
Discourse and Audience: Organizational Change as Multi-Story Process

David Buchanan and Patrick Dawson

Cranfield University; Universities of Aberdeen and Wollongong

ABSTRACT This article is critical of monological research accounts that fail to accommodate polyvocal narratives of organizational change, calling for more fully informed case studies that combine elements of a narrative approach with processual/contextual analysis. We illustrate how contrasting versions of the same change event by different stakeholders and by the same stakeholder for different audiences, raise theoretical and methodological issues in the analysis and presentation of data on organizational change. Our argument is that research narratives (that seek to develop understanding of change processes) are necessarily selective and sieved through particular discourses that represent different ways of engaging in research. They are authored in a particular genre and written to influence target audiences who become active co-creators of meaning. Organizational change viewed from this perspective is a multi-story process, in which theoretical accounts and guides to practice are authored consistent with pre-selected narrative styles. These, in turn, are purposefully chosen to influence target audiences, but this subjective crafting is often hidden behind a cloak of putative objectivity in the written and oral presentations of academic research findings.

INTRODUCTION

There is nothing novel in stating that organizational change is ‘multi-authored’, comprising competing accounts, but much remains unconsidered in this claim. Most commentators who discuss the phenomenon of competing histories address the issue in terms either of stylistic choices (or authoring voices), or of deciding whether to be complicit in supporting the dominant narrative, or subversive in reporting otherwise marginal or silenced voices. This article offers two complementary arguments. The first is that narratives have causal functions and intent, in seeking not only to shape understanding of past events, but also in seeking to shape trajectories of change into the future. While we may speak of stories of change, this article argues that those stories also constitute and shape the sequence of change events that they report; narratives are both about and become the change process. The second is that while respondents in research studies may

Address for reprints: David Buchanan, Cranfield University, School of Management, Cranfield, Bedfordshire MK43 0AL, UK (david.buchanan@cranfield.ac.uk).

be 'accused' of offering accounts which serve personal purposes of sensemaking, impression management, and the advance of political agendas, those 'accusations' (observations) equally apply to the qualitative case researcher and author. This has implications for research method, the selection and analysis of 'raw material', the reflexive stance of the researcher, and the scripting of case study accounts. Our aim is to develop a new approach that combines existing ideas from narrative and processual perspectives in order to open up the seemingly innocuous claim that change is 'multi-authored' (Tsoukas and Chia, 2002).

In combining these twin perspectives, it is necessary to cover much territory within a limited space. We begin with the view that any change story can be written and accounted for from many different standpoints, depending on the narrator (Clausen and Olsen, 2000). One of our arguments (and we are not alone in this) concerns the observation that multiple change narratives compete with each other, either because they are personally self-serving, politically motivated, or informed by only partial knowledge of what actually happened (Leitch and Davenport, 2005). The accounts that win this competition and that 'stick' often do so through a combination of fact, narrator credibility and influence, political tactics, skilled 'storytelling performances' (Ng and De Cock, 2002), and the symbolic influence that arises from the manner in which accounts are articulated and presented (Clausen and Olsen, 2000). In these stories, we are looking at 'after-the-change' accounts that may seek to rationalize complex political processes, provide a platform for self-aggrandisement, influence future political decision-making, or justify new management techniques that seek to secure employee compliance and commitment (Noon et al., 2000). In addition to these stories of the past, there are also stories of the present (that are part of changing) that both shape and are shaped by change processes (Dawson and Buchanan, 2005). In other words, the nature of the change process and its outcomes can potentially be explained by the way in which it is authored or scripted, and during the process edited and revised, by key narrators, sometimes (but not always) known as change agents or change leaders. As such, the 'winners' and 'losers' of this internal authoring competition are not merely scriptwriters of change, but shapers of ongoing change processes. In this scenario, multi-authored stories occur in real time, before and during the process, influencing the nature and flow of events and the stories of others. To put it another way, multiple stories are an integral part of the complex dynamic of changing in the experiences that they capture, and in the influence that they have on the shape, direction and outcomes of change, as well as on 'after-the-change' accounts.

Another key argument of this article relates to the role and influence of the researcher. Once again, this is an area that has been given considerable attention, especially in discussions on the theory and practice of conducting process research in organizations (Pettigrew, 1990; Poole et al., 2000; Ropo et al., 1997). Our focus here, however, is on how to accommodate the polyvocal aspect of change stories while clarifying the roles of researcher as data-gatherer, analyst and author which, we argue, remain hidden in monovocal case study presentations. In developing this argument, we explore the position of the case researcher who uses individual and group stories as an essential source of data for making sense of change processes. Such data may be synthesized in an attempt to construct an 'objective' outsider account, or they may be used to weave competing narratives into some other form of polyvocal account (Tsoukas and Hatch, 2001). To the

extent that changes are ongoing, and/or the careers of the key players in those changes are ongoing, the researcher becomes a character in the story, potentially helping to promote the narratives of some internal authors and reduce the legitimacy of others, depending on how seriously the case analysis of the researcher is seen by the organization's key characters. Researchers, in turn, attempt to maintain and enhance their own academic reputation, as analyst, critical thinker, and/or perhaps as someone who is able to turn their analyses into practical advice.

The article opens with a discussion of the concept of narrative from which we examine change as a multi-authored process that consists of competing accounts. The import of these competing stories for the analysis and presentation of case study data is discussed and some of the dilemmas of presentation are outlined. A number of processual/contextual studies are used to show that while conflicting accounts may be recognized (in being part of the data), these elements can often remain hidden in post-analytical chronologies of change, formal presentations and published accounts (Dawson, 2003). A framework proposed by Deetz (1996) is used to illustrate how different research orientations might handle such data, leading to the argument that the change narratives authored by researchers reflect similar processes of sensemaking, impression management, and political positioning as the respondent accounts on which they are based (although the academic case study often adheres to a methodological and epistemological genre that provides scholastic credentials of authenticity). The article thus demonstrates how narratives can shape the nature and sequence of the events that they describe, and how both respondent and researcher narratives are crafted to persuade, to influence, to suggest lines of action, and to make things happen; in short, *caveat lector*.

