Foreword and Acknowledgements

"Narrative and Discursive Approaches in Entrepreneurship" is a second book in a miniseries of four publications called "Movements in Entrepreneurship" which depart from so-called writers workshops where authors first meet to discuss their possible contributions based on first drafts responding to a thematic call for chapters. The aim of this series is to move the field of entrepreneurship by stimulating and exploring new ideas and research practices in entrepreneurship in relations to new themes, theories, methods, paradigmatic stances and contexts. While the first book, entitled "*New Movements in Entrepreneurship*" and symbolized by the element of *water*, follows the streams of research we as scholars take part in, focuses on the flux and flow of entrepreneurial life and was carried through following actual emerging movements in entrepreneurship research, this second book is edited with the symbol of "air" in mind, taking in fresh air from and following new winds from neighbouring disciplines such as anthropology and literary studies, from new paradigmatic stances such as poststructuralism and feminism and their recent explorations of the linguistic turn through narrative, dramaturgical, fictive, conversational and discursive projects.

attempts. We thank the many anonymous reviewers who helped the authors to revise their chapters substantially after the workshop. Our publisher, Edward Elgar – especially Francine O'Sullivan – shared their trust and their fullest professionalism to accomplish this second book in the Series they host.

Keep looking at the Movements,

Daniel and Chris

Introduction

Daniel Hjorth and Chris Steyaert

Following our first publication workshop challenging contributors to think and write the 'New Movements in Entrepreneurship' (see Steyaert and Hjorth, 2003), this second workshop took on the challenge of gathering around the theme of 'Narrative and Discursive Approaches in Entrepreneurship'. This is now a book that you hold in your hands. It is again a result of a collective and international work and represents, as such, a much suggested effort in entrepreneurship research to establish new dialogues between cultures. If the first workshop invitation was more broad and general, this second one specified a more narrow focus at the same time as it opened towards neighbouring disciplines where narrative and discursive approaches have been explored for some time now. The idea is that a simultaneous combination of a stringent focus and new stimulations can create an intensification in how we study entrepreneurship, resulting in new movements.

As we start to introduce you to this book, we prefer to skip the usual rhetorics of why these approaches are important, much needed, etc and point immediately to a central tension in this book, as one can "read" it in the title "Narrative and Discursive Approaches". All chapters in this book, whether they start with a narrative emphasis or a discursive persuasion, have sooner or later to address the connection between narration and discourse.

There are no-clear-cut narrative or discursive approaches, and the 12 Chapters move in between these possibililities to enact their own specific and sometimes creative response to that tension.

To address this tension in this introduction, we would like to formulate three immediately, and for the reader pertinent and pragmatic, questions. The first question – *(how) do narrative and discursive approaches work within entrepreneurship studies?* can only be responded by inviting readers to read and work with the Chapters 2 till 10, and to see whether they work for them. These nine Chapters can be seen as experimenting with narrative and discursive approaches, and for the authors it has been an exciting and difficult trajectory, not in the least because all of them have come with embodied experiences rather than with armchair observations. The second question is *'what are the larger stakes for entrepreneurship when turning to language-based approaches?'* In replying to that question, we can refer to the new themes that we might address in studying entrepreneurship, but also to the broader debates one gets involved in when taking the linguistic turn in entrepreneurship seriously. There are two chapters in this book – one by Steyaert and one by Hjorth in between which the other nine chapters are situated (kept hostage?) – that address explicitly the broader conceptual movements that are at stake when one works with narrative and discursive approaches. Both chapters might help readers to prepare for reading the different applications tried out in this book. The third question - *how can we be moved by these approaches?* - and simultaneously our third encouragement to readers to join this movement, is again replied in three concrete attempts of "readers" who have been involved with the production of this book and who have in writing formulated some of the inspirations and questions this spectre of chapters raise? In Chapter 12, you can find a triptych of replies by Katz, Gartner, and Hosking, which can inspire you to think how these language-based approaches can be used when moving into your sphere as student and/or practitioner of entrepreneurship.

