GRI Report 2000:5

THE USES OF NARRATIVE IN ORGANIZATION RESEARCH

Barbara Czarniawska

THE USES OF NARRATIVE IN ORGANIZATION RESEARCH

Barbara Czarniawska
Gothenburg Research Institute
School of Economics and Commercial Law
Göteborg University
Box 600, 405 30 Gothenburg, Sweden
barbara.czarniawska@gri.gu.se

April 2000

THE USES OF THE NARRATIVE IN ORGANIZATION RESEARCH

ABSTRACT

A so-called literary turn in social sciences in general and in organization studies in particular has resulted in re-discovering the narrative knowledge in organization theory and practice. Organization researchers watching the stories being made and distributed collect organizational stories and provoke story telling in their contacts with the field of practice. This paper takes up the variety of ways of reading such narratives, classifying them into the three steps delineated in the hermeneutic triad: explication, explanation, and exploration. Explication raises the issues of interpretation and overinterpretation; and finds different solutions in pragmatist vs. traditional hermeneutic theory of interpretation. Explanation has a wide range of techniques and approaches to offer, from structuralism through poststructuralism to deconstruction. Narratology is of help also in the last stage, exploration, offering reflection concerning the construction of the researcher's own story by genre analysis etc. The paper ends in a review of most common attitudes towards text analysis: text as the key to the world, text-as-world, texts in the world (science as conversation).

The ever-present narrative

> The narratives of the world are numberless. Narrative is first and foremost a prodigious variety of genres, themselves distributed amongst different substances – as though any material were fit to receive man's stories. Able to be carried by articulated language, spoken or written, fixed or moving images, gestures, and the ordered mixture of all these substances; narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting . . . stained glass windows, cinema, comics, news item, conversation. Moreover, under this almost infinite diversity of forms, narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the very history of mankind and there nowhere is nor has been a people without narrative. All classes, all human groups, have their narratives . . . Caring nothing for the division between good and bad literature, narrative is international, transhistorical, transcultural: it is simply there, like life itself. (Roland Barthes 1977: 79)

This by now classic statement of Barthes had a profound effect on authors from outside linguistics and literary theory who noticed that narrative knowledge, all modernist claims notwithstanding, is the main bearer of knowledge in our societies (Lyotard 1979, Bruner 1980, 1986). Although its main competitor, the logico-scientific kind of knowledge, has a higher legitimacy status in modern societies, the everyday use of the narrative form is all pervasive. Graduate students read mountains of books on methods, like this one, but when they want to submit their first paper to a referee journal, they ask a colleague who has already published "How did you go about it?" The method books are accompanied by growing numbers of biographies and autobiographies, and they themselves are richly illustrated with stories.

What is more, it is useful to think of an enacted narrative as the most typical form of social life, pointed out Alasdair MacIntyre (1981). This is not an ontological claim; life might or might not be an enacted narrative, but conceiving of it as such provides a rich source of insight. This suggestion is at least as old as Shakespeare, and has been taken up and elaborated upon by Kenneth Burke (1945), Clifford Geertz (1980), Victor Turner (1982), Ian Mangham and Michael Overrington (1987), and many others.

Thirdly, but not least important, narratives are a common mode of communication (Fisher 1984, 1987). People tell stories to entertain, to teach and to learn, to ask for an interpretation and to give one.

Therefore, a student of social life, no matter of which domain, needs to become interested in narrative as a form of knowledge, a form of social life, and a form of communication. This necessity was easily accepted by researchers into family life (Mishler 1986) or life stories (Linde 1993), but was not at all obvious in such domains as my own specialty, organization studies. Modern work organizations were seen as a site of production, of dominance, and of other forms of knowledge, such as technical knowledge and logico-scientific knowledge.

The presence of technical knowledge in the organizational context was taken for granted and seldom scrutinized before the sudden rise of studies of science and technology. In the meantime, the main pretenders for the form of knowledge most relevant to render the complexity of organizing were narrative knowledge and logico-scientific knowledge, technical knowledge often seen as a by-product of the latter.

Jerome Bruner (1986, 1990) has succinctly contrasted the two forms of knowledge, showing that narrative knowledge tells the story of human intentions and deeds, and situates them in time and space. It mixes the objective and the subjective aspects, relating the world as people see it. In contrast, the logico-scientific (paradigmatic) knowledge, 1) looks for causal connections to explain the world, 2) out of such connections formulates general laws, 3) contains procedures (ÒparadigmsÓ) to verify/falsify its own results. It has also a distinct style, which I tried to imitate here.

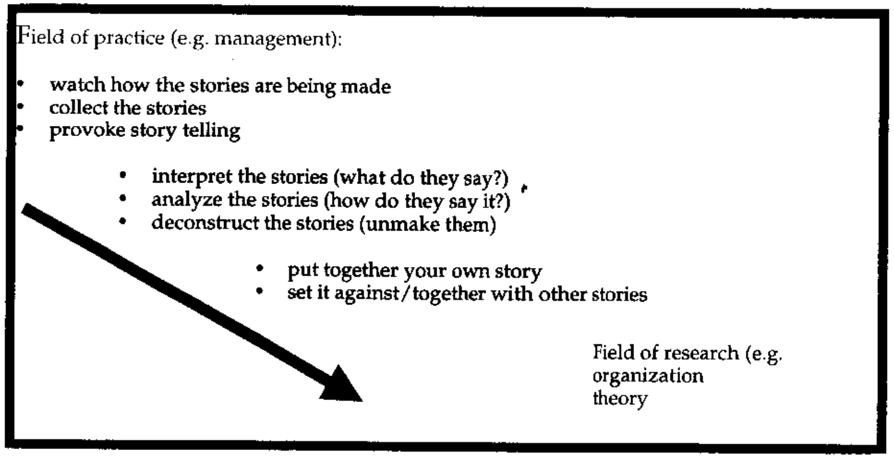
The contest between the two concerned both the kind of knowledge used in the field of practice, and the kind of knowledge to be produced by the field of theory for the benefit of this practice. In what follows, I shall be using mostly examples from the field of practice known as management, and from the field of theory known as organization theory. The reasons for this, apart from the obvious one that it is the field I know best, are twofold. Firstly, modern societies are organized through and through, as Perrow (1991) pointed out. Children in a daycare center learn the rudiments of effective organizing, and churches rekindle their ancient knowledge of finance management. Managerialism, for good or bad, is swamping sectors and fields of life that before felt safely excluded from it: health care, culture production, universities (Power 1997). Secondly, economic organizations were traditionally protected from cultural analysis – as sites "outside culture", where neither art nor literary criticism could apply – by the claim of closeness to natural phenomena. This claim, most obviously formulated by the economists who purport to be discovering the "natural laws of economy", was forcefully contested by the economists who joined the "literary turn" (e.g. McCloskey 1986, 1990). Although there were always close ties between "culture" in the narrow sense of the word and economy, at present the ties are even closer and need to be recognized and taken into account.

It is not difficult to accept that narrative knowledge is ubiquitous in everyday efforts of organizing. Managers and their subordinates tell stories and write stories, to one another and to interviewers, be they researchers or journalists. Organizational histories and managerial biographies tell the past stories of organizing, and the media feed us the present stories of that kind.

