



Challenges, opportunities, and future directions in narrative inquiry

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Chapter 17 Concluding Comments: Insights, Challenges and Future Directions in Narrative Inquiry

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Introduction

This volume brings together a diversity of approaches to narrative and narrative inquiry in research with children and young people, exploring and showcasing how these concepts are understood and applied across a range of disciplines and research contexts. In this respect, the volume underlines the fluidity and diversity of narrative inquiry as a trans-disciplinary research field, with the capacity to yield highly nuanced understandings of children and young people's everyday realities. The wide variety of disciplinary perspectives and analytic lenses to understanding narrative captures and reflects the exponential growth in narrative inquiry, over the past two decades in particular (Chase, 2005; Squire et al, 2013).

Taken collectively, contributions to this volume underline the varied, flexible, multi-layered and transformative character of narrative inquiry, illustrating the power and complexity of children and young people's stories about their everyday lives in the spaces and places they inhabit. The multi-dimensional nature of narrative inquiry is evidenced in the varied research topics and themes, the diversity of methodological approaches and the richness of data explored. Contributions to the volume clearly illustrate the contextual nature of storytelling; the importance of individual/micro-level factors in how stories are (re)-constructed and told (e.g. linguistic conventions) and how physical space and wider socio-cultural forces (e.g. power dynamics, language and temporality) shape and reflect how young people (re)-tell and (re)-experience their 'lived lives'.

In this concluding chapter, we firstly synthesise methodological and conceptual insights from across the volume. Secondly, we crystallise key learning in relation to children and young people's experiences across multiple contexts, with reference to the thematic sections of the volume. We highlight some challenges raised across the volume associated with utilising narrative methods with children and young people, and reflect on future directions for narrative research with children and young people.

Narrating Childhood and Youth: Methodological and Conceptual Insights

The power, creativity and richness of narrative research approaches in examining the multidimensionality of children and young people's lived experiences is evident throughout the volume. From a methodological standpoint, the diverse range of approaches underlines the flexibility and depth of research materials emanating from narrative research; these include; mono/single method narrative studies (see chapters by Mooney, this volume and Morrow and Elliott, this volume) and 'multi' or 'mixed' method qualitative research that encompass narrative interviewing approaches (see for example, McGarry, this volume and Kallio, this volume). Chapters in the volume engage with critical approaches to narrative inquiry using varying conceptual approaches and diverse research methodologies including: visual research methods (e.g. Osgood, this volume), topological mapping (see Kallio, this volume), essay writing (Morrow and Elliot, this volume), story-mapping (Reilly and Hughes, this volume), Participatory Action Research (PAR) approaches (Wall et al., this volume), and the Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM) (Mooney, this volume).

Contributions to this volume engage with topics and questions such as what it means to narrate and what narrative research is, which simultaneously influences processes of research design, data collection, analysis and interpretation. Drawing on the work of leading scholars

and key texts on narrative inquiry including Andrews (2007, 2014), Squire et al., (2013) Chamberlayne and King (2000), Clandinan and Connelly (2000), Riessman (2002, 2008, 2013), Rustin (2000), Tamboukou (2008), and Wengraf (2001, 2011) (amongst others), contributors engage with and further highlight key concepts in the literature such as temporality, sequencing, storytelling, knowledge, multi-vocality, contexts and depth, all characteristic of narrative inquiry (Andrews, 2007, 2012a, 2012b; Riessman and Quinney, 2005; Riessman, 2013). While methodological debates continue regarding what narrative inquiry is, and what it is not (Squire et al. 2013), this volume shows narrative inquiry to be multidimensional and diverse in character; simultaneously ‘kaleidoscopic’ (Karlsson, 2008), multi-vocal and multi-layered.