These three questions will now be elaborated in three parts. In the first part, we present the general themes announced by the book title and further elaborated in the Chapters of Steyaert and Hjorth. In the second one we describe the contributing chapters in terms of main ideas. In a third part, we open up to the first readings of this book by Katz, Gartner and Hosking.

Preparing to read: narrative and discursive approaches

This book is clearly responding to what has been described as the 'linguistic turn' in the social sciences and humanities. Now, it took some time for this 'turn' to reach organization studies and when it did - and it still does (see Deetz, 2003) - it emerged as an interest in metaphors as tropes in a language re-inaugurated as an active force rather than as a passive medium for the distanced observer. Metaphors were 'discovered' as tools for organizing, often emphasized in their positive effects rather than their negative. With this 'turn', however, not only the cultural context of organizing was emphasized, aiding our understanding of complex social processes, but an opening towards 'language-problems' more generally followed. One could say that Wittgenstein's turning of philosophy's attention towards its major tools – language in its various forms and dimensions – meant that everything was rephrased as a linguistic problem. Structuralists thrived on this idea, leaning on the Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure, to say that language is a never-ending chain of signifiers and that what people say can be analysed in terms of a formal structure of language, reflecting linguistic and cultural orders. Claude Levi-Strauss became a front-figure in this structural-linguistic anthropology and operated as a *bricoleur*, using concepts knowing that these could not be grounded in truth nor fixed by some higher meaning. Already here was an opening towards the force of power in language-

use. This meant that the discursive nature of language was brought back into focus. Philosophy and anthropology played their important parts in this process. This made the rather weak interest in questions of politics and ethics impossible to keep out of the studies.

Boosted further by the postmodern debates on the role of the (social) sciences in the formation of the human, especially inspired by Michel Foucault's work, organization studies turned towards organizational practices with novel perspectives. Especially through the discussions on the ethics and politics of organizing, the linguistic as well as the non-linguistic, the discursive as well as the non-discursive, talk and text as well as bodies and aesthetics were now part of studying and theorizing organization. It took some time for the linguistic turn to reach entrepreneurship studies. It would be fair to describe Gartner's 'Words lead to deeds' (1993) as one early example. Others have followed, but we still lack the breadth and depth these approaches could bring to entrepreneurship studies. This book tries to contribute to a remedy against this lack. It does so emphasizing the narrative and the discursive as part of effects of this linguistic turn.

To answer a question of what the point would be with narrative and discursive approaches in entrepreneurship studies we would start with a question ourselves: 'What is silenced by the lack of a response to the 'linguistic turn' in entrepreneurship studies? What major contemporary debates are we staying out from? ', and, as we here limit ourselves to narrative and discursive approaches as examples of responses to this turn, especially: 'What is silenced by the lack of narrative and discursive approaches in entrepreneurship studies? What major themes doe we leave out? Quite obviously, the chapters of this book are all different answers to this question, demonstrating what could be done and what specific (new) themes emerge. But many of these answers can be linked to the broader debates that the linguistic turn has brought to the social sciences, organization studies, and now also to entrepreneurship studies. With two conceptual chapters by Steyaert and Hjorth, we try to bring to the

foreground some of these debates that co-construct the frames in which the different chapters of this book move themselves. In chapter 1 and 11, we prefer to relate ourselves to entrepreneurship as forms of social creativity, taking place primarily in societal rather than in business contexts. Entrepreneurship is a societal force: it changes our daily practices and the way we live; it invents futures in populating histories of the present, here and now. In such processes, entrepreneurial processes, the present and the future is organized in stories and conversations, the primary form for knowledge used in everyday practices. In addition, in such entrepreneurial processes, the discursive nature of knowledge, including self-narratives, present a major challenge for subjects in entrepreneurial processes. Subject-positions, or roles in discourse, have to become stabilized and related to others in dialogical and discursive practices of organizing desires, attention, resources, and images. Entrepreneurship as a dialogical creativity is located in-between the possible and the impossible. Understanding the discursive reproduction of knowledge and practices often means a heightened sensitivity before how 'normalities' are reproduced, and thus what force anomalies carry. Convincing others – directing desires, organizing resources, dealing with obstacles – and sharing images of 'what could become' is done in small narratives to which people can relate. This book has collected discussions of the discursive and narrative of entrepreneurial processes, and we now turn to a short description of what they do.