A student of organizations naturally retells organizational narratives and constructs them herself. Nevertheless, she cannot stop here, as by doing that she will be barely competing with the organizers themselves, and from a disadvantaged position. She must go further and see how organizational narratives unfold. This interest can lead her to a stance espousing the ideas of logico-scientific knowledge, as in formalism and structuralism, but this is not a stance represented in this text. The analyses I intend to present are closer to the poststructuralist spectrum of narratology. Such an analysis does not look for chains of causes and effects but for frequent ("usual") connections between various elements of a narrative. It does not search for laws, but for patterns and regularities, which do not reveal a deep structure – either of the world or of the mind – but which are affixed to a text by the writer and the reader alike. The reader is able to see how a text was made not because she divines the writer's intentions, or comprehends universal human nature, but because reader and writer are both producers and consumers of the same set of human institutions.

But what, if any, is the relevance of the institution of narrating (e.g. literature) for the institution of organizing (e.g. management)? Narrating is organizing, and although organizing is more than narrating, even that part of it that is non-narrative can become a topic of a narration. One cannot repair a machine by telling how it was done but one can always tell a story about the repair. This can also be restated in the terms used by Ricoeur when he claims that a text is a fitting analogy for an action just as an action is a proper analogy for a text (Ricoeur 1981).

The figure below depicts various uses of narrative and its analysis in social science studies, simultaneously announcing the contents of the present text:



The uses of narrative in social science research (adapted from Czarniawska 1999a)

Field of practice as a site of a narrative production, circulation and consumption

Watching how stories are being made

Hayden White (1987) describes how the way of writing history changed with time. Annals registered only some dates and events, not attempting to connect them. Chronicles presented causal connections, but were devoid of plot, or a meaningful structure. Only the more modern way of writing history can earn recognition as a "story" that is more than a chronological compilation. I was struck by the analogy between these three forms and the story making that I was able to watch during my study of the city of Stockholm (1999b). The register of my direct observation resembled annals, even if contemporary metrology permits a more detailed measure of time. Only an additional column, added by me in what already was an interpretative attempt, revealed that many of these seemingly disconnected events and actions were related to the common topic: the city administration was being divided into districts. Interviews with people engaged in carrying the reform through resembled chronicles: they reported the chronological and causal chains of events, but did not have a point, or a plot. After some time, however, complete stories begin to emerge.

One day at a City Office (observation)

DR = district reform.

Time	Event/Action	Topic
08.00	Moving into the new office. People move up and down the corridor, carry boxes, arrange the coffee room.	Practical problems related to the DR
08.30	Conversation with the researcher in a car on the way to the training &development center	The role of research in municipal administration. DR
09.00	Coffee chat (an emergency stop in the subway system prevented most of the course participants from arriving on time)	
09.45	Introduction to the course	The new management model and economic system resulting from DR
10.30	Return to the office. A tour around new offices, chats.	Practical aspects of DR: office and personnel
10.45	Work at the computer	?
11.10	A ventilation specialist comes in	Ventilation problems.
...	...	...

District Reform (interview with the project leader)

In the autumn of 1994 the mayor called to his office the head of one of the district social care centers, who was known for her positive attitude towards the idea of dividing the city administration into districts. She was informed that the majority had reached a decision to decentralize city administration and that she had been chosen to be responsible for the whole project.

After many earlier hesitations, this time all the political parties but one collaborated on formulation of guidelines for the reform and supported the nomination of the project leader. Her immediate task was to collect all the information necessary to implement the decision. Many practical details were still open for discussion, as the decision concerned the principle and only few issues were clear.

The project leader received unlimited authority for her activity. Her first decision was to create a temporary network that would include all the municipal managers, rather than forming a new office for the reform. Her staff was very limited, consisting of three investigators who had extensive knowledge about most of the operations gathered under the municipal umbrella. As the reform required a new division of economic resources, the team was complemented with an economist, a person responsible for information, and a secretary. In time, a computer specialist was added. The team set to work on a detailed inventory of municipal activities. City managers were called to their first meeting with the reform team.

On January 1, 1997, the division of Stockholm's administration into 24 district offices and committees was a fact.

The story of the District Reform (interview with the Head of the Office, my structuring in the left column)

Move$_1$	It started as a political question: The conservatives were very doubtful, but the Social Democrats were always very interested. The other parties — center,

	liberals, and greens were in favor, because they wanted to decentralize power away from the city hall. Thus when the Social Democrats came to power in 1994 they immediately ordered an investigation that was completed after 6 months, and had of course given a positive answer to the question.
Compli-cation$_1$	They checked around and invited many researchers from Gothenburg, which had introduced this reform earlier on. Well, it is always possible to interpret research results in many ways. In my reading, it was a total failure, but those who were responsible say that it was a great success. Politicians are always pleased with what they have done. They also say that they saved a lot of money, but I would like to point out that districts could show positive results because city hall ended with a deficit of a billion kronor every year. So I guess it depends how one counts. At any rate, we have Gothenburg as an ambiguous example, and then most other municipalities in Sweden who backed away from the district reform, deciding it was a failure. Big companies that want to save money reduce the number of their divisions and centralize, but we spend lavishly on decentralizing. For some reason Stockholm is always the last to catch the latest fad.
Compli-cation$_2$	Additionally, the districts do not have direct election, at least not yet. So the important politicians are still sitting in city hall, and so do the heads of the corresponding departments. How these poor people in the districts can be fully accountable for their operations one can only wonder. Many of those cannot be financially autonomous. Poor districts exist even in Stockholm.
Compli-cation$_3$	This year, 1996, the municipality invested 200 million in reorganization, with the justification that it will bring in a billion in savings per year, due to resulting rationalization, synergy effects and increased effectiveness.
Equili-brium$_2$	As it is now, I think that we need to prove to the inhabitants that we truly saved this billion and turned it to their advantage. But nobody listens to

	me. No wonder, as it is practically impossible to show. And if it will be impossible to show it next year, the explanation will be that this billion vanished in quality improvement. And this could be anything: free lunches at school, more teaching hours, more social assistants, more public transportation for the elderly. And so on year after year. Nobody would dare to ask: Do children enjoy school more? Do they learn more at school than in other European countries? Do we have the best or the worst schools in the world? But this is of course impossible to measure and to tie to money, spent or saved.
Moral	So everything is as usual: politicians do everything they can to avoid measuring the actual quality.

The three excerpts above demonstrate *that* sensemaking is a retrospective process, requiring time, but they do not actually show *how* the narrative is woven from disparate events. This is difficult to evince because of the inevitable conflict between "the prospective orientation of life with the retrospective orientation of narrative" (Ryan 1993, p.138). It is impossible to monitor the actors in order to capture the moments during which they elaborate their life experience into a story (in the example above the minimal period of time would have been 3 years). Yet Marie-Laure Ryan (1993) succeeded in locating what she calls "a factory of plot" (p.150): live radio broadcasts of sports events. There, "the real life situation promotes a narrative tempo in which the delay between the time of occurrence of the narrated events and the time of their verbal representation strives toward zero, and the duration of the narration approximates the duration of the narrated" (p.138).