The multiplicity of data analysis and interpretation techniques adopted by narrative researchers is evident in scholarly engagement with various approaches to analysis including Biographical Narrative Panel Analysis (Mooney, this volume), Discourse Analysis (Harragan, this volume), Thematic Analysis (McGibbon, this volume), and analysing biographical interview materials across and over time (Mayock and Parker, this volume). Looking across different chapters, this volume further identifies narrative research methods as creative, inventive, innovative, political, contextual, transformative, powerful and emotive (Wengraf, 2004, 2011; Hydén, 2013; Andrews, 2014; O’Grady et al, 2018). Contributions to this book reflect key debates in extant literature on what it means to tell one’s story, the social and cultural purposes of storytelling in society (e.g. justification, remembering, entertaining, persuading, legitimising agency, reconstructing identities); and the roles and responsibilities of researchers in (re)constructing children and young people’s life stories and their meanings (Riessman and Quinney, 2005; Byrne, 2017). The intricacies of children and young people’s stories, what it means to ‘tell’ and how gender, ethnicity and social class shape and reflect storytelling and young people’s engagement in research are further highlighted in chapters by

Harragan and McGarry (amongst others). Similarly, some extant literature point to how these variables (amongst others) influence narrative research (Holloway and Freshwater, 2007; Atkinson, 2019), thus further illuminating the contextual and multi-dimensional character of everyday storytelling and relationships between researchers and participants. The notion of place as multifaceted, dynamic and ever-changing is similarly embedded in contributions to this volume; chapters such as Wall et al (this volume) and Reilly and Hughes (this volume) draw into sharper focus how the dynamics of particular places and communities impact on research with children and young people, opening up dialogue and conceptual avenues on how young people reimagine places as both cultural and physical locations. Indeed, chapters by Reilly and Hughes (this volume) and Wall et al (this volume) illuminate that young people's interpretations and narratives of places and environments are entangled with notions of physical space, future imaginaries and past and present material and cultural realities which evolve and transform across time (Christensen et al, 2017).

The recent emphasis accorded to children and young people's 'everyday' lives represents an important shift in narrative research, much of which focused on adults until recently. The adoption and further development of narrative methodologies and concepts allied to narrative inquiry (e.g. temporality, sequencing) by scholars in the new Sociology of Childhood and in Youth Studies contributed significantly to narrative inquiry, which by its nature is ever-changing. The increased prominence accorded to narrative methods in these and other disciplines yield further insights into 'hidden' dimensions of children and young people's lives, including how and why they remain silent about certain issues (Spyrou, 2016) and how they experience daily and life changing events in the ways that they do. Furthermore, it can be argued that insights about children and young people's everyday realities, including intricate descriptions of sights, smells, sounds and how they experienced certain events at particular moments in time are more likely to emerge during narrative interviews compared

to other methods, including structured and semi-structured interviews (Bryman, 2008). As evident in this volume, an increasing corpus of literature focuses on the complexities and multi-faceted nature of doing narrative research with children and youth; the importance of stepping outside of adult-centric knowledge cultures and ways of seeing the world (Punch, 2002) and developing dialogue on multiple levels (e.g. between researchers as part of collective knowledge sharing, and between researchers and young people as co-producers of research) (Christensen and Prout, 2002). Ethical considerations pertaining to research on childhood and adolescent experiences, particularly when it involves eliciting narrations about traumatic life events, are extremely important, and are brought to the fore in chapters of this book (see for example, Mooney, this volume). Some of these insights are discussed subsequently in this chapter in relation to future directions for narrative research.

Commensurate with perspectives in the Sociology of Childhood, Children's Geographies, and Child and Youth Studies, children and young people are interpreted in this volume as dynamic and active agents in the world; as creators, performers and as conduits of narrative (Clandinan et al., 2016). The diversity of methodologies outlined in this book further underlines the significance of 'small stories' in children and young people's interactions, that remain central to how they (re)create and (re)transform the world around them, for understanding future imaginaries about the type of world they want to inhabit, who they are and who they want to be (Bamberg, 2006; Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008; Puroila, 2013). Significantly, this volume highlights the importance of internet-based and novel technologies for capturing young people's small stories, and the importance accorded to technology by young people for peer support networks, friendship building and social development (see for example, Phoenix, this volume and McGarry, this volume). Given the direction of narrative research with children and young people towards understanding 'small stories' (Bamberg, 2006) and transformations in communicative technologies, young

people's 'small' and 'big stories' in virtual and online spaces are likely to be accorded attention in future narrative inquiry with children and young people.

