

**Narrative Beginnings and Lived Experiences in (Re) Shaping Stories to Live by:
Embracing Multicultural Worlds through Narrative Inquiry**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores, through narrative inquiry methodology, the understanding about identity making when entering and living in a new world. More specifically, this thesis focuses on understanding, through narrative inquiry, how immigrants that chose Canada as a place to live and compose a new storied life, (re)shape their lives, their stories to live by, across multicultural landscapes. Initially driven by a narrative beginnings context, I engage in an autobiographical narrative, inquiring into my own stories as an immigrant from Brazil, embedded on understanding who we are and who we are becoming, when (re)shaping lives in motion; lives in the context of the multiplicity of worlds and identities. In addition, through the voices of David and Sam (participants of this research), and more specifically, through excerpts (transcripts) from the interviews with David and Sam, this thesis connects the sense of being an immigrant, embedded in a multicultural world, with how we (re)shape our stories to live by, as we compose lived stories in a new place. Within this perspective, this thesis demonstrates, inspired by the voices of David and Sam, how that at the same time we immigrants, paradoxically, try to keep our identities and to maintain our culture within a plurality of worlds and a plurality of lived experiences, we, can shift our identities in relation to the sense of living and belonging to a place. Lastly, this thesis also stresses the importance and the role of the community-based organizations that support newcomers, immigrants, and refugees. Precisely, through the voices of David and Sam, this thesis demonstrates how the support and some programs offered by community-based organizations affect and shape the context of identity making when living in a new world composing new stories to live by. In the discussion, I argue that embracing multicultural worlds through narrative inquiry can explore the understanding of identity making, (re)shaping ourselves, interwoven with being at ease in a ‘new world’ and the sense of happiness and openness to new cultures and stories. In addition, in the discussion, I claim about the importance and the intersection of the necessity of community-based organizations for newcomers in (re)shaping our stories to live by.

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DEDICATION

To Carol and Helena...the immigrants that I love most...the immigrants that live in my heart...

To David and Sam...and all thousands of immigrants who come to Canada bringing much more than they have on their suitcase...

To Shaun Murphy, for bridging many dreams that we, immigrants, bring to Canada (beyond our suitcase) ...

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PERMISSION TO USE	i
ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
DEDICATION	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction.....	1
Narrative Beginnings.....	1
Research Wonder.....	3
Understanding and (Re)Shaping the Self Identity in Between Worlds.....	5
<i>People and places as oneself (and as one world)</i>	5
<i>Songs, living in motion and (re)shaping myself</i>	6
<i>Lived stories in a plurality of worlds and (re)shaping identity</i>	8
Lives in Motion and Translating the Plurality of (My) Worlds.....	10
Composing a Life within a Plurality of Ourselves.....	12
Multiculturalism, Multicultural Landscapes, Stories to Live by and Narrative Inquiry: Is ‘Living in Cultural Diversity’ a Challenge?.....	14
<i>Cross-cultural lives and (re)shaping stories to live by: Translating lives in Canada through narrative inquiry</i>	16

CHAPTER TWO

Methodology and Research Design.....	20
Narrative Inquiry, Understanding Experience.....	20
Narrative Inquiry and Narrative Beginnings.....	21
Narrative Inquiry and Lived Experiences in a Multicultural World.....	23
Research Theoretical/Practical and Social Justifications.....	24
Commonplaces and Participants.....	26
Negotiating Research.....	27
Research Methodology, Field and Research Texts and Analysis: The Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space.....	28
Ethical Considerations, Negotiation of Relationships, and Consent Process.....	29
Embracing Multicultural Worlds through Narrative Inquiry: The Commitment to Understanding Lives in Motion.....	29

CHAPTER THREE

Living as Immigrants in a Multicultural World: Our Voices Echoing through a Multiplicity of Lived Experiences.....	34
You (Only) Live in Canada.....	34

<i>Composing lives and stories to live by in between worlds</i>	34
<i>Keeping our identities as we (re)shape ourselves in a (new) place</i>	36
After All, Why Am I Here?.....	37
<i>Unfolding worlds within a plurality of lived experiences: Beyond a single story</i>	37
<i>Poland, immigrants, and refugees: Our past embodied in our lived stories</i>	38
<i>Unfolding lives...and... what if?</i>	40
What Did I Leave Behind? ... Maintaining and (Re)Shaping Our Identity and Our Culture.....	41
<i>The construction of self within a plurality of worlds</i>	41
<i>Entering in a new world bringing more than we have in our suitcase...and recreating ourselves: brackets?</i>	42
Getting Lost in Translation and Losing More Than Words Can Mean: (Re)Shaping Our Identity and Culture.....	44
<i>Narratives of place and people: This is a closer story, isn't?</i>	45
Feeling (Happy?) ...Immigrating to Canada and the Challenge of Being Ourselves within a Multicultural World.....	47
<i>A single story about why you (we) are here?</i>	47
<i>Living in motion and composing new stories within a plurality of worlds...a roller coaster of feelings</i>	49
<i>I will always be an immigrant: going back there and turning into a different person than I am here</i>	51
Being an Immigrant and Being a Canadian Citizen...Is There Something Beyond the Citizenship Status?.....	52
<i>I am a citizen...where? The sense of being in a place</i>	52
<i>I am a Canadian citizen, but I will never be a Canadian: The sense of identity connected to the place you live...what do you need to be a Canadian citizen?</i>	54
<i>Surely you must be fluent in English! Really?</i>	55
<i>Your nationality and your sense of identity: I will be Brazilian forever</i>	56
Keeping and Shifting Our Identities: I Feel Like a Canadian Now.....	58
<i>The sense of living and belonging to a place...does geography matter?</i>	59

CHAPTER FOUR

The Necessity of Community Organizations for Newcomers: Sharing Our Voices and Narrative Commonplaces...Many Worlds, Stories and Lives	61
A Book, Poland, Brazil... some Coffee and a Myriad of Worlds within Community-Based Organizations.....	61
<i>Public libraries and travelling-guide books: Impacts on identity making</i>	61
<i>Feeling like a tourist within a myriad of worlds</i>	63
<i>Cultures and lives shared at the community-based organizations</i>	64

Connecting Community-Based Organizations with Our Lives in Motion: Composing (New) Stories, Stories to Live by, and (Re)Shaping Ourselves as Immigrants.....	66
Coming to a New Place: ‘World’- Travelling and Being at Ease in a ‘World’.....	68
<i>‘World’- travelling when working with a plurality of worlds, stories, lives and cultures</i>	68
<i>Being at ease in a ‘world’ and the sense of happiness and openness to new worlds, cultures and lives</i>	70
Living as Immigrant: My (Our) Identity, and...What as Your Level? Is This an Illusion?.....	74
Composing New Stories to Live by Based on Previous Experiences: If I Could do (Some) Things Differently...If I Could Travel (Back) in Time.....	77
<i>Our stories to live by and the sense of being in a place: shaping and reshaping who we are and are becoming</i>	77
<i>Explain to me what it means to be an immigrant...an eternal paradox</i>	80
<i>If I could change it...if I could travel (back) in time</i>	82
Unfolding Lives and the Plurality of Worlds within Community-Based Organizations: Composing and Sharing (New) Lived Stories and Stories to Live by.....	86
 CHAPTER FIVE	
Embracing Multicultural Worlds, (Re) Shaping Stories to Live by, and Composing (New) Lives...Looking Back and Imagining Forward through Narrative Inquiry	88
Embracing Multicultural Worlds through Narrative Inquiry.....	88
<i>Composing (new) lives as we move forward as narrative inquirers: Moving from field texts to the final research text</i>	88
<i>(Re)shaping stories to live by...do we have an answer for the research wonder?</i>	91
Understanding Lived Experiences, Told Stories, and (Re)Reshaping Stories to Live by Within a Multicultural World.....	93
The Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space within Community-based Organizations and Interwoven with the Plurality of World.....	96
<i>Representing narratives of lived experiences within personal, practical, and social justifications</i>	96
<i>There is never a single story...there is never a final story</i>	102
Word images...and (in between) worlds image(s).....	102
We are the storytelling species...Storytelling is in our blood.....	106
REFERENCES	108

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Narrative Beginnings

I miss my friends, I miss my rock ‘n roll band, I miss my students, and I miss teaching biology (mostly when standing in a classroom in front of forty students and looking into their eyes filled with dreams, sometimes beyond biology content).

I already knew that those mixed feelings and nostalgia would be part of my life when I was in Brazil making plans for moving to Canada. Probably, the first time I wondered about my feelings in a kind of “between worlds” (literally and emotionally) I was in Bogota, Colombia; the long wait times for flight connections and the crazy time zone boosted my thoughts, which were already wandering a lot.

In this context, if I put my thoughts and wonders in an organized way, I would say that the year of 2016 was a kind of bridge between two different worlds in my life. In this sense, I believe that, when looking back at 2016, I can think of my life in a way that everything was very busy and, at the same time, mechanical (predictable). In other words, despite the crazy workaholic way of life I had, I could think about my everyday life considering a starting and ending point in my activities and goals. In this way, I knew that my lived experiences were embedded and shaped in the context of my family, my friends, my rock ‘n roll band, and the students I used to teach, who were from five different schools, and each school in five different cities. And I loved all of it.

On the other hand, I knew that something was missing; even though I felt happy in a personal and professional way, I could feel that, when looking forward, when thinking beyond

my personal achievements, when considering the situation of my own values wondering about the sense of happiness, I knew that things could (or should) be different. Wondering about this situation, I am not sure if it was the long time on the road every early morning commuting to the school, or the fact that I started to picture myself in a couple of years from that time, the point is that I came to realize that there was not enough time for myself or my family, and this meant that I could not be fully happy.

Indeed, even though I was feeling happy in a personal and professional way, something was missing. It seemed that it was the real sense of the self-embodied in the everyday life of my family and myself. The most interesting thing is that in all of this I am coming to realize a new and different world in every present moment. In other words, after many and different barriers that we needed to overcome, we arrived in a Western city of Canada and it certainly has been a new world for me in a wide context beyond just a change in place. In this sense, I am coming to realize, in my everyday life, that we (my family and I) are living a new life together in this “new world”.

I could not imagine how the expression “in between worlds” would be so important in my life and by that I mean, mostly, the sense of self shaped by my lived experiences in Brazil and my “new life” here in Canada. In other words, yes, I miss my friends, my rock ‘n roll band, and my students from Brazil; however, I have the great feeling of living in motion now; the great feeling of living with and through the plurality of lives and worlds; and I know that I am unfolding and shaping a new and different life now (and, as it will be approached and discussed within this thesis, attending community-based organizations that support newcomers, immigrants, and refugees, was an important moment in my life in this context). In this sense, I

am happy in considering more space and time for myself now, for my wonders and my goals. In addition, I am very happy to have more time together with my family.

Ultimately, all my mixed emotions and feelings, and the nostalgia of my friends, my rock ‘n roll band, and my students from Brazil, will never be replaced; however, as time goes by, and my use of English improves, I will be encountering new friends, and I will be talking with different people. I will come to realize that my friends, my rock ‘n roll band, and my students from Brazil are not in a different world, they are not so far away, they are not part of my “between worlds”, but they are part of my shaped life in one single world that is always unfolding in time and space.

Research Wonder

Given this context, this research focused on understanding, through narrative inquiry, how people (re)shape their lives, their stories to live by¹, across multicultural landscapes. It is important to consider this (re)shaping in our lives, because “it is a commonplace to note that human beings both live and tell stories about their living. These lived and told stories, and talk about those stories, are ways we create meaning in our lives as well as ways we enlist each other’s help in building our lives and communities” (Clandinin, 2006, p. 44).

In the context of (re)shaping our lives, and considering the multiplicity of worlds and stories to live by, inspired by narrative inquiry which is viewed as both phenomenon and methodology (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), this research approached my research wonder in regards to understanding the identity-making of the self-related to place in a multicultural world.

¹ Stories to live by (Clandinin& Connelly, 1995) is a narrative phrase related to identity. In short, it means that the stories we tell about ourselves shape and exhibit identity.

As will be further discussed, it is important to briefly highlight the importance, within the context of this research, of writing '(re)shaping' using brackets. The use of parentheses when typing '(re)shaping' is related to a metaphoric interpretation of identity-making of the self, when entering in a new world and composing (new) lived stories. Considering the metaphorical interpretation, the brackets themselves, represent a kind of shield, a wall, about ourselves, about who we are, and who we are becoming when living in a new world. Within the metaphorical context, the brackets, when typing '(re)shaping', indicates how we are willing to open ourselves regarding sharing and living within a multicultural world. In other words, in essence, the use of brackets relates to the openness in regards recreating ourselves living in a new world (which would be, in a metaphorical context, the absence, or thin brackets), and, as a pole apart, maintaining our culture (from our home country) when living in a new world (which would be related to a shield about identity-making; therefore, within the metaphorical interpretation, the use of thicker brackets).

Considering this perspective, the research wonder specifically focused on understanding how lived experiences within and through multicultural landscapes are related to (re)shaping stories to live by. Furthermore, this research inquired into the experiences of (re)shaping stories to live by of immigrants who chose Canada as a place to live and, as a result, as a place to compose a new storied life.

Considering this context, Bateson (1990) wrote that,

in many ways, constancy is an illusion. After all, our ancestors were immigrants, many of them moving on every few years; today we are migrants in time [...] of any stopping place in life, it is good to ask whether it will be a good place from which to go on as well as a good place to remain. (p. 14)

Therefore, as we do not shape our stories, but rather, we are always (re)shaping who we are and who we are becoming, interwoven to the place we live, this research focused on understanding lived experiences and (re)reshaping stories to live by of people who moved to Canada from other countries.

Andrews's (2007) wonders helped me consider how this research attended to the stories of life and the sense of identity within the context of being a newcomer living in a new world:

how is that we access, interpret, and analyze stories that, at their heart, are distant from experiences that we ourselves may have encountered not only in our lives but in the accounts of others, which are part of our own narrative repertoire? [...] and how is our sense of identity affected by opening ourselves to the very different realities that are encountered by others? (p. 489)

In summation, this research developed a better understanding of (re)shaping lives in motion; lives in the context of the multiplicity of worlds and identities.

Understanding and (Re)Shaping the Self Identity in Between Worlds

People and places as oneself (and as one world)

Basso (1996) wrote that the stories of life and stories of place are the people themselves, their lives. They are interwoven. As the author asserted: "their names for themselves are really the names of their places. That is how they are known, to others and to themselves. They were known by their places. That is how they are still known" (p. 21). In this sense, people's sense of place and their sense of themselves are intertwined, and stories occur in a place, and places are, at the same time, the people themselves.

The sense of being and the sense of self-identity are part of my everyday life. In other words, I can say that, perhaps because of my passion about music, there are three or four songs that I know here in Canada, and when I listen to them I have a strong feeling of being, of being in a place and being myself...it may sound strange, but the fact that even in Portuguese I am not able to explain what this means, makes me wonder that “there’s a difference between knowing something of that experience in your head and being able to understand the experience in your heart” (Young et al., 2015, p. 158).

Songs, living in motion and (re)shaping myself

Wondering about the feeling of being here and being myself, embodied with my lived stories, I recognize that seeking a better understanding of ourselves involves more than “just” thinking about our stories; it is important to think *with* stories in our lives (Morris, 2001). In this sense, as Clandinin (2013) wrote: “thinking with stories is primarily thinking relationally [...] thinking about the other’s experience, to thinking of the narratives that shape each person in her contexts, in her unfolding life, in that moment that comes out of all the other moments and points toward a future” (p. 30).

Moreover, it is important to consider that we are our moment now, we are shaped everyday (White, 2009); and this means that we compose our lives every day; we shape and are shaped by our everyday life in a creative way, aware at the same time that the landscape on which we move is in constant change (Bateson, 1990). Additionally, as the author wrote: “self-knowledge is empowering” (p. 5). Given this context, looking backward and forward in our lived experiences, we come to realize that the stories of our lives are not supposed to be permanent, with an end already apparent from the beginning; in fact, we need to live creatively, we need to

think and live with stories, because, after all, stories matter, many stories matter, there is never a single story about any place or anyone (Adichie, 2009; Bateson, 1990).

From this perspective, I wonder if my inability to describe my feelings of being here and being myself when listening to three or four specific songs is part of living in motion now, with stories of life. In this sense, I feel that this emotion is the opposite way, at least in part, of the sense I also have of how linear my life has been since I arrived here. I mean that when I think about my lived stories in Brazil I cannot think of them with relation to a date (sequence); on the other hand, thinking about my lived stories here in Canada, I always link the events in a sequence of how/when things happened. In other words, when I recall some lived experience in Brazil I do not know exactly when it happened (sometimes neither how or why they happened). On the other hand, when I recall some lived experience here in Canada I always think of the context of when, how, and why it happened, and I think of it in a linear/chronological context. Probably, all of that is related to the shorter time period I have lived here so far, which also has less complexity.

However, when I try to understand the feelings and emotions I have about being here and being myself when listening to the songs I relate to as mentioned before, I cannot describe how my experiences are interwoven within a space and time context; it is beyond a chronological and linear context; and maybe this is because, in many different moments of my life, I connect songs I have listened to and liked with some events that have happened; and for that I need to consider that maybe in trying to understand the relationship of those new songs I listened to with my lived experience here, I have been feeling the sense of living in motion, and, therefore, I have now the sense of (re)shaping my self-identity in a new world, and all of this means for me something beyond a chronological and linear context.

Lived stories in a plurality of worlds and (re)shaping identity

On one hand, I can think in a storied manner of my life in a linear way ever since I arrived here in a Western city of Canada. On the other hand, as previously stated, when I think about the feelings I have when listening to those songs, I realize that they gave me the sense of being in a place and time beyond the linear and chronological way that our lives can be explained. In fact, I think and feel that I am living with stories in my world.

In other words, when I wonder about the context shaped by the importance of music in my life and its connection with my lived experiences and stories to live by, I am reminded that when I was in Brazil, one thing I loved to do was to ride my bike, mostly on the weekends, for hours in the streets of the city I lived; and surely I did that while listening to songs from my MP3 player. It was a great moment for me; a kind of feeling of freedom about being myself in a place and at the same time beyond the mechanistic nature of our daily lives. For all of that, I remember that the first time I listened to those songs I often refer to, I felt the same emotion of when I was riding my bike in Brazil.

I can also state that, many bands and songs that I am coming to know here in Canada, most of the times I have in my mind a certain pattern of feelings and memories. This means that I know that I borrowed the CD from a library; I know that I listened to the songs and, regardless if I liked the songs or not, I know that I returned the CD. However, in the case of the songs that I am referring to here is different. When I first listened to the three or four songs I do not know why or how it was possible, but the fact is that I already felt emotions related to imaging myself riding a bike on a beautiful day through the streets of this beautiful Western city of Canada,

without concerns regarding what day or what time it is, and, more importantly, I felt the strange emotion that I have always lived here and sometimes the feeling that I have lived here before.