DEFINING NARRATIVE FOR UNDERSTANDING CHANGE PROCESSES

Following the 'narrative turn' in social science, all writing can be seen as narrative writing (Cortazzi, 2001; Richardson, 2000), and theory can be read as a stylized form of story (Sutton and Staw, 1995). However, while many commentators equate narrative with story, these notions are problematic, as they are widely used in different contexts, with varying connotations. Narratives pervade organization studies in different guises, from teaching case studies, to executive autobiographies, to accounts of change intervention. In research, critical incident interviews produced narratives leading to the infamous two-factor theory of work motivation (Herzberg et al., 1959), and have been used to identify events in the development of leadership capabilities (Bennis and Thomas, 2002). As narrative perspectives have become fashionable (Monin, 2003), research has embraced a wider range of themes. Boje (1991, 2003) treats the organization as a storytelling system, mining anecdotes 'performed' by organization members for insights into political advantage in conversation. Boyce (1996) argues that stories provide cues to organization cultures. Barry (1997) explores the use of narrative therapy to develop change agendas. Gabriel (1998, 2000) captures stories which explore the emotional and symbolic components of organizational life. Taylor et al. (2002) discuss how storytelling, through creating meaning and interpretations, can contribute to organizational learning, problem solving, induction, and socialization.

Confronted with such diverse usage, the term narrative is perhaps better regarded as a category label. From this standpoint, stories, scripts, anecdotes, legends, sagas, histories, myths, reports and other discursive accounts are categorically narratives. This category is too broad for most analytical purposes; some stories may be anecdotal and terse, while case histories of change may offer rich detail covering significant periods of time. The narratives of interest to an understanding of organizational change processes are those relating to more or less extended event sequences concerning changes in a particular organizational context. These change intervention narratives include the often partial accounts of respondents, and the typically more holistic theoretical narratives authored by case researchers (Poole et al., 2000). In a definition consistent with this focus, Czarniawska (1998, p. 2) notes that: 'a narrative, in its most basic form, requires at least three elements: an original state of affairs, an action or an event, and the consequent state of affairs', along with a plot that brings these elements into a meaningful whole. Vendelø (1998) adopts a similar definition, incorporating a chronological account of an event sequence indicating causality through actions explained in terms of intentions, deeds, and consequences. Barry and Elmes (1997) argue that the concept of narrative emphasizes the presence of multiple interlinked realities, relating subject matter to cultural and historical contexts, and they use the terms narrative and story synonymously to refer to thematic, sequenced accounts.

Narratives, therefore, are not merely descriptive. As an event sequence implies causality, some narratives, depending on content and construction, offer more than cues, insights, symbols, and metaphors. In describing the manner in which events unfold, narratives can highlight the cast of characters, capture contrasting motives and evolving relationships, and display interpersonal tensions, backstage behaviours and conflicts, as well as outcomes. Narratives describing contextualized, multilayered event sequences, linking antecedents to consequences over time, leading to a point or moral, can be analysed inductively in terms of embedded theory. Several commentators argue that organizational discourse (Grant et al., 2004; Harley and Hardy, 2004; Heracleous, 2006), business narratives (Denning, 2005), myths – including knowledge, heroic, tragic and reflexive narratives – (Gabriel, 2004) and fiction (Czarniawska and de Monthoux, 1994) are a source of understanding in their own right (see also, Becker, 1992; Boje, 1991, 2001; Brown, 1998, 2006; Butler, 1997; Czarniawska, 1998, 1999; Knights and Willmott, 1999; Gabriel, 1998, 2000; Phillips, 1995). Narrative constructs that relate consequences to antecedents through event sequences in context over time thus appear to be particularly relevant to understanding the unfolding of complex organizational change processes.

POLYVOCAL NARRATIVES OF CHANGE: A HISTORY OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS?

The narratives of change written by researchers rely on narratives supplied by respondents. In providing contrasting accounts of the same events, respondents may be variously engaged in personal sensemaking in relation to their role and identity (Brown and Humphreys, 2002; Taylor, 1999), in impression management with researchers and readers of published accounts as prospective audiences (Vendelø, 1998), and in pursuit of political agendas which may be supported or blocked depending on the manner in which

events and actors are represented (Heracleous and Barrett, 2001). In addition, some respondents may only have partial engagement with the change process being studied, and may simply report what information they possess, however inaccurate or incomplete. In documenting change, most published textual accounts – regardless of perspective – begin with a concept of a need to change ('once upon a time'), describe a series of choices and interventions ('and then, and then'), and conclude with results or an evaluation of outcomes (see for example, Patrickson et al., 1995). The plots typically involve a cast of change agents and other actors, descriptions of the change process, and explanations of putative consequences (Kotter and Cohen, 2002). Pettigrew's (1985) processual analysis of organization development in the chemicals company ICI, and Reisner's (2002) description of the turnaround and subsequent profits collapse of the United States Postal Service, both share these narrative properties. However, from a narrative perspective, Boje (2001, p. 9) is critical of monological research accounts that 'rely upon sequential, single-voiced stories' in presenting 'accurate' and 'objective' versions of events. These monological narratives are problematic in at least three respects. First, the concept of language as merely mirroring reality has been undermined by the view of discourse as constituting meaning, challenging the notion of unbiased researchers producing impartial accounts (Hatch, 1996; Van de Ven and Poole, 2005). Second, several studies reveal how different stakeholders provide contrasting versions of the same change events (Brown, 1998; Fincham, 2002). Third, research narratives can be authored with different voices (Hatch (1996) depicts research as 'narrative performance'), or styles (Rhodes (2001) describes the researcher as 'textual practitioner').

In developing pluralistic or polyvocal accounts of change, the researcher as storyteller thus faces two problems. The first concerns which accounts to include. Hazen (1993) argues that the researcher should reveal all silenced and otherwise excluded voices, and not just report the 'loud, articulate, respectable, or directive' ones. The second concerns how effectively to articulate the resultant narrative(s). Dopson, for example (2005, p. 1137), illustrates how a failure to recognize competing narratives and 'the struggles between a variety of groups with different career interests' can lead to unintended consequences. In her study of the attempts by health policy makers to use the principle of evidence-based medicine (EBM) to change clinical practice, she shows that, while EBM was appealing to policy makers in offering a straightforward 'scientific' and objective solution, it failed to take account of differences in sensemaking and the conflicts within and between interdependent groups that comprise the NHS. Narratives are thus tools for personal sensemaking (Bies and Sitkin, 1992; Read, 1992; Weick, 1995) and may be used to deflect other perspectives, to challenge counter stories, to mark as dubious the motives of others, to establish the credibility, legitimacy, and dominance of certain viewpoints, and to present a compelling justification for aims and actions. In other words, narratives shape meanings and can act as counters in the game of organizational power and politics around programmes of organizational change. From an organizational discourse perspective (Grant et al., 2004) accuracy and objectivity is unattainable, as there is never one authentic truth but multiple narratives (Czarniawska, 1998). In addition, as Cunliffe et al. (2004) observe, researchers cannot avoid locating themselves in the narratives of others. In this we have not only to accommodate the multiple and conflicting viewpoints of individuals and groups, but

also the ways in which the values of researchers are implicated in the development of their findings.