A broadcast is constructed around three dimensions: *the chronicle* (what is happening), *the mimesis* (how does it look, a dimension that allows the listener to construct a virtual picture of the events) and the emplotment (introducing structure which allows making sense of the events).

While emplotment is considered central for building a story (White 1987), it is obviously the chronicle that is central to a sports broadcast. The necessity of matching the narrative time to a real time creates specific challenges and responses. One is "empty time" (the "missing years" in the annals), when "nothing" is happening on the field, and the broadcasters fill it with past stories and general chat, at the risk of being caught in the middle of the story by a new event. Another is the congestion of events, a problem usually solved by quickening the pace of speech, sometimes to an impossible speed.

One way of filling empty time is to turn it to the service of the mimetic dimension of the broadcast. When there is a lull after a dramatic event, this event can be retold with an emphasis on how it happened.

The real challenge, however, is the emplotment of the broadcast. The broadcasters, says Ryan, perform it using three basic operations: *constructing characters*, that is, introducing legible differences between the actors (a hero and an opponent); *attributing a function* to single events; and *finding an interpretive theme* that subsumes the events and links them in a meaningful sequence ("near success", "near failure", etc. p.141).

The close analogy between sports events and organizational performance in contemporary societies has been extensively commented upon (Corvellec 1997). Indeed, the spectators (e.g. the shareholders) insist on seeing the chronicle of the events, not least because they want to have an opportunity to make their own emplotment. Although the real interest concerns the plot ("why do you have losses?"), the loosely espoused principles of logico-scientific knowledge turn the attention away from the operation of emplotment. Plots are given (in the form of scientific laws), so the only activity required is to recognize their pattern in the chronicle. This black-boxing of the emplotment process results in the scarce interest in mimesis – on the part of the actors, spectators, and observers/researchers alike. And yet it is the mimesis, the how, that offers most clues as to the way events become connected with the help of an accessible repertoire of plots.

The Kalevala style of management

The chairman of a US university department told me that when newly appointed, he tried to draw the lines for the future development of the department. After having been constantly rebuked by his colleagues, he changed tactics and went around collecting "narratives of identity", just like the good Finnish doctor who thus assembled his country's literary treasure of stories. The chairman acquired a similar treasure – he could now tell the identity of the department better than any of his senior colleagues – and that earned him authority and respect (Lerer, 2000).

Not all managers have such a humble and understanding attitude towards their task – many fabricate and circulate stories with a clear ambition to manipulate. Nevertheless, each organization has a contemporary and historical repertoire of stories, sometimes divided into "internal stories" and "external stories", sometimes stories spread abroad with a hope of their return in a more legitimate form, for example via mass media (Kunda 1991). Any researcher who cares to spend some time in the organization, listening to what is told and reading some of its textual production, will encounter such narratives, and will sometimes be allowed to directly observe their practical use (see e.g. Boje 1991 for a study of narrative performances).

Sabine Helmers and Regina Buhr (1994) carried out a field study in a large German company producing typewriters. They spent three weeks in the company, conducting interviews and observing. During their stay several interlocutors, all men, told them the following story:

> *The Tactful Typewriter Mechanic*
> The new secretary had called in the mechanic many times because her electric typewriter kept making spaces where they didn't belong. After trying unsuccessfully to find the cause, the mechanic decided to observe the secretary at work for a while. He soon discovered the problem. The girl, generously endowed with feminine attractions, kept hitting the space key involuntarily every time she bent forward. The mechanic showed that he was capable of dealing with this rather delicate situation. He found the excuse to send her out of the office and raised her swivel-chair four centimeters. Since then she had no problems with her machine and has nothing but praise for the excellent mechanic.
> (Helmers and Buhr 1994: 176)

At first, say Helmers and Buhr, they did not pay much attention to the story, but its repetitions made them curious. The story was told as if the event took place the day before, but the attempt to trace it led them to an Austrian in-house publication for a typewriter dealer dated 2 June 1963 (the excerpt is quoted from that source). Thus a practically ancient story was kept alive by retelling it, and was given relevance by situating it contemporarily and in the narrators' own company. The tale had its "sisters" in other companies, industries, countries, and times. Helmers and Buhr showed how stereotyping women as "dumb blondes" actually hampered the technological developments in the typewriter industry. Stories of the kind they encountered redefined many technically solvable machine errors as "users' problems".

Joanne Martin (1990) attended a conference sponsored by a major US university, dedicated to the ways that individuals and businesses might help to solve societal problems. One of the participants, the CEO of a large transnational, told the conference participants the following story:

> We have a young woman who is extraordinarily important to the launching of a major new (product). We will be talking about it next Tuesday in its first world-wide introduction. She has arranged to have her Caesarian yesterday in order to be prepared for this event, so you – We have insisted that she stay home and this is going to be televised in a closed circuit television, so we're having this done by TV for her, and she is staying home three months and we are finding ways of filling in to create this void for us because we think it's an important thing for her to do (Martin 1990: 339)

Unlike the Helmers and Buhr story, this one was found disembedded, floating free in the artificial space of the conference. Accordingly, instead of following its connections through time and space, Martin has decided to deconstruct and reconstruct the story from a feminist standpoint. The deconstruction revealed evidence of a suppressed gender conflict in work organizations, illuminating blind spots of management practice and theory that fueled the conflict and kept it out of view.

Boland and Tankasi (1995) took a critical view of "collecting" organizational narratives, as if they were artifacts forever petrified in organizational reality waiting to be "discovered" by a researcher. Yet every narrative becomes new with each retelling, and the "petrification" of narratives is not the result of the myopia of the researcher, but of intensive stabilizing work by the narrators. Long-lived narratives are sediments of norms and practices, and as such deserve careful attention.

How to prompt for narratives in an interview situation

"Telling stories is far from unusual in everyday conversation and it is apparently no more unusual for interviewees to respond to questions with narratives if they are given some room to speak" (Mishler 1986: 69). An interview situation can thus easily become a micro-site for production of narratives, or just an opportunity to circulate them, where a researcher is allowed to partake in narratives previously produced. In many cases answers given in an interview are spontaneously formed into narratives. This is usually the case of interviews aiming at life histories, or, in an organizational context, at career descriptions, where a narrative is explicitly asked for and delivered. This is also the case of interviews aiming at a historical description of a certain process. When the topic of an interview is a reform, or reorganization, that is, a chain of events that unfold in time, there is nothing unusual in formulating a question that prompts a narrative. "Could you tell me the story of the budget reform as you experienced it?" "Can you recall when you first started to talk about the necessity of reorganizing your department? And what happened next?"

This does not mean that research interviews always evoke narratives. Unlike spontaneous conversation, they may incite a conscious avoidance of narratives insofar as they are constructed as arenas where only logico-scientific knowledge can be legitimately produced. Both sides have to combat the shared conviction that "true knowledge" is not made of narratives. "What were the factors that made a reorganization necessary?" will be perceived as a more "scientific" question, prompting analytic answers. It is then thus a task of the interviewer to "activate narrative production" (Holstein and Gubrium 1997:123).