No doubt, all of this is beyond what my words can express and beyond a chronological space and time context. This is very important for me, because in such moments, when I listen to, or even remember those songs, I recognize that my life here in Canada is certainly not shaped in a linear context; it is just a matter of the short time that I have been living here so far. I also recognize that I am living with stories in my life, and not stuck “between worlds”, but in a plurality of worlds, of lives in motion. In short, if it were possible to put into words and combine with one song the feeling I have when I listen to such songs, it would be something like this:

Breathe, breathe in the air

Don't be afraid to care

Look around, choose your own ground

For long you'll live and high you'll fly

And smiles you'll give and tears you'll cry

And all you touch and all you see

Is all your life will ever be

(Waters, 1973)

The lyrics above cause me to think about the process of composing a life and (re)shaping myself again and again in a plurality of worlds – which is very different than feeling stuck “in between worlds” (Bateson, 1990; Lugones, 1987; Young et al., 2015). Lugones (1987) asserted about being open to surprise and self-construction; about stretching ourselves in our own world (imagination); also, about becoming ourselves and the sense of belonging to a place (Caine & Steeves, 2009).

In this context, I understand that (re)shaping my identity between worlds means that identity is constructed within the plurality of worlds and lives in motion (Guerrero, 2011; Lugones, 1987); this means, as Adichie (2009) asserted, stories matter and there is never a single story about any place or person. This is helpful in understanding Clandinin's (2013) words that "people's lived and told stories are not linear" (p. 45). In this sense, as Clandinin argued, "we need to inquire into all these kind of stories, stories that have become intertwined, interwoven into who we are and are becoming. These stories live in us, in our bodies, as we move and live in the world" (p. 22).

Living with stories is fundamental to the human search for meaning (Bateson, 1990). In this perspective, King (2003) wrote "the truth about stories is that that's all we are [...] you can't understand the world without telling a story" (p. 32). Indeed, our daily lives are shaped by our own stories and by other people's lived stories, we meet in the midst of our and their lives, and throughout this unfolding life, we can identify and come to understand the past, present, and how it will shape the future (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Young et al. (2015) stated that when we consider an understanding of identity as stories to live by, it is important to connect the contexts of our stories, our stories to live by, and the places we live. Further, as Clandinin and Huber (2002) described, "these narrative understandings of knowledge and context are linked to identity. For us, identity is a storied life composition, a story to live by. Stories to live by are shaped in places and lived in places [...] we have come to understand experience as narratively constructed and narratively lived" (pp. 161-162).

Lives in Motion and Translating the Plurality of (My) Worlds

In searching for a better understanding of (re)shaping lives in motion, lives in the context of the multiplicity of worlds and identities, I wonder about my feelings of being here and being myself; I wonder, now considering myself as an immigrant, if I have lost some meaning of my storied life in Brazil (Hoffman, 1991). This feeling could be translated and intertwined with Clandinin's et al. (2006) words: "as we reflected on our own experiences, we saw that our stories of whom we were had shifted partly because of the contexts in which we found ourselves and the people with whom we came to live in relation" (p.113). In addition, Clandinin (2013) wrote "our experiences in the past are embodied in our lived and told stories. We carry them with us" (p. 196). I am living with the feelings and emotions of the plurality of worlds, plurality of stories, and plurality of lives.

In understanding and (re)shaping myself, I feel that all this plurality of worlds, plurality of stories, and plurality of lives sometimes need to be translated; it needs to make sense. In this way, I recognize that, when thinking about my life in Brazil, I can feel the connection of emotion and spoken words; on the other hand, so far, I feel an incomplete assimilation of words and emotion in my thoughts. And this means that is not only when I am translating words in my head I have a sense that all will lose the feeling.

My understanding is that it is something beyond the translation itself. It is like when I am playing some songs in Portuguese and I can feel the emotion in the lyrics; on the other hand, when playing songs in English (even knowing the "meaning of the words") I often cannot feel the same emotion. In other words, those three or four songs that, when I am listening to them, I have a feeling of being here and being myself, I understand one word here and there; and the fact is that sometimes I wish I knew the translation, and sometimes I do not. That is why, at least

sometimes, our sense of being in a place and being ourselves are beyond what words can express.

In other words, my understanding is that sometimes the sense of ourselves, the sense of being ourselves in a place and time is beyond the physical and biological context; it sounds like Young et al. (2015) words about understanding the experience in our hearts; also, perhaps, intertwined in a metaphoric and artistic world, in which Menon, Redlich-Amirav, Saleh, and Kubota (2015) wrote: “metaphors help me to see truths that I might not have been able to face otherwise. Through poems the truths strike my heart and seek into my soul” (p. 82). In this sense, Freeman (2007) argued that as we consider an artistic form that truly serves the content of our lives, “the challenge at hand is a poetic one, the foremost aim being not to reproduce reality but to actualize and explicate it, to bring meaning into being in such a way that the world is visible” (p. 136).

Composing a Life within a Plurality of Ourselves

It is important to consider the unfolding and finding of coherence in a plurality of worlds and new lives in motion, because “we are not fixed in particular constructions of ourselves, we are open to self-construction [...] we are not stuck in any particular ‘world’. We are there creatively” (Lugones, 1987, p. 16). In this sense, I need to consider that living experiences are continuously interactive, in the way of composing and re-composing stories, in other words, lives; in the midst of a process of inquiring into ourselves, in living, telling, retelling, and reliving stories of experience as a way to understand the past and present and as a way to imagine the future, in an unfolding and co-composing process (Caine, Estefan, & Clandinin, 2013; Young et al., 2015).

Indeed, I believe that now I am living with the feeling and emotion of the plurality of worlds, plurality of stories, plurality of lives, inquiring into my unfolding life means to me not staying in between worlds or belonging in a “new world”, but implies different perception of unfolding and understanding lives in motion. Living in motion and living in a plurality of worlds is related to the multiplicity of different experiences and, at the same time, interwoven with the fact that the reality of the self and world can be relative (White, 2009). In inquiring into these sentences, I am reminded of Clandinin’s (2013) words, when she wrote: “through the fusion of memory and imagination, the past is open to restorying [...] imagination interwoven with memory then always shifts backward and forward across, in, and over time [...] through the possibility of imagination and memory the future, too, is open to being shifted, to being changed by being able to imagine other possible narratives” (p. 196).

This understanding of lives in motion, and the plurality of worlds, and plurality of lives and stories to live by means now to me that I am composing beyond a single story. In this context, Clandinin (2013) wrote that “understanding lives in motion creates openings for new relationships to emerge, for lives to unfold in unexpected ways [...] there is no final telling, no final story, and no one singular story we can tell” (p. 205). There is a beauty in different worlds, the beauty of stories that live in silences and then begin to be told (Young et al., 2015). Sharing our lived experiences is important in building new stories to live by; in other words, it is important to travel through the multiplicity of lives and worlds, because “travelling to someone's ‘world’ is a way of identifying with them [...] because by travelling to their ‘world’ we can understand what it is to be them and what it is to be ourselves in their eyes” (Lugones, 1987, p. 17).

In other words, travelling to someone's world through our narrative, lived stories and imagination we come to realize that "there is always more in experience than we can predict" (Greene, 1995, p. 14), and, "there are geographies and landscapes still to be explored by those of us hoping that we do not all have to be strangers to each other [...] but that we can strive to interpret our new and many-faceted world" (Greene, 1995, pp. 15-16).

Multiculturalism, Multicultural Landscapes, Stories to Live by and Narrative Inquiry: Is 'Living in Cultural Diversity' a Challenge?

According to Phillion, He, and Connelly (2005) multiculturalism can be considered as the way people live their lives in an increasingly diversified world. People of different cultural beliefs and values are in continual interaction for addressing equality and justice in living among people of different cultures. In this context, Canada plays an important role in embracing a huge cultural diversity. He, Phillion, Chan, and Xu (2008) described that, in Canada, over 18% of the total population was born outside the country, with millions of immigrants coming from diverse parts of the world, with the authors listing specifically Asia and Middle East, Europe, and Latin America. Within this perspective, He et al. (2008) argued that immigrants coming to Canada are more diverse than ever; as the authors affirmed, "they arrive from a broad spectrum of countries with a wide range of linguistic, cultural, racial, and socio-economic backgrounds" (p. 220).

Given this context, according to Chan and Boone (2010), multiculturalism is an intimidating theme, which crosses, intersects, and bridges many issues and challenges. As a result, many thoughts can be related to the meaning of 'living in cultural diversity'. In this sense, DeTurk (2004) wrote that throughout the history, nations and societies have been struggling with clashes of cultures embedded in the meaning of 'living in cultural diversity'. Considering this

perspective, DeTurk (2004) affirmed that human beings are fundamentally social, and our values and beliefs are profoundly shaped by various dimensions of our social identities.

It is important to reflect on Chan's (2004) words, when she pointed out about "how differences, whether ethnic, linguistic, cultural, familial and societal may mean in a society where individuals are balancing the maintenance of a sense of ethnic heritage and identity while at the same time, striving to achieve a sense of community and harmony through membership in the larger society" (p. 13).

In this context, Phillion (2002b) argued that multiculturalism, related to the context of 'living in cultural diversity', has influenced and changed many disciplines and research methodologies. As a result, according to Rahatzad, Dockrill, and Phillion (2016), the intersection of multiculturalism and narrative inquiry allows for multiple perspectives and interpretations of lived experiences. The authors asserted that multiculturalism within narrative inquiry is not something to be defined; rather, it must be allowed to be unpredictable, in the sense of how cross-cultural experiences are storied and this has opened spaces for new methodological possibilities; consequently, narrative inquiry related to multiculturalism thrives on learning from examination of social relations, culture, and stories to live by.

Chan (2010) affirmed that narrative inquiry can provide an indication of the intersection of the complex influences shaping the lives of immigrants embedded in their culture and social relations and, as result, shaping their stories to live by. In this perspective, considering the relationships of 'living in cultural diversity', lived experiences, and stories to live by, He et al. (2008) wrote:

Dewey's sense of experience is compatible with an anthropological sense of culture.

Culture has temporal and existential dimensions: temporal in that every culture embodies

past, present, and future; existential in that culture is evolving and changing within interactions among people and social milieu. Just as experience for Dewey is embodied in culture, for us culture is embodied in experience. (p. 223)

Given this context, Phillion (2002a) asserted that narrative inquiry plays an important role for understanding multiculturalism and the meaning of ‘living in cultural diversity’.

According to the author, narrative inquiry “has the potential to represent the nuances of joy, sorrow and hope in lives lived in a multicultural world, and to provide rich, multifaceted, historical, personal, social and in-place accounts of multicultural life” (p. 553).

Accordingly, considering that people live and experience the world through stories (Xu, Connelly, He, & Phillion, 2007), in aiming to embrace lived multiplicities (Menon et al., 2015) through the plurality of stories to live by embedded in multicultural landscapes, it is important to relate the intersection of multiculturalism and ‘living in cultural diversity’ involving narrative inquiry as a practice of care through life stories and lived experiences in a multicultural world (Menon et al., 2015).

Cross-cultural lives and (re)shaping stories to live by: Translating lives in Canada through narrative inquiry

“‘Why did I come to Canada? What am I doing here? What am I going to do in the future?’” (He, 2002, p. 323). Undoubtedly, conscious or not, loudly or quietly, longing desperately for an answer or as a lured wonder, every immigrant in Canada has already asked him or herself these profound questions. Before trying to find possible answers for these wonders, it is important to consider that, as immigrants, our cross-cultural lives and stories to live by are now embedded in a complex interwoven process of (re)shaping ourselves; where our

voices are changed, our backgrounds are challenged, and our sense of living and being in a place are negotiated (He, 2002; Menon et al., 2015).

In other words, for instance, when Li (2004) wrote about her own experience of living in Canada and being shocked to realize that, despite her great mark on the TOEFL exam, she could not understand what her professor and fellow graduate students were talking about in class discussions when she started her Master's program, I still can feel myself immersed in the same context; in addition, I wonder that this "struggling to make sense of this troubling period of our lives" (Li, 2004, p. 27) is certainly beyond the meaning and the translation of English words. In this context, Chan (2007) argued that the sense of ourselves and our stories to live by are part of a continuing narrative construction, and must be understood in terms of cultural characteristics of the home and community combined with their ongoing interaction over time.

Given this perspective, Zhao (2007) asserted that writing about her lived stories and experiences has empowered herself in regard being an international graduate student in Canada. The author described that, during the period she started to write her doctoral research proposal, she became fascinated by the idea of doing research by inquiring into people's experiences and lived stories, and she started to wonder and write about her own lived stories and experiences as a daughter, mother, and immigrant. Indeed, it is important to consider that it is also our own life that is embodied in a new context, in a new world; and to comprehend all of this we need to reflect on that our lived stories, our narrative, can make a difference (Xu et al., 2007).

Reflecting on this context, Andrews (2007) described how the understanding of herself and the understanding of being in a place were profoundly transformed when she was studying abroad. The author pointed out that her stories to live by were deeply (re)shaped by nurturing different and diverse voices. In this sense, Li (2011) also called attention to the fact that lived

experiences are beyond told words can be, literally, translated. And this context is important when we consider the process of telling, retelling, living, and reliving embodied in cross-cultural stories to live by.

Zhao (2007) wrote that “when we live new stories on new landscapes, usually we rely on our lived stories to tell who we are” (p. 50). These words make me wonder how important is the process of (re)shaping ourselves when travelling between and amongst myriad worlds (Lugones, 1987); our lived stories and our stories to live by are what make meaning for our lives (Xu et al., 2007). In addition, I wonder that, regardless of the place and time we attend to, we are never alone, and this means that there is always a possibility to relive and tell our continuing stories, and to (re)shape stories to live by (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Li, 2004; Zhao, 2007).

In addition, when I reflect on Hoffman’s (1991) words: “I am traveling toward experience” (p. 162), and considering that “experiences are never taken at face value but are explored in terms of temporality, sociality, and place” (Xu et al., 2007, p. 418), it is essential to reflect that through narrative inquiry it is possible to have a better understanding of lives in motion, lives in the context of how we, as immigrants, (re)shape our lives, our stories to live by, living in multicultural landscapes. In other words, it is important to consider how narrative inquiry and multiculturalism draw multiple perspectives to interpretations of composing new lived experiences and (re)shaping stories to live by (Rahatzad et al., 2016).

Ultimately, it is significant to ponder the approach of this research in a sense of understanding, through narrative inquiry, how lived experiences within and through multicultural landscapes are related to identity-making of the self. In other words, this research approached, through narrative inquiry, the understanding of the unfolding process of (re)shaping stories to

live by of immigrants who chose Canada as their (our) new world in travelling toward experiences and composing new lived stories.

CHAPTER TWO

Methodology and Research Design

Narrative Inquiry, Understanding Experience

According to Clandinin and Caine (2013), narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience. Narrative inquiry is both a view of the phenomena of people's experience and a methodology for narratively inquiring into experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In this way, a narrative inquiry proceeds from an ontological position, a curiosity about how people are living and the constituents of their experience (Caine et al., 2013). In addition, the authors wrote: "from a narrative view of experience, we attend to place, temporality, and sociality within our own life stories and within the experiences of participants" (p. 577). Given this perspective, Caine et al. (2013) also stated that Dewey's theory of experience (1938) is cited most often as the philosophical foundation of narrative inquiry.

In this context, Clandinin and Caine (2013) wrote that "Dewey's two criteria of experience, interaction and continuity enacted in situations, provide the grounding for attending to a narrative conception of experience through the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space with dimensions of temporality, place, and sociality" (p. 168). In addition, Clandinin (2013) pointed out that "narrative inquiry is an approach to research that enacts many, if not all, of the principles of a Deweyan theory of inquiry (Deweyan pragmatism). Narrative inquiry is relational in all ways that our Dewey-inspired view of experience makes visible; that is, it is relational across time, places, and relationships" (pp. 18-19).

Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) argued that the view of experience embedded in narrative inquiry has its roots in John Dewey's (1938) pragmatic philosophy, as the authors asserted that

as narratives explore human experience unfolding through time, narratives constitute an appropriate method when considering inquiry embedded on a pragmatic framework..

Furthermore, considering that narrative inquirers approach the study of an individual's experience in the world and, through said study, seek ways of enriching and transforming that experience for themselves and others, the pragmatic ontology of experience is a well-suited theoretical framework for narrative inquiries (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). In addition, Rosiek (2013) argued,

for the pragmatist, even the most abstract philosophical concepts are best understood as relational habits formed within specific portions of the stream of our experience.

Ontology and norms, for example, are not considered simple descriptions of what is real and right in the world but are instead considered practices that happen within experience and that shape experience. (p. 695)

Caine et al. (2017) stated that narrative inquirers are deeply embedded in Dewey's (1938) pragmatic philosophy, focusing on temporality and interaction as central inquiry concepts when understanding experience as unfolding over time in contexts. As a result, the authors composed a relationship between narrative inquiry and pragmatism by drawing on conceptual understandings of a Deweyan-inspired view of experience.

From this perspective, Caine et al. (2013) asserted that narrative inquiry explores the understanding that who we are (and who we are becoming) and our stories to live by are fundamentally narrative in nature and embodied on our lived experiences.

Narrative Inquiry and Narrative Beginnings

Clandinin (2013) stated that it is important for narrative inquirers to begin with personal justifications; and this means justifying the inquiry embedded on their own life experiences. In this sense, the author wrote,

Each narrative inquirer needs to engage in such autobiographical narratives as she/he begins a new study. We call these autobiographical narrative inquiries narrative beginnings. Through that writing, each of us comes to understand, to name, our personal, practical, and social justifications [...] this work shapes our research puzzles and identifies key narrative concepts and terms. In this way we can make visible our ontological and epistemological commitments and imagine who we will be alongside, in relation with, participants. (p. 89)

Given this context, Clandinin and Caine (2013) stated that research in narrative inquiry begins with inquiring into researcher's own stories of experience. The authors asserted: "because narrative inquiry is an ongoing reflexive and reflective methodology, narrative inquirers need to continually inquire into their experiences before, during, and after each inquiry" (p. 171).

As a result, the process of narrative beginnings serves as a personal justification as narrative inquirers begin their research process. In other words, narrative inquirers, through the process of narrative beginnings, can justify the inquiry in the context of their own life experiences, tensions, and personal inquiry puzzles (Clandinin, 2013).