A number of studies have attempted to tackle some of these issues through, for example, feeding back to management contrasting accounts of change. For example, O'Connor's (1995) management contact described her depiction of conflicting and self-serving internal accounts of an organization development initiative as shocking, outrageous and unacceptable, and never met with her again (but gave her permission to publish the paper). Brown (1998) presents three contrasting accounts concerning the implementation of a medical support system. Fincham (2002) shows how those involved in computer systems development in a financial services organization revised their narratives, switching themes and allegiances, and differentially attributed success and failure, in order to save face and to influence future courses of action. In relation to the same organizational changes, Brown and Humphreys (2003) contrast senior management stories of epic and heroic change with the narratives of hopelessness and betrayal from other groups. In a candid account, O'Leary (2003) reveals four conflicting 'narrative constructions' in her analysis of change in a newspaper company, admitting that she found the stories of some groups more appealing than others, because they were more passionate, captured her imagination, and provided interesting theoretical insights.

A further problem arises from the observation that narratives are potentially unstable, as they are open to revision over time, as organizational knowledge is first scripted, then selectively retold for other audiences, sustained, then revised and ultimately replaced (Parker, 1997). While transient closure may be achieved through the suppression of subversive versions, there are always opportunities, forums, and audiences, given ongoing fluctuations in organizational power-political positioning, for the 'rewriting of history' (Forster, 1994). Narratives are thus fragile and flexible, capable of revision, of partial retelling, of parody, and also of radical reinterpretation (e.g. Collins and Rainwater, 2003). Doolin's (2003) study of a New Zealand hospital provides an interesting example, observing how change was performed through multiple narratives, and how the appropriateness of past decisions was rewritten to support current objectives. Such rewritings of events are thus important to an understanding of the current contextual conditions under which change processes might unfold in future. Narratives may be 'compelling tales', but they can also be partisan and transient, interpreting and reinterpreting the past, anticipating (the author's) preferred versions of the future and operating in the service of particular agendas, goals, and frameworks of understanding. Narratives can thus be used to legitimate particular interests and actions (Currie and Brown, 2003). The process of change may thus be viewed as a continuing contest between competing narratives authored to service the present and future political agendas of their narrators, a view echoed by Bacharach and Lawler (1998) who argue that the history of organizational change is the history of conflicting interests, alignments, and negotiations.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AS A HISTORY OF COMPETING NARRATIVES

One of our key arguments is that single voiced narratives of change offer little to broaden our knowledge of organizational change processes, and yet this remains the dominant

form of knowledge acquisition in this field. We argue that change is complex, political and multi-voiced, and in this section draw from existing studies to illustrate how accounts of change can be contradictory on at least four *overlapping* dimensions, concerning conflicts of attribution, assessment, interpretation and audience. In considering the authored story of change, we then use Deetz's (1996) 'dimensions of contrast' to highlight the links, which are often hidden in mainstream change management literature, between target audience and the narrative voice of the researcher. Our intention is to show how we can develop more informed studies of change that combine elements of a narrative approach with processual analysis – a turn that is not currently evident in studies that pursue one or other of these perspectives.

Conflicts of attribution: how can a particular event sequence be explained? As one of the features of narrative is embedded causality, conflicting attributions concerning issues influencing outcomes have theoretical significance in supporting different explanations. These conflicts are often put into stark relief when key stakeholders and major political players use high profile events, such as concerns over health risks, wars, national disasters, and similar incidents, to present their own explanations in which key experts may be used to substantiate certain versions of reality. In an attempt to bring closure on such publicly and politically sensitive issues, public inquiry reports are often called for, and Brown (2003) provides an analysis of how these reports service public demand through the creation of a compelling story that seeks to reconcile conflicts of attribution. Brown uses the report on the Piper Alpha disaster to show how public inquiries construct a particular version of reality that serves to allay public panic through asserting an (institution's) ability to regulate and control, and hence prevent reoccurrence of, such disasters (2003, p. 100). In seeing storytelling as an essential feature of our existence in which numerous narratives co-exist, the inquiry report is interesting as it attempts to present a univocal and coherent view on what is multivocal and fragmented. In his analysis, the report is seen to serve as a means of legitimating social institutions and depoliticizing disaster events (Brown, 2003, p. 96):

In effect, a hegemonically successful report is one that is wholly or largely uncritically accepted as providing a comprehensive and accurate account of the events it purports to describe, which is seen to be fair in its assessment of culpability and the allocation of blame, and which makes seemingly appropriate recommendations. To be hegemonically effective, and thus to maintain and repair the legitimacy of the state apparatus, a text needs to be received as authoritative. Authority is not a property of texts per se, but a characteristic attributed to texts by their readers, that is, authority is ascribed to texts rather than inscribed in them, though partly on the basis of authority claims that texts themselves make.

Brown views sensemaking as a narrative process in which meanings are constructed and shared. His analysis is not concerned with how sensemaking occurs by those who experience a disaster, but how subsequent inquiries constitute disaster sensemaking, or how those inquiries resolve conflicts of attribution by constructing a 'realistic and plausible tale' that is 'verisimilitudinous' (2003, p. 104). In this way accounts aims to extend hegemonic influence by seeking 'active consent' that things did happen the way reported.

Brown thus concludes that, 'the power to tell a story is itself hegemonic, and readers need constantly to be aware that even a story reflexively told is suffused with power' (2003, p. 109).

Conflicts of assessment: the point of intervention narratives typically concerns what went well, what went wrong, and (depending on perspective) what other organizations can learn from that experience. However, evaluations of change outcomes are often contested, with regard to subjective responses, and also with respect to quantifiable metrics. This is illustrated in Buchanan's (2000) analysis of a re-engineering project at Leicester Royal Infirmary. He shows how one assessment tracked performance over four years, covering operating and staff costs, productivity, inpatient activity, quality indicators, and other resource and output measures. This revealed that the hospital was initially efficient, that on some measures performance had improved, while on others performance had decreased. Despite over 60 pages of text and 50 pages of statistical analysis, the report (Brennan et al., 1999, p. 6) concludes that: 'it will clearly not be possible to disentangle the effects of re-engineering from other general initiatives and improvements in efficiency at the macro level'. A second 'implementation and impact' study concluded that re-engineering had been a catalyst for change and that quality of care had improved. However, a sub-heading stated: 'changed but not transformed'. Bowns and McNulty (1999, p. 41) argue that 'there is little evidence of the dramatic transformation of the performance of the hospital, routine quality indicators remain broadly stable [and] the general picture is of marginal improvements in most of the main traditional indicators of efficiency'. They also conclude (p. 4) that 'the redesign of patient care processes has not resulted in sufficient savings to consider the initiative to have paid for itself'. A third, internal, evaluation identified recurrent annual cost savings of £900,000 and capacity increases of 20 per cent in some areas (Leicester Royal Infirmary, 1997, p. 3). In this case example, individual assessments of change ranged from 'success' to 'failure' with individuals involved in re-engineering offering sharply contrasting views (Buchanan, 2003).