The immense value of narrative methods for examining children and young people's discourses about themselves and the world around them are further exemplified in rich data linked to themes of identity, belonging, place and agency throughout this volume. This includes discourses about doing 'something' and doing 'nothing' (Harragan, this volume); narratives of home and belonging among homeless youth (Mayock and Parker, this volume); young people's responses to environmental education (Walsh, this volume), discourses of caring (McGibbon, this volume) and children's understandings of place and community (Reilly and Hughes, this volume and Wall et al, this volume). The significance of narrative methods in prioritising an exploration of the intricate aspects of children and young people's lives, the challenges of utilising different approaches, how various narrative methods have been combined or 'mixed' in research and how they reveal different aspects of children and young people's interactions in distinctive spaces, are key themes inherent throughout chapters of this volume as well. This reflects developments and research directions in the field of narrative inquiry generally, and topics and issues that continue to be accorded precedence in qualitative and mixed-method research including; what it means to 'mix' or 'combine' methods and the challenges and intricacies associated with using qualitative research to explore people's realities (Bryman, 2008).

Children and Young People's Everyday Experiences across Multiple Contexts: Key Insights

The richness of how young people make sense of who they are in relation to the spaces and places they inhabit and the importance of social networks (including family and peers) in their accounts and stories about daily life events are clearly evidenced throughout the volume. Contributions to this book underline the complexity of children and young people's experiences in distinct settings; in the home, leisure and recreational settings, and educational arenas. This reflects the increase in qualitative research on children and young people's relationships in these spaces (Clandinan et al., 2016); for example, recent studies underline the importance of positive recreational experiences for children and young people's wellbeing, the development of interpersonal skills, and for developing resilience and social support (Outley et al., 2011; Nolas, 2014; Brady et al., 2018). Research in Children's Geographies, Youth Studies and Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) address the complexities of how young people make sense of their environments, showing how their everyday relationships with physical space and everyday objects impact on identity, development and wellbeing (Hopkins, 2010; Blaise, 2016; Christensen et al, 2017; Blaise and Rooney, 2020; Ormalm, 2020). In this section, we summarise key insights from the four thematic sections of the volume.

Home, care and identity

Chapters in the first section of the book illuminate the importance of home, families and identity in children and young people's lives. In a social and political climate that is characterised by increasing numbers of homeless young people (Clarke et al., 2015) and uncertainties about youth unemployment (Eurostat, 2020), these chapters underline the policy

imperative of challenging homelessness in all its forms. The complexity of young people's narratives about home and place, and their importance for policies are evident throughout these chapters. Importantly, Mayock and Parker show that definitions of home are contested, and are linked to young people's perceptions of physical space, notions of safety and belonging and relationships with family and friends. As Mayock and Parker (this volume, p. 5) state 'there is broad consensus that when home is experienced positively, it is not simply a physical structure but rather a safe and secure place where people feel autonomy, control and a sense of privacy and comfort; home is also a space that provides a source of identity and belonging'. Comparable definitions of home are evident in Kallio (2016, p.375) who argues that 'homes can be located only partially on Euclidean maps'. Kallio utilises the concept of 'topological home' which she defines as 'inter-subjectively established and mutually shared lived space of the family (whomever it may include), existing particularly to each of its members through subjective engagements' (ibid). Relational and emotional dimensions of home attract considerable attention in child and youth research, social geography, social care, and social work (Latimer and Munro, 2009; Biehal, 2014). Similarly, the importance of strong family relationships in the home to children and young people's emotional and physical wellbeing are evident in chapters by McGibbon and Mayock and Parker (this volume). Themes of home, family and relationships are evocatively conveyed in Rachel Thomson's chapter that takes place in the security and warmth of Emily's home, surrounded by her cherished possessions, about each of which she tells a story symbolising love, inter-generational care and emotional and intellectual nourishment.