In summation, aiming to approach the process of a narrative beginning, one initial research wonder, as approached in the Introduction, was inspired by Clandinin's (2013) words: "Who are you in this narrative inquiry?" [...] it is in my inquiries into who I am in relation to these phenomena that my research puzzle begins to become clearer, that I can begin to justify my study personally, practically, and socially and that I can begin to come to terms with what I am

studying” (p. 81). In this sense, when inquiring myself as an immigrant interwoven with the research puzzle, I need to explore the tensions about the sense of living and belonging in between worlds; at the same time, as I compose new lived stories and (re)shape the sense of identity in this (new) unfolding world.

Narrative Research and Lived Experiences in a Multicultural World

As earlier stated, and according to Clandinin and Caine (2013), Dewey’s theory of experience is the philosophical foundation of narrative inquiry. Indeed, narrative inquiry begins and ends with a respect for lived experience. Dewey’s view of experience allows for the study of experience that acknowledges the embodiment of the person living in the world (Clandinin, 2013).

In addition, according to Clandinin and Connelly (2000) in narrative inquiry there is a relationship between researcher and participants, in a way that we enter in the midst of our lives, and recognizing that our lived stories and lived experiences unfold through time and place, as we live always in the midst of telling, retelling, and living the stories of the experiences that shape our lives.

Rahatzad et al. (2016) argued that, inspired by the methodological commitments of narrative inquiry, scholars have brought narrative inquiry into a multicultural world. The authors wrote that the intersections of narrative inquiry and multiculturalism constitute an approach to understanding issues of social justice and social equity. In addition, they pointed out that the interdisciplinary natures of narrative inquiry and multiculturalism have allowed multiple perspectives to interpretations of lived experiences.

In fact, Rahatzad et al. (2016) asserted that employing narrative inquiry in the context of multiculturalism aims to critically examine the social relations context. In addition, the authors argued that in “both phenomena and method, narrative multiculturalism is a fusion of narrative thinking and multicultural thinking, as a human-centered, experimental, reflective, and relational way of thinking about, researching, and understanding everyday phenomena” (p. 4).

Considering this perspective, according to Huber, Li, Murphy, Nelson, and Young (2014), narrative inquiry research in a multicultural context holds potential to generate vital knowledge and evidence for further understanding the making and re-making of identities, of lives. In addition, the authors stated that the development of the idea of ‘stories to live by’ as a narrative, experimental way to understand how knowledge, context and identity are linked and can be understood narratively.

In conclusion, Rahatzad et al. (2016) wrote:

as narrative inquiry proliferates through multicultural and cross-cultural lenses, lived experiences and personal understandings increasingly contribute to understandings of social realities. Narrative inquiry is evolving based on contextual imperatives as a decentering of enlightenment rationality and alternatives to scientific reasoning. This is a critical shift in narrative inquiry that can contribute to the broadening of human knowledge [...] narrative multiculturalism is an exploration of how the social world is experienced by a multitude of humans. (pp. 10-11)

Research Theoretical/Practical and Social Justifications

Caine et al. (2017) asserted that sharing lived experiences situates narrative inquiry as a social justice practice. Being in relationship with the participants, and living alongside their

unfolding lives, social justice concerns arise and can be inquired into who we are becoming and how we can shape ourselves toward in a more socially justice world. In other words, when considering the context of sharing narratives of lived experiences within personal, practical, and social justifications, Clandinin (2013) pointed out that our past is open to restorying, and sharing our lived stories, inquiring ourselves about who we are and who we are becoming, creates the possibility of attending differently on our social relations, where our work and our lives can make a difference. But how can we relate this context within this research?

Reflecting upon the main purpose of this research and, more specifically, approaching the (further) discussion related to the research wonder, I understand that I am not the same person that I used to be when I was living in Brazil and for that I do not mean that I am better or worse now than I used to be. Probably, the word ‘different’, in my opinion, fits well in this regard. However, it is important for me to reflect in the context of ‘different.’ For what? For who? In other words, how will feeling that I am ‘different’ now make difference in my own life? And in others’ lives? In the larger sense, what does this also mean for individuals who support newcomers that come to Canada?

I believe that the main reason for feeling different than I used to be in Brazil is due the plurality of worlds that I am living now, and by extension I wonder about the plurality of worlds for other newcomers. I write this in both meanings: emotionally and literally. Considering the literal way of understanding the plurality of worlds, as earlier stated in this thesis and (further) approached in the discussion, attending community-based organizations that support newcomers, immigrants, and refugees was an important moment in my life. I encountered there a multicultural world, with a plurality of lived experiences and stories. This context leads to the emotional meaning and importance of the word ‘different’ for me. In other words, my feelings

and sense of identity were affected by the plurality of worlds, plurality of lives and plurality of stories that not only I encountered, but was also a part of

In this way, what initially could be seen (and felt) as a clash of cultures, values, and beliefs; in a short time, when we allow ourselves to the openness, to the delight of listening, telling, and sharing different realities, different lived experiences and stories to live by, we start to realize that we compose and re-compose our lives embedded in our social relations. For that, we need to consider Young et al. (2015) words, when they asserted that there is a beauty in different worlds, the beauty of stories that live in silences and then begin to be told. As a result, traveling through the multiplicity of lives and worlds and sharing our lived experiences is important in building new stories to live by.

Inspired by Clandinin's (2013) words when she affirmed that our past is open to restorying and that "listening deeply and inquiring into our changed lived and told stories calls forth the possibility of attending differently, of shifting practices, and of creating possible social-political or theoretical places where our work and our lives can make a difference" (p. 52), I wonder about how the emotional and the literal meanings of living in a plurality of worlds and how feeling 'different' for me now can make a difference in my daily life as well for the others' lives.

Commonplaces and Participants

This research employed a narrative inquiry methodology attending to multicultural landscapes and focusing on the sense of lived experiences in (re)shaping stories to live by. In this sense, considering the commonplaces, aspects that need to be explored in undertaking narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2013), this research attended to community-based organizations that support

newcomers, immigrants, and refugees. More specifically, this research approached people who have been involved with newcomers and, at the same time, were once newcomers themselves. In this way, although this research was not done at community-based organizations, the participants of this research (David and Sam) were people who came from different countries and now their work involves supporting newcomers in Canada.

Negotiating Research

Clandinin and Caine (2013) stated that in narrative inquiry, narrative inquirers negotiate with participants an ongoing relational inquiry space. The authors also described that entering the field begins with the negotiation of relationships and the research puzzle(s) to be explored. Throughout the inquiry, negotiations of purpose, transitions, intentions, and texts are ongoing processes. In this context, and as framed in this research, regarding data collection, Clandinin (2013) wrote “beginning with a starting point of telling stories can begin in one-to-one situations or with more than one participant with a researcher. In both situations the participants begin by telling their stories” (p. 103). In addition, Clandinin and Caine (2013) asserted that as narrative inquirers we co-compose the relational three-dimensional narrative inquiry space with participants, and in this way they also begin to compose and co-compose field texts.

Within this context, David and Sam, the participants of this research, and I (researcher/narrative inquirer) negotiated our ongoing narrative space inquiry regarding our interviews, which relates to the places and times we met and how we would approach our conversations.

Research Methodology, Field and Research Texts and Analysis: The Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space

Inspired by a Deweyan theory of experience, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) conceptualized narrative inquiry as research methodology in the way they developed a metaphor of a three-dimensional narrative inquiry space. Clandinin (2006) affirmed that “the three dimensions of the metaphoric narrative inquiry space are: the personal and social (interaction) along one dimension; past, present and future (continuity) along a second dimension; place (situation) along a third dimension” (p. 47).

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) stated that field and research texts are composed with consideration to the three-dimensional narrative space, in a way that researchers and participants move in a reflective and continuous process back and forward of co-composing field and research texts. In this sense, considering when composing field, research, and final texts with the participants (David and Sam), Clandinin and Caine (2013) asserted that field and research texts “refer to the records, including for example, field notes, transcripts of conversations, and artifacts such as photographs and journal that are composed or co-composed by researchers and participants” (p. 166). In addition, as a process of composing and co-composing field and research texts, Clandinin and Caine (2013) pointed out that there is a continuous process of engagement between researchers and participants as they move backward and forward in the three-dimensional narrative inquiry spaces. Also the authors drew attention to the fact that, as will be further discussed, final research texts can be (were) difficult to write; mostly because their attention now turns to the public audience that maybe they do not know about, and did not take part of the lived and told stories of the researchers and participants.

Ethical Considerations, Negotiation of Relationships and Consent Process

Caine et al. (2013) argued that the consideration of participants is the first responsibility for narrative inquirers. In addition, the authors acknowledged that central ethical concerns involve the negotiations of entry and exit, as well as the representation of experience.

In other words, narrative inquiry spaces are framed by ethics and behaviors of openness, reciprocity, and care. Both researchers and participants belong to the narrative inquiry space of living within relational spaces attentive to ethical considerations, complexities, and tensions (Clandinin & Caine, 2013).

In this context, Clandinin (2013) wrote that, considering the relational narrative inquiry space, researchers become part of participants' lives and they part of researchers' lives. In this way, researchers are relational inquirers; attentive to whom they are and who they are becoming alongside the participants' lives. Therefore, researchers are also part of the phenomenon under study. Researchers and participants co-compose the stories embedded in the narrative inquiry space.

Clandinin and Caine (2013) stated, regarding the negotiation of relationships and consent process, that narrative inquirers negotiate with participants an ongoing relational inquiry space. In addition, the authors pointed out that "a commitment to relationships and reciprocal respect are key elements [...] to live in collaborative ways in co-composing and negotiating stories. The ethics of care also calls forth social responsibilities, with an attention to equities and social justice" (p. 167).

Embracing Multicultural Worlds through Narrative Inquiry: The Commitment to Understanding Lives in Motion

Atkinson (2007) wrote “we are the storytelling species. Storytelling is in our blood. We think in story form, speak in story form, and bring meaning to our lives through story. Our life stories connect us to our roots, give us direction, validate our own experience, and restore value to our lives” (p. 224). In fact, reflecting about these sentences I am reminded of King’s (2003) words when he wrote “the truth about stories is that that’s all we are [...] you can’t understand the world without telling a story (p. 32). In this context, our lived experiences and our stories to live by are profoundly intertwined with the process of composing and re-composing stories that we share, that we listen and tell, and all of that is immersed in living in motion, living in the midst of a plurality of lives that we encounter. Given the perspective of the research wonder of this thesis, it is important to consider how our life stories are interwoven in the context that living under certain social-historical conditions shape our lives (Andrews, 2007).

This research, which attended to multicultural landscapes through narrative inquiry and focusing on the sense of lived experiences in (re)shaping stories to live by, was rooted in the context that the “participants are always in the midst of their lives and their lives are shaped by attending to past, present, and unfolding social, cultural, institutional, linguistic, and familial narratives” (Clandinin & Caine, 2013, p. 170).

In this sense, considering that life stories do not simply reveal context stories themselves, but rather create the world which reveals one’s identity and the complex relations of specific temporal, geographical, and social elements to it (Menon et al., 2015), it is important to point out that in response to the questions of “so what?” and “who cares?” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) regarding personal, practical, and social justifications for this research, that life stories arise from lived experiences, and for that it is essential to consider how our and our participants’ lives and experiences can be shaped differently in the future (Clandinin & Caine, 2013). In addition,

Atkinson (2007) wrote: “life stories serve as an excellent means for understanding how people see their own experiences, their own lives, and their interactions with others. They allow us to learn more than almost any other methodology about human lives and society from one person’s perspective” (p. 241).

Given this context, this research was situated in one-to-one contexts with participants; more specifically, this research attended to two (2) participants (David and Sam) who work in community-based organizations supporting newcomers in Canada and, at the same time, the participants themselves come from different countries.

Clandinin (2013) described that “in one-to-one situations participants are asked to tell their stories in a variety of ways: by responding to more or less structured interview questions, by engaging in conversation or dialogue, or by telling stories triggered by various artifacts such as photographs or memory box items” (p. 103). In addition, Clandinin and Caine (2013) asserted that one starting point for narrative inquiry is, most frequently, telling stories; and the methods most used are conversations, or interviews as conversations.

This research was comprised of four (4) interviews (approximately 1-hour each) with each participant. As this research attended to human subjects, approval from the Behavioral Research Ethics Board at the University of Saskatchewan was required and received, as well a consent form was signed by each participant.

According to Craig and Huber (2007), as narrative inquirers we are in relation inquiring into the lives we are composing and re-composing in the midst with our participants, and is this sense of being and inquiring in relation that makes possible for us, narrative inquirers, to attend to the reverberations of experiences in multiple people’s lives.

In this sense, it is important to consider, that in regard to the negotiation of relationships, narrative inquirers and participants negotiate an ongoing relational inquiry space. According to Clandinin and Caine (2003) “this relational space is what we most commonly call the field” (p. 171). In addition, the authors asserted that the ongoing relational inquiry space unlocks a space to notice knots that live within each of our lives’ foundations, and how these are interwoven into the experience under study. Clandinin (2013) also pointed out that

in narrative inquiry it is the unfolding lives of participants, and of each of us as researchers, that matter. Narrative inquiry is about attending to lives, the living of those lives in process and in the making. Narrative inquiry as a deeply relational practice sees research as an unfolding of lives in relation. New people join in and others drift away in the spirit of for now, knowing that their lives will always be shaped by their experiences in each narrative inquiry. (pp. 141-142)

Indeed, the process of ongoing negotiation involves a continuous conversation, in which both narrative inquirers and participants are similarly engaged and committed to the ongoing relationship (Clandinin & Caine, 2013). Additionally, according to Craig and Huber (2007), and as happened considering the relational space inquiry between the participants of this research and we, narrative inquirers and participants negotiate in the midst of their lives and contexts, and through which relationships are formed and transformed and are filled with inevitable complexities; as a result, “it is through attending to these complexities that we continue to learn what it means to live and inquire into lives as they are temporally and situationally composed and recomposed” (Craig & Huber, 2007, pp. 268-269).

Considering this perspective, the ongoing negotiation with participants

gives a representation of the unfolding lives of both participants and researchers, at least as they became visible in those times and places where our stories intersected and were shared [...] we strive for a sense of being morally responsible to each other and to our negotiated relationships as well as to our negotiated texts. We work toward a sense of mutuality and co-composing in what we write. (Clandinin, 2013, p. 132)

In this way, considering the process of living in relational ways with participants and moving from field to field texts and final research texts, Clandinin and Caine (2013) affirmed that field texts and final research texts are negotiated between narrative inquirers and participants.

When composing the final research texts, as further discussed in the following chapters, Clandinin and Caine (2013) pointed out that it is important to consider the personal, practical, and social justifications of the shared work between narrative inquirers and participants. This is important to consider because in narrative inquiry, “stories are not just a medium of learning, development, or transformation, but also a life [...] living is field text, and field texts are co-compositions of lives” (Caine et al., 2013, pp. 578-579). Trying to conclude with some few words, it is important to reflect that, this wonder of life, and wonder of living in motion and travelling within a plurality of lives and worlds (Lugones, 1987), are related with the fact that “we used to be strangers, but now our lives are interwoven with each other” (Menon et al., 2015, p. 91).

CHAPTER THREE

Living as Immigrants in a Multicultural World: Our Voices Echoing through a Multiplicity of Lived Experiences

This chapter will explore an understanding of identity making when entering and living in a new world. More specifically, through excerpts (transcripts) from the interviews with David and Sam, this chapter will connect the sense of being an immigrant, embedded in a multicultural world, with how we (re)shape our stories to live by, as we compose lived stories in a new place. Additionally, this chapter will demonstrate, inspired by the voices of the participants of this research, how that at the same time we, paradoxically, try to keep our identities, and to maintain our culture, within a plurality of worlds and a plurality of lived experiences, we, immigrants, can shift our identities in relation to the sense of living and belonging to a place.

You (Only) Live in Canada...

Composing lives and stories to live by in between worlds

“You only live in Canada, but you are not Canadian.” Those words still resonate in my thinking from the first time I heard them from David, a research participant. David came to Canada from Poland when he was a child; he was 5 years old and his parents fled from Poland as refugees. David is currently an adult and holds Canadian citizenship and Polish citizenship. The reason for writing “holds Canadian citizenship” rather than “currently David is a Canadian citizen”, relates not only to the first sentence of this paragraph, but also with the main focus of this research; more specifically, I am reminded of Saleh, Menon, and Clandinin’s (2014) words,

when they stated: “It is impossible to engage properly with a place or a person, without engaging with all of the stories of that place and that person” (p. 279).

Within this context, and as already portrayed at the beginning of this research, the expression “in between worlds” is important in the ways people shape and (re)shape their lives, their stories to live by, across a variety of landscapes. Considering the statement, “You only live in Canada, you are not Canadian”, it challenges our voices, our lives, our identities as immigrants, about who we are and who we are becoming related to our identity-making of the self as connected to the place we live.

In this context, according to Sam, the other participant in this research, noted that Canada is in fact the country where she lives, but, as she pointed out: “it is only a place where I live” (transcript with Sam, June 13). She added:

I will never be Canadian, and I will never feel myself as a Canadian. I already hold a Canadian citizenship, but, for example, I traveled on my vacation and at the border with the U.S. they (the customs officer) asked about my nationality, as I was travelling on my Canadian passport, I responded ‘Canadian’; but it's not how I feel, it is not what my heart tells me; I will never consider myself Canadian, never; because it is my belief. If someone turns to me and says: "You only live here in Canada, but you will never be Canadian", I will turn and say "I agree! I am Brazilian!" (transcript with Sam, June 13)

Sam’s country of origin is Brazil; I choose to write where she is from, rather than something like ‘Sam is Brazilian’ because newcomers enter into a place between worlds as they compose new stories to live by. In addition, considering the context of this research and my life now as an immigrant, sometimes I wonder about becoming a permanent resident and, maybe, ultimately, a Canadian citizen, but, when thoughts like that, connected with the context of this

research, come to my mind, I also wonder: ‘As I continue to live here in Canada, will I ever consider myself Canadian in my future?’ or ‘Will I ever be Canadian (in my heart)?’

Keeping our identities as we (re)shape ourselves in a (new) place

Our lives here in Canada as immigrants, our identities, who we are and who we are becoming, are related to our identity-making, (re)shaping ourselves, and all of this is interwoven with the place we live. As Basso (1996) asserted, the stories of life and stories of place are the people themselves, their lives. They are interwoven. Basso (1996) also pointed out that people’s sense of place and their sense of themselves are inseparably intertwined, and stories occur in a place, and places are, at the same time, the people themselves.

Therefore, considering the perspective of this research in inquiring into the experiences of (re)shaping stories to live by of immigrants who chose Canada as a place to live and, as a result, as a place to compose a new storied life, I consider Lugones’s (1987) words when she wrote about being open to surprise and self-construction, about stretching ourselves in our own world (imagination), and all of that interwoven with becoming (and challenging) ourselves and, at the same time, becoming in a place.