Conflicts of interpretation: in a longitudinal study of plant-level change at an automotive manufacturer, Dawson (2003) illustrates how narratives reflect the political interests of key actors. The plant manager's account involved the creation of a stakeholder coalition comprising managerial and supervisory staff, union officials, and outside experts. Although union officials viewed his account as 'inaccurate', claiming that his role as change champion was overstated, they did not undermine his story. Furthermore, the new working practices threatened the role of forklift truck drivers, who vigorously resisted change, arguing that the new system would prove inoperable, and yet their position was ignored by the union who communicated a supportive position on change to their shop stewards. They allowed the plant manager publicly to promote his account in the hope that this compelling tale would prevent senior managers from adopting a sub-contracting strategy that would result in plant closure. The plant manager gained further support through collaboration with a government Division of Manufacturing Technology, whose staff convinced senior managers of the advantages of cellular manufacturing. The expert voice of the collaborators supported the storytelling of the plant manager who in turn had the cooperation of the union. While union officials held a different narrative, they recognized the political value of the plant manager's account,

and were thus complicit in the demise of the role of forklift truck drivers and in sustaining a public narrative of change that promoted a particular political viewpoint.

Conflicts of audience: these relate to the creation and maintenance of stories that may conflict in narrative terms but make sense in relation to expectations of different audiences. For example, Collins (2005) contrasts the 'official' language of Scottish public sector leadership (visionary, transformational) with the more personalized accounts of CEOs. This disjunction between public and personal accounts reflects how narratives are shaped differently in formal arenas, and how in this context they are constructed to legitimate the stance and positional power of leadership. This construction is purposeful. The narrators recognize the necessity to allay public and/or political anxieties, while ensuring that their story is compelling in meeting audience expectations. The storyteller acknowledges that the 'practical realities' can never be fully conveyed in such a construction, for by so doing the power of the narrative to influence public opinion may be undermined. Once again the political process of narrative construction and the unequal power relationships mean that some voices get heard over others, while some accounts remain unspoken or are reshaped for public consumption.

In these illustrations of four overlapping dimensions of conflict, we see the power of narratives to shape the meaning and understanding given to event sequences. Conflicts of assessment, multiple interpretations of events, stories for different types of audiences, and competing explanations (and attempts to bring closure to conflicts of attribution) all mark organizational change as a history of competing narratives. But what does this mean for researchers engaged in the study of change processes? In the section that follows we identify four analytic ideal types and discuss their implications for research and theory development.

THIS IS HOW IT HAPPENED AND OTHER STORIES

Observing that 'stories change depending on who is telling them', Pentland (1999, p. 715) argues that 'selective silencing is an unavoidable feature of narrative'. Gabriel (1998, p. 136) notes that, as the plot or aim of stories is to persuade, truth is subordinate to purpose as 'poetic license is the prerogative of story telling'. As photographers decide what lies inside the frame, authors decide which information to present. While fictions are designed to entertain, organizational narratives are often designed to colour the perceptions and judgements of their audiences. Consequently, narratives are not neutral, and reporting change is an activity with political intent. This lack of neutrality, persuasive intent, and politicization, applies both to respondent accounts and to research-based narratives. In the latter, there is not only selective retelling (as there is often more than one story to tell), but also selective discourse in story construction (there is more than one way to tell the story).

Hatch (1996), for example, argues that every narrative is 'a version' told from a particular perspective, dependent on the concept of narrative voice, which is determined by whether or not the narrator is a character in the story. She outlines four positions in which the narrator can be, respectively, an objective observer, a minor character, the main character, or combine those voices as an omniscient observer. Defining genre as a style of writing that is recognizable, legitimate, and acceptable to readers (and thus

central to the author's credibility), Rhodes (2001) reports his study of a quality management programme in an Australian multinational company as a conventional third person objective research report, then as ghost-written autobiographies of the management interviewees, and finally as an interpretive autoethnography. Arguing that authoring research narratives involves skills similar to those of the novelist, Czarniawska (1998, 1999) argues that fictional literature and academic research are not distinct domains.

While different authoring voices make different allowances for competing versions of change processes, the emphasis in the sources just cited lies with stylistic choice, and not directly with problems of handling contradictory data. As indicated, other commentators have viewed those contradictions primarily in terms of conflict between a dominant narrative and subversive voices. The official account often reflects the political positioning of key stakeholders, justifying their decisions and actions, and drawing attention to selected themes, characters, and outcomes. From a managerial perspective, a coherent success story with a clear bullet-point summary is more compelling than a complex tale with overlaid plots and characters, challenges to management judgements, and ambiguous outcomes. In retelling narratives of change, researchers may become complicit in protecting the dominant narrative, lending it a form of credibility (the appearance of objectivity through academic support) and thereby further bolstering and protecting this particular narrative against attack or subversion from others stories of change. There may also be the deliberate silencing of some accounts, primarily for ethical reasons, to maintain confidentiality, but perhaps also, as Pettigrew (1990) argues, to maintain theoretical coherence. Consequently, change narratives pass into theoretical and practical utterances, sieved through research aims and political agendas, and also through research perspectives or paradigms (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). To illustrate the consequent scripting of change accounts, we will adopt the more recent framework of research orientations developed by Deetz (1996) (see Schultze and Leidner, 2002).

Deetz's (1996) 'dimensions of contrast' rely on discursive moves and social relationships, rather than on procedures and individuals. One dimension of contrast is 'local/emergent' versus 'elite/*a priori*', based on sources of ideas and concepts, in dialogue with respondents, or established by the researcher from theoretical considerations. The second is 'consensus' versus 'dissensus', based on relationships between research aims and the dominant social discourse, with the aim either to confirm unity of understanding, or to expose conflicts and tensions. These dimensions produce what Deetz (1996, p. 198) describes as a 'convenient four-space solution', identifying the 'analytic ideal types' (p. 195), summarized in Figure 1.