How, then, to obtain narratives in a situation which prompts the use of the logic of representation and offers many possibilities of avoiding an account? Sacks (1992) put emphasis on the way "membership categorization" is used in construction of meaningful narratives (see also Baker 1997). Switching from the vocabulary of ethnomethodology to that of narratology one could say that membership categories are descriptions of *characters*, one of the necessary elements of every narrative. "I" is just a personal pronoun, "a woman of 50" a statistical category, but "a mother of a family of five" is already a beginning of a narrative. Introducing a tentative membership categorization is a ploy that often works. A character must know his or her lines, and deliver them accordingly, or protest the categorization and offer an alternative account.

The other necessary element of a useful narrative is a *plot*. Narratives based on sheer chronology are of little use in interpretation. The regular occurrence of Tuesdays after Mondays can hardly produce any profound insights into the nature of organizing, unless the construction of a calendar is being discussed. Although narratives always engage the *logic of succession* (albeit not always in a straightforward manner), stories also involve the *logic of transformation* (Todorov 1978). The minimal plot, says Todorov (1971/1977:111)

> consists in the passage from one equilibrium to another. An "ideal" narrative begins with a stable situation, which is disturbed by some power or force. There results a state of disequilibrium; by the action of a force directed in the opposite direction, the equilibrium is re-established; the second equilibrium is similar to the first, but the two are never identical.

The second equilibrium may resemble the first or reverse it. A company in trouble may reorganize and become profitable again, or it may go into bankruptcy. The episode that describes the passage from one state to another can have one or many elements. There can be one single force that changes the state of affairs into another one ("a paradigm shift") or a force and a counterforce; the two latter often consist of an event and an action (a flood and emergency management). Usually plots are complicated and contain chains of actions and events, oscillating states of affairs, apparent actions and wrongly interpreted events, as in suspense or mystery, but a minimal plot is enough to make sense of a narrative. Thus the other common way of invoking narratives is fishing for a missing element in the minimal plot. Even an apparently analytical question like "What were the factors that made the reorganization necessary?" is but a pompous way of asking for the first element of the plot, the original state of affairs.

Once characters and a plot are in place, a story has been constructed. Before I move to the possible ways of reading it, another comment on characters is due. Unlike membership categories, they do not have to be human. Many organizational narratives have as important characters a Computer, the Market, or an Equality Program. Also, the accounting aspect of a narrative does not have to be explicit: the very way of structuring the elements of the plot may serve as an explanation or justification. Narratives mix together humans with non-humans, causes with reasons, explanations with interpretations. This makes them difficult but also gratifying to interpret.

How to read a narrative?

As there are many ways of reading a narrative (before one even decides whether it is an "interpretation" or an "analysis" that takes place), the "hermeneutic triad" formulated by Paul Hernadi might be helpful. It separates conceptually three ways of reading a text, usually present simultaneously and intertwined in practice.

explication	explanation	exploration
standing under	**standing over**	**standing in for**
reproductive translation	**inferential detection**	**existential enactment**
reconstruction	**deconstruction**	**construction**

The hermeneutic triad (Hernadi 1997)

Explication corresponds to a stance that Eco (1990) calls that of *a naive, or a semantic reader*. It is guided by an ambition to understand a text, and Hernadi uses here Frye's (1957) insight showing that it implies a humility on the part of the reader: standing under the text. Explanation sets the reader above the text. The innocuous question "what does the text say?" is replaced with an interruptive "how does it say it?" (Silverman and Torode 1980). This equals a stance of *a critical, or a semiotic reader* (Eco 1990). Hernadi's triad is democratic in that it puts all explanatory efforts on the same plane: be it semiotics, criticism, structural or rhetorical analysis, deconstruction – they all attempt to disassemble the text to see how it was made.

Exploration, or standing in for the author, might be seen as more sparingly used in scientific texts, a genre that does not encourage existential enactment. Yet it can be found in most readings: in the conclusion of a positivist scholar, in the confessional remarks of an ethnographer (Geertz 1988, Van Maanen 1988), in standpoint feminism (Smith 1987, Martin 1990, Calás and Smircich 1991) and in empowerment ambitions of a narrative analyst (Mishler 1986).

As this text is dedicated to the analysis of narratives, I will focus on two initial operations, that of explication and explanation, or the habits of a semantic and a semiotic reader.

The difficulty of explication

The traditional rendering of this operation consists of the researcher writing "the one true story" of what "really happened" in a clear, authoritative voice. This procedure is nowadays considered an anathema, but with a great degree of exaggeration. After all, there are many good reasons to make up a consistent narrative – out of many partly conflicting ones, or out of an incomplete, or fragmented one. The justice or injustice done to the original narrative depends on the attitude of the researcher and on the precautions he or she takes.

The main problem of rendering somebody else's story in one's own idiom is the political act of totalizing that it entails. This problem became acute in anthropology as literacy increased in previously oral societies (Lejeune 1989). The Other who before was just "described", took on the task of self-description and of questioning the descriptions of the anthropologists. Yet when a field of practice under study, such as management, is highly literate, the re-descriptions undertaken by the researchers are open to practitioners' comments and questions. The status of science, especially the social sciences, does not stifle the protests and critiques any more. As I pointed out at some length in a different context (Czarniawska 1998), the "voices of the field" reported in organization studies are as literate and eloquent as those of the reporters, and often have greater political clout.

This does not release the researchers from the responsibility for what they write and the duty to respect their interlocutors. But this responsibility and respect do not have to be expressed in a literal repetition of what has been said. A researcher has a right, but also a professional duty, to do a "novel reading", in an apt expression coined by Marjorie DeVault (1990): an interpretation by a person who is not socialized into the same system of meaning as the narrator, but is familiar enough with it to recognize it as such. At any given time and place, she continues, there are *dominant and marginal readings* of the same text and, I may add, there are a number of narratives reporting the same developments but plotting them in a different ways. Some plots are dominant while others are considered marginal, but it is not necessary that the researcher subscribe to the dominant plot. Agreement is not always the best way of expressing respect. The researchers' duty is, however, to take the authorial responsibility for the narrative they concocted, and also to admit the existence of opposition from the interlocutors, if they are aware of it.

There are many other ways of paying respect to one's interlocutors. One is a multivoiced story, recommended by many anthropologists (see e.g. Marcus 1992). There is then not one, but many narratives; as in a postmodern novel, all tell their story and the researcher does not have to take a stand on which is "right" and which is "wrong". One example is to be found in the work of Yiannis Gabriel (1995) who quoted four accounts of an explosion of a fire extinguisher. One account was a chronicle that merely reported the sequence of the events, while the remaining three constructed three different stories with different heroes, victims, and plots.

One has to point out, however, that polyphony in a text is but a textual strategy (Czarniawska 1999a). "The voices of the field" do not speak for themselves; it is the author who makes them communicate on his or her conditions. Therefore it is more adequate to speak, in line with Bakhtin (1928/1985), about "variegated speech" of the field, about leaving traces of different dialects, different idioms, and different vocabularies, rather than homogenizing them into a "scientific text". Again, this textual strategy is not as drastically different from one authoritative story as it may seem. Even pasting together fragments of authentic narratives, taken straight from an interview protocol, decontextualizes them but, in return, it also re-contextualizes them (Rorty 1991). It is never a question of "authenticity"; it is always a question of creating an impression of authenticity, of recontextualization that is interesting ("novel"), credible and respectful.