The diversity of methodologies used in this section brings temporal dimensions of children and young people's narratives into sharp focus. Mayock and Parker's longitudinal life story approach enriches our understanding of the dynamics that shape young people's housing and homeless trajectories over time. Young people's narratives revealed by Mayock and Parker

further illustrate that constructions of home are complex and multifaceted, strongly connected to past experiences but also to the present context of the young people's lives. By inviting seven year old Emily to choose and talk about objects in her bedroom that represented her past, present and future, Thomson illustrates how researcher curiosity and digital technologies can be combined to meaningfully explore and illuminate questions of time, continuity and change with a younger child. Furthermore, authors in this section remind us that these narratives have been captured at just a point in time; meanings continue to evolve as young people's journeys continue. In the three years since Thomson's encounter with Emily, they have both moved on, leading her to conclude that 'the research process itself produces queer temporalities, with biographical time outstripping the slow productivities of analysis and writing, and the liveness of past moments captured by recording devices and fieldnote scribbles' (p. 15).

A further notable feature of chapters in this section is that young people's narratives allow us to see their experiences and meanings in a new light, challenging stereo-types and abstract notions of 'normal development'. Thomson challenges prevailing tendencies to consider children in the past or future tenses and not in the present. McGibbon notes that eliciting the narratives of young carers helps us to move beyond stereotypes which ascribe a 'master identity' to young carers constructed around their care-giving responsibilities, acting to homogenise potentially significant differences between sub populations of young carers.

Importantly, chapters in this section also contribute important insights to literature on identity development among children and young people. In various ways they elucidate how young people construct a positive sense of identity within the social contexts where they are located. In all chapters, young people aspired to meet traditional normative expectations, particularly in relation to education and home, but they found this challenging for a myriad of reasons such as lack of a secure base (Mayock & Parker, this volume), caring responsibilities

(McGibbon, this volume) or reluctance to move on from childhood (Thomson, this volume). The impact of interlinking factors, including relationships, stigma, institutions and cultural values in positively or negatively influencing identity development and life trajectories is also evident across the chapters. Relational approaches to young people's agency and identity reconstruction (Edwards, 2009) emphasise the importance of knowledge, social interactions and relationships in developing resilience. Comparably, chapters in the home care and identity section draws attention to the significance of family relationships in young people's lives that both help and hinder how they express themselves in everyday life. Chapters such as Mayock and Parker also draw attention to economic and policy-related factors that affect how young people forge and maintain family relationships over time. Taken as a whole, the chapters in this section then, underline the significance of the home in young people's narratives and the interplay of a variety of factors in influencing how they narrate different understandings of home and belonging.

Recreation, Place & Community

The section on recreation, place and community explores several issues including the centrality of recreational spaces in young people's lives, how recreational activities connect to discourses of belonging and community, and how these activities are important for developing friendships and peer supportive networks (Gilligan, 2008; Nolas, 2014). Significantly, papers in this section illustrate the wide range of narrative methods used to explore these issues with rural and urban children and young people, including photography, film, mind mapping, blogging and 'Netnography' (amongst others).

Despite the multifaceted and contested character of community (Crow and Maclean, 2006; Crow, 2008), young people recreate discourses of community and identity in various ways.

The array of contexts discussed here (e.g. Republic of Ireland, Canada, and the UK) and the inclusion of insights from young people in rural and urban locations contributes markedly to extant research on young people's lives in geography, sociology and youth studies. Furthermore, insights from so-called 'seldom heard' youth (e.g. rural and indigenous youth, young people in economically marginalised regions, and second and third generation migrants) about place and community are potentially significant for policy and services planning. Given the primacy of debates about service provision for young people in rural and urban areas (European Network for Rural Development, 2018), decreases in government spending on improved infrastructure for children and families in many countries since the 2008 economic downturn, and the increasing emphasis accorded to migration in international policy forums, the research focus on these groups is especially timely. However, rural youth and young people from migrant backgrounds are frequently marginalised in policy arenas as per research (Thompson, 2003). The incorporation of narratives from young people in these groups as documented in this volume is therefore pertinent. Indeed, the process of how young migrants and children and youth in rural areas enact identity through intersecting discourses related to sex, gender, social class and race is accorded significance in research (Reynolds and Zontini, 2015). Insights from McGarry (this volume) and Wall et al. (this volume) on how young people in rural communities 'do identity' (ibid) are also potentially significant for policy and service planning and implementation.