In applying this framework to our concerns with conflicting accounts of change, we can see how change narratives are variously scripted, and while these caricatures may be blurred, they usefully capture different orientations to our understanding of change. For example, a normative or 'modern' discourse assumes progressive enlightenment, rationalization and control. Here concerns lie with codification, with establishing covariation and causal relations through hypothesis testing, with cumulative evidence, with nomothetic laws. Conflicts of assessment are resolved through comprehensive and systematic data collection; conflicts of attribution and interpretation are resolved by adopting the majority view; there are no conflicts of audience because there is only one accurate version to narrate. Conflicting accounts in this discourse represent inaccurate, minority,

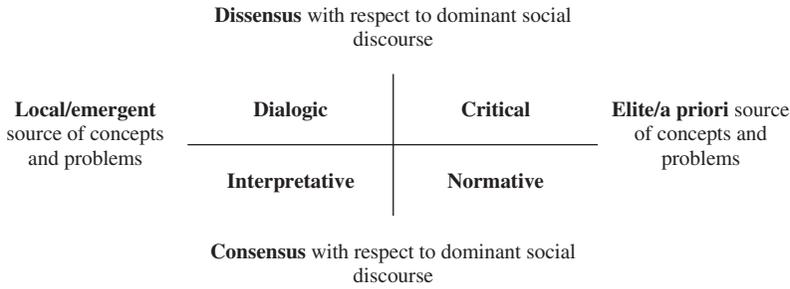


Figure 1. Discourses in organization research

aberrant, maverick, malicious, uninformed views, which play relatively insignificant roles in relation to change processes and outcomes, and which can be marginalized by triangulation. Closure is achieved by conformity with and reinforcement of the dominant social discourse.

An interpretative discourse regards individuals as sensemaking, as engaged participants, as co-creators of social structures, and is based on ethnographic and hermeneutic methods designed to establish local meanings and interpretations, grounded in social and organizational practices. Conflicts of assessment, attribution, and interpretation are taken for granted; conflicts of audience are a consequence of socially constructed realities. Conflicting accounts in this discourse reflect ongoing socially-positioned attempts at self-interpretation, and are thus allocated equivalent weight. There is no one correct account. Closure is achieved by representing faithfully the diversity of interpretations.

A critical discourse views organizations as sites of political struggle. The research objective is to unmask modes of domination and distorted communication by demonstrating how these are reproduced, to highlight how social practices and institutional structures create and sustain power differences, obscuring alternative perspectives. The aim is to establish the conditions in which conflicts can be surfaced and discussed. Conflicts of assessment arise from power and status differentials; conflicts of attribution result also from differences in social and organizational position; conflicts of interpretation serve either to sustain or to challenge power; conflicts of audience are manifestations of attempts to exert influence in different social settings. Conflicting accounts in this discourse represent silenced voices whose resistance to dominating discourses should be exposed. Closure is achieved in a utopian end-state, when conflicts are addressed and resolved following radical social reform.

A dialogic or postmodern discourse focuses on the role of language in the constructed and polyvocal nature of social reality. Organizations are viewed as disjointed narratives and perspectives that fail to establish a coherent reality. Dialogic discourse seeks to unpack taken-for-granted realities, to uncover their complexities, lack of shared meaning, and hidden resistances. There are no conflicts of assessment or interpretation as different accounts are equally valid. Attributions are defined from different standpoints. Audiences must be aware of the motives and purposes of those who speak to them. Conflicting accounts in this discourse represent narrative fragments, elements in a kaleidoscopic tapestry. Closure cannot be achieved as the notion of a single reality is illusory, and such truth claims are suspect.

Table I. Genres and conflicting accounts

<i>Genre</i>	<i>Status of conflicting accounts</i>
Dialogic process theory frustrate truth statements	<i>Confirmatory</i> : display the polyvocal nature of social existence, reveal complexity, challenge status quo, confirm fragmentation and lack of coherence in accounts of 'reality'
Critical process theory embarrass power brokers	<i>Illustrative</i> : provide further evidence of conflict, struggle and resistance, expose power differentials, give voice to the silenced and powerless, perpetuate the struggle
Interpretative process theory expose multiple realities	<i>Anticipated</i> : access lived experience and individual sensemaking, socially positioned accounts expose the social construction of organizational change phenomena
Normative process theory codify practical guidelines	<i>Irrelevant</i> : soft data, unhelpful, confusing, troublesome, unverifiable, uncodifiable, non-cumulative, interesting anecdote only, surgically remove by triangulation

Offering caricatures of four categories of process theory, Table I summarizes these discourses, their objectives, and the status which they grant conflicting accounts. Following Czarniawska (1999) and Rhodes (2001), these represent genres for authoring research narratives. A normative genre is concerned with the codification of practice; conflicting accounts are irrelevant (e.g. Hamel, 2000; complete with seven-step guide on 'how to start an insurrection' if change is too slow). An interpretative genre exposes multiple realities; conflicting socially constructed accounts are anticipated (e.g. Brown, 1998; Fincham, 2002). In a critical genre, the aim is to embarrass power figures; conflicting accounts reveal power inequalities and exploitation (e.g. Knights and McCabe, 1998). The purpose of a dialogic genre is to frustrate claims to truth; contradictory views reinforce this viewpoint (e.g. Collins and Rainwater, 2003; Skoldberg, 1994).

Thus we argue that narratives of change are *discoursed*, articulated in a particular genre, and *audienced*, to influence a specific readership. Researchers who seek to be appreciated by their chosen constituency must adopt a narrative voice commensurate with their target audience. For example, Huy (2001) establishes his identity as normative management commentator in a *Harvard Business Review* article, and identifies himself as an interpretative sociologist in *Administrative Science Quarterly* (Huy, 2002). Knights and McCabe (1998) adopt a critical labour process perspective in *Human Relations*, and Knights (2002) establishes a postmodern identity in *Organization*. In short, understanding change as a multi-story process is not so self-evident as is often assumed. This viewpoint involves not only the competing narratives of individuals and groups who experience change, and the manner in which their stories are reshaped over time and influence the process that they seek to make sense of, but also the way that stories are audienced and discoursed in constructing narratives that represent data, practical knowledge and theoretical understanding.