Explanation 1: Interpretation and overinterpretation

Interpretation is often set in contrast to explanation, but here it is understood (indeed, interpreted) in a pragmatist way, in the sense of all inquiry, of recontextualization. It therefore combines explication with explanation, asking the question "what does this text say? and how come?" But this redefinition does not solve all the practical problems encountered in its application.

> To interpret means to react to the text of the world or to the world of a text by producing other texts . . . The problem is not to challenge the old idea that the world is a text which can be interpreted, but rather to decide whether it has a fixed meaning, many possible meanings, or none at all (Eco 1990: 23).

The question is thus: one meaning, many meanings, or no meaning at all? In response to the recent wave of reader-oriented theories of interpretation, Eco (1992) pointed out that interpretations are indefinite but not infinite. They are negotiations between the intention of the reader (*intentio lectoris*) and the intention of the text (*intentio operis*), as the hermeneutic circle tells us. They can end with a first level reading (typical for a semantic reader) or an overinterpretation (a tendency of a semiotic reader). Most of the readers live someplace between those two extremes, and different readers have different interpretation habits.

Rorty (1992) had difficulty in accepting this pragmatic interpretation model, precisely because of his pragmatist position. Despite all repudiations, there is a clear hierarchy between Eco's two extreme readers: the semiotic reader is a clever one (presumably a researcher), whereas the semantic reader is a dupe (presumably an unreflective practitioner). Also, the difference proposed by Eco between an ÒinterpretationÓ (which respects *intentio operis*) and ÒuseÓ (for example, lighting a fire with a text, but more generally just a disrespectful reading), is something that Rorty could not accept. For him, all readings are ÒusesÓ. If a classification of uses – i.e. readings – is required, Rorty suggested a distinction between a *methodical reading*, one that is controlled by the reader and the purpose at hand, and an *inspired reading*, which changes the reader and the purpose as much as it changes the text.

For me these issues have more significance than simply being part of an altercation between two theoreticians who otherwise stand very close to one another. In undertaking organization research we are joining a conversation on this topic which is not limited to organizational researchers (Czarniawska 1997). Social science as a soliloquy in many voices is not an attractive vision. It seems both exciting and gratifying (as well as frustrating and difficult) to try to speak to the Other, and among many Others, practitioners are one possible partner in such a conversation.

I do not intend to say, naively, that practitioners read or ought to read everything we write: there exist issues of a self-reflective nature which are not of much interest to outsiders, like this present article. Nor do I intend to announce condescendingly that we have to Òadapt to practitioners' needsÓ, by which is usually meant that we have to operate at the level of Reader's Digest. I claim that practitioners are educated enough to understand what we write; they rarely read us because they do not find our texts interesting. I would also postulate that there is no such thing as Òpractitioners' needsÓ, at least not as a fixed entity.

This reasoning concerns the impossibility of carrying through the *intentio auctoris*, of foreseeing and successfully manipulating an audience. But is there no *intentio operis*? Can readers interpret as they please?

What is a Òreasonable interpretationÓ and what is an ÒoverinterpretationÓ is negotiated not so much between the text and the reader, as among the readers. In that sense intentio operis seems an excellent device, to be treated pragmatically. It is impossible, however, to establish the intentio operis of a given text once and for all. Intentions are being read into the text each time a reader interprets it. Again, this does not mean there is an unlimited variety of idiosyncratic interpretations. In a given time and place there will be dominant and marginal readings of the same text (DeVault 1990), and this makes the notion of interpretive communities very useful (Fish 1989).

Explanation 2: Structural analysis and deconstruction

One traditional way of analyzing a narrative is that of a structural analysis, an enterprise close to semiology and Formalism (see e.g. Propp 1968, Todorov 1971, 1978 and Barthes 1977). Almost before this method acquired legitimacy in the social sciences, it was swept away by poststructuralism. It makes sense, however, to follow Selden's (1985) suggestion that "poststructuralists are structuralists who suddenly see the error of their ways" (p. 72). This statement is especially convincing when we observe that the leading poststructuralists were, in fact, leading semiologists: Barthes, Bakhtin, Todorov. "The most fundamental difference between the structuralist and poststructuralist enterprises can be seen in the shift from the problematic of the subject to the deconstruction of the concept of representation" (Harari 1979: 29). This shift led to problematization of the "deep structure" concept. To quote a definition of well-known French structuralists, narrative structures, "or, more accurately, semio-narrative structures, [were] to be understood in the sense of deep semiotic structures (which preside at the generating of meaning and bear general forms of discourse organization)" (Greimas and Courtés 1982: 317). "Deep structures are customarily opposed in semiotics to surface (or superficial) structures. While the latter ostensibly belong to the sphere of the observable, the former are considered as underlying the utterance" (ibid: 69).

Thus one could say that the move from structuralism to poststructuralism meant abandoning the depth for the surface: if deep structures are demonstrable, they are observable. Structures can no longer be "found", as they are obviously put into the text – by those who read the text, including the author (after all, writing is reading anew). This meant abandoning the ideas of the universal structure of language, or of mind, and accepting the idea of a common repertoire of textual strategies (Harari 1979), which are recognizable to both the writer and the reader. This relaxation of basic assumptions leads also to the relaxation of the technique: as there is no one true deep structure to be discovered, various techniques can be applied to structure a text and therefore permit its novel reading.

An extension of poststructuralism is deconstruction (Derrida 1976).

> To "deconstruct" a text is to draw out conflicting logics of sense and implication, with the object of showing that the text never exactly means what it says or says what it means. (Norris 1988: 7)

Deconstruction is a technique and a philosophy of reading. Used by Derrida (1987) for reading philosophical texts, it becomes a kind of philosophy itself (Rorty 1989). Used by gender scholars, it becomes a tool of subversion (Johnson 1980). Used by organization researchers, it becomes a technique of reading by estrangement (Feldman 1995). As a technique of reading, it earns an excellent introduction in Martin's article mentioned earlier, where she composed a list of deconstructionist "moves" (1990). This list, apart from being a useful aid to anybody who would like to try a hand at deconstruction, also reveals the historical roots of deconstruction, or rather, its historical sediments. It contains elements of close reading, of rhetorical analysis, of dramatist analysis, of radical rewriting – it is a hybrid. Therefore, it does not make much sense to speak about "proper deconstruction" or the "correct use of structural analysis": the literary techniques should serve as a source of inspiration, not a prescription to be literally followed.

In my rendition, narrative analysis does not have a "method"; worse still, it does not have a "paradigm", the set of procedures to check the correctness of its results.[1] It has an access to an ample bag of tricks – from traditional criticism through Formalists to deconstruction – but it steers away from the idea that a "rigorously" (that is, rigidly, as the two are synonyms) applied procedure would rend "testable" results. The ambition of narrative analysis in social sciences should be an inspired reading, as Rorty (1992) calls it, or a novel reading as Marjorie De Vault (1990) does.