David’s words resonate,

I think because my parents really insisted on keeping that identity as Polish and not Canadian, and I only heard my dad saying a couple of years ago like: ‘Oh, I actually feel like Canadian now, because I have lived here for so long’. But we never identified (ourselves) as Canadian before; we identified as being Polish, so it is really weird for me, because as much as you want to be people here or like your friends or whatever you

are still trying to maintain who you are; you are so identified with that, so it is always the hardest part. (transcript with David, May 12)

These wonders can be partially understood in relation to the work of Clandinin et al. (2006), who wrote, “as we reflected on our own experiences, we saw that our stories of whom we were had shifted partly because of the contexts in which we found ourselves and the people with whom we came to live in relation” (p. 113). This can be seen in the words of the two participants as they compose stories to live by in new places and with new people. In addition, Clandinin (2013) argued that “our experiences in the past are embodied in our lived and told stories, we carry them with us” (p. 196).

Within this perspective, I wonder about us, immigrants, living with feelings, thoughts, and emotions related to the plurality of worlds, plurality of stories, and plurality of lives; and, at the same time, how, now as immigrants, our cross-cultural lives and stories to live by are embedded in a complex interwoven process of (re)shaping ourselves; where our voices are changed, our backgrounds are challenged, and our sense of living and being in a place are negotiated (He, 2002; Menon et al., 2015).

After All, Why Am I Here?

Unfolding worlds within a plurality of lived experiences: Beyond a single story

So, when I think about why I am here in Canada, I think this is a powerful question, because I have worked with so many immigrants and most of the answers were (are) ‘I am here in Canada to provide a better life for my children’, and then I look at myself and I have no children. And it is interesting because I think ‘so why am I here?’ I moved to Canada for love; without ever before imagining in my life that I would move to another

country, never had imagined what it would be like nor hypothesized what how my life would be like; and then, all the sudden, I moved to Canada. And here I am. (transcript with Sam, March 29)

He (2002) posed questions, such as, “‘Why did I come to Canada? What am I doing here? What am I going to do in the future?’ (p. 323). Indeed, Sam’s words and feelings not only relate to these questions, but also, with the sense of living within cultural diversity, a plurality of (unfolding) worlds, in (re)shaping our identities and our sense of being in a (new) place. In this context, and more specifically, as immigrants, those wonders are connected with He et al. (2008) words when the authors noted that immigrants coming to Canada are more diverse than ever; as the authors affirmed, “they arrive from a broad spectrum of countries with a wide range of linguistic, cultural, racial, and socio-economic backgrounds” (p. 220).

Indeed, wondering about ‘Why am I here?’ can, many times, (re)shape our sense of being immersed in an unfolding world, related to the multiplicity of different experiences and different lived stories. Clandinin (2013) wrote about emotions and how our past is opened to restorying; about how, through imagination and memory, the future as well is opened to be shifted, to be changed by being able to (re)shape ourselves and our identities. The author also pointed out how the understanding of the plurality of lives and stories to live by are interwoven with the possibility of creating openings for new relationships to emerge, for lives to unfold in unexpected ways, as a way to compose a life beyond a single story of ourselves (Adichie, 2009; Clandinin, 2013).

Poland, immigrants, and refugees: Our past embodied in our lived stories

David's stories echo in my mind when he stated about landing in Canada when he was 5 years old, after his parents fled from Poland as refugees. David had no English, and it was a cold winter.

As he said:

My parents fled from Poland as refugees and I stayed behind in Poland, then my parents moved to Canada and they were constantly trying to get me out of Poland, but the government was keeping me there. I was brought up by my grandmother, so when I came over, I had no English at all, it was the middle of winter; so, that is kind of my story. It was a very difficult time. (transcript with David, April 7)

These words lead me to consider not only the plurality of worlds, stories and lives, in (re)shaping our identities (as immigrants), but mostly, the question connected with "why am I here", that is "How did I come to Canada?"; and in wondering about this question, I mean 'how' as the most profound meaning that we can consider. In this sense, when we consider the terms 'migrant' and 'refugee', according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2007-08), "refugees are persons who are outside their country of origin for reasons of feared persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order and, as a result, require international protection."

In addition, an immigrant "is someone who changes his or her country of usual residence, irrespective of the reason for migration or legal status" (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2007-08, <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/definitions>). In other words, immigrants "choose to move in order to improve the future prospects of themselves and their families. Refugees have to move if they are to save their lives or preserve their freedom" (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2007-08).

Considering these definitions, I quote David,

It is important to consider how people came to Canada, because there is a big difference between who came as refugee and somebody that immigrates with a work permit for example; the difference is that when you are coming over as refugee, you are not choosing to leave your country, it is a push, rather than a pull factor. You might be pushed out because of war, because of instability or maybe because of climate. You are forced to leave the family and your belongings. There are a lot of different factors that come into a play. Most refugees here are pushed out, they are restarting their lives, facing many problems upon arrival and coming with hurts from war such as trauma, so that's a lot to deal with, which makes some extra difficult. (transcript with David, April 7)

Undoubtedly the initial question “Why am I here?” is strongly interwoven with Clandinin’s (2013) words, when she argued that our experiences in the past are embodied in our lived stories. In this sense, those experiences that we carry, allow us to see how our lives and stories to live by can be (re)shaped within the context of people we encounter interwoven with the places we live in.

Unfolding lives...and...what if?

Those sentences make my mind travel back in time, and then I consider how our lives would have been different if we had made different choices throughout our unfolding lives. In other words, I remember asking Sam if she could imagine herself, how her life would be, if she had chosen to stay in Brazil. Sam answered:

I have thought about this several times. So, when I was in Brazil, I was in a very good position professionally. I had become an NGO manager, I was at the peak of my career, I

had the highest salary I could make, in a project I loved; so I think if I had stayed there, I would be fine, but I would be scared of violence, because really Brazil has become violent; and moving to a safer country is a good thing for me. So, when you ask me "what would my life be like if I had not come", I am not sad to imagine myself in Brazil. At the same time, because my family is still there, I don't either live 100% happy because I know they are exposed to violence. So, I feel that the life of an immigrant is always a paradox, and always a paradox of what we live here, of that we left there, of the people we know here, the people that we left there. It is always a paradox; about what we live here and what we left. (transcript with Sam, June 13)

Sam's words are, in my opinion, sentimentally provocative, not only considering what we physically left behind in our home country, but, mostly, in regards to balancing what we culturally left behind and now (re)shaping ourselves in a new world, with new cultural ways of being.

What Did I Leave Behind? ... Maintaining and (Re)Shaping Our Identity and Our Culture

The construction of self within a plurality of worlds

Bruner (1991) wrote that, in regards the construction of self within a plurality of worlds, this context "involves not only the construction of self, but also a construction of one's culture under different conditions of life" (Bruner, 1991, p. 77). Inspired by these words, I recall moments with David when we were going back and forth wondering about his statement: "because as much as you want to be like people here, or like your friends, you still try to maintain who you are" (transcript with David, April 7). I remember how I used to say to David

that I love those words, and how, probably, all immigrants could identify themselves within this context.

In this perspective, we can consider the way people, mostly immigrants, enter, see, live, and (re)shape themselves in a new world. And by 'world' I try to give the widest meaning as possible. As Lugones (1987) pointed out,

A 'world' in my sense may be an actual society given its dominant culture's description and construction of life, including a construction of the relationships of production, of gender, race, etc. But a 'world' can also be such a society given a non-dominant construction, or it can be such a society or a society given an idiosyncratic construction. But they are different "worlds". A 'world' need not be a construction of a whole society. It may be a construction of a tiny portion of a particular society. It may be inhabited by just a few people. Some "worlds" are bigger than others. In a "world" some of the inhabitants may not understand or hold the particular construction of them that constructs them in that "world." (p. 10)

As we, immigrants, constantly (re)shape ourselves related to the construction of self within a plurality of worlds, it is important to consider how Lugones (1987) stressed the existence of different worlds and the fact that, sometimes, somehow, we can feel lost when trying to understand ourselves embedded with the sense of what means to live and, more importantly, to belong in a new world.

Entering in a new world bringing more than we have in our suitcase...and recreating ourselves: brackets?

When we consider the context of lives interwoven with the multiplicity of worlds and identities, I am reminded of Andrews's (2007), when she wrote about how our different lived experiences are connected with our sense of identity, and how this context would be affected by opening ourselves to different stories and lives that we encounter entering in a new world.

David posed some words about that:

A lot of people when coming from their home country they bring a lot with them, and they try to recreate that at their communities, whereas other people don't want to; so they want to recreate themselves now as a new person. I met many people like that. There are two different types of people: people that come with more than they bring in their suitcase; they want to maintain the culture of their country, recreate that kind of life, whereas there are other people that come and they recreate themselves, as a new person.(transcript with David, June 23)

When I ponder about (re)shaping ourselves as we enter a new and multicultural world, I consider how the word '(re)shaping' with brackets could be interpreted beyond a simple typing detail. More specifically, when we consider a connection between the expression "recreate themselves" and the use of parentheses when typing '(re)shaping' ourselves as we enter in a new world. What I mean is that sometimes, maybe, our feelings and desires for openness within a new world, composing new stories, are connected with our anxiety of losing our sense of identity about who we were and now who we are becoming in a new country. In other words, when we consider using brackets in '(re)shaping', we can interpret the brackets as a shield regarding maintaining our own identity and culture, and, on the other hand, living and allowing ourselves to the openness. As Lugones (1987) asserted,

I can understand my confusion about whether I am or am not by saying that I am both and that I am different persons in different 'worlds' and can remember myself in both as I am in the other. I am a plurality of selves. This is to understand my confusion because it is to come to see it as a piece with much of the rest of my experience as an outsider in some of the "worlds" that I inhabit and of a piece with significant aspects of the experience of non-dominant people in the "worlds" of their dominators. (p. 14)

Indeed, we, immigrants, bring so much more than our suitcase, and as we enter in a new world, as we compose new stories to live by, (re)shaping ourselves, we feel that we also lose something that is beyond what we did not physically bring in our suitcase.

Getting Lost in Translation and Losing More Than Words Can Mean: (Re)Shaping Our Identity and Culture

I remember when talking to David and asking him if there would be something, culturally speaking, that he used to do when he lived in Poland and now he had lost or would (or will) never fit within Canadian culture. He answered that this was a very interesting point and, as an example, he talked about how he felt one day when watching a foreign film, a Polish one, which, according to David, had a lot of subtle humor. And in this regard, David stressed that unless you really understand the history of the country, and you really understand the culture, you will not get that kind of humor. As he pointed out:

And so, I was watching a Polish movie with some Canadian friends and there was something like: 'oh! This scene!', and then I was laughing, and they were like: "why is that funny?" "This is not funny". And then I think to myself that I will never really fully understand this film, because, there are some parts on this film that, unless you are really

connected and really understand the culture, you not really get that; like, there is something lost in translation. And also, with some books, I read a lot of, for example, Russian authors, like Dostoiévski; so, I am reading, and I think about how much am I really getting from this translation? (transcript with David, June 23)

The words “lost in translation” really resonates in my mind as I consider the session named ‘What Did I Leave Behind? ... Maintaining and (Re)Shaping Our Identity and Our Culture’. In other words, how could we know what we left behind? How could we put that with words (beyond the language itself)? I mean culturally speaking and, for that, how does this affect our feeling and desire of maintaining and (re)shaping our identity and our culture in a new country?

Narratives of place and people: This is a closer story, isn't?

Some wonders that Sam expressed could be helpful in understanding her sense of identity and (maintaining) her culture.

So, this question of our identity and having been part of a culture, for example, my favorite kind of music is “Forró” (a traditional genre popular in Northeast in Brazil) so, I will have to turn my attention to Brazil, and if I try to show it to someone else, the person might even like it, maybe find it interesting, but, something will be always missing, because, for example, when I listen to “Forró” music, it brings me feelings, memories of the country I lived. On the other hand, for example in my work, sometimes they tell a joke about something that I have no idea what it is; then the person says “ah! It is from that TV show” and I “so what? I am not getting” then I feel myself like an outsider. (transcript with Sam, June 13)

I find it very interesting when I think of Sam, and how she expressed nostalgia about some musical aspects found in Brazil. Particularly, when connecting about being an immigrant and things that we left behind, and the context of maintaining and (re)shaping our identity and our culture. In this context, I recall some words that Sam shared:

I remember one day when I did a storytelling at an event, and I told the story of 'Asa Branca' ("White Wing" - a traditional Brazilian song). I told the story while a musician played the song itself and in the end, I remember I had the feeling: "are these people really understanding the situation of northeastern migration within Brazil?" and the feeling "how did they get out of their homes? How everything was painful? What they left behind? their families?" And now, I think how all of that relates to life, our life as immigrant; they (people from Northeast that migrate within Brazil) went out to fetch water; I went out to fetch love. The person goes out to fetch the happiness of their children; the emigrant is always looking for something. So, are they (the audience at the event) really understanding all of that? Because as much as we tell, I don't know if it touches the same thing that we lived. (transcript with Sam, June 13)

Palmer (2005) raised some thoughts about this context, as the author affirmed, "narratives of place based in personal experience provide points of access as well as conflict for a wider audience across cultures. They can provide a starting point for developing an understanding of members of other cultures, to see them in terms of their relationship to the land" (p. 163).

Sam continued to share her story interwoven with stories of land and stories of people: On one of the days of that event, there were some people from Brazil attending, they went to the event, so, at the end of the story, the Canadians were still paying attention,

and the Brazilians were crying, because it's a closer story, right? (transcript with Sam, June 13)

In fact, those words show an intersection between narratives of place and personal experience when composing a new life in a new world. In other words, when reflecting about the meaning of 'it is a closer story', we need to consider that stories are made of people and places; they are interwoven. Thus, stories are rooted in the relationship between people's culture and the understanding of some conflicts across cultures, which involves, for example, considering different feelings and reactions when different people listen to the same story.

Feeling (Happy?) ...Immigrating to Canada and the Challenge of Being Ourselves within a Multicultural World

A single story about why you (we) are here?

Starting this section with "Feeling (Happy?)" was emotionally difficult within the context of being an immigrant interwoven with the research puzzle, and mostly when considering sharing participants' lived experiences, stories, and stories to live by; as Saleh, Menon, and Clandinin (2014) argued "questions of diversity and inclusion are central to learning to engage in narrative inquiry" (p. 271). Therefore, sharing the multiplicity of lived experiences about who we are, who we are becoming, interwoven with (re)shaping our stories to live by in a multicultural world, can challenge what we have taken-for-granted in our lives, as we attend the complexity and the diversity of lives in motion.

Given this perspective, considering the sentence "immigrating to Canada and the challenge of being ourselves within a multicultural world," I recall Sam's words when she shared

some thoughts about her work as settlement advisor with immigrants (newcomers) arriving in a western city in Canada. As Sam stated:

During my work with immigrants, and considering the reasons people immigrate, I meet people who come from developed countries, and I think to myself ‘so why?’ For example, someone who lives in Ireland and moves to Canada, it is something strange, because, ‘why (come)?’ Then, also someone from Germany. I met a few people like that, and it is something that confuses me, because usually immigrants are from underdeveloped countries. So, I believe my situation would be the same as many people. But regardless the country we and they come from, I believe the main point is that if the (home) country had better opportunities, quality of life, they would rather stay, because it is easier, right? Because, it is very difficult to immigrate, very. (transcript with Sam, July 24)

After Sam shared these words, I started to reflect if she had already heard some effective story about ‘why are you here? Why did you come to Canada?’ In other words, if she had already heard something like a straightforward and common answer for this question. In fact, I ended up asking Sam during our interview about this thought. As she answered:

It is a great point, because I always ask, as a starting point of our conversation, ‘why are you here?’ And then, the vast majority says: ‘I’m here because of my children’. I can tell you during all these years working and listening hundreds and hundreds of immigrants, that the vast majority, they tell me the same sentence, they tell me ‘I have moved to give my children a better life, and I know that I will never be 100% happy here’. And they also add ‘I know I will never be 100% happy here because it is not my house, I don’t feel like I am in my country, but I know it will be good for my children, I know that they can

feel 100% happy here, and that's what matters'. Of course, each one can have some particularly different reason to be here, but, for the vast majority, this is what I hear, and the answer comes from different countries, Nigeria, India, Pakistan, China, Colombia, Brazil...anywhere you can imagine, it is always the same answer. (transcript with Sam, July 24)

Probably we have here a conflict as we compose new stories, (re)shaping who we are and who we are becoming, living in a new world. As we attend the complexity of lives in motion, interwoven with the challenge of being ourselves within a multicultural world, we, first generation of immigrants, can share the same answer that Sam pointed out, however it is important to consider that, we can have the same answer, but never the same story; never a single story of anyone, of any place.

Living in motion and composing new stories within a plurality of worlds...a roller coaster of feelings

Few seconds after Sam shared these words, a moment of tension arose. There was a powerful silence during the interview. Probably, this silence happened because not only Sam shared her lived experience inspired by her work as settlement advisor with immigrants, but perhaps because she also mentioned people from Brazil. Despite the fact we had a moment of silence, we both knew that we were reflecting upon our own lived experiences as immigrants from Brazil. Those minutes of silence were filled with anxiety about who we are becoming, about (re)shaping our stories to live by, and about the strong desire of feeling happy in a new world.

Sam broke that moment of silence; I am not sure if I can write that she broke the moment of tension. Nevertheless, some words filled our three-dimensional inquiry space, strongly marked by a process of self-reflection, contemplation, openness, and uncertainty (Clandinin & Caine, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). As Sam shared:

But I need to consider that, when I meet with those immigrants, they are new here, they are newcomers, so they are still in that feeling, in that roller coaster of feelings. Of course, over time they start to feel better; however, they continue stating that they will not be 100% happy here. And I think that is what I feel with myself here too. I feel that, I have no children, I am here for my husband. I will never be 100% happy, I am not, and I feel that I will never be. Because my family is in Brazil, my parents, my sisters; so, it is always a daily struggle of what worth more and what is not worth; you weigh the country, your life, and while still having greater happiness, we are still here, right?
(transcript with Sam, July 24)

When we are a newcomer in a new country, probably the sense of happiness and feelings involving the anxiety and uncertainty about who we are, or like Sam stated, the sense of roller coaster of feelings, might be a pattern regarding all cultures and countries. In other words, possibly every newcomer that arrives here in Canada and every newcomer that arrives in any other country can share similar emotions and feelings.