CONCLUSION

In this article, we have argued for the need to accommodate competing narratives in conceptualizing organizational change as a multi-story process, and to synthesize insights

from a narrative approach to processual and contextual analysis of change. Rich processual accounts demonstrating how change processes are shaped over time have been provided by a number of longitudinal studies (e.g. Clark et al., 1988; Pettigrew, 1985). Such accounts have also captured elements of politicized decision-making (e.g. Buchanan and Badham, 1999; Pettigrew, 1973), and conflicts in interpretation and assessment (e.g. Dawson, 2003). However, conflicts of attribution and audience are less evident in these studies, which typically offer post-analytical accounts that are generally coherent and single-voiced. Their intention is to provide explanations of change processes as they unfold over time, rather than to present divergent narratives *per se*. In contrast, narrative studies are interested in the characteristics of stories (Boje, 1991), and in the way that stories make experience meaningful (Boje and Dennehy, 1993, p. 18). From this perspective, storytelling is not simply about description, but about emotional engagement with an audience, about creating and sustaining meaning, and about discrediting other worldviews (Gabriel, 2000). There is also concern with conflicts of attribution and, as illustrated above, the ways in which such conflicts may be resolved through, for example, public inquiry reports (Brown, 2000, 2003). Although these dimensions of conflict interweave and become part of the data for researchers from both processual and narrative perspectives, there is much to be gained from building on the complementarities in these approaches in an attempt to broaden our critical research gaze on organizational change processes. To develop research in this mode, Deetz's (1996) framework offers a good starting point, illustrating contrasting discourses, focuses of interest, and modes of engagement with conflicting accounts. From our perspective, the challenges posed by such a combinational approach should not be understated, and while we seek to sketch some of these issues, this presentation is limited by space.

The co-existence of multiple and conflicting narratives that are replaced, refined and rewritten to meet the shifting needs and expectations of different audiences, sits well with longitudinal processual studies that seek 'to capture reality in flight' (Pettigrew, 1990). Those multiple narratives do not simply provide a different lens from which to view lived experiences of change. They also reveal the iterative processes of sense-giving and sensemaking, demonstrating also how narrators (who may be both audience and co-authors of a number of stories over time) co-create narrative scripts that influence the understanding of and behaviour towards ongoing change. The narrative researcher focuses on the story as a construct that provides modes of interpretation and insight, whereas the processual researcher is concerned with the ways in which individuals and groups can influence the views and actions of others in steering change processes. In combining these interests, we seek not only to use stand-alone stories to understand the sensemaking and sense-giving associated with employee experience of change, but also to understand the broader context in which those stories both account for and shape the processes of which they seek to make sense. Consequently, our analysis of change narratives is intertwined with a processual/contextual analysis of organizations changing.

This raises a number of methodological challenges. The processual researcher is, among other things, interested in artefacts, images, video presentations, emails, documents and in observing individual and group behaviour, and the verbal and non-verbal interpersonal communications that occur in the organizational context under investiga-

tion. In addition, there is a need to treat stories seriously, and not just those that contribute to the dominant narrative. Processual research thus needs to accommodate the collection of individual and group narratives over time. Importantly, these data should not simply be broken down and linked with documentary and observational data in rebuilding themes and sub-themes towards a conventional post-analytical account of change. Although such data can be used in this manner, we contend that they should also be analysed in relation to the sense-giving and sensemaking of change and the ways that other stories and interpretations may compete and be rewritten over time. Multi-story analysis thus seeks to accommodate the ambiguities and contradictions that are part of the storytelling process and audience interpretations, as well as the feedback that not only evaluates accounts of change but also shapes change processes. This is a broader analysis of multiple data sources in pursuit of a more comprehensive understanding that is not constrained by the need to produce *the* account of change. The challenge lies in analysing components of data (such as stories, and the way that changes are reshaped over time by different individuals and groups), while also engaging in elements of conventional processual analysis, and then in providing a meta-analysis that provides a synthesis that is both polyvocal and coherent. In adopting such an approach, change can be defined as an emergent process, shaped within a dynamic contextual setting, that is conditioned by a web of jostling narratives, and is propelled by the creative authoring of a sequence of interpretations and change interventions. Lines of action are plotted casting heroes, villains, and fools; plot twists and false avenues may be invented as circumstances require; and a range of corporate and individual endings anticipated. In a given organizational context, other stimuli continuously interweave such as the arrival of new machinery, the non-verbal cues of others, and the breakdown in interpersonal relations between management levels or between different shop floor factions, all adding to an evolving picture of the world of work and to our data as organizational researchers.

In combining narrative and processual approaches, observational data are an important source, and may present other conflicts of interpretation between what is vocalized, what is documented, and what is done. It is not uncommon for our view of the ways things are to differ from that of others. The researcher's field notes can be used to construct other stories of change, to contextualize the ebb and flow of emotions and of the scripting and re-scripting of accounts. The change process is authored in a number of ways, by those experiencing change, for example, by those seeking to manage and steer the process, and by the researcher trying to make sense of the utterances and actions of others. These stories are invariably authored with the intent to influence. For the change agent, stories can have causal intent; for the researcher, the published story is currency for status, recognition and possible promotion. Within organizations, the persuasive dominant narratives are those which are most plausible, credible, coherent, and attractive; they are often presented by the most powerful, perceived to be effective and legitimate solutions to known problems, and are able successfully to jeopardize the legitimacy of competing accounts. To an extent, the nature and direction of future actions can be anticipated in terms of who currently is articulating 'good' stories about what and how to change, with what consequences, in competition with other proposals in circulation. For research design and the development of theory, this perspective has implications beyond existing processual perspectives which often identify, but seek either

to report or to reconcile competing narratives. While it is important to acknowledge conflicting accounts, it is also necessary to recognize that respondent and research narratives can be both *stories of* and *stories for* the change process. Data collection, interpretation, and theory building must take into account the duality of narratives, which sit outside the process, as descriptive, explanatory accounts, while often located inside the process, performing a shaping role. While change can be explained retrospectively *using* narrative, change can also be influenced prospectively *through* narrative.

These observations may constitute the focus of a novel and challenging research agenda. They certainly raise issues that cannot be adequately resolved here, such as how to combine a multi-methods contextual analysis of change with an analysis of stories in which political process is also serviced by elements outside the story telling arena. The challenge is to engage in an analysis of change as a multi-story process while ensuring that other elements of agency and structure are not jettisoned in an over-reliance on narrative analysis. Finding an appropriate balance between these complementary perspectives, in a way that improves our understanding without devaluing the integrity of the two approaches is key. We conclude, therefore, that process theories offer meta-theoretical perspectives, which do not directly generate hypotheses, but which provide instead lenses which reveal the contextualized, complex, iterative and politicized nature of change. A narrative perspective offers a complementary lens, emphasizing the contextual, temporal, sequential, and multi-authored properties of change, while also highlighting attempts to frame, plot, manipulate and direct episodes and event sequences along the preferred trajectories of competing narrators. We therefore argue that a narrative approach should be used to inform research designs that adopt a contextual/processual perspective as this can offer valuable insights in furthering our knowledge and understanding of organizational change processes.