Narrative analysis put to use(s)

Reading action/decision as a narrative

As I mentioned before, the obvious move of retelling the story of the events that took place in a field in the form of a well-constructed narrative is treated with suspicion by authors familiar with narrative analysis. It leads either to the necessity of analyzing one's own narrative, whose construction may be alien to that practiced in the field, or to hiding the work put into its construction. Creative ways are searched for, and found, to circumvent this difficulty.

One such solution has been applied by Ellen O'Connor (1997) who told the story of a US employee who mobilized an opposition against the company policy that pushed people toward involuntary retirement. She presented the event as a sequence of narratives (letters, documents, but also excerpts from interviews and media comments), showing how various people conformed or rebelled against the common repertoire of characters, functions and plots, in their roles both of storytellers and the interpreting audience. In organizational life, unlike in literature, she concludes, "one may intervene directly in the text to determine the limits and possibilities of intertext" (1997:414).

Ellen O'Connor took decision making as starting point, and this might explain the freedom of shaping the narrative, and the intertext, which she has attributed to her characters. Kaj Sköldberg (1994) used genre analysis in his reading of change programs in Swedish municipalities, and saw the local actors more carried away by the dramatic genres they employed than empowered by them. Two competing genres – a tragedy and a romantic comedy – resulted in a mixture that presented itself to the audience, including the researcher, as closest to satire, an effect unintended by either the directors or the actors of the drama. Sköldberg's use of genre analysis, inspired by White (1973), employs MacIntyre's (1981) notion of social life as an enacted narrative.

Dramatizing narratives

Yet another way of avoiding the pitfalls of an unreflective narrative construction in research is to incorporate the analysis into the narrative itself, to exploit "the content of the form", in White's (1987) formulation. Sköldberg's way of treating his field material is halfway to this solution; a complete step often involves a dramatization of the narrative. Such an operation makes the construction work visible to the reader, and the choice of a device is a major choice in the analysis.

---

[1] Although there exist attempts to create one; see e.g. Watson (1975) for a formal model of narrative analysis based on the works of Burke and Labov.

The title of Michael Rosen's article, "Breakfast at Spiro's: Dramaturgy and Dominance" (1985), summarizes it very well. Rosen picked up his observation of a business breakfast at an advertising agency, and decided to present it as a social drama, which was also a convention decided upon by the organizers of the event themselves. The article has therefore the form of an annotated screenplay. As the events unfold, Rosen offers both a dramaturgical critique, a connection to the events outside the time and the place of the drama, and a commentary on the reactions of the audience.

Bengt Jacobsson goes even further, forming the results of the study of municipal decision-making into a script for a *commedia dell'arte* (Czarniawska-Joerges and Jacobsson 1995). The choice of this form summarizes the final results of his analysis, revealing the theatricality and ritualism of the political organization, its skillful production of the improvisation effect based on routines and rehearsals, and its standard stock of characters.

Narratives of identity: Life stories, career stories, organizational biographies

While it may not be surprising that organizational narratives offer a conventional stock of characters, they also offer material for constructing subjectivity, or personal identities (Gabriel 1995). This focus in narrative analysis has the longest tradition in social sciences, far exceeding the ample field of organization studies. According to Mishler (1986), Labov and Waletzky (1967) were the first to use narrative analysis on interview material gathered from people telling stories from their life experience. Mishler has since become the classic of narrative interviewing, which he sees as a means of empowerment of respondents, "the aim being to recover and strengthen the voice of the lifeworld, that is, individuals' contextual understanding of their problems in their own terms" (1986:142-143). Charlotte Linde (1993) combined the ethnomethodological tradition with Labovian linguistic analysis and psychological theories of the Self, showing how coherence is achieved in life stories. Catherine Riessman (1993) took a more sociological approach to women's life stories, where "culture 'speaks itself' through an individual's story" (p.5). Her narrative analysis is also situated within the Labovian framework.

In the organizational context, life stories acquire two variations: career stories and organizational identity narratives. Career stories are most often analyzed within the framework of Foucauldian discourse analysis, situating the process of identity construction within, or against, the dominant discourse (Valérie Fournier 1998, Peltonen 1999). Organizational identity narratives are not only official historical documents, but all kinds of collective storytelling that attempt to create a pseudo-subject, the Organization (Czarniawska 1997).

Blurring genres or, how wide is the field?

All the examples above concerned narratives produced in the field of practice, or in the encounter between the researchers and the field of practice. It has been pointed out, however, that there exist a great variety of narratives about a certain field of practice, but constructed outside of it: fiction (Phillips 1995). Reading the text created by fiction writers, both in a research mode and in a teaching mode (Claire Cohen 1998), offers a variety of insights not always easily accessible in field studies. After all, claims Kundera (1988): "The novel dealt with the unconscious before Freud, the class struggle before Marx, it practised phenomenology (. . .) before the phenomenologists" (p.32).

Following this implication, Virginia Hill Ingersoll and Guy B. Adams (1992) were able to explain, analyzing US children's literature, why people enter work organizations with a proper set of values, such as technical rationality, already in place. José Luis Alvarez and Carmen Merchán Cantos (1994) showed the changing attitude ("From escapism to resented conformity") towards modern economy and corporate life by tracing it in Spanish literature. A similar stance was taken by Boland (1994) in his interpretation of "The Rise of Silas Lapham" as a lesson in the moral economy of pain to be used in modern management.

Reading together

The use of narratives, fictional or not, in the process of education (Phillips 1995, Cohen 1998) assumes a possibility of a collective reading. Such a possibility has also been exploited as a resource in research. Bronwyn Davies (1989) read the feminist versions of fairy-tales to four- and five-year-old children, only to find herself (or the stories) corrected by her listeners, who appeared to have a well-entrenched notion of gender roles. She came to the surprising conclusion that "children struggle for quite a long time to learn the liberal humanist concept of the person as fixed and unitary, since this does not adequately capture their experience which is of multiple, diverse and contradictory ways of being" (p.40). Once winners in this struggle, they are prompt to exhibit this hard-learned lesson in applying reified stereotypes that result from such a concept.

Quite in line with this reasoning were the results of a study where students of management in various countries were asked to interpret short narratives illustrating gender discrimination in workplaces (Czarniawska and Calás 1997). Some interpretations redefined the event as nondiscriminatory; others recognized it as a discriminatory but localized it safely in "another culture", usually outside the "modern western world". Collective reading reveals the repertoire of institutionalized interpretations and stereotypical classifications.

Narratives from one's own backyard

The last example of the uses of narrative analysis concerns its application to the narratives from one's own field of practice, that is, the field of theory. Such an analysis, often combined with rhetorical analysis, starts from the early dramatist analysis of drinking driver research by Gusfield (1976) and extends to numerous examples of narrative analysis in science studies (Mulkay 1985, Traweek 1992, Curtis 1994), and in field studies in general (Geertz 1988,Van Maanen 1988).