But how similar are those? How could we measure and judge those? Certainly, there is not a protocol or a brochure that can explain those. And more importantly, we need to consider lives in motion, we need to consider that composing lived stories and stories to live by sometimes seem to be something new, in a new place, but, it is paramount to consider that we are

always in the midst; in the midst of our lives and in the midst of other peoples' lives and stories that shape and (re)shape who we are and who we are becoming. As Caine et al. (2013) wrote

We are our stories, and our stories are what we need to learn, to live, and to live well. Today, I live and see the world through a lens that compels questions about how our stories shape us, and our relationship with the world in which we live. I talk back and forth with many lived and told stories; this back-and-forth talk allows me to begin to retell and relive my experience. (p. 578)

I will always be an immigrant: going back there and turning into a different person than I am here

When sharing stories with David, we had some of those moments where many worlds and different lived experiences collided where and when the social, cultural and familial contexts were strongly embodied in our stories to live by, about how we were, who we are and are becoming.

The way that I am when I meet my friends when I go back to Poland, it seems that it is not the way that I am, because, it was just different. I guess it is quite confused and sometimes complicated; going back there and turning a different person than I am here.

(transcript with David, June 23)

As already happened with Sam, after sharing these words, David and I had a moment of silence, which quickly was broken by David's words; but, again, the moment of tension was still in our relational narrative inquiry space, as he attended to the familial context:

And it is something that just happens because, for example my mom, she said something, and we speak in Polish, she said something like, from her lived experience, and she

quoted somebody, from some book she read; she said that she feels so strongly in the some ways as this author, a Polish author, and she said something like ‘for me, immigration is like an incurable terminal sickness, because anywhere you always going to be you, an immigrant, you can’t change it, you can’t fight it’. So, it is something that she feels; even when she goes back there, she still feels as an immigrant; and she is here. So, you can’t change it. It is always what you will going to be, an immigrant. It is a challenge, right? (transcript with David, June 23)

When reflecting upon those words, I consider the sense of (re)shaping ourselves embedded on the multiplicity of worlds, stories and lives; and all of that colliding with the sense of our stories to live by, about who we are and who we are becoming, beyond the status of being an immigrant or a citizen of any country.

Being an Immigrant and Being a Canadian Citizen...Is There Something Beyond the Citizenship Status?

I am a citizen...where? The sense of being in a place

Wondering about the meaning and (personal?) values of being an immigrant and being a Canadian citizen and, more specifically, considering the research puzzle framed on the question of (re)shaping our identity, as immigrants living in Canada, I am reminded about going back and forward with David in this regard. In this sense, many times, during our interviews, David used to emphasize about some people (immigrants) he knows that do not want to apply for citizenship here in Canada. According to David, one important reason for that is because those people stressed out the concern of losing their home country citizenship status once they obtain Canadian citizenship.

Indeed, this could be an important justification for not applying to hold a Canadian citizenship; as David used to say that himself holds dual citizenship, and he also used to make it clear about the importance of not losing his Polish citizenship. According to David, this context is important as part of his identity, shaping who he is, and as he identifies himself as being David and as a “dual” citizen of Canada and Poland.

Given this context, Appelbaum (2002) examined the relationships between diversity, identity, and citizenship. The author argued that the concept of citizenship should consider questions of identity and cultural diversity.

Considering the thought that identities are interwoven with diversity and cultural experience; in addition, considering the question of citizenship status; more specifically, the sense of being in a place, I am reminded of, during an interview, asking David about the situation if he was not allowed to have dual citizenship. In this way, imagining this situation, if he still would choose to apply for citizenship in Canada. In other words, I asked David to imagine the scenario that once he gets his citizenship here (Canadian), he loses his Polish citizenship.

And David answered,

Well, if I just recently came here, and I was going to apply for citizenship then, it would be so different, because it is not who I am anymore. If the circumstances change, if I was just coming here older, it would be so different, because I came here so much younger. I mean, because, now, I am so thankful for the family I have here, that I created, and now making an honorable life here. And going back to a life there; but you can still honour your culture (having dual citizenship), it is a paper, right? That allows you to do certain things, it is not something that will close you from your culture. (transcript with David, July 28)

The expression “it is a paper, right?” regarding citizenship status, resonated in my mind for some time; as now I consider how the sense of being a Canadian citizen (status of citizenship stated “on a paper”) and the sense of belonging in a place can be connected with our sense of identity, interwoven with our lived experiences, stories, and the multiplicity of worlds and lives.

I am a Canadian citizen, but I will never be a Canadian: The sense of identity connected to the place you live...what do you need to be a Canadian citizen?

The concept of citizenship is interwoven with our stories to live by, our lived experiences, and our sense of living in motion and (re)shaping ourselves in connection with being in a place. When we consider David’s words connecting the citizenship status as a document (paper), I am reminded of Sam’s words when she raised, as David did, some thoughts about the delicate context of being a citizen and the sense of identity connected to a place you live.

As Sam stated,

When I think that I hold a Canadian citizenship, I also think how it affects my identity in terms of nationality, because I think, even though I am Canadian citizen, I will never be Canadian. I will just answer that I am Canadian at the border of a country, because it is for my own convenience. (transcript with Sam, June 13)

After Sam shared these thoughts, I felt intrigued about what she meant by “for my own convenience”, so I asked her if this question was connected to a bureaucratic issue, as she answered,

Yes! Absolutely for a bureaucratic question, to ease my entry here. But in terms of identity, of feelings, I will never see myself as Canadian (or feel like a Canadian); and to

me the question of feeling matters a lot. So, for example, during the World Cup, imagine a match Canada versus Brazil, and when I listen to the Brazilian anthem, I get emotional, whereas when I listen to the Canadian anthem, I don't get emotional, I don't identify myself with it So, I think maybe it's more an epistemological question. I don't know what is the definition of being Canadian. So, what do you need to be a Canadian citizen? Do you need just a paper? Or do you need a feeling? What do you need? (transcript with Sam, June 13)

Those words amazed us; and then we had a moment of profound and reflective silence. Were we thinking about the same context, about what it means to be a Canadian and what it means to be a Brazilian? I did not ask Sam what she was reflecting about during our moment of silence, not only in consideration that moment during our interviews where many words and thoughts are told in silence, but mostly because I reflected that it would be impossible to have an answer regarding what is needed to be a Canadian, or a Brazilian citizen.

Surely you must be fluent in English! Really?

Few minutes later, during our interview, after that moment of thoughtful silence, Sam broke the silence with a question:

Do you think to be a Canadian citizen you have to be fluent in English? (transcript with Sam, June 13)

I remember that I was still in doubt if she was asking me or she was personally reflecting on question. But she was, indeed, asking my opinion about what, at first, seemed to me a simple question; in a way that, my initial thought was 'of course! To be a Canadian citizen you have to be fluent in English and/or French!'. In fact, I shared this thought with Sam, and then she asked

me if a person who does not speak English (or French) could not consider himself/herself a Canadian citizen. After listening to Sam's question, I thought she was approaching the same question again, so I told her that I was a little confused about what she meant. But, then, one important point was brought to our conversation. As Sam explained,

Do you see how it can be confusing? The definition of what it is to be Canadian and the definition of nationality, it is all so complex. Because if we consider the legal question, the law, for example, people over 65 years old don't need to speak English to apply and eventually obtain Canadian citizenship. (transcript with Sam, June 13)

Your nationality and your sense of identity: I will be Brazilian forever

When Sam shared her thinking, I started to wonder about adults who immigrate, for example to Canada, and how their sense of identity and being (and belonging) to a place could be different as compared to children that immigrate as well. In this sense, I asked Sam about her thoughts regarding the context of some people (immigrants) that live in Canada and recreate themselves living in (almost) the same way they used to live in their home country. In this sense, I shared with Sam the thought about being an immigrant and how the sense of identity and being in a place are related to our nationality, and how it relates, at the same time, to the place we were born and the place we moved to, live now and obtain the (new?) citizenship status. And all of that interwoven with (re)shaping ourselves, who we are and are becoming.

And then, again after a moment of silence and reflection, Sam stated,

It is interesting! Because when you think about the place that you were born, at first, it seems something easier to define, regarding your nationality and your sense of identity, right? The place of birth defines your nationality. But, thinking about the context you

said, so, when nationality is acquired, how does it affect your feelings about your own identity and sense of nationality? Yes, it is interesting; particularly, I will be Brazilian forever. (transcript with Sam, June 13)

Among many thoughts, I felt a keen interest in knowing why Sam stated so straight, and with confidence that “I will be Brazilian forever”. I asked Sam if she had a reason for her powerful statement and if it was related to a decision she made or if it was related to a feeling. And Sam answered attending to a familial context,

I would not say this is a decision; certainly, it is a feeling I have. And, it's hard right? Because, maybe for some people this is a decision. So, for example, you also ask me the reason, and I do not know. My theory would be that it all depends on the reasons that made the people leave the country and the ties they still have with the country, mostly in regards the family. So for example, if I had moved here with all my family from Brazil, it would be easier for me to feel more Canadian; but, in my case, as my family is still in Brazil, and they will be there forever, it is very difficult for me to deny being Brazilian; because, if I deny being Brazilian, it would be like, for me, I am denying my family. (transcript with Sam, June 13)

I ponder about the connection of denying a nationality with being (and the sense of belonging) to a place. Undoubtedly, as we (re)shape ourselves, through our unfolding lives, we see the possibility of shifting our stories to live by interwoven with the place we live and places we lived; where, considering those ones, we have many different lived stories, and many different people we met in the midst of our lives, that are still part of who we are and who we are becoming.

Keeping and Shifting Our Identities: I Feel Like a Canadian Now

Those thoughts and the familial context made me to travel back in time within the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin & Caine, 2013), where my attention focused on one interesting research puzzle aspect that, as Sam did, David also shared, in regards to a familial context, when he stated ‘you only live in Canada, but you are not Canadian!’

David used to share about, when he was young, going back to Poland and keeping his connection with Polish culture and language. I tied the dimensions of temporality, place and sociality to this comment and asked David how he felt his lived experiences shaped (and shape) his own identity living in Canada now, and how they can be related to the social context of his family and friends.

David shared,

So that was and is a pretty big part of it for sure; I think because my parents really insisted on keeping my identity as Polish and not Canadian, and, I only heard my dad saying a couple of years ago like: ‘Oh, I actually feel like Canadian now, because I've been living here for so long’. But we never identified (ourselves) as Canadian before; we identified as being Polish, so it is really weird for me. So, sometimes, it is so strange for me to hear that somebody saying like ‘you are Canadian, you are not Polish’. (transcript with David, May 12)

When David exposed what seemed to be a shift regarding his identity and the sense of citizenship interwoven with a place where you live and possibly belong, I started to wonder, again, about the familial context, in a sense of the family we eventually have here in Canada, in which I mean, for example, spouse and children. My thoughts were shared by David, when he explained,

So, this is important, because, when I think about my father saying he feels more Canadian now, and then, with grandkids, the family dynamic has been changed, because, my wife, she is Canadian, so, the kids now, they were born here, so they speak English; they don't speak Polish, not as much I would like they do. So, the family dynamic is totally different, and your way of thinking must be different too, because, before it was just me and my parents, so we could keep been (living) in (our) world, keeping our identity. But, now the family dynamic is totally different, that don't share the same identity, and so it is different. (transcript with David, May 12)

The sense of living and belonging to a place...does geography matter?

Considering the thoughts shared by David and Sam, and uncertain if I could use the words "shift of identity", I recall, some moments, when my wonders were tied to the context of, literally and geographically speaking, places we live and places we lived. In this sense, I started to wonder if the geographical distance regarding the countries we, immigrants, come from, matters regarding (re)shaping our stories to live by and the feeling of citizenship, living and belonging to a new place now.

Given this context, considering that Sam and I came from Brazil, I remember asking Sam if she would like if Brazil and Canada were "neighbours", like U.S. and Canada are, for example. Honestly, before asking Sam, I was a little nervous because, initially, I thought it was a kind of silly question, with no importance regarding (re)shaping our identities and our sense of citizenship here in Canada; and Sam answered,

If Brazil and Canada were neighbours, it would be a dream to me! The easier my visit, and my family, and vice versa, my quality of life and my mental health would be better.

And, because in my head it is as if I separate ‘being a citizen on paper, for my own convenience, to acquire bureaucratic facilities’ and ‘being a citizen in my heart’. So, if it was just crossing a car frontier between Brazil and Canada, I would always feel ‘I’m going back to my country, Brazil, where I’m a citizen.’ (transcript with Sam, July 24)

I still reflect upon Sam’s words and I try to connect with David’s words as well, in regards the concept of being a citizen of one country, living in a place, and the sense of belonging to that place. Would it be possible to measure which “kind” of citizenship status is worth more? For example, being a Canadian citizen stated on a “piece of paper”, and being a Canadian citizen from the heart? And how much all those questions are interwoven with shaping who we are and are becoming and our identities?

Some words that Sam shared still resonate in my mind:

And, when you set the scenario of if Brazil and Canada were “neighbours”, before you finished your question I started to think, ‘What if the situation in Brazil was like the situation in Canada?’, well, I would not need to think twice to go back to Brazil.

(transcript with Sam, July 24)

Yes, I think I understand Sam, me too.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Necessity of Community Organizations for Newcomers:

Sharing Our Voices and Narrative Commonplaces...Many Worlds, Stories and Lives...

This chapter will focus on the importance and the role of the community-based organizations that support newcomers, immigrants, and refugees. More specifically, this chapter will demonstrate, through the voices of David and Sam, how the support and some programs offered by community-based organizations affect and shape the context of identity making when living in a new world composing new stories to live by. This chapter will explore the connection of community-based organizations and our lives in motion, interwoven with being at ease in a ‘world’ and the sense of happiness and openness to new worlds, cultures, and lives. In summation, this chapter will show, borrowing from David’s words, that community-based organizations “create an atmosphere of welcoming, and not institutional; because we have that understanding (about being an immigrant). We are not an institution there, we do more than that”. (transcript with David, September 8).

A Book, Poland, Brazil... some Coffee and a Myriad of Worlds within Community-Based Organizations

Public libraries and travelling-guide books: Impacts on identity making

When I was living in Brazil, for many reasons, I was not in the habit of attending public libraries. Now, living in a western city of Canada, attending public libraries, more specifically one public library near the apartment where I live, is one of my favourite things to do in my daily life. In this moment, I wonder about the research puzzle in regards (re)shaping ourselves living a

‘new’ life in a ‘new’ world; in which, sometimes, some details of our daily lives, like regularly attending public libraries, are part of who we are becoming.

I attend that public library every day; and for different purposes: perhaps to borrow a CD, or to borrow a book, or a DVD; and, more importantly, within the context of this research, to work, which involves reading academic books, articles, writing, and transcribing.

At that library there is a beautiful orange armchair that is my favourite spot to sit to work. Usually I am lucky, and that armchair is available. One day I was there, sat on that comfortable armchair working on my transcripts. More specifically, I was working on David’s transcripts, and many things were passing through my mind. At one moment, I took a break and I stood up looking behind me; and then, I had a strange feeling when I noticed that, literally behind me (that orange armchair), there was a book shelf named ‘Travel’, where many ‘travelling-guide books’ were available to borrow.

Led by a mixed emotion, I looked for the Brazil’s travel guide, and it did not take long to find it; when I found it, I felt a kind of disappointment because I was expecting a thicker book. For many (emotional) reasons, I did not take or open the book. However, I felt glad when all of a sudden I thought ‘where is the travel guide book for Poland?’ Despite having many books (books about countries, places, people, culture, and worlds) on that shelf, it did not take long to find the Poland travel guide (Turp, 2018).

With that book in my hand, I tried to capture the essence of one piece of information written on the cover: ‘The guides that show you what others only tell you’. I wondered what this sentence really meant. I will not judge if sharing people’s stories, their lived experiences within different cultures and countries, is less important than reading that book, I will just focus on what happened after borrowing that book.

Feeling like a tourist within a myriad of worlds

While flipping through the book, at one moment I had the feeling of being a tourist who planned to visit Poland, and the book was a guide showing me places to stay, where to eat and drink, the history of Poland, and much more information that we expect to find in any travel guide. However, I am not a tourist, and besides, I have no plans to visit Poland, at least anytime soon. In fact, the core of my feelings was permeated by the anxiety of hearing from David about the book. Clandinin and Caine (2013) wrote that “in narrative inquiry, conversations are shaped by both the participants and researchers; they are not guided by predetermined questions” (p. 167). Indeed, we do not have a script when doing the interviews and co-composing the field texts; however, since I had the book in my hands, I could not wait for the next interview with David and, in addition to showing him the book, more importantly, I was looking forward to hearing his lived experiences and stories related to how living in Poland shaped who David is, was, and is becoming.

Finally, we had our interview, and the essence of that sentence written at the cover: ‘The guides that show you what others only tell you’ seemed to fade away in my mind while I was paying close attention on David’s words regarding his lived experiences and stories connected to Poland. It was clear that he was happy explaining to me some Polish words written on the book; also, David was excited to show me some pictures of landscapes, traditional regions, places, and cities in Poland. Indeed, it was a lovely interview; I learned a few words in Polish and, more importantly, I learned that what others tell you means a lot; stories of lives, stories of people, connected to a place and time, really matter.

Given this context, I shared some thoughts with David; I told David that when I was flipping through the book, seeing the pictures (places, landscapes, cities, etc.) I started to wonder that if I was not doing this research, I would ever be interested in checking out that book and being curious about Poland's culture. Perhaps, unless I was planning a trip to another country, I would never feel a keen interest to know about different cultures, different countries, different people, different worlds, and lives. In this way, I shared with David that, probably because of this research, I believe that I see the context of multiculturalism in a different way now. I see in a different way how people are, how people come (and came) here, and, one important personal wonder that I shared with David, was how attending community-based organizations that support newcomers, immigrants and refugees, just after landing in a western city of Canada, meant (and means) a lot to me; how this context shaped my life, who I am and who I am becoming.

