

Making Stories for the Moments of Our Time

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Donna Haraway reminds us of the importance of stories. Stories can tell us about our past, our present, and our future, and they can also be frameworks and guideposts for thoughts and for imagining what might be to come. Haraway tells us that stories “are about giving and receiving patterns; they are ongoing and they can fall apart or do something very interesting and vital”.¹ Stories can help us to think and can also help us to form a practice for living and receiving others. I am reminded of the importance of telling stories, and the vital ways that stories help us to know or understand our world, as I watch the unfolding of the stories around the arrest and death of George Floyd.

The unconscionable actions by multiple police officers that lead to the death of George Floyd has led to protests throughout not just Minneapolis—where the death took place—but the rest of the United States and in many other countries. As of this writing, protests over George Floyd’s death, and police brutality more generally, are taking place in Britain, Germany, Denmark, Italy, New Zealand, Canada, Poland, and Australia. This outpouring of anger in the form of protests is more remarkable still because these countries are also grappling with the real fear of contagion due to COVID-19. The stories of the protests have led many communities and organizations to grapple with how to make sense of (yet another case of) police brutality and death. Hopefully, this time, greater action and change of practice occurs. I am also reminded that the protests have seemed to gain fuel due to the live witness stories and videos filmed by bystanders, each posted as a story of the truth. It remains to be seen whether these stories “fall apart” or lead to “vital” change.²

Stories also figure prominently in this collection of articles and responses. In alignment with the mood of the moment, these articles and responses grapple with changing how we think and how we act, with

our educational practices and political choices. In this issue, the article by Samantha Deane uses stories to grapple with our own response-ability for gun control. Barbara Stengel responds to Deane's article by reminding us of the ways that money enables particular stories to be told and remain untold. Nicholas Eastman uses the story of St. Louis revitalization and school revenue policies to argue for an understanding of sacrifice as a sort of ritual that is demanded of the less fortunate in our school districts. Lynda Stone responds to Eastman's critique by pointing out the various forms of counter-discourse and counter-action that stand opposed to the ritualistic sacrifices of particular neoliberal subject positions. Cris Mayo, in her presidential address, thinks through the ways that anger can be a response but can also be a method of grappling with inequality and inequity in our time. Adam Greteman and Michele Moses respond to Mayo's address by using stories from their own lives to guide us toward the type of anger that is educative in nature. Sara Hardman, in her general session paper, tells us the stories of the West Virginia teacher strikes as a way of wrestling with discourses around what it means to be a teacher. Liz Jackson, in her response to Hardman, reminds us—through the story of the recent Hong Kong protests—that strikes and protests can lead to identity formation and counter-conduct but may not inevitably lead to justice. The articles referenced above aim to help us think through and act on the political policies and ideological histories that generate our lived experiences.

Other articles and responses in this issue use stories to directly highlight school practice and the aims of schooling. Naoko Saito uses stories from Michael Moore and Margaret Fuller to highlight the ways that a focus on everyday life and living can contribute to a spiritual democracy that should be at the heart of schooling practices. Shannon Robinson responds to Saito by expanding our definition of democratic practice and, with Saito, arguing against spiritual vacancy. Annie Schultz and John Mullen pinpoint Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* as a story that can lead to intensive examination of our connections to land and nature

and that can lead to a greater focus on fostering a full ecology. Leanne Holland responds to this by telling us her own story of working with Maxine Greene on projects that used art and narrative to drive deep thinking practices in/for the school. Matthew Thomas-Reid walks us through his experience of trying to create authentic assessments and weaves a story that allows us to grapple with what counts as authenticity. Seamus Mulryan responds to Thomas-Reid by honing the difference between expression and representation and offers this as a helpful way to think about authenticity in identity or assessments. Kirsten Welch uses stories from her own experiences with teachers who guide their students toward a practice of ‘being nice’ as a form of moral behavior. Welch prompts us to ask: Is being nice really what we are after? Welch guides us to think more deeply about our moral language and language of morality. Derek Gottlieb hones Welch’s argument by making the distinction between moral life and moral language. J.R. Allison explicitly uses the motif of storytelling as a way of history-making. She questions the stories we tell about early feminist scholars. Buddy North reminds us that these stories are more meaningful when we can look, with a critical eye, both back to the stories of the past, as well as to the ways that stories should shape our actions in the future.

Haraway argues: “we need stories (and theories) that are just big enough to gather up the complexities and keep the edges open and greedy for surprising new and old connections.”²³ In this issue, readers will find stories (and theories) aplenty for ongoing connections, complexities, and surprises, stories that lead to better thinking and informed practices.

1 Haraway, Donna, and Thyrza Nichols Goodeve. “Speaking Resurgence to Despair/I’d Rather Stay With the Trouble.” *Feministische Studien* 37, no. 2 (2019): 335-347.

2 Ibid.

3 Haraway, Donna. “Staying with the Trouble?: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene”. In Jason W. Moore (ed.), *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History and the Crisis of Capitalism*, Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2016. Pp. 34-76.