Subsequently, chapters in this section underline the importance of different types of recreational activities and communities in young people's lives; this includes: sports and religious communities (McGarry, this volume) and the importance of volunteering and out of school initiatives for civic engagement, citizenship and youth participation and built and 'natural' environments for understanding children's visions of community (Harragan, this volume; Reilly and Hughes, this volume). Corresponding to extant research, papers in this

section underline how informal and non-structured leisure activities influence the development of 'relational communities' (Harris and Wyn, 2009) among children and young people, allowing them to negotiate multiple barriers (e.g. physical, emotive, economic) to express and legitimise who they are in contemporary society. For example, Reilly and Hughes' work calls attention to processes of 'boundary making' and boundary 'renegotiation' in everyday life. In their chapter, they draw attention to how children perceive their local environments as 'dangerous' or 'risky' which thereby affects and regulates their everyday mobility. Wall et al. similarly highlight the complexity of Indigenous young people's narratives of community in rural Canada; these are simultaneously linked to perceptions of the surrounding environment and social relationships. Harragan's chapter also underlines that despite experiencing various types of economic and/or social disadvantage, young people's narratives about their everyday and imagined future lives transcend these experiences, creating new imaginaries about themselves and the places they inhabit.

Narrative and Educational Spaces

Focused on educational settings, section three of this volume engages a series of distinct contexts exemplifying the playful diversity inherent to narrative research with children and young people. Taken together the section's chapters illustrate how narrative research approaches are fluid, porous and adaptable across multiple contexts. Despite contributors to this section presenting varied cases from the USA, Ireland and the UK engaging a variety of child and youth cohorts, the chapters maintain a narrative focus across disciplinary boundaries and over a variety of educational experiences. The diversity of these chapters demonstrates the malleability of narrative research methods, particularly given that over the course of contributions authors incorporate narrative approaches within the baby room

(Osgood, this volume); the museum (Hall et al., this volume) and the classroom (Walsh and Hall et al., this volume). Further to this, contributors acknowledge how narrative methodologies can support alternative pedagogic endeavour, providing a space from where children and young people's learning can be supported (Hall et al., this volume), but also where children and young people's agency as co-creators of new knowledge is explored and celebrated (Walsh, this volume). Given that children and young people spend increasing amounts of time in educational spaces, collectively the series of chapters offer a snapshot of the everyday lived realities of young participants.

A particular strength of the narrative methodologies incorporated throughout section three reflects the capacity of the approach to engage in the complexity of children and young people's lives, providing insights that might otherwise have remained concealed. Hall et al. (this volume) argue that the potentialities of a narrative research design are advantaged by and through the fact that young people are familiar with the story-telling genre and therefore can engage with learning material that tells a story or prompts them to tell one. This is similar to Walsh's chapter where young participants tell stories of climate challenge in an effort to learn about such challenges themselves, while also disseminating broader messages of climate change to their homes and communities. In the case of Osgood's chapter (this volume), she advocates for the capacity of narrative to tell alternative and different stories, in this instance stemming from the baby room. The frame of her chapter shifts from a human experience of things to the actual things themselves, considering how objects might present an opportunity to tell alternative stories. Woven through the fabric of this collection, is the sense that narratives are inseparable from the complexity of children's everyday lives. This nexus (Osgood uses the word 'assemblage') points towards the potential for narrative to become a site of convergence for children and young people as they engage with and develop new stories and modes of story-telling (for example Walsh indicates how themes such as

gender and class play out in the film narratives of participating children in her chapter). Of further note here is Osgood's argument relating to scale and how global events 'play out' in the baby room through an understanding of domestic policies relating to national security in the UK.

