issue and tell her what had happened to my mother and what I thought about motherhood and fatherhood. Well, I told her that being a young father was not a problem, my mother also thought the same, so much so that she had my sister while still young. She said that being a father or mother early was not bad as everyone says, there's no reason to wait to be prepared, because this sort of thing has no prescription, nobody will ever be prepared until it happens (Story 5 - Chapter 2).

In the first excerpt, the group, which had chosen to treat gender as a social fact, raised questions about prejudice relating to freedom of sexual orientation and gender roles. Among other issues, we discussed in class the constructed aspect of what feminine and masculine are and how the divergent person tends to suffer "social constraint". In the second excerpt, the group had chosen maternity as a social fact. We talked about different conceptions of motherhood, about humanized childbirth and the ways in which they felt pressure to have children or not in their families. The students also called attention to the unequal weight in terms of childcare expectations, which fall much more heavily on women. Based on the concept of social fact, we concluded that these ideas are learned and internalized through social relations – an aspect emphasized in the story written by the last group.

Karl Marx's ideas provided the inspiration for the third chapter. I introduced his perspective through a comparison between narratives of English workers during the Industrial Revolution and recent news reports on slave labor in Brazil. The students identified similarities and differences regarding the working conditions. We talked about how the similarities are connected to an underlying structure, corresponding to the capitalist mode of production. The differences were related to the advances and setbacks in terms of workers' rights,⁹ while the students reported on work-related situations involving their own families. From the introduction of concepts like social classes, alienation and surplus value, Marx's ideas were developed using texts, theatrical exercises inspired by Augusto Boal's Theater of the Oppressed, and the analysis of comic strips

⁹ We discussed issues that were prominent at the time such as the approval of labor reforms.

and videos. Finally, the students produced the third part of the story, which we named **Conflicts and social inequalities**.

A few new chapters addressed cross-class love affairs. Most of them narrated the introduction of the main character into the world of work, showing inequalities and conflicts, as in the following example:

This year I graduated from high school. I had been waiting a long time for this because I wanted to go to college, I wanted to study business administration. I realized that my mother's salary alone wouldn't be enough to pay for college (since it also had to support the house, our grandmother and us), so I decided to look for a job. I spent almost a month looking for a decent job that would meet my needs, but I got one that was in the center of Porto Alegre. It's a job that I like, because it involves working with computers and data processing, things I already wanted to work with. The problem is really the distance because I have to take six buses a day (three outbound buses and three return buses).

[...] The time has come for me to go to work, WORK!! For the first time, I left the house so cheerful that I couldn't stop smiling. [...] When I arrived in front of the building, it seemed bigger to me than it had been on the day of the interview, but I thought: this is fear wanting to overwhelm me, I will go ahead, and so I did. Arriving at the office floor, I saw a lot of people, about 50, sitting in front of computers. Anxiety was already taking hold of me, but I kept going. While an attendant took me to the boss's office, I saw that there was just one chair in the office, so I thought: this is my place. Arriving there, there was me, Marcelo, and a boy with blond hair and green eyes, with his father in a suit, very well dressed. I sat next to them in a very comfortable chair and there I thought: what is he doing here? In the interview they said there was only one vacancy. At that moment, the boss began to speak. He said it was good that I had appeared, introduced me to this Ricardo (the boy sat next to me) and said that he was my colleague now. Curiosity overcame me, though, and I asked: at the time of the interview, wasn't there only one vacancy? He replied: Yes, the job is Ricardo's and you will be the assistant to my team, handling their paperwork and serving coffee. I was outraged at the time. But I thought: this is the only job I got, so I can't waste it.

Spending mornings at school and the afternoons at work, I was feeling exhausted, I had no time for anything. I didn't have the time any more to do the things I liked, to have fun. My boss still didn't pay much attention to me, because I was a "newbie" and my nickname at work was "the coffee boy." Last week he gave Ricardo a salary raise while I haven't even

received my first pay yet. So, I was thinking, I guess I'm not going to work here anymore. I stepped into the office and got a surprise... (Story 3 – Chapter 3).

The final chapter sought inspiration in Max Weber's ideas. From the concept of "ideal type of social action", we developed the notion of subjectivity and how society is built from the intentionality of subjects. During the work, we conducted a survey in which each student indicated the percentage of their motivation to be in school, distributed in Weber's four types of social action. For each group, we wrote the answers on the board and made the calculations to reach the statistics for the entire classroom. It was interesting to note that in all groups, the most frequent type of action was instrumentally rational – that is, the motivation to go to school was related more to the objective of obtaining a diploma. We connected this to the idea of the rationalization of life under capitalism. To develop the idea of subjectivity, quite alien to some students, we watched videos and worked with photography, correlating the question of intentionality with the discussion about framing and editing. The last chapter of the story was called **The Character's Motivations** and produced texts like these two below:

Over time, Rafael began to realize that not all people were the same, and that they had different thoughts on different subjects. He learned a little of this from Lucas, who was very religious and linked to family tradition, while Rafael had no definite religion... (Story 6 – Chapter 4).