Reading contributions: an overview

Narrative and discursive approaches – all somewhere specifically in between - are tried out and presented in nine chapters, namely the chapters 2 till 10. In no particular order, as we can imagine readers to pick from the titles and this overview of contributions what seems most tempting. Readers create their own (dis)order of reading and connecting.

Sami Boutaiba, responding performatively to the 'opening' Chapter on prosaics by Steyaert, takes us into entrepreneurship in the making. He brings us into a story of a start-up, but told in a new way. The story as such, we learn, is kept together by thin threads between different small narratives carrying energy and explanatory force for their narrators. Facing demands from their own primary images and stories of what they were supposed to become, they struggle to relate themselves – as a group – to external 'audiences' demanding certain kinds of stories. Boutaiba exemplifies how a prosaics of entrepreneurship takes us into ways of knowing entrepreneurship previously lacking in our field.

If Boutaiba's story reminds of the what is now already seen as a typical 'new economy'-kind of start-up, characteristic for the millennium-switch, Monica Lindh de Montoya's world, as she enters the streets of Caracas in *Chapter three*, has gotten far less media-attention. As if we were sitting in the back of one of the cabs of the "driven entrepreneurs" her story is based upon, so close to us are the everydayness-troubles and usual struggles to find opportunities and create a life of one's own. Lindh de Montoya reminds us of the anthropological contributions to entrepreneurship studies and shows us how this perspective draws attention to aspects of entrepreneurial endeavours we otherwise often miss. The anthropologist locates entrepreneurship in the midst of society and social processes of making a living in its fundamental sense.

Again, in *Chapter four*, Lene Foss' story brings us even closer yet into the distant when she tells the story of an effort to narrate an entrepreneurial identity in the process of establishing a theatre in a rural (Norwegian) region. In a way, a classical story with relations to Horatio Alger, Emilia Erhardt, Marie Curie, Witold Gombrowicz, Ivan Karamazov and Louise Bourgeoise; people creating lives and stories, inventing and re-inventing their identities. In Foss' case there is a fascinating story of a move (literally) to the boundary of the possible and an attempt to move that boundary beyond present limits. It is a story of being on the move – between centre and periphery, between past and future, between identities. A central vehicle for this movement is narratives, and self-narratives in particular.

We have all heard about the start-up Mecca of the Bay Area, the Silicon Valley ventures, and the dot.com-adventures. Ellen O'Connor's *Chapter five* takes us to this world of speed, expectations, dreams, competition, and changing technologies/preferences. The world of the IT-economy and the challenges to get attention and legitimacy in a market crowded with 'hungry sharks'. Legitimacy is a central problem in entrepreneurship studies. But seldom (if ever) have we got to read a close-up of legitimacy problems in the way of O'Connor's. The chapter forms equally well into an illustration of how narrative knowledge and narrative forms of knowing play a crucial role in everyday organising. It adresses how the concept of an 'entrepreneurial team' (or team entrepreneurship) is at stake here. This study not only shows how legitimacy building is central to venturing, but it also gives body to central business administration concepts – such as strategy and financing – which in this story take on a live sensation.

Have we so far had stories around single contexts, Robert Smith and Alistair R. Anderson collect in *Chapter six* plenty of entrepreneurial stories, so-called e-tales: hagiographies, classical e-tales, entrepreneurial biographies and novels on entrepreneurs, narratives and their metaphorical composition as discussed in entrepreneurial studies, familial

fables and mentorial tales. They examine this excellent overview and varied spectre of stories in detail and find the proverbial devil in the e-tale, namely that all stories of entrepreneurs and on entrepreneurship promote an entrepreneurial ethos replete with an underpinning of moral values. They argue convincingly that narrative is not a neutral representation but instead fulfills a moral purpose.