Cultures and lives shared at the community-based organizations

After sharing these thoughts, and a moment of silence, David and I started to talk about the importance and role of community-based organizations that support newcomers, immigrants, and refugees. More specifically, David, who works at one of these community-based organizations, referred to some essential programs offered to the clients (newcomers, immigrants and refugees) that aim to help them (us) to feel welcome, to improve our English skills and, more importantly, to understand our lives in motion, (re)shaping who we are becoming in a new world. As David shared,

There is a program at some community-based organizations, like we have at the one I work, called 'Coffee and Conversation' Program; and it is an interesting program because, initially it relates to a way that people can practice their English skills, through

informal conversation; however, it is also about everybody else's culture. So, you are sitting there, and you have someone that is from China, someone from Brazil, from Poland, from Syria, wherever. And people talk; and, when I go around each table, everybody is talking about similarities and differences that they have in their cultures. So, it is interesting. I think even if it is minus 45 degrees [Celsius], they are still there. So, working there (at that community-based organization) is really expanded, expanded my knowledge, my interest about all the people's stories. So, it is a really interesting place to work. (transcript with David, July 28)

Wondering about these words David shared, I thought of Sam for two reasons: Sam came from Brazil, and I was reminded during our interviews, how we talked about similarities and differences in our cultures between Brazil and Canada. However, the most important reason for thinking of Sam was because, like David, Sam also worked at a community-based organization that supports newcomers, immigrants, and refugees. Sam and I had a moment during our interviews where we talked about the importance and role of community-based organizations that support newcomers, immigrants, and refugees. Sam shared her thoughts,

Working with different people, from different cultures, for the first time in my life, I really had to learn to understand and respect other cultures. So, I had to learn, for example, when coming to the reception, when it was the first time to welcome my new client, and then only the man talks to me, the woman be quiet. And it was very interesting; that is why I think when you work with immigrants, you have to investigate and learn in depth, because just having common sense there would not be doing well for the immigrants. (transcript with Sam, July 24)

When working on the transcript of this interview, I noticed that after Sam shared these words, I interrupted her asking what she meant when she said “because just having common sense there”, more specifically, I wondered if she was connecting this sentence with the context of understanding other cultures and people more deeply; Sam clarified,

Yes! Exactly! What I mean by common sense is that I need to stop thinking that only my culture is right. Other cultures should be respected! So, what I judge that is right in my culture, maybe is not right for everyone, right? I think this is what I mean by common sense: really being open to understanding that there are other cultures, different ways of being, living, dressing, behaving, and that all people deserve to be respected. And we must try to understand the reason behind it, beyond the common sense. (transcript with Sam, July 24)

Connecting Community-Based Organizations with Our Lives in Motion: Composing (New) Stories, Stories to Live by, and (Re)Shaping Ourselves as Immigrants

Sam and David’s thinking about being open and understanding different ways of living, different cultures, people and lives, and mostly, that all people deserve to be respected, are interwoven with Adichie’s (2009) words, when she asserted that stories matter and there is never a single story about any place or person. In this context, I comprehend that (re)shaping ourselves, as immigrants, and composing new stories in a different world, means that stories to live by are (co)constructed within the plurality of worlds, people, cultures, and lives in motion (Guerrero, 2011; Lugones, 1987).

Therefore, this understanding of lives in motion, and the plurality of worlds, and plurality of lives and stories to live by lead to Greene’s (1995) words, when she stated “there are

geographies and landscapes still to be explored by those of us hoping that we do not all have to be strangers to each other [...] but that we can strive to interpret our new and many-faceted world” (pp. 15-16).

Undoubtedly, all those thoughts, sentences, and quotes are connected with a myriad of worlds within community-based organizations that support newcomers, immigrants and refugees, in a way that they are connected to many lives in motion, stories to live by and, more importantly, how we (re)shape ourselves as we enter in a new world. I consider now about how being open and sharing lived stories within a myriad of worlds, lives, and cultures when attending the programs at community-based organizations was essential in shaping who I am and who I am becoming. I felt glad, during one interview, that I could share my thinking and experience with David when he commented,

We always try to create an atmosphere of welcoming, and not institutional; we are different people, but we have the same passion towards our clients. We all share that feeling that we are going to do everything to make the people feel welcome, because either we are immigrants or coming from immigrants’ family. So, we know that experience; we know how difficult it is. So, every time somebody walks through that door, and sit down to the registration, I think how difficult it was to my parents; I think about all those struggles, all those basement suites that we lived in, forms that my parents would bring back home for not understanding, parent teacher interviews; and how, over the years, the struggles in becoming successful and citizen of this country. So, every time somebody walks through that door, I think there is practically the first place that they usually attend as newcomers. So, you need to be so patient and kind, and this is one thing

that I really love in doing there because we have that understanding; we are not an institution there, we do more than that. (transcript with David, September 8)

Coming to a New Place: ‘World’- Travelling and Being at Ease in a ‘World’

‘World’- travelling when working with a plurality of worlds, stories, lives and cultures

Sharing our lived experiences is important in building new stories to live by and (re)shaping who we are and are becoming as we enter into the midst of other people’s lives. In other words, it is important to travel through the multiplicity of lives and worlds, because “travelling to someone’s ‘world’ is a way of identifying with them [...] because by travelling to their ‘world’ we can understand what it is to be them and what it is to be ourselves in their eyes” (Lugones, 1987, p. 17).

Therefore, this understanding of lives in motion, the plurality of worlds, plurality of lives, and stories to live by lead to Clandinin (2013) words, when she stated “borderlands as spaces that exist around borders where one lives within the possibility of the multiplicity of different experiences [...] researchers, including narrative inquirers, frequently find themselves crossing cultural discourses, ideologies and institutional boundaries” (p. 137).

In this context, I comprehend that (re)shaping ourselves, as immigrants, and composing new stories in a different world, means that stories to live by are (co)constructed within the plurality of worlds and lives in motion (Guerrero, 2011; Lugones, 1987).

Inspired by these thoughts and quotes, and wondering about my own experience, connecting with the research puzzle, as a narrative inquirer, and living as an immigrant, and many times having personal clashes regarding culture, daily life activities, beliefs, I remember when, during one interview with David, and one interview with Sam, I shared, with both of

them, the same thoughts regarding how important it is to have participants, within the context of this research, that, at the same time are immigrants themselves, and also work in community-based organizations that support newcomers, refugees, and immigrants.

My personal experience of feeling very welcomed when I first entered and attended community-based organizations after coming to reside in a Western Canadian city was important as I learned to negotiate living in a new place. I am sure many other people who attend community-based organizations feel (and felt) very welcomed too. After sharing these ideas and feelings with David and Sam, I ended asking them, during individual interviews, about how they feel and see themselves when working with people that came from different countries, different cultures, different lived experiences, and different stories to live by. I asked David and Sam the same question, which was ‘do you think your life would be different if you had another job?’.

And David answered,

Definitely! I probably would not be so happy. I have been in many different fields of work, but I have always been really passionate about the work that I do now and I have always wanted to pursue this field, just because I feel like I have been doing it all my life. I mean, for example, since my mum's English wasn't as good, I was always kind of helping her filling forms, a kind of interpreter, so, I am extremely passionate about the job that I have. And it's like exciting to think who I am going to meet today. So, meeting people and hearing their stories and remembering how much my parents struggled when we first came to Canada. So, I have like a really genuine prospective of what life means when you move to a different country; and so that's why I enjoy so much working there, and I really put my heart into it when I work with people that I meet. Just because of my own experience meaning what my parents went through. (transcript with David, April 7)

David shared his thinking by attending to the familial context when travelling amongst myriad worlds (Lugones, 1987; Menon et al., 2015) which is not only interwoven with our own stories to live by, but also, is part of how we identify and understand lived multiplicities within a plurality of worlds and lives (Lugones, 1987).

When Sam shared her thoughts regarding the same question she did not attend to the familial context in the same way David did; however, this context never meant Sam did not travel to a myriad of worlds, attending to the multiplicity of lives, stories to live by, and making an important connection with her work and a sense of social justice. As Sam explained,

So, I am very blessed to have a job where I can have deeper conversations with people. So, when you don't have an exchange, it can be very hard to understand other people's culture, of really looking at the world with each other's eyes. So, I think working in a settlement agency allows me this exchange every day; and then living in Canada, you are exposed to multiculturalism; but that does not mean that you are coming a more tolerant person, or that you understand more, or that you accept that your culture is not right. And this is interesting! I think it's two completely different things. I think you're exposed to seeing different people, but if you are not willing to open yourself, your social and cultural judgment is still there. (transcript with Sam, March 29)

Being at ease in a 'world' and the sense of happiness and openness to new worlds, cultures and lives

Clandinin and Caine (2013) wrote that social actions make significant contributions to the theoretical justification of narrative inquiry. As the authors stated "one of the significant contributions is frequently to the ways in which others understand the lives of people, in the

assumptions and values they place on lived experiences, and making visible the silences, disruptions, and complexities inherent in people's experiences" (p. 171).

Wondering about understanding the lives of people interwoven with travelling amongst myriad worlds (Lugones, 1987), I shared with Sam, after her thoughts above, about the possibility of, sometimes, feeling sad for working (and living) within many different lived experiences and stories to live by. I asked Sam if having the knowledge and experiences she had about multiculturalism and a sense of social justice, interwoven with many different people's stories and lives, would sometimes bring her, as a negative aspect of her work, some suffering. Sam explained,

When you talk about suffering, two things come to my mind: the first one is still, for example, having to live with people who are not so open to other cultures, and so hearing some prejudice, and you try to show that it is not the way things are. So, as this person did not live, did not talk to other people, that still makes generalization about cultures, so I think this is a part of suffering. And I think the second suffering is, by working in this environment, you feel kind of responsible for some people. So, for example, I've already had some clients who suffered domestic violence. So, as much as it is not your job, you feel responsible, you are emotionally weary too, and, you can do nothing; you can show the way, but the decision belongs to that person. Then, I think it is these two sufferings: feel responsible for people and have to live with people who are not open to different cultures. (transcript with Sam, March 29)

Lugones (1987) wrote that "without knowing the other's 'world', one does not know the other, and without knowing the other one is really alone in the other's presence because the other is only dimly present" (p. 18). Considering this statement by Lugones, I wonder about Sam's

thoughts; specifically, I wonder how the sense of feeling responsible for someone and not being open to different cultures seem poles apart in our own lives and in relation with others.

Certainly, our stories to live by and how we live in relation with others shape how we live in our 'world' and this context is part of being at ease in a 'world' (Lugones, 1987). In this sense, Lugones (1987) highlighted some ways of being at ease in a 'world'; as the author described that one way of being at ease in a particular 'world' is by being normatively happy; according to the author, another way of being at ease in a 'world' is by being humanly bonded ("I am with those I love and they love me too", p. 12). Finally, Lugones (1987), also pointed out that one way of being at ease in a 'world' is sharing stories with others, especially daily stories, like the program offered by this community-based organization called 'Coffee and Conversation'.

I wonder about Sam and David's words in relation with their work within community-based organizations that support newcomers, refugees, immigrants, and the connection with Lugones' words, regarding being at ease in our own 'world' and when travelling to someone's 'world'. And all of that interwoven with the multiplicity of lives, worlds, lived experiences, and stories to live by. My mind travels through some thoughts shared by David,

So, my work, it is more hands on. We call it front line work. A front-line worker is someone who works directly with people, and for example, in my case, with people from different countries and cultures. So, you need to develop a professional relationship at work first, and then it could turn into more personal. And this is a kind of thing that I explain to lot of the clients, that culturally here, people normally are not going to bring you into their lives; whereas I come from a culture that we just talk; we kind of don't think too much, we just say. The other person will not think 'oh, it is too personal'. So, I

don't want to change who they (immigrants) are, I just want them to realize that some things are culturally different. (transcript with David, September 8)

Many words that David shared during our interview resonated in my head for a long time. More specifically, I felt intrigued about the sentence 'whereas I come from a culture that we just talk; we kind of don't think too much, we just say'; in a sense that I started to wonder about Brazilian culture regarding sharing our personal stories and lived experiences with others. Probably, like David, I also come from a culture where we just talk, we do not think too much, measuring words, we share feelings and emotions easily embedded in our daily lives.

I also wondered with Sam about the connection of her work and her cultural background. I shared with Sam that her work involves sharing lived stories, personal stories, that, many times, can bring some emotional and cultural tensions. In this way, considering the Brazilian culture, we feel at being at ease in a 'world' when we hug, when we make eyes contact, and more importantly, when we talk, sharing lived stories. I wondered, with Sam, professionally speaking, if having a Brazilian culture regarding openness, would make some difference, in a positive or negative way, in her work; more especially when considering the relationships with her clients (newcomers).

Sam revealed,

What I see, in terms of my profession, is that the clients who created a deeper relationship with me and opened more, they were women. I think women, regardless of culture, have a bigger predisposition; maybe because of the lack of people who understand the situation, with whom they could open. So, they saw me at the door, and they could throw all the despair, the doubts, the conflicts. I think that there is an identification, maybe because I woman too, but also, I think that is because I am Brazilian. So, I allowed

myself, during my professional sessions, to give personal examples, and that helped a lot in creating the connection, helped them to feel confident, helped them to realize they also could open. And, sometimes, months later, some clients would return and the feedback I was always given was: ‘with you I feel comfortable, with you I can talk’. So, I really think that my Brazilian cultural background, of being more open, helped me to be a better professional. (transcript with Sam, July 24)

Living as Immigrant: My (Our) Identity, and...What as Your Level? Is This an Illusion?

Considering Sam’s thoughts regarding our cultural background interwoven with being and living as an immigrant, and all of that embedded with the sense of identity making, I raised some wonders to Sam. I told Sam that sometimes, on a personal level, for some people, we, as immigrants, are seen to have a starting point at level zero. So, the first thing we must do is to prove; we must prove that we are able to accomplish some tasks, like to teach, to work, or even doing things related to your leisure time, like playing a guitar, for example. I think that for some people, we need first to prove that, for at least some things; because for them, our starting point is at level zero.

Considering my life as an immigrant and interwoven with the research puzzle, the expression “starting point at level zero” brought me some feelings about living in motion and, at the same time, feelings about shaping (new) stories to live by and my lived experiences in a sense that all was (is) clashing in between worlds.

I was reminded when Dewey (1952) wrote that “a fully integrated personality exists only when successive experiences are integrated with one another” (p. 43). In addition, according to Dewey (1952), “every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before

and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after” (p. 27). I wonder if “starting point at level zero” is part of an illusion. Probably, considering Dewey’s words, after we were born there is no more “level zero”; however, we, unfortunately, must ponder living our lives embedded on judgments, stereotypes, and the eternal assessment provided by our or one other culture about if what we are and what we do (or capable to do) is good or even enough to be accepted within this or that culture.

Within the context stated above, considering the research puzzle, and all of that tied with the importance of the community-based organizations, I understand that, in fact, what means “starting point at level zero” is part of an illusion. In other words, we, immigrants, when attending community-based organizations could not measure (or be measured) at any level in this regard. Thus, embedded on the atmosphere of the myriad of worlds, stories, and lives, we must consider that “level zero” is only connected to judgements, and not our lives.

Those thoughts deeply permeated my mind; and I did not have chance to share them with Sam, as she seemed to feel intrigued with another expression that we raised. Sam shared:

You said one sentence, an expression that I loved. Yes, it is as if we always have to prove, we always have to prove. We are always proving; proving that we are able to do things, that we can speak the language, that we are not bad, that we are polite, that we know how to respect others, that we will not steal, and as if we always have to prove everything. (transcript with Sam, July 24)

I wonder about not only the fact that, sometimes, we need to prove to some people that we are able to be and live in a decent way, but I also consider how much this context can affect our identity as we compose our lives as immigrants. Certainly, we, immigrants, do not need or even have any reason to ‘spread the word’ that we are immigrants; in other words, we do not

keep saying here and there that we are immigrants. However, sometimes your English will indicate that you are immigrant; sometimes your phenotype will say that; and sometimes both will say that you are immigrant. But, why? Why do we need to prove to some people that we are able to do certain things, and live well, as we were not immigrants in the way they might imagine? I wonder if, above all, we need (or want) to prove and show ourselves that maybe we do not wish to be an immigrant. I reflect that all those challenges, uncertainties about who we are and are becoming, about (re)shaping our stories to live by, is something that we, as immigrants, will always be exposed to when living within a multicultural world and travelling to someone's 'world'.

When sharing some of these wonders with Sam, mostly in regards that we will be always exposed to some challenges, and maybe, even having a perfect English, we will always be an immigrant, Sam noted:

And look! I already hold a Canadian citizenship! I am a Canadian citizen! but, because my first language is not English, I can be looked and treated differently. And we might even get into another strand that is, as much as I am and can feel like a Canadian citizen, how do Canadians look at me? And how does this affect my own identity? (transcript with Sam, July 24)

As we balance our lives in motion considering the 'world' inside a community-based organization, and the 'real world outside', we have to highlight the importance and role of community-based organizations. In this sense, it is important to consider not only programs like English classes, but mostly, in regards of being in a safe space, that will, eventually, (re)shape the sense of identity and how we look to each other living within a plurality of worlds as we compose new lived stories.

Composing New Stories to Live by Based on Previous Experiences: If I Could do (Some)

Things Differently...If I Could Travel (Back) in Time...

Our stories to live by and the sense of being in a place: shaping and reshaping who we are and are becoming

‘How do Canadians look at me? And how does this affect my own identity?’ (transcript with Sam, July 24). These wonders recall Richardson (2001) who posed,

Writing about our lives suggests two important things: first, it directs us to understand ourselves reflexively as persons writing from particular positions at specific times; and second, it frees us from trying to write a single text in which everything is said at once to everyone, a text where the ‘complete’ life is told. The life can be told over and over again, differently nuanced. For it is known differently dependent upon where one sits in time in relationship to one’s life (p. 36).

In addition, the author stressed that sharing stories about our lives can lead to some uncomfortable feelings regarding what we learn about ourselves and others.

Reflecting on this context, Andrews (2007) described how the understanding of herself and the understanding of being in a place were deeply (re)shaped by nurturing different and diverse voices. In this sense, this context is important when we consider the process of telling, retelling, living, and reliving embodied in cross-cultural stories to live by.

Huber, Caine, Huber, and Steeves (2013) also explored the context about how our identities and culture are intimately connected to the land and to the stories lived and shared. The authors asserted “being on the land calls forth stories embedded within the land and, too, within

our bones. Living in the midst of these stories, and our interactions with them, they become part of who we are and who we are becoming” (p. 215).

All those previous paragraphs were inspired by the sentences Sam posed at the beginning of this section; however, while writing and wondering about some quotes and sentences stated above, my mind travelled back and forward to places, time, and people who I know, who I met, lived with and, not only have shared lived stories, but, also, have shaped who I am (and who I am becoming).

Interweaving stories of place, more specifically when connecting land and identity, with my personal life now as an immigrant, I recall that, when I was living in Brazil, I used to travel to schools I worked every day during the week; and I clearly remember when, sometimes, 11pm or later, tired and longing to reach home, I used to drive my car through that bend on the road where I could finally see the city I lived; and then, totally unconsciously, I used to think (and feel) “home, home again”. The sense of home for me never meant the house I lived itself, but the place I lived interwoven with my feelings, lived experiences, and stories to live by. Now, as an immigrant I confess that I am not sure if I would have the same feeling when driving my car through some road and seeing the city I live now.

Wondering about these thoughts and feelings, Palmer (2005) described “how spaces become places through human action on the landscape, and how people come to know the land through personal experience” (p. 159). In this context, the expression ‘where you live’, instead of ‘where you stay’, shows how interwoven is our life (shaping who we are) and our stories to live by with the place we live (Palmer, 2005). According to the author, narratives of place mean the stories of people, their lived experiences, “the stories are the land” (p. 166), as our stories are our people, our lives.