Throughout the educational contexts discussed, a diverse array of narrative inquiry methods are used. These include the development of pedagogical tools (in the instance of Hall et al. and Walsh, this volume) to support children in identifying and developing their own narratives in both formal and informal educational contexts. Osgood's work also incorporates more participant observation approaches to narrate the experience from the baby room. All three contributions highlight the role of technology in creating narratives; Hall et al. (this volume) through the interactive museum model developed and the visual cues of the poetry lesson; Walsh (this volume) through the creation of climate action films; and Osgood (this volume) through the experimental incorporation of photographic equipment as agentic. The capacity of narrative approaches to adapt to new modes of inquiry and dissemination bodes well for the overall sustainability of the paradigm as an important qualitative research approach.

Methods for Narrative Approaches with Children and Young People

Chapters in the fourth section of this book underline the power of narrative research methods in revealing 'nuanced' aspects of young people's relationships, knowledge and discourses. Indeed, this is also a prominent theme in sections one, two and three of this book. Taken as a whole, part four underlines the diversity and range of methodological approaches to understand the richness and variety in children and young people's everyday experiences. The complexity of children and young people's 'everyday' interactions and experiences is an

important aspect of this volume, and the significance of narrative methods in capturing the momentary and lived experiences that form part of the tapestry of everyday life, is addressed in this section.

Reflecting the central aims of the volume, the fourth section showcases a variety of methodological approaches including topological mapping (Kallio, this volume), essay writing (Morrow and Elliott, this volume), the Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM) (Mooney, this volume), online platforms and narrative interviews (Phoenix, this volume). Significantly, this section underlines key concepts and issues in narrative inquiry, demonstrating the importance of temporality (Mooney, this volume; Morrow and Elliott, this volume), social media and the ‘production’ of young people’s voices (Phoenix, this volume) and the complexity of children’s reactions to issues of societal and political importance globally (ibid). McNamara’s work also connects to chapters in previous sections, underlining challenges and opportunities associated with operationalizing children’s rights in a practical sense in research. The emphasis on trauma in McNamara’s chapter and in the chapter by Mooney (this volume) further highlights the complexity of young people’s everyday relationships. Mooney’s work in particular shows how the meaning of traumatic experiences in childhood is renegotiated across the life course and the significance of methods that engage with people’s lived realities, moment to moment (Wengraf, 2001). The unifying concepts that emerge strongly in this fourth section (temporality, identity and agency amongst others) are intrinsically connected to ideas, questions and issues addressed in preceding sections of this volume as well. For example, temporality and sequencing accorded primary by Mooney (this volume) reflect comparable statements by Mayock and Parker (this volume) about situating narrative analysis techniques in and across time. Identity and agency as per Phoenix (this volume) and McNamara (this volume) also belie contributions by Harragan (this volume) and McGarry (this volume).

Narrative Research with Children and Young People: Challenges and Future Directions

In spite of significant increases in the amount of research engaging narrative approaches with children and young people, there remain a number of areas where further work is necessary. Such opportunities are certainly not particular to narrative approaches, and in some instances are well documented across critical discussions of qualitative research methodologies more broadly. Central to constructing future research agendas that incorporate a narrative focus, is an acknowledgement of the approach's capacity to engage diversity however manifest. As exemplified through this edited volume, narrative research with children and young people has the potential to encompass infinite avenues of inquiry, through multiple research approaches that build on ideas of storytelling, constructed by and through a diverse range of research designs. The flexibility of narrative approaches to adapt across multiple and diverse lines of inquiry is a particular strength of narrative research, however in the context of work with children and young people there has been little written on this theme. Reflecting on the edited volume to hand, this section then points towards a series of potential future research directions in the context of narrative work with children and young people.