The narratives from one's own practice are analyzed like all others, possibly with more bravado (after all, the analyst is on safe ground, at least epistemologically if not always politically) but also with special care due to the fact that the narrators cannot be anonymized. As in previous examples, different options are open. Thus I have analyzed March and Simon's "Organizations" as an example of my thesis that research writings often contain a plot without a story (Czarniawska 1999a). Martin Kilduff (1993) decided to deconstruct the same text, coming to the conclusion that it contains a simultaneous rejection and acceptance of the traditions the authors sought to surpass. Kilduff ended his deconstruction with yet another narrative – a confessional tale that analyzed his motives in undertaking such an enterprise, a creative exercise in exploration.

What is to be found in a narrative?

To paraphrase Barthes, the narratives of field studies are indeed numerous, and so are analytical approaches that might be used to make sense of them. By sampling as many as I managed to cram into the given format, I wanted to convey the growing richness of such approaches, and a firm conviction that there is no (and there must not be) "one best method" of narrative analysis. Authors reach out to varied sources for inspiration: many combine narrative analysis with rhetorical analysis, dramatist analysis, semiotics, discourse and conversation analysis. Deconstruction is a hybrid in itself. Thus, rather than evaluating the advantages of different approaches, I would like to consider the question, what do the analysts hope to find at the end of the analysis?

Let me simplify this question by assuming that a narrative usually presents itself to its analyst in the form of a text. Thus narrative analysis can be treated as a type of textual analysis. What does one look for in a text?

There are at least three versions of the answer to this question. According to the first, conventional one, texts are but a reflection of reality. One has to overcome the text, as it were, to get at what is behind it, at the true story of events. This is consistent with a theory of language as medium between objective reality (the world as it is) and a person's subjective cognition. A writer communicates his or her subjective understanding of the world via a text. 1.

In the second and more radical version, the text is all there is. The text is the world. Shocking as it may sound, this is not a new idea. There are well-known precedents – the Bible and the Koran, books containing the world as created by God. On a more mundane level, ethnomethodology claims that all the rules typical of a community can be found in any conversation between competent members of this 2.

community. From this it is possible to deduce that the only reading of a text is such as is permitted by the rules of reading which it itself dictates. Indeed, says Latour, "Semiotics is the ethnomethodology of texts" (1993:131).

3.

The third version, the one I opt for, is close to the previous one, but expresses a different preference. Instead of looking at a text under a deconstructivist (or conversation-analytical) microscope, it proposes treating a text as belonging to other texts, as a material trace of a conversation that was or is taking place. The most obvious example of this approach could be seen in O'Connor (1997).

It is difficult to imagine a textual analysis in the context of field studies that makes a clear-cut choice among the three, however. Some kind of realism will always linger, either as a style in the texts which we are analyzing or as a stylization of our own texts, undertaken for legitimating purposes. After all, every one of us sits in his or her appropriate iron cage, or rather in a whole collection of iron cages fitting into one another like Russian dolls, decorated with institutional trimmings. Rather than striving for a rigorous narrative analysis or for purity of a genre, reading and writing of narratives will remain a creative activity, based on bisociations and hybridizing.

References

Alvarez, José Luis and Merchán Cantos, Carmen (1994). 'From Escapism to Resented Conformity.' Pp. 175-198 in Czarniawska-Joerges, Barbara and Guillet de Monthoux, Pierre (eds.) *Good Novels, Better Management: Reading Organizational Realities in Fiction.* Reading, UK: Harwood Academic Publishers.

Baker, Carolyn (1997). 'Membership Categorization and Interview Accounts.' Pp. 130-143 in Silverman, David (ed.) *Qualitative Research. Theory, Method and Practice*, London: Sage.

Bakhtin, Michail M./Medvedev, P.N. (1928/1985). *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship. A Crtitical Introduction to Sociological Poetics.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Barthes, Roland (1966/1977). 'Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives'. Pp. 79-124 in Barthes, Roland, *Image-Music-Text* (transl. Stephen Heath). Glasgow: William Collins.

Boje, David (1991). 'The Story-Telling Organization: A Study of Story Performance in an Office-Supply Firm.' *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 36: 106-126.

Boland, Richard J. Jr. (1994). 'Identity, Economy and Morality in *The Rise of Silas Lapham*', in Barbara Czarniawska-Joerges and Pierre Guillet de Monthoux (eds.), *Good Novels, Better Management*. Reading, UK: Harwood Academic Publishers, 115-37.

Boland, Richard J. Jr. and Tankasi, Ramkrishnan V. (1995). 'Perspective Making and Perspective Taking in Communities of Knowing.' *Organization Science*, 6(3): 350-72.

Bruner, Jerome (1986). *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bruner, Jerome (1990). *Acts of Meaning.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Burke, Kenneth (1945/1969). *A Grammar of Motives*. Berkeley, CA: The University of California Press.

Calás, Marta and Smircich, Linda (1991). 'Voicing Seduction to Silence Leadership.' *Organization Studies*, 12(4): 567-601.

Cohen, Claire (1998) ' Using Narrative Fiction Within Management Education.' *Management Learning*, 29(2): 165-182.

Corvellec, Hervé (1997). *Stories of Achievement. Narrative Features of Organizational Performance*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Curtis, Ron (1994) 'Narrative Form and Normative Force: Baconian Story-telling in Popular Science'. *Social Studies of Science*, 24: 419-461.

Czarniawska, Barbara (1997). *Narrating the Organization. Dramas of Institutional Identity*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Czarniawska, Barbara (1998). *A Narrative Approach in Organization Studies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Czarniawska, Barbara (1999a). *Writing Management. Organization Theory as a Genre*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Czarniawska, Barbara (1999b). *Det var en gång en stad på vatten*. Stockholm: SNS.

Czarniawska, Barbara and Calás, Marta (1997) 'Another Country:Explaining Gender Discrimination with "Culture".' *Administrative Studies*, 4: 326-341.

Czarniawska-Joerges, Barbara and Jacobsson, Bengt (1995) 'Politics as *Commedia dell'Arte*'. *Organization Studies*, 16 (3): 375-394.

Davies, Bronwyn (1989). *Frogs and Snails and Feminist Tales*. North Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Derrida, Jacques (1976). *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Derrida, Jacques (1987). *The Postcard. From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

DeVault, Marjorie L. (1990). 'Novel Readings: The Social Organization of Interpretation.' *American Journal of Sociology*, 95(4): 887-921.

Eco, Umberto (1990). *The Limits of Interpretation*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Eco, Umberto (1992). *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Feldman, Martha (1995). *Strategies for Interpreting Qualitative Data*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.

Fish, Stanley (1989). *Doing What Comes Naturally: Change, Rhetoric, and the Practice of Theory in Literary and Legal Studies*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Fisher, Walter R. (1984). 'Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm:The Case of Public Moral Argument.' *Communication Monographs*, 51: 1-22.

Fisher, Walter R. (1987). *Human Communication as Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason, Value, and Action*. Columbia, South Carolina: The University of South Carolina Press.

Fournier, Valérie (1998) 'Stories of Development and Exploitation: Militant Voices in an Enterprise Culture. *Organization*, 5(1): 55-80.

Frye, Northrop (1957/1990). *The Anatomy of Criticism*. London: Penguin.