Ana grew up taking care of those fields and gardens with her parents, that's why she dedicated herself so much to the school garden. There was a lot of history there for her. [...] She said that the school principal intended to destroy the garden to build a sports court. It was clear that it wasn't for the good of the school or anything else. They knew the guy. The court would only make him richer. It would be used by the neighborhood soccer team, who would pay him a lot of money to use it (Story 7 – Chapter 4).

As we can see, in the closing chapter of the story some groups tended to narrate situations in which different points of view were placed in perspective, mobilizing the subjects' motivations for action, according to Weberian categories. Some groups took advantage of this approach to develop a final conflict in the story and build an outcome.

Final considerations

I learned that even when we create stories, we always relate them to our own life (Student A).

[With the writing of the stories] we learned what each sociologist (Marx, Weber and Durkheim) thinks, but with our point of view (Student B).

I learned to put myself in someone else's shoes, even if he was created by us. I was able to feel his emotions and anguish (Student C).

In my history, for example, there was a fact that really happens in our society. Through this, we can better understand the people involved (Student D).

I think the idea is to show that even though we are so different, we are always connected (Student E).

Similar to the way in which Social Sciences offer instruments to order and interpret the profusion of information received daily, the act of narrating also orders time and connects the successive experiences in which we are involved. As Mário Vargas Llosa says, novels provide organization, cause and effect; a beginning and end: “through lies, they express a curious truth that can only be conveyed in a veiled and hidden way, disguising itself with what it is not” (LLOSA, 1984). The above excerpts, taken from the evaluative activity conducted at the end of the school year, thus provide an account of some of the results of the pedagogical proposal from the students' point of view, demonstrating how they recognize the potentialities of learning about Sociology through fiction. The writing exercises seem to have helped them locate their lives within a relational perspective and in articulation with theories and concepts that helped them better understand the individual-society relation. In their writings and evaluations, we can identify how they connect biographies to public questions relating to the social structure (MILLS, 1982), while working to produce movements of strangeness and relativization, standing in the other's place, facilitated by the fictional construction.

It is notable that in the performed activities, the role of fiction was not restricted to representing or illustrating pedagogical content, but aimed to

develop awareness, “educating the attention” (INGOLD, 2010). In this sense, the problematization of the hegemonic narratives with which students have everyday contact emerged as a necessary movement to give visibility to the pulsating issues of their daily lives, thus enabling an openness to creation. In fact, if a narrative is reduced to repeating pre-molded schemes and formulas, it does not effectuate its “fictional intent”: “to be real in its falsity” (COSTA, 2014, p. 559). Teaching Sociology through fiction, therefore, does not mean accepting just any story, but those that provide the connection – be it through strangeness or identification – with the lived territory and, from this connection, launch into non-recognizable experiences and becoming (KASTRUP, 2005).

It should also be noted that the introduction to Social Science theories and concepts did not have the central objective of presenting details of the classic authors’ arguments: instead, I was concerned with “bringing the concepts to life” (SCHWEIG, 2015; INGOLD, 2012). In this way, *social fact*, *social classes*, and *ideal types of social action* came to life when they were mixed with examples close to hand and served to produce new interpretations and narratives. It was a question of experiencing what Ingold (2012) calls “creativity forward”, that is, seeking the meaning of concepts in their movement together with young people, rather than “backwards”, that is, rigorously reconstituting the theoretical elaboration of the authors. It is also notable that throughout the work with fiction, investigative thinking was stimulated, even though it was beyond the framework of traditional academic research. Questions were proposed to students through the analysis of their own experiences and productions, allowing them to experience the potential of the concepts – establishing relations, comparisons, evaluations – instead of just reproducing their definitions.

In this text, therefore, I sought to contribute to thinking about the ways in which the Social Sciences can walk alongside school subjects, mixed with their specificities and paying attention to the demands and challenges that arise from contemporary transformations in education. In a scenario of supposed polarizations and enclosure in bubbles of monolithic thinking, rather than disputing who has better access to reality itself, the endeavor here was to fictionalize the reality in question in order to get to know it better. Consequently, the pedagogical work involved raising awareness through the confrontation between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic narratives. This movement contributed to the understanding that we work to shape the world that we inhabit and that we are co-responsible for creating it, as we invent and affirm our own versions.

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