Narrative approaches frequently require a significant time commitment from both researchers and participants. Engaging narrative approaches often necessitates multiple engagements with research participants to build rapport, trust and develop rich understandings of the stories told. This can be limiting and may constrain the 'where' of the research and is exemplified in the volume to hand through the lack of voice from the Global South (Majority World) in particular. This is certainly not a new critique, with qualitative approaches often accused of anglocentricism, whereby the majority of research contributions on a particular theme represent the Global North (Minority (and often English speaking) World) (Denzin and

Giardina, 2012). With Ansell (2005) describing children and young people as the world's largest marginalised minority group, positioning the voices of Global South children and young people within this population, creates an even greater disparity and ultimately silences the storied lives of this diverse group. Therefore to enhance our understanding of the everyday lived experiences of children and young people in the Global South, there is certainly scope for further research with this group. There are some recent examples of trans-disciplinary research with children and young people globally (Mitchell and Moore, 2018); however, there appears to be a paucity of trans-disciplinary work with young people in the Majority World. This represents an important opportunity for narrative scholars across disciplines to engage with children's realities in these regions, identifying areas of confluence and convergence in how they are represented in various scholarly disciplines, compared to how they frame the world through discourse, story, silences and everyday talk.

This also raises ethical questions on how we, as researchers, 'do' narrative research. What is clear from the diverse contributions throughout this volume is that the corpus of literature on ethics in qualitative research (generally) and in narrative inquiry in particular, is vast. However, elements of narrative interviewing techniques (including pressing for further narrative or stories about certain events), have potentially damaging emotional implications for children and young people who may be required to re-live past trauma, even when ethical safeguards are in place. This requires further scrutiny and consideration from narrative scholars. Furthermore, there is sparse literature on what happens to children and young people in the aftermath of narrative interviews taking place, questioning the impact of re-living and re-telling emotionally traumatic events on the well-being of young people. More critical commentaries on these issues would greatly enhance qualitative research literature (generally) and improve existing critical understandings of narrative research with children and young people.

What also emerges from this collection is the role of technology in supporting narrative approaches to research (Hall et al, this volume; Phoenix, this volume). Once again, the incorporation of technology is characterised by diversity, as technology becomes both a supporting tool and an agentic one. There are a number of avenues requiring further inquiry in this instance. Firstly, there is an opportunity to reflect on how technology is being used in narrative research. For example it can be used to supplement and support the development of children and young people's stories, but can also be an agent of creation in such stories. Secondly, there is an opportunity to (re)consider the relationship between narrative inquiry and technology, providing a reflection on how narrative approaches have adapted to incorporate technology in facilitating storytelling. By extension then, finally, there is a need to consider how technology, as either a storytelling support or facilitator, might also prioritise certain perspectives over others, and in doing so ultimately silence some voices. Such discussion is, of course, also framed by issues of equity and access, with not all children and young people having access to such technological innovations.

The all-encompassing capacities then of narrative inquiry can at once represent an opportunity and a challenge for researchers. The fact that narrative has the capacity to transcend difference is surely a strength of the approach, in that it acknowledges diversity, does not assume homogeneity and can sustain multiple lines of inquiry across cohorts of children and young people over time. That said, the fact that there remains no strict blueprint as to what constitutes narrative inquiry can be both a help and a hindrance to researchers using the approach. On the one hand narrative inquiry provides flexibility and durability, allowing researchers to engage multiple research designs. On the other hand accusations around a lack of rigour in both research design and approach might also lead to charges of cherry-picking or might deter researchers from engaging the approach entirely.

When considered collectively, contributions to this volume highlight the capacity of narrative research approaches in providing opportunities to acknowledge, engage and analyse the complexity of children and young people's lives, generating insight on the everyday experiences of often marginalised cohorts, whose stories might otherwise remain untold (particularly if using more structured research approaches). In doing so, narrative approaches make space to recognise the diversities inherent to the lived realities of growing-up, providing a mechanism to incorporate varied contexts but also multiple timeframes (past and present experiences as well as future aspirations). Throughout the volume's chapters, contributions engage a broad range of research methods, demonstrating the multifarious manifestations of what it means to 'do' contemporary narrative research. As an approach, narrative inquiry prioritises the voice of the child or the young person, making no assumptions and allowing the young person to hold the balance of power in telling or retelling stories, but also in allowing some stories to remain untold. Considering the inherent flexibility of narrative approaches, coupled with the approaches capacity to adapt across contexts, to engage new methodologies (including technological advances), and with its ability to understand nuance within everyday life, narrative inquiry presents an enduring analytical framework for exploring the lives of children and young people.

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