Within this perspective, Basso (1996) drew the conception of place-making (world). According to the author, building and sharing place-making (world) means that “portions of the past are brought into being” (p. 6). In addition, Basso (1996) wrote that “if place-making is a way of constructing the past, a venerable means of doing human history, it is also a way of constructing social traditions and, in the process, personal and social identities. We are, in sense, the place-worlds we imagine” (p. 7).

Wondering about the sense of being in a place, interwoven with (re)shaping our stories to live by, and sometimes colliding between worlds, my mind travels back and forward through these following words:

“In this transition

Not only was I at substantial physical distance from where I am from

But I was also

At substantial distance from the kinds of experiences that shaped my early years

My early identity” (Young et al., 2015, p. 6).

Now, my mind travels back and forth reflecting about the conception of place-making (world) and the sense of this chapter when considering the importance and role of community-based organizations. Within this context, I recall when one day I was attending an English class, and our teacher asked us, all immigrants, to share about some place that we lived or would like to recommend someone to visit on our home country. That was one of the most memorable days for me. I still have flashes about all of us, immigrants, sharing places, stories, culture, and history that we lived, and also that we wish people could visit places that are not only places, but rather, people, lives and all the place-worlds we can imagine.

Explain to me what it means to be an immigrant...an eternal paradox

In exploring the context of the multiplicity of worlds and identities, connected with (re)shaping lives in motion, and the understanding of who we are and are becoming, I recall some thoughts that Sam shared during our first interview:

Each person has a different life, everyone has a story, right? And probably experiences the culture differently; so, maybe as sometimes we do not understand our own story, it gets so complicated to look at the world with the other's eyes. (transcript with Sam, March 29)

After reflecting on these words, and considering the sentences 'How do Canadians look at me? And how does this affect my own identity?' (transcript with Sam, July 24), interwoven with the preceding paragraphs, I shared with Sam the wonder of being an immigrant, (re)shaping ourselves, and considering who we are and are becoming living (sometimes) in between worlds. Within this context, I asked Sam if there would be something she would do differently embedded within the decision of moving to Canada.

In other words, and beyond her personal lived stories, I asked Sam to imagine not only her own experiences living as an immigrant in Canada, but also to consider that, as Sam works as settlement advisor in a community-based organization, she could expose, to a newcomer, considering her personal and professional opinion, all the feelings, emotions, positive, and negative aspects regarding what "means" to immigrate to Canada. Undoubtedly, this wonder was difficult, not only to elaborate and share with Sam, but also to deeply reflect about; as Sam explained,

I think it is really complicated. I would say that immigrating is a very big change in your life; many things that you hope will happen, will not happen; and many things that you do not expect, will happen, and you will be very grateful for this. It will be difficult; there will be times when you will think about giving up, at other times you think it was the best thing you did in your life. And while I was answering, I was reflecting a lot about the issue of the eternal paradox that is our life as immigrants; immigration is an eternal paradox, at least for the first generation, an eternal paradox. (transcript with Sam, September 25)

As it has always happened during our interviews, we had a moment of silence, permeated by a moment of tension. Certainly, many thoughts were colliding in our minds (and hearts). Personally, I remember that Sam's words 'immigration is an eternal paradox, at least for the first generation' and 'immigrating is a very big change in your life' emotionally reached me in a way that our interview, after that moment of silence, was rooted on sharing personal stories connected to our families in Brazil.

In fact, 'immigration is an eternal paradox' practically became a kind of trademark sentence embedded on our interviews. Often, we, maybe more Sam than I, would come back to this statement, bringing, and sharing thoughts about the 'eternal paradox of being an immigrant'. More specifically, during one interview, when Sam connected the 'eternal paradox' with being the 'first generation' of immigrants, we had the strange feeling about how our stories seemed not only so close, but also immersed within the paradox of being so new and so old at the same time. In other words, we shared thoughts about how we had built a professional career (and life) in Brazil, and then (all the sudden?), as newcomers, we had a feeling of, at least within the professional context, starting over, and with the uncertainty if things would work. And our

thoughts and concerns were not framed on the financial context, but on our hopes of being and living, professionally, happy.

Within this perspective, Sam also shared many stories involving newcomers that she met and assisted, as settlement advisor, at one community-based organization, when she had a chance to exchange experiences with a multiplicity of worlds, lives, cultures, stories to live by, and, within the professional context, people that came with different levels of education, degrees, careers, and skills, that now, living here as immigrants, sometimes (need to – a very delicate word) work (during the first years living in Canada, or sometimes forever) in entry level jobs.

Those words, thoughts, anxieties, and dreams shared brought us more moments of silence and tension, where we probably were reflecting again about our own lives, and about the lives of many other immigrants, and the dreams connected with the happiness of our (and their) children (as the next generation of immigrants). And after many doubts, wonders, and feelings shared, Sam, attending her own, and many other lives, as immigrant(s) interwoven with the context of personal dreams and the familial context living within the ‘eternal paradox’, argued how the question of what it “means” to immigrate to Canada would be so delicate when answering that to someone from your family, comparing answering to someone that you have never met before.

If I could change it...if I could travel (back) in time...

I am not sure why, or how it happened, but, after Sam shared her thoughts, we did not have a moment of silence; instead, I immediately asked her one question I had shared with David during one of our interviews; which was: ‘if you could travel (back) in time, and imagining that you can keep your memories, would you do anything, differently, regarding your own life, identity, family?’ And Sam shared,

I think if I could travel back in time, I would use the last 5 or 6 months that I still was in Brazil to study English. I spent the last months in Brazil with the certainty that I would come to Canada, so I tried to study English, but not much; I should have arrived in Canada with better English. This would have prevented many problems and frustrations. That would be the first thing. The second thing I would do differently is that I would have left home and faced the new city before I did. (transcript with Sam, September 25)

I still remember during that moment on our interview, when I could barely reflect on Sam's words, when all the sudden she looked at me and said: 'and you, Luis?' Even though I had already asked David the same question, I confess that I had never thought about my own life embedded on that wonder. So, I felt astonished when needed to wonder about my own life within this context

After a moment of silence, when my mind was travelling back in time and space, interwoven with a myriad of peoples' stories lived and shared, I told Sam that, if I could travel (back) in time, I would like to have moved to Canada younger than I am. Maybe when I was 30 and not 40 years old. However, I shared with Sam how, sometimes, our lives are led by the unpredictable and inconstancy of circumstances. In other words, I shared with Sam that I had never considered moving to another country when I was younger; maybe because of that, I did not prepare myself, regarding English, and more importantly, about my feelings and emotions embodied when planning to move to another country. In this sense, I told Sam that things practically happened all of the sudden. And I shared with Sam that this context was (and is) important in my life.

Again, we had a moment of silence, and then Sam raised some thoughts,

Exactly! Exactly! And you know that thinking about it now, you know something I would not do differently? Something I would keep the way it happened? How fast I had to decide to come (to Canada). Because I think if I had had more time to think about that, if I had told my husband something like ‘oh! I think I am not ready yet, let's wait six more months’ so I think the longer I thought about it, I think I would not have come. (transcript with Sam, September 25)

I practically interrupted Sam asking her if this context would be (or is) good or bad; and then she explained,

I think it would be bad, because I would not live everything I am living now right? I think I would be scared; I think the lack of confidence in myself, thinking to myself that I do not speak English, something like ‘what are you doing? Moving to a country that does not speak your language, are you crazy?!’ So maybe if I had had time to think about it, I would not have come. But I really believe that all the things happened in such a fast and crazy way that I had no choice. (transcript with Sam, September 25)

Reflecting on many (personal) wonders and upon Sam’s words (shared above), I have a feeling of living in motion, living in the midst and, embedded on the myriad of people’s lived stories that are composed and shared as we move within the unpredictable and inconstant way on the fabric of our lives.

I also reflect about the sense of being in a place and the sense of belonging, living here in Canada now. As I consider my thoughts, explored at the beginning of this thesis, about the feeling of living in motion, and (re)shaping myself, connected with the sense of being in a place interwoven with those songs I listen. Within this context, I reflect about the title of this section; I reflect that, probably because the time that I have been living here, and, more importantly,

probably because all the stories shared here, I have the feeling, when listening now to those songs refereed at the beginning of this thesis, of living in motion, of being in a place, but not anymore within a linear context of my unfolding life.

My mind now travels back and forth in time and space, connected with people's lived stories, and all of that interwoven again with the words of this title's section "Composing New Stories to Live by Based on Previous Experiences: If I Could do (Some) Things Differently...If I Could Travel (Back) in Time...", and then some thoughts that David shared inspire more and more my unfolding life...

Well, if I could travel back in time, I do not think I would do something different. So, looking back now, I already thought that it would be great to had grown up there (in Poland), within their culture, because even though I grew up here, sometimes I think I don't feel fully Canadian; I feel it is complicated sometimes, because there is an important presence of that culture in my life, my parents tried to maintain it, and I love it, but I still feel a struggle sometimes. But, no, I don't feel I would change anything, because I was very fortunate to be able to experience so much, to go back, be there, and be here later, to move around. Now, looking back there, thinking about the relationships and experiences that I had, it is not everybody that has that. (transcript with David, September 8)

And now my mind travels through Connelly and Clandinin (2006) words, when they argued that our daily lives are shaped by our own stories and by other people's lived stories, we meet in the midst of our and their lives, and throughout this unfolding life, we can identify and come to understand the past, present, and how it will shape the future.

Ultimately, the sense of openness, safe, welcome, and all the support that we encounter when attending community-based organizations that support newcomers, immigrants and refugees, is essential in (re)shaping our stories to live by as we compose new lived stories in a new world. Undoubtedly, sharing lived stories connected with a myriad of worlds within community-based organizations, represents a way to understand lives in motion, and who we are and who we are becoming.

Unfolding Lives and the Plurality of Worlds within Community-Based Organizations: Composing and Sharing (New) Lived Stories and Stories to Live by

Clandinin (2013) wrote that “understanding lives in motion creates openings for new relationships to emerge, for lives to unfold in unexpected ways [...] there is no final telling, no final story, and no one singular story we can tell” (p. 205). There is a beauty of (different) worlds, the beauty of stories that live in silences and then began to be told, unfolding and touching lives (Young et al., 2015).

Rahatzad et al. (2016) asserted that the intersection of multiculturalism and narrative inquiry allows for multiple perspectives and interpretations of lived experiences. The authors pointed out that multiculturalism within narrative inquiry is not something to be defined, rather it must be allowed to be unpredictable, in the sense of how the plurality of worlds and lived experiences are storied; consequently, the connection of narrative inquiry and multiculturalism thrives on learning from examination of social relations, culture, and stories to live by.

Attending community-based organizations that support newcomers, immigrants, and refugees have (re)shaped my life in a way that the research puzzle is now interwoven with who I am and who I am becoming. As a result, I have the feeling that, if I had not attended community-

based organizations that support newcomers, immigrants, and refugees after moving to a western city of Canada, not only my life would be different now, but, within the context of the research puzzle, I would feel and see the plurality of worlds, lives and cultures differently; not better or worse, but differently.

David and I discussed the necessity and role of community-based organizations during more than one interview, and now, my thoughts focus on how, in fact, borrowing some David's words, 'we (community-based organizations) are not an institution there, we do more than that. So, every time somebody walks through that door, and sit down to the registration, I think how difficult it was to my parents.' (transcript with David, September 8).

Indeed, community-based organizations not only create an atmosphere of welcoming to immigrants, and refugees, but, more importantly, they also provide us, immigrants and refugees, which normally attend community-based organizations as newcomers, the atmosphere, the empowerment, and the strength to compose and share new lived experiences, new stories to live by, within the plurality of worlds, living in motion, and the unfolding lives and (new) stories.

And this context matters, because as Clandinin (2013) argued, "we need to inquire into all these kinds of stories, stories that have become intertwined, interwoven into who we are and are becoming. These stories live in us, in our bodies, as we move and live in the world" (p. 22). And this is important to consider, because our lived stories and our stories to live by are what make meaning for our lives (Xu et al., 2007).

CHAPTER FIVE

Embracing Multicultural Worlds, (Re) Shaping Stories to Live by, and Composing (New)

Lives...Looking Back and Imagining Forward through Narrative Inquiry

Embracing Multicultural Worlds through Narrative Inquiry

Composing (new) lives as we move forward as narrative inquirers: Moving from field texts to the final research text...

Clandinin and Caine (2013) wrote that “moving from field texts to interim and final research texts is a complicated and iterative process full of twists and turns” (p. 172). Clandinin et al. (2006) also pointed out, when narrative inquirers begin to compose interim and final research texts, we draw our attention to identifying moments of tension that we noted from participants in their experiences. Those moments of tension are an important part of narrative inquiry research; they are often when we, narrative inquirers, attend to the dimensions of temporality, sociality and place, and begin to see disruptions, fragmentations, and silences in participants’ and our own lives (Clandinin & Caine, 2013).

Inspired by these words, my mind travels back and forth, wondering about those moments of tension that arose during the interviews with David and Sam. At first, I saw and felt those moments of tension as something emotionally difficult to deal with and overcome; during those moments I wanted to emotionally pretend that we were not having any tension. Now I reflect that those moments of tension never meant something emotionally negative or something that we should have avoided and wished to not happen.

Indeed, I understand now that those moments of tension are connected with the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, as Clandinin and Caine (2013) asserted “the inquiry space

opens up a space to see the knots that live within each of our lives' fabrics, and how these are interwoven into the experiences under study [...] the process of narrative inquiry can be therapeutic, that is, it can draw attention to the difficult places, times, or contexts in which we all live" (p. 173).

Now, thinking of David and Sam, and considering all those moments of tension, permeating our shared stories, silences, eye contact, expressions, etc. I consider how they are connected to the methodology of narrative inquiry. They were all embedded in the process of narrative inquiry, of moving from field texts to final research texts, we began to see disruptions, fragmentations and how, when attending to our lives in motion and in the midst of lives with the participants, our lived experiences are interwoven with the research puzzle (Clandinin et al., 2006; Clandinin & Caine, 2013).

Given this perspective, Clandinin and Caine (2013) words resonate in my head, as the authors argued that,

Field texts are read and reread, looked at and relooked at, and attention is paid simultaneously to temporality, sociality, and place. It is the attention to the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space that then moves deeper into the meaning of the experiences. While there are three dimensions in the inquiry space, these dimensions are often intertwined and knotted. In some ways the three dimensions form the fabric of life experience. The knots tie stories to place, people, and time, and one dimension cannot be understood without the others. (p. 172)

As I start to reflect about the fabric of life experience and connect with this last section, which intends to be a discussion about the research puzzle of understanding lived experiences

and (re)reshaping stories to live by of newcomers who moved to Canada, my mind and my heart travel back and forth in time and space, within the plurality of worlds, people, and lives.

Reflecting about understanding the research puzzle as a narrative inquirer and at the same time as a newcomer, I remember feeling that being a narrative inquirer could be very delicate when attending to the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space with participants. By this I mean that sometimes those moments of tension we shared were emotionally vulnerable in the sense that they lead us to consider moving beyond the research puzzle, as we want to remove ourselves from the phenomena under study and the accompanying tensions. Clandinin and Caine (2013) reminded us as narrative inquirers, that “we do not remove ourselves from our research puzzles and observe phenomena or analyze people, but, rather we become part of the ongoing negotiation of making meaning of experience” (p. 177).

As narrative inquirers, we can live with difficult stories and experiences, and we build a relational space with the participants; we stay with them, in ways that shape the composing of the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space marked by ethics and attitudes of openness, mutual vulnerability, reciprocity, and care (Caine et al., 2013; Clandinin & Caine, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Clandinin and Caine (2013) stressed that narrative inquirers “need to attend to the ways individual narratives of experience are embedded in social, cultural, familial, linguistic, and institutional narratives. Each inquiry reflects the ambiguities, complexities, difficulties, and uncertainties encountered by the inquirer as she/he lives in the field and writes field texts and interim and final research texts” (pp. 171-172).

Those sentences spark my mind and my heart in a way that I can see and feel myself immersed on many stories shared with David and Sam; more specifically, many lived experiences and shared stories, that will be highlighted and reflected/discussed further, resonate

in my life, maybe, on our lives, as we (re)shape and compose new stories to live by in the midst of the plurality of lives in motion.

In this way, as we compose (new) lives and stories to live by, as we begin to see disruptions, fragmentations, and silences in participants' and our own lives (Clandinin & Caine, 2013), the context of the relational inquiry space beyond the narrative inquirer and participants is important to understand in the multiple dimensions of looking backward and forward within stories. Stories that are lived, told, retold, and relived. Stories that circulate and fill spaces between people (Caine et al., 2013; Clandinin, 2006).

Therefore, the narrative inquirer and participants are embedded within a social, cultural, and familial context that opens the “possibility to continuously inquire into the social fabric of experience and to not lose sight that people are always becoming” (Clandinin & Caine, 2013, p. 176); and all of that means that we are rooted in the process of always composing (new) lives and stories to live by, (re)shaping ourselves.

(Re)shaping stories to live by...do we have an answer for the research wonder?

During one interview, David shared the thought that people who come from their home country bring a lot with them, bringing more than they have in their suitcase. David also shared that some people “want to maintain the culture of their country, recreate that kind of life, whereas there are other people that come and recreate themselves, as a new person” (transcript with David, June 23).

Inspired by David's words and considering Sam's thoughts when she shared that ‘each person has a different life, everyone has a story, and maybe sometimes we do not understand our own story’ (transcript with Sam, March 29), I reflect on the research puzzle framed around

understanding lived experiences and (re)reshaping stories to live by of immigrants who moved to Canada.

I believe that those words shared by Sam and David indicate a strong connection with the word '(re)shaping' - using brackets. As already previously explicated, the essence of using brackets relates to our possible openness when living in a new world. However, it is important to consider now that there is something that can veil the meaning of 'openness', which I mean here a connection with Sam's words; more specifically "and maybe sometimes we do not understand our own story" (transcript with Sam, March 29).

Given this context, I am reminded of Andrews' (2007) words, when the author raised the thought "how is our sense of identity affected by opening ourselves to the very different realities that are encountered by others?" (p. 489). Understanding the identity-making of the self, related to place in a multicultural world, is interwoven with understanding lives in motion, lives in the context of the multiplicity of worlds and identities; where and when, sometimes, stories and lived experiences we ourselves may have encountered are distant not only in our lives but in the accounts of others (Andrews, 2007).

In this way, the consideration of the research wonder is deeply related to understanding our own story, our lived experiences, lived stories, values, culture, beliefs. Then all of that being mindful about the sense that our daily lives are shaped by our own stories and by other people's lived stories that we meet in the midst of our and their lives; and throughout this unfolding life, we can identify and come to understand the past, present, and how it will shape the future (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006).