REFERENCES

- Bacharach, S. B. and Lawler, E. J. (1998). 'Political alignments in organizations: contextualization, mobilization, and coordination'. In Kramer, R. M. and Neale, M. A. (Eds), *Power and Influence in Organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 67–88.
- Barry, D. (1997). 'Telling changes: from narrative family therapy to organizational change and development'. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, **10**, 30–46.
- Barry, D. and Elmes, M. (1997). 'Strategy retold: toward a narrative view of strategy discourse'. *Academy of Management Review*, **22**, 429–52.
- Becker, H. S. (1992). 'Cases, causes, conjunctures, stories, and imagery'. In Ragin, C. C. and Becker, H. S. (Eds), *What is a Case: Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 205–15.
- Bennis, W. G. and Thomas, R. J. (2002). 'Crucibles of leadership'. *Harvard Business Review*, **80**, 39–45.
- Bies, R. S. and Sitkin, S. B. (1992). 'Explanation as legitimation: excuse-making in organizations'. In McLaughlin, M. L., Cody, M. J. and Read, S. J. (Eds), *Explaining One's Self to Others: Reason-Giving in a Social Context*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 183–98.
- Boje, D. M. (1991). 'The storytelling organization: a study of story performance in an office-supply firm'. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **36**, 106–26.
- Boje, D. M. (2001). *Narrative Methods for Organizational and Communication Research*. London: Sage.
- Boje, D. M. (2003). 'Using narrative and telling stories'. In Holman, D. and Thorpe, R. (Eds), *Management and Language: The Manager as a Practical Author*. London: Sage, 41–53.
- Boje, D. and Dennehy, R. (1993). *Managing in the Postmodern World: America's Revolution Against Exploitation*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall-Hunt.

- Bowns, I. R. and McNulty, T. (1999). 'Re-engineering Leicester Royal Infirmary: An Independent Evaluation of Implementation and Impact'. School of Health and Related Research, University of Sheffield, and Centre for Creativity, Strategy and Change, University of Warwick Business School.
- Boyce, M. E. (1996). 'Organizational story and storytelling: a critical review'. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, **9**, 5–26.
- Brennan, A., Sampson, F., Hemsley, J. and Evans, M. (1999). 'Evaluation of Business Process Re-Engineering at Leicester Royal Infirmary: Final Report on Changes Between 1994/5 and 1997/8 – Macro Measures Study'. School of Health and Related Research, University of Sheffield.
- Brown, A. D. (1998). 'Narrative, politics and legitimacy in an IT implementation'. *Journal of Management Studies*, **35**, 35–58.
- Brown, A. D. (2000). 'Making sense of inquiry sensemaking'. *Journal of Management Studies*, **37**, 45–75.
- Brown, A. D. (2003). 'Authoritative sensemaking in a public inquiry report'. *Organization Studies*, **25**, 95–112.
- Brown, A. D. (2006). 'A narrative approach to collective identities'. *Journal of Management Studies*, **43**, 731–51.
- Brown, A. D. and Humphreys, M. (2002). 'Nostalgia and the narrativization of identity: a Turkish case'. *British Journal of Management*, **13**, 141–59.
- Brown, A. D. and Humphreys, M. (2003). 'Epic and tragic tales: making sense of change'. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, **39**, 121–44.
- Buchanan, D. A. (2000). 'The lived experience of high velocity change: a hospital case study'. *American Academy of Management Conference, Symposium on Strategy as Dynamic and Pluralistic*. Toronto, August.
- Buchanan, D. (2003). 'Getting the story straight: illusions and delusions in the organizational change process'. *Tamara: The Journal of Critical Postmodern Organization Science*, **2**, 7–21.
- Buchanan, D. and Badham, R. (1999). *Power, Politics and Organizational Change: Winning the Turf Game*. London: Sage.
- Burrell, G. and Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis*. London: Heinemann.
- Butler, R. (1997). 'Stories and experiments in social inquiry'. *Organization Studies*, **12**, 927–48.
- Clark, J., McLoughlin, I., Rose, H. and King, R. (1988). *The Process of Technological Change: New Technology and Social Choice in the Workplace*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Clausen, C. and Olsen, P. (2000). 'Strategic management and the politics of production in the development of work: a case study in Danish electronic manufacturing plant'. *Technology Analysis and Strategic Management*, **12**, 59–74.
- Collins, D. and Rainwater, K. (2003). 'Riders on the storm: a sideways look at a celebrated tale of corporate transformation'. *British Academy of Management Annual Conference*. Harrogate, September.
- Collins, J. (2005). 'Examining the private and public discourse of the leadership of Scottish public bodies'. *21st EGOS Colloquium*. Berlin, June/July.
- Cortazzi, M. (2001). 'Narrative analysis in ethnography'. In Atkinson, P., Coffey, A., Delamont, S., Lofland, J. and Lofland, L. (Eds), *Handbook of Ethnography*. London: Sage, 384–94.
- Cunliffe, A., Luhman, J. and Boje, D. (2004). 'Narrative temporality: implications for organizational research'. *Organization Studies*, **25**, 261–86.
- Currie, G. and Brown, A. D. (2003). 'A narratological approach to understanding processes of organizing in a UK hospital'. *Human Relations*, **56**, 563–86.
- Czarniawska, B. (1998). *A Narrative Approach to Organization Studies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Czarniawska, B. (1999). *Writing Management: Organization Theory as a Literary Genre*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Czarniawska, B. and de Monthoux, P. G. (Eds) (1994). *Good Novels, Better Management: Reading Organizational Realities in Fiction*. Reading: Harwood Academic Publishers.
- Dawson, P. (2003). *Reshaping Change: A Processual Perspective*. London: Routledge.
- Dawson, P. and Buchanan, D. (2005). 'The way it really happened: competing narratives in the political process of technological change'. *Human Relations*, **58**, 845–65.
- Deetz, S. (1996). 'Describing differences in approaches to organization science: rethinking Burrell and Morgan and their legacy'. *Organization Science*, **7**, 191–207.
- Denning, S. (2005). *The Leader's Guide to Storytelling: Mastering the Art and Discipline of Business Narratives*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Doolin, B. (2003). 'Narratives of change: discourse, technology and organization'. *Organization*, **10**, 751–70.
- Dopson, S. (2005). 'The diffusion of medical innovations: can figurational sociology contribute?'. *Organization Studies*, **26**, 1125–44.
- Fincham, R. (2002). 'Narratives of success and failure in systems development'. *British Journal of Management*, **13**, 1–14.