Gabriel, Yiannis (1995). 'The Unmanaged Organization: Stories, Fantasies and Subjectivity.' *Organization Studies*, 16(3): 477-502.

Geertz, Clifford (1980). *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth Century Bali*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Geertz, Clifford (1988). *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Greimas, Algirdas Julien and Courtés, Joseph (1982). *Semiotics and Language. An Analytical Dictionary*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Gusfield, Joseph (1976) 'The Literary Rhetoric of Science: Comedy and Pathos in Drinking Driver Research.' *American Sociological Review*, 41(February): 16-34.

Harari, Jose V. (1979). 'Critical Factions/Critical Fictions.' Pp. 17-72 in Harari, Jose V. (ed.) *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-structuralist Criticism*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Methuen.

Helmers, Sabine and Buhr, Regina (1994). 'Corporate Story-telling: The Buxomly Secretary, a Pyrrhic Victory of the Male Mind.' *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 10(2): 175-192.

Hernadi, Paul (1987). 'Literary Interpretation and the Rhetoric of the Human Sciences'. Pp. 263-275 in John S. Nelson, Allan Megill, and D. N. McCloskey (eds.) *The Rhetoric of the Human Sciences*. Wisconsin, MD: University of Wisconsin Press.

Holstein, James A. and Gubrium, Jaber F. (1997). 'Active Interviewing.' Pp. 113-129 in Silverman, David (ed.) *Qualitative Research. Theory, Method and Practice*, London: Sage.

Ingersoll, Virginia Hill and Adams, Guy B. (1992) 'The Child Is "Father" to the Manager: Images of Organizations in U.S. Children's Literature'. *Organization Studies*, 13(4): 497-519.

Johnson, Barbara (1980) *The Critical Difference: Essays in the Contemporary Rhetoric of Reading*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Kilduff, Martin (1993) 'Deconstructing *Organizations*.' *American Management Review*, 18(1): 13-31.

Kunda, Gideon (1992). *Engineering Culture: Control and Commitment in a High-Tech Organization*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Kundera, Milan (1988). *The Art of the Novel.* London: faber and faber.

Labov, Willim and Waletzky, Joshua (1967) 'Narrative Analysis: Oral Versions of Personal Experience'. Pp. 12-44 in Helms, June (ed.) *Essays on the Verbal and Visual Arts.* Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Latour, Bruno (1993).*We Have Never Been Modern*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Lejeune, Philippe (1989). *On Autobiography*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Lerer, Seth (2000) Personal communication.

Linde, Charlotte (1993) *Life Stories. The Creation of Coherence.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lyotard, Jean-Françoise (1979/1986) *The Postmodern Condition. A Report on Knowledge.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

MacIntyre, Alasdair (1981/1990). *After Virtue*. London: Duckworth Press.

Mangham, Ian L. and Overington, Michael A. (1987). *Organizations as Theatre: A Social Psychology of Dramatic Appearances*. Chichester: Wiley.

March, James G. and Simon, Herbert A. (1958/1993). *Organizations*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Marcus, George E. (1992). 'Past, Present and Emergent Identities: Requirements for Ethnographies of Late Twentieth-Century Modernity World-Wide.' Pp. 309-330 in Lash, Scott and Friedman, Jonathan (eds.) *Modernity & Identity*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Martin, Joanne (1990). 'Deconstructing Organizational Taboos: The Suppression of Gender Conflict in Organizations.' *Organization Science*, 1(4): 339-359.

McCloskey, D. N. (1986). *The Rhetoric of Economics*. Wisconsin, MD: The University of Wisconsin Press.

McCloskey, D. N. (1990). 'Storytelling in Economics', in Cristopher Nash (ed.), *Narrative in Culture. The Uses of Storytelling in the Sciences, Philosophy and Literature.* London: Routledge, 5-22.

Mishler, Elliot G. (1986). *Research Interviewing. Context and Narrative.* Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press.

Mulkay, Michael (1985). *The Word and the World. Explorations in the Form of Sociological Analysis.* London: George Allen & Unwin.

Norris, Christopher (1988) Deconstruction, post-modernism and visual arts. Pp. 7-55 in Norris, Christopher and Andrew Benjamin (eds.) *What is deconstruction?* London: ACADEMY EDITIONS.

O'Connor, Ellen S. (1997) 'Discourse at Our Disposal. Stories in and Around the Garbage Can.' *Management Communication Quarterly*, 10(4): 395-432.

Peltonen, Tuomo (1999) 'Finnish Engineers Becoming Expatriates: Biographical Narratives and Subjectivity. *Studies in Cultures, Organizations and Societies*, 5(2): 265-295.

Perrow, Charles (1991). 'A Society of Organizations.' *Theory and Society.* 20: 725-762.

Phillips, Nelson (1995). 'Telling Organizational Tales: On the Role of Narrative Fiction in the Study of Organizations.' *Organization Studies*, 16(4): 625-49.

Power, Michael (1997). *The Audit Society: Rituals of Verification.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Propp, Vladimir (1968). *Morphology of the Folktale.* Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.

Ricoeur, Paul (1981). 'The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as Text', in John B. Thompson (ed. and trans.), *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 197-221.

Riessman, Catherine Kohler (1993). *Narrative Analysis.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Rorty, Richard (1989). *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rorty, Richard (1991). 'Inquiry as Recontextualization: An Anti-Dualist Account of Interpretation'. PP. 93-110 in *Philosophical Papers 1. Objectivity, Relativism and Truth*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press,.

Rorty, Richard (1992). 'The Pragmatist's Progress'. Pp. 89-108 in Eco, Umberto, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Rosen, Michael (1985). 'Breakfast at Spiro's: Dramaturgy and Dominance.' *Journal of Management*, 11(2): 31-48.

Ryan, Marie-Laure (1993) 'Narrative in Real Time: Chronicle, Mimesis and Plot in Baseball Broadcast. *Narrative*, 1(2): 138-155.

Sacks, Harvey (1992). *Lectures on Conversation*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Selden, Raman (1985). *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press.

Silverman, David and Torode, Brian (1980). *The Material Word. Some Theories About Language and Their Limits*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Sköldberg, Kaj (1994). 'Tales of Change: Public Administration Reform and Narrative Mode.' *Organization Science*, 5, 2: 219-238.

Smith, Dorothy (1987). *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*. Boston: Northern University Press.

Todorov, Tzvetan (1971/1977). *The Poetics of Prose*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Todorov, Tzvetan (1978/1990). *Genres in Discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Traweek, Sharon (1992). 'Border Crossings: Narrative Strategies in Science Studies and Among Phycisists in Tsukuba Science City, Japan'. Pp. 429-465 in Pickering, Andrew (ed.), *Science as Practice and Culture*. Chicago: The University Chicago Press.

Van Maanen, John (1988). *Tales of the Field*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Watson, Karen Ann (1973) A rhetorical and sociological model for the analysis of narrative. *American Anthropologist*, 75: 243-264.

White, Hayden (1973). *Metahistory. The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe*. Baltimore, MR: The John Hopkins University Press.

White, Hayden (1987). *The Content of the Form. Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*. Baltimore, MR: The John Hopkins University Press.