Consequently, it would be impossible to have one answer for the research puzzle; that is, it would be impossible to have one straight answer; mostly because we are embedded in a

process of unfolding our lives (in motion) under the unpredictable and inconstant, where many lives, experiences, and stories are interwoven with our own stories and, at the same time, considering this research context, within a multicultural world, where a plurality of lived experiences constitute the fabric of life.

Understanding Lived Experiences, Told Stories, and (Re)Reshaping Stories to Live by Within a Multicultural World

Appelbaum (2002) wrote,

diversity specifically refers to the plurality of identities, and it is seen as a condition of human existence rather than as the effect of an enunciation of differences that constitute hierarchies and asymmetries of power. Identities are constructed in processes of contestation and struggle, and in practices of solidarity and cultural experience; they are based on perceptions of knowledge, experience, and power. They are also, themselves, processes of learning that are context-dependent and open to interpretation. (p. 96)

David, during one interview, shared the following sentence he used to hear from his father: “You only live in Canada, but you are not Canadian” (transcript with David, April 7). Appelbaum’s (2002) words considered that identities are constructed and embedded in a process of cultural experience and are context-dependent (and power). When I connect David’s sentence with “as much as I am and can feel like a Canadian citizen, how do Canadians look at me? And how does this affect my own identity?” (transcript with Sam, July 24), we have an alignment explored by Huber et al. (2013) when the authors asserted that our identities and culture are intimately connected to the land and to the lived and shared stories related to the land. The authors wrote “being on the land calls forth stories embedded within the land and, too, within our

bones. Living in the midst of these stories, and our interactions with them, they become part of who we are and who we are becoming” (p. 215). Given this perspective, and considering Zhao’s (2007) words: “when we live new stories on new landscapes, usually we rely on our lived stories to tell who we are” (p. 50), understanding lived experiences, told stories, and (re)reshaping stories to live by within a multicultural world, is interwoven with the context that “experiences are never taken at face value but are explored in terms of temporality, sociality, and place” (Xu et al., 2007, p. 418).

I recall when Sam shared during one interview about how the place you live, and your nationality, defines your sense of identity; more specifically, Sam raised the thought about living in Canada and holding a Canadian citizenship; as she said: “how does it affect your feelings about your own identity and sense of nationality? Particularly, I will be Brazilian forever.” (transcript with Sam, June 13). David also brought this context of self-identity interwoven with sociality, and the feeling of belonging and living in a place, when he shared: “so, sometimes, it is so strange for me to hear somebody saying like “you are Canadian, you are not Polish” (transcript with David, May 12).

The social context interwoven with (re)shaping stories to live by and lived experiences, was framed by David’s words when he stated about never identifying himself (and themselves - his family) as Canadian before, as he identified himself as being Polish. And David added: “because as much as you want to be like people here, you are still trying to maintain who you are; you are so identified with that” (transcript with David, May 12).

Palmer (2005) pointed out that the meaning of narratives of place are interwoven with a sense of identity, and all connected with stories of people and lived experiences. Additionally, inspired by Basso (1996) and his concept of place-making, which relates to lived stories that are

brought and embodied in (re)shaping who you are and who you are becoming, I understand and feel like Sam, when she shared one day about the sense of being an immigrant as an eternal paradox; about what we live here, about what we left behind, and, more importantly, about who we are and who we are becoming.

When I consider the challenge of understanding lived experiences, told stories, and (re)reshaping stories to live by within a multicultural world, and when I reflect upon Appelbaum's (2002) words about the plurality of identities that are constructed and interwoven with cultural experience and are context-dependent (and open to interpretation). Then I comprehend that the sense of self-identity is connected with the importance of travelling toward experiences within a myriad of worlds (Hoffman, 1991; Lugones, 1987) as part of (re)shaping our identity embedded with the sense of belonging in a place.

In other words, when I weave Sam's words: "so, what do you need to be a Canadian citizen? Do you need just a paper? Or do you need a feeling? What do you need?" (transcript with Sam, June 13) with David's words: "for me, immigration is like an incurable terminal sickness, because anywhere you always going to be you, an immigrant, you can't change it" (transcript with David, June 23), these sentences collide, collapsing within different worlds and different identities that are embedded in a maze of the paradox of being an immigrant and, sometimes, the paradox of being ourselves in a place.

Therefore, "[Canada] is only a place where I live" (transcript with Sam, June 13) and "going back [to Poland] and turning [into] a different person than I am [in Canada]" (transcript with David, June 23) represents this paradox when we consider our lives as immigrants and now living in an (unfolding) new storied world. Given this perspective, it is essential to reflect that this research shows that the understanding of lived experiences and (re)reshaping stories to live

by within a multicultural world through narrative inquiry opens the possibility to have a better understanding of lives in motion, lives in the context of how we, as immigrants, (re)shape our lives, our stories to live by, living in multicultural landscapes.

Within the context of the research puzzle, and embracing multicultural worlds through narrative inquiry, the findings can be connected to the importance and necessity of community-based organizations that support newcomers, immigrants, and refugees as they enter in a new (unfolding) world and start to compose (new) stories to live by.

Ultimately, when considering the context of being an immigrant, regarding the sense of being and belonging to a place when entering in a new world, connected with the role of community-based organizations, and all of that interwoven with the sense of identity-making; it is important to reflect, inspired by Appelbaum's (2002) words, that identities are constructed and embedded in a process of cultural experience and are context-dependent. In this sense, (re)shaping ourselves when living within a myriad of worlds, stories and lives, calls forth to comprehend that who we are and who we are becoming, are beyond the status of being an immigrant or a citizen of any country.

The Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space within Community-based Organizations and Interwoven with the Plurality of World

Representing narratives of lived experiences within personal, practical, and social justifications

According to Rahatzad et al. (2016) researchers have brought narrative inquiry methodology into a multicultural world. Rahatzad et al. (2016) also argued that the

interdisciplinary natures of narrative inquiry and multiculturalism have allowed multiple perspectives to interpretations of lived experiences.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) wrote that in narrative inquiry there is a relationship between researcher and participants in a sense that, as narrative inquirers and participants enter the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, attending to places, people, and time, the inquiry is still in the midst of living and telling, on an unfolding process of sharing the stories of the experiences that shaped (and shape) people's lives. Words shared by Huber et al. (2013) echo in this regard:

It is the attentiveness and ethics embedded within narrative inquiry that calls us to live, to tell, and to retell and relive stories of experience. It continues to be significant for the emerging field of narrative inquiry to attend to personal experience over time, in social contexts, and in place(s), particularly the experiences of people and communities whose experiences are most often invisible, silent, composed, and lived on the margins. (pp. 235-236)

As previously stated, this research attended to multicultural landscapes through narrative inquiry and focused on the sense of lived experiences in (re)shaping stories to live by. In this way, Huber et al. (2014) pointed out that narrative inquiry research in a multicultural context holds the capacity to generate vital knowledge and evidence for further understanding the (re)shaping of stories to live by; and all of that connected in understanding how knowledge, context and identity are linked and can be understood narratively.

Considering the narrative commonplaces of sociality, temporality, and place, and representing narratives of lived experiences within personal, practical, and social justifications, this research attended to community-based organizations that support newcomers, immigrants,

and refugees. Within this context, this research approached people (participants) who are involved with newcomers and, at the same time, were once newcomers themselves. In this way, David and Sam, the participants of this research, came from different countries and now their work involves supporting newcomers in Canada.

How can we relate the context of considering the narratives of lived experiences within personal, practical, and social justifications, with the importance of attending community-based organizations that support newcomers, immigrants, and refugees as framed on this research?

Words that David shared shed some light in this regard:

I am extremely passionate about the job that I have. And it is like exciting to think who I am going to meet today; so meeting people and hearing their stories and remembering how much my parents struggled when we first came to Canada. (transcript with David, April 7)

Clandinin and Caine (2013) reminded us that participants are always in the midst of their lives and their lives are shaped by attending to past, present, and unfolding social, cultural, institutional, linguistic, and familial narratives. David's words show us the connections of social, cultural, institutional, and familial narratives when considering the context of sharing narratives of lived experiences within personal, practical, and social justifications. In this way, David's words permeate the context about the importance of attending community-based organizations that support newcomers, immigrants, and refugees embedded in this research.

Inspired by David's thoughts about people who work at some community-based organizations, that they are either immigrants or come from an immigrant family, connected when David expressed about knowing not only what means to be an immigrant, but mostly knowing and recognizing how difficult is when moving to a different country, David shared

some words in relation about what permeates his work and what could mean as we start to compose a new life in a new world.

So, every time somebody walks through that door, and sits down to the registration, I think how difficult it was to my parents. So, I think there is practically the first place that they usually attend as newcomers. And this is one thing that I really love in doing there, because we have that understanding. We are not an institution there, we do more than that. (transcript with David, September 8)

On a personal level, I could live and feel David's words "we are not an institution there, we do more than that", when I started to compose a new life in a new world after arriving in Canada. By this I mean that I understand the plurality of worlds embedded in my own life and, at the same time, connected with the research puzzle, as I write as a narrative inquirer as well. Probably because of this research, attending community-based organizations and encountering there a multicultural world, with a plurality of lived experiences and stories, led me to how a sense of identity is affected by the plurality of worlds, plurality of lives, and the plurality of stories that I encountered there and was also experiencing.

Reflecting about all of that, and considering myself a newcomer, those thoughts, feelings, and lived experiences, are interwoven with my role as narrative inquirer, within the research puzzle, in a way that Clandinin and Caine (2013) pointed out

With our lives as researchers we need to engage in intensive autobiographical narrative inquiries inquiring into a range of field texts that allow us to understand who we are and are becoming in relation to potential participants and particular phenomenon.

Autobiographical narrative inquiry allows us to compose our research puzzles as we

begin the processes of justifying our inquiries personally, practically, and socially. (p. 170)

When I reflect narratively in an autobiographical context, I consider my lived stories, my lived experiences, and my stories to live by as a newcomer and, at the same time, as a narrative inquirer feeling embodied on the research puzzle.

This research is connected with my personal experience as a newcomer when attending community-based organizations and events such a programs like ‘Coffee and Conversation’ (as earlier explained), when and where I could feel the beauty of openness, the beauty of listening, telling, and sharing different experiences, embedded in different worlds, different lived experiences, and stories to live by, when and where I started to realize that composing new lives in a new place is interwoven with our social relations.

The words above represent my life, in a personal way, in connection with this research, which means, embedded in the research puzzle, I would have those feelings, experiences, and stories anyway; but, would that be possible? Could a line separate narrative of lived experiences, within personal, practical, and social contexts, on two different worlds (personal and professional)?

My lived experiences, stories to live by, and who I am and am becoming are not framed in one specific world, but, inspired by Menon et al. (2015) words, my lived experiences and lived stories do not simply reveal context structured stories themselves, but rather create a world that reveals my identity and the complex relations of specific temporal, geographical, and social elements to it.

When I consider my lived experiences and stories of attending community-based organizations, considering myself as a newcomer (in a personal way), and now, reflecting upon

the research puzzle (in a professional context), thinking not only about David and Sam as participants of this research, but, more importantly, thinking of them regarding personal, practical, and social justifications, I reflect that we are never shaped by a particular world, or a particular life style (in a professional or personal way only). Rather “as we attend to people's experiences through narrative inquiry, a new language, a language of landscapes, of stories to live by, of lives in the midst, develops. Perhaps, as we begin to speak and live different experiences, we start to change the stories” (Huber et al., 2013, p. 236).

Words shared by Sam come to my mind, when she stressed the importance of opening yourself to different cultures, different stories, worlds, and lives. Sam shared that, when working with different cultures, you meet different people, but, at the same time, if you do not allow yourself to experience openness, your social and cultural judgment is still there; in this way, Sam reflected about the importance of respecting other cultures and being open to different lives, stories, and worlds. This involves sharing about our own lives, as Sam explained:

So, they saw me at the door, and they could throw all the despair, the doubts, the conflicts, I think that there is an identification, maybe because I allowed myself, during my professional sessions, to give personal examples; and that helped a lot in creating the connection, helped them to feel confident, helped them to realize they also could open (transcript with Sam, July 24).

Considering our personal lives and this research puzzle, framed within the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space within community-based organizations and interwoven with the plurality of worlds within personal, practical, and social contexts, Clandinin and Caine (2013) reminded us that stories arise from lived experiences, and for that it is essential to reflect,

when sharing our lived stories and experiences, how our and our participants' lives can be shaped differently in the future.

Finally, I reflect on Clandinin's (2013) words, when she reminded us that our past is open to restorying and sharing our lived stories, inquiring ourselves about who we are and who we are becoming, creates the possibility of attending differently on our social relations, where our work and our lives can make a difference, not only for ourselves, but also for the people who we meet in the midst of this unfolding fabric of life within the plurality of worlds and stories.

There is never a single story...there is never a final story...

Word images...and (in between) worlds image(s).

You only live in Canada

Immigration is an eternal paradox

People come with more than what they bring in their suitcase

The emigrant is always looking for something

Having dual citizenship ...it is a paper, right?

You only live in Canada

We don't share the same identity

Being a citizen in my heart

All people deserve to be respected

Every time somebody walks through that door

You only live in Canada

Meeting people and hearing their stories

What do you need to be a Canadian citizen?

I come from a culture that we just talk

What we live here and what we left behind

You only live in Canada

People that come and they recreate themselves

Your social and cultural judgment is still there

They could throw all the despair

You need to be fluent in English!

You only live in Canada

Everyone has a story, right?

You are still trying to maintain who you are

I am here in Canada to provide a better life for my children

There is something lost in translation

You only live in Canada

It brings me feelings, memories of the country I lived

How do Canadians look at me?

It is always the same answer

I feel myself like an outsider

You only live in Canada

Why are you here?

Going back there and turning a different person than I am here

It is so strange for me to hear somebody saying 'you are Canadian'

I would not live everything I am living now, right?

You only live in Canada

I will never be 100% happy here

That roller coaster of feelings

How does it affect your feelings about your own identity?

It's very difficult to immigrate, very

You only live in Canada

I will be Brazilian forever

I need to stop thinking that only my culture is right

We are not an institution there, we do more than that

I don't want to change who they are

You only live in Canada

You are not Canadian

(word image based on multiple research transcripts)

The word image above reminded me of Clandinin et al. (2006) when the authors wrote that word images may create a unidimensional account; a partial view of lives so far. In addition, the authors stated that “the word images capture layers of text and chapters and cases in a way that retain the complexity and nuance but make these characters easily and immediately accessible for analysis and understanding” (p. 178).

David and Sam inspired all the words written in the word image. I would not say that I chose those words considering any “grammar rule”; by this I mean that, instead, when writing those word images, I was inspired by King’s (2003) words when he wrote “stories are wondrous things; and they are dangerous” (p. 9). I also reflect upon Saleh et al. (2014) words, when the authors stated “as we inquired into our stories, ever conscious of the fluidity of time, place, and relationships, we were mindful of always being in the midst of a multiplicity of stories— the personal, social, institutional, cultural, linguistic, and familial stories that we all live by and within” (p. 279).

When I think of David and Sam, when I think of all the words written in this word image, it is hard for me to consider an unidimensional account, linear words, and linear worlds... when I look back and imagine forward, I reflect and feel that those word images collide with my image of in between worlds, I have the feeling, and mostly because of this research of living more and more within the multiplicity of stories to live by interwoven with a myriad of worlds (Bateson, 1990; Lugones, 1987; Saleh et al., 2014).

In this sense, I believe that living with the feeling and emotion of the plurality of worlds, plurality of stories, plurality of lives, and inquiring into our unfolding lives means that we are not stuck in between worlds (Brazil, Canada, Polish, etc.), but it means a different perception of unfolding and understanding lives in motion embedded on our social relations.

Ultimately, this understanding of lives in motion, the plurality of worlds, the plurality of lives, and stories to live by, leads to composing (and living) beyond a single story (Adichie, 2009); when and where a sense of feeling and living in motion about living in the midst, within and through the plurality of lives and worlds that unfold through the unpredictable, shapes who we are and who we are becoming, as we (always) continue to compose (new) lives and stories to live by.

We are the storytelling species...Storytelling is in our blood.

King (2003) wrote “the truth about stories is that that’s all we are [...] you can’t understand the world without telling a story” (p. 32). Our lived experiences and our stories to live by are embedded in and shaped by the process of living in motion, living in the midst of the plurality of lives that we encounter; and all of that is deeply connected with composing, telling, retelling, and reliving stories of experience, about who we are and who we are becoming (Huber et al., 2013).

When we consider Atkinson’s (2007) words “we are the storytelling species. Storytelling is in our blood” (p. 224) and as we imagine our lives as we look forward embracing the plurality of stories, lives, and worlds, we can say that we regain a kind of paradise, in a sense that we restore value to our lives, bringing meaning to our lives through stories (Adichie, 2009; Atkinson, 2007).

Reflecting about who I am, and who I am becoming, interwoven with between worlds, between being a newcomer and a narrative inquirer, and thinking about this research puzzle, thinking about David and Sam, about all the moments that we shared, I “need to think about here is the sense that it is not only the participants’ and researchers’ lives in the midst but also the

nested set of lives in which each of us live” (Menon et al., 2015, p. 98). I need to reflect and consider that we live in a world that, as storytelling species, stories matter, many stories matter and there is never a single story about any place about any person (Adichie, 2009).

Young et al. (2015) asserted that there is a beauty in stories that live in silences and then begin to be told. Within a beauty of a plurality of worlds, sharing all the stories that shape and (re)shape ourselves, our stories to live by, through and by our lived experiences, in a (midst and no ending) process of inquiring, in living, telling, retelling, and reliving of stories of experience, is a way to understand the past and present, and also a way to imagine the future, in a unfolding and co-composing (living) inquiry process (Caine et al., 2013; Young et al., 2015).

Undoubtedly, “we are the storytelling species. Storytelling is in our blood” (Atkinson, 2007, p. 224), and, according to Huber et al. (2013),

Understanding the transcendent nature of stories requires attentiveness to the resonances and dissonances shaped in the meeting of lives, to the gaps and silences created and opened up. In this meeting of lives the transcendence of dominant social, cultural, and institutional narratives also become visible. (p. 235)

Finally, inspired by Clandinin and Caine (2013) words, inquiring narratively into our lived stories and lived experiences, and sharing all of that, allows us to attend to our lives in a different way, in relation not only to ourselves, but also in relation to others people’s lives that we meet in the midst; and “recognizing this also means that there will never be a final story, that each story and experience begs for a new story to be told, for the experience to be retold and also relived” (Clandinin & Caine, 2013, pp. 175-176).

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