

## Introduction: Involved in stories: narrative in social sciences

In the mid-twentieth century, Wilhelm Schapp stated: « We human beings are always involved in stories. Everyone is always part of every story in which is involved. “History” and “being involved in stories” are closely related to the point that, even in thought, it is likely impossible to separate them. »

Recently, a consistent trend of openness towards narrative analysis has emerged in social sciences. This renewed research perspective integrates a tradition of narratological studies that was originally oriented to the analysis of texts and artistic products, literature, movies, television, and so on.

This phenomenon, defined as *narrative turn*, apart from connecting traditionally unrelated disciplines to the narratological analysis - such as history, sociology, psychology, politics, economics and marketing - is emerging as a unifying ground for the conventional distinctions between fields of knowledge. On the one hand, the need to re-launch the debate on the use of narratological theories, on the other, the necessity to reconsider such methodological perspectives in order to progress on these lines of research have arisen. All that without neglecting the enormous influence that the spread of digital media has exerted on this field of study.

There will be several ways to handle narrations and their relation with the social world. More specifically, two aspects of the narratological reflection will represent the guidelines of our debate:

The first aspect concerns the gnoseological dimension of the "stories". It is fair to affirm that narrations offer an alternative to the reification that mechanistic models have imposed on the analysis of both human behaviour and social processes. In this sense, individual and collective stories could be a reply to the construction of socio-scientific projects aimed at conceiving a dominant model of knowledge.

The second aspect refers to the epistemological dimension of narratological studies. A large part of the research programs based on narrations start from the belief that traditional methods, particularly those focusing on large numbers, do not allow to reconstruct the social phenomena in their full richness and complexity.

Without opposing them, narrations integrate numbers - always knitted in scientific narrations - and indicate non-Cartesian ways to analyze social processes. Starting from these assumptions, central will be the space devoted to matters related to the way in which being "involved in the stories" may be considered as the object of knowledge as well as its *modus operandi*.