- Forster, N. (1994). 'The analysis of company documentation'. In Cassell, C. and Symon, G. (Eds), *Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research: A Practical Guide*. London: Sage, 147–66.
- Gabriel, Y. (1998). 'The use of stories'. In Symon, G. and Cassell, C. (Eds), *Qualitative Methods and Analysis in Organizational Research: A Practical Guide*. London: Sage, 135–60.
- Gabriel, Y. (2000). *Storytelling in Organizations: Facts, Fictions and Fantasies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gabriel, Y. (2004). *Myths, Stories, and Organizations: Premodern Narratives for our Times*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Grant, D., Hardy, C., Osrick, C. and Putnam, L. (Eds) (2004). *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Discourse*. London: Sage.
- Hamel, G. (2000). 'Waking up IBM: how a gang of unlikely rebels transformed Big Blue'. *Harvard Business Review*, **78**, 137–46.
- Harley, W. and Hardy, C. (2004). 'Firing blanks? An analysis of discursive struggle in HRM'. *Journal of Management Studies*, **41**, 377–400.
- Hatch, M. J. (1996). 'The role of the researcher: an analysis of narrative position in organization theory'. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, **5**, 359–74.
- Hazen, M. A. (1993). 'Towards polyphonic organization'. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, **6**, 15–26.
- Heracleous, L. (2006). 'A tale of three discourses: the dominant, the strategic and the marginalized'. *Journal of Management Studies*, **43**, 1059–87.
- Heracleous, L. and Barrett, M. (2001). 'Organizational change as discourse: communicative actions and deep structures in the context of information technology implementation'. *Academy of Management Journal*, **44**, 755–78.
- Herzberg, F., Mausner, B. and Snyderman, B. B. (1959). *The Motivation to Work*. New York: John Wiley.
- Huy, Q. N. (2001). 'In praise of middle managers'. *Harvard Business Review*, **79**, 72–9.
- Huy, Q. N. (2002). 'Emotional balancing of organizational continuity and radical change: the contribution of middle managers'. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **47**, 31–69.
- Knights, D. (2002). 'Writing organizational analysis into Foucault'. *Organization*, **9**, 575–93.
- Knights, D. and McCabe, D. (1998). 'When "life is but a dream": obliterating politics through business process re-engineering?'. *Human Relations*, **51**, 761–98.
- Knights, D. and Willmott, H. (1999). *Management Lives: Power and Identity in Work Organizations*. London: Sage.
- Kotter, J. and Cohen, D. (2002). *The Heart of Change: Real Life-Stories of How People Change Their Organizations*. Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Leicester Royal Infirmary (1997). *Re-engineering in Healthcare: The Leicester Royal Infirmary Experience*. Leicester: The Leicester Royal Infirmary NHS Trust.
- Leitch, S. and Davenport, S. (2005). 'The politics of discourse: marketization of the New Zealand science and innovation system'. *Human Relations*, **58**, 891–912.
- Monin, N. (2003). *Management Theory: A Critical and Reflexive Reading*. London: Routledge.
- Ng, W. and De Cock, C. (2002). 'Battle in the boardroom: a discursive perspective'. *Journal of Management Studies*, **39**, 23–49.
- Noon, M., Jenkins, S. and Lucio, M. (2000). 'Fads, techniques and control: the competing agendas of TPM and TECEX at the Royal Mail (UK)'. *Journal of Management Studies*, **37**, 499–520.
- O'Connor, E. S. (1995). 'Paradoxes of participation: textual analysis and organizational change'. *Organization Studies*, **16**, 769–803.
- O'Leary, M. (2003). 'From paternalism to cynicism: narratives of a newspaper company'. *Human Relations*, **56**, 685–704.
- Parker, M. (1997). 'Dividing organizations and multiplying identities'. In Hetherington, K. and Munro, R. (Eds), *Ideas of Difference*. Oxford: Blackwell, 112–36.
- Patrickson, M., Bamber, V. and Bamber, G. (Eds) (1995). *Organisational Change Strategies: Case Studies of Human Resource and Industrial Relations Issues*. Melbourne: Longman.
- Pentland, B. T. (1999). 'Building process theory with narrative: from description to explanation'. *Academy of Management Review*, **24**, 711–24.
- Pettigrew, A. M. (1973). *The Politics of Organizational Decision-Making*. London: Tavistock.
- Pettigrew, A. M. (1985). *The Awakening Giant: Continuity and Change in ICI*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Pettigrew, A. M. (1990). 'Longitudinal field research on change: theory and practice'. *Organization Science*, **1**, 267–92.
- Phillips, N. (1995). 'Telling organizational tales: on the role of narrative fiction in the study of organization'. *Organization Studies*, **16**, 625.

- Poole, M. S., Van de Ven, A. H., Dooley, K. and Holmes, M. E. (2000). *Organizational Change and Innovation Processes: Theory and Methods for Research*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Read, S. J. (1992). 'Constructing accounts: the role of explanatory coherence'. In McLaughlin, M. L., Cody, M. J. and Read, S. J. (Eds), *Explaining One's Self to Others: Reason-Giving in a Social Context*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 3–19.
- Reisner, R. A. F. (2002). 'When a turnaround stalls'. *Harvard Business Review*, **80**, 45–52.
- Rhodes, C. (2001). *Writing Organization: (Re)presentation and Control in Narratives at Work*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Richardson, L. (2000). 'Writing: a method of inquiry'. In Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 923–48.
- Ropo, A., Eriksson, P. and Hunt, J. (1997). 'Reflections on conducting processual research on management and organizations'. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, **13**, 331–5.
- Schultze, U. and Leidner, D. E. (2002). 'Studying knowledge management in information systems research: discourses and theoretical assumptions'. *MIS Quarterly*, **26**, 213–42.
- Skoldberg, K. S. (1994). 'Tales of change: public administration reform and narrative mode'. *Organization Science*, **5**, 219–38.
- Sutton, R. I. and Staw, B. M. (1995). 'What theory is *not*'. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **40**, 371–84.
- Taylor, S. S. (1999). 'Making sense of revolutionary change: differences in members' stories'. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, **12**, 524–39.
- Taylor, S. S., Fisher, D. and Dufresne, R. (2002). 'The aesthetics of management storytelling: a key to organizational learning'. *Management Learning*, **33**, 313–30.
- Tsoukas, H. and Chia, R. (2002). 'On organizational becoming: rethinking organizational change'. *Organization Science*, **13**, 567–82.
- Tsoukas, H. and Hatch, M. J. (2001). 'Complex thinking, complex practice: the case for a narrative approach to organizational complexity'. *Human Relations*, **54**, 979–1013.
- Van de Ven, A. H. and Poole, M. S. (2005). 'Alternative approaches for studying organizational change'. *Organization Studies*, **26**, 1377–404.
- Vendelø, M. T. (1998). 'Narrating corporate reputation: becoming legitimate through storytelling'. *International Studies of Management and Organization*, **28**, 120–37.
- Weick, K. E. (1995). *Sensemaking in Organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA and London: Sage.