Alf Rehn and Saara Taalas continue in *Chapter seven* to explore in between the moral and the immoral and what, as a consequence, can be assumed in entrepreneurship studies and what has already passed into the 'taken-for-grantedness' of convention. Rehn and Taalas' broadly stated ambition to discuss the possibilities of entrepreneurship as a social science unhindered by 'blind assumptions' derived from judicial and economic systems of thinking challenges us to reflect upon how entrepreneurship is carved out as a specific theoretical domain. What happens if we think beyond these boundaries? What could become of entrepreneurship studies should they include empirical cases presently left unnoticed due to these assumptions-in-use? We are invited to a discussion of what it takes for a study to be included as an entrepreneurship study. Through theirfascinating narration of the blat system in former Soviet Union and of Bad Boys Inc. (innovative drug dealing) we are helped to think entrepreneurship beyond the limits of the present.

Seldom is the drama of entrepreneurial processes brought into the research context and made to affect the scholarly text. Torben Damgaard, Jesper Pihl and Kim Klyver's text (*Chapter eight*), however, does so. They make use of their experiences in the field – consulting and counselling the entrepreneur – as they make up a play in which their roles in the drama come into use. It uses the form of drama to both 'methodologically' grasp their field-study and analytically discuss the process of consulting and counselling the entrepreneur. Having created this play, this drama, they step onto another layer of the text

where they reflect upon their roles in the drama and provide us with insights concerning the theoretical and methodological points with using drama in the research process.

In *Chapter nine* Katarina Pettersson shows how a feminist perspective on the Gnosjö discourse changes how this well-known Scandinavian example of an entrepreneurial region is commonly read. Pettersson shows how the Gnosjö discourse – and discourses on entrepreneurship more generally – are masculine in nature. While 30 per cent of Gnosjö's entrepreneurs are women, they are often excluded from studies of entrepreneurship, studies that still claim to represent The Gnosjö case or what entrepreneurship is. Tracing the Gnosjö discourse in research studies as well as daily newspapers, Pettersson is able to describe how these texts co-produce images of entrepreneurship assuming its masculine nature.

Kathryn Campbell (*Chapter ten*) moves through entrepreneurship studies driven by the quilt and quilting as metaphors. She approaches the problems of 'normal science' and suggests 'paradigm pluralism' as a way to make space for new entrepreneurship research from a feminist perspective that can give room for women entrepreneurs. Her text seeks to allow us to 'imagine better theories for women entrepreneurs'. To do that she suggests we augment our symbolic repertoire through the quilt metaphor which brings us to new insights into the entrepreneurial process. Campbell also provides examples of how thinking with metaphors can be applied in entrepreneurship research through discussing new strategies for theory-building.

Rereading: first respondings

It is no secret to tell that the nine chapters we above invite you to read have been read before. These nine chapters are a result of many readings, discussions and rereadings. For the writers'workshop at Sandhamn in the Stockholm archipelago, where all authors discussed each others' preliminary versions, some experienced readers were invited to join the

conversations, and also, after the workshop, many different readers – this time in the role of anonymous reviewers – have contributed with their friction to the ongoing writing process. *For once*, we have asked three of these reviewing readers (of whom two also participated in the archipelago workshop) to become writers while rereading one more time the almost finished book-manuscript. Our question was "how do these texts move you?", and we hope their answers might give readers a glimpse of the many pragmatic questions, intensive experiences and conceptual challenges. Jerry Katz, as a careful listener and a constructive storyteller, formulates many pertinent questions and has as many practical suggestions to support that narrative approaches could make school *after* this book on both sides of the Atlantic. William B Gartner responds with telling a intriguing story himself to set up a dialogue with some of the Chapters. He sees the book as performing the variation that emerges from taking a narrative route, an emphasis he himself had to struggle to get told and published. The motiv behind that struggle and persistence which Gartner borrows from the poet William Carlos William, is the belief that narration and fiction learn us to pay attention and respect to the stories of our life. A third response is from Dian M. Hosking who explores in a dialogue with Daniel Hjorth the relational implications involved in conceiving entrepreneurship through narration and discourse. Rather than an answer-response interview, their dialogue forms a double perspective, a play of act and supplement while connecting entrepreneurship and relational constructionism.