Author(s): Humphreys, M. & Brown, A.D.
Title: An analysis of corporate social responsibility at Credit Line: A narrative approach
Year of publication: 2008

The citation for the published version is:
Humphreys, M. & Brown, A.D. 2008. An analysis of corporate social responsibility at Credit Line: A narrative approach. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 80: 403-418.

Link to published version (may require a subscription):
http://dx.doi.org/ 10.1007/s10551-007-9426-0

AN ANALYSIS OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AT CREDIT LINE: A NARRATIVE APPROACH[1]

Humphreys, M. & Brown, A.D. 2008. An analysis of corporate social responsibility at Credit Line: A narrative approach. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 80: 403-418.

[1] We gratefully acknowledge the insightful comments made by Andy Crane, Dirk Matten, Jeremy Moon and the anonymous reviewers on earlier drafts of this manuscript.

AN ANALYSIS OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AT CREDIT LINE: A NARRATIVE APPROACH

ABSTRACT

This paper presents the results of an inductive, interpretive case study. We have adopted a narrative approach to the analysis of organizational processes in order to explore how individuals in a financial institution dealt with relatively novel issues of corporate social responsibility (CSR). The narratives that we reconstruct, which we label 'idealism and altruism', 'economics and expedience', and 'ignorance and cynicism' illustrate how people in the specific organizational context of a bank ('Credit Line'[2]) sought to cope with an attempt at narrative imposition. In particular, our work exemplifies how people in organizations draw on shared discursive resources in order to make sense of themselves and their organizations. We illustrate how many people within the bank found it hard to integrate the normative case for CSR with their version of a narrative identity which had, and continued to be, centred on economic imperatives for new initiatives. Our paper both demonstrates the value of the analysis of shared narratives, and represents an attempt to deal adequately with the polyphony of organizational voices, in case studies of CSR.

KEYWORDS: Corporate social responsibility, identity, narrative, sensemaking, power, case study.

[2] Credit Line is a pseudonym.

INTRODUCTION

This paper analyzes three narratives regarding corporate social responsibility (CSR) told by members of a bank (Credit Line). In line with the linguistic 'turn' in the social sciences, we understand 'organization' as a discursive space constituted through language practices, especially the authoring, telling and re-telling of stories (Boje, 1991; Czarniawska, 1997; Gabriel, 1999). Our research draws on a wealth of literature which suggests that narrative is an appropriate interpretive lens for understanding processes of organizing (Currie & Brown, 2003; Rhodes, 2000), especially individual and collective sensemaking (Brown, & Kreps, 1993; Bruner, 1991), identity constructs (Humphreys & Brown, 2002 a,b**;** Ricoeur, 1991) and the exercise of power through language (Clegg, 1989; Westwood & Linstead, 2001). Our case not only demonstrates the value of analyses of shared narratives in efforts to illustrate 'the diversity and complexity' of processes of organizing, but does so in ways which emphasize 'the discursive social nature' of complex organization (Barry & Elmes, 1997: 40). A narrative approach, we argue, permits sophisticated analyses of managers' efforts to deploy notions of 'CSR' in organizational contexts.

Corporate Social Responsibility

One problem managers of contemporary Western organizations have is to make sense of the phrase 'corporate social responsibility' (CSR). Windsor, (2006: 93), for example, refers to CSR as an 'embryonic and contestable concept'. Further, corporations tend to develop CSR policies using a stakeholder model (Brammer and Millington 2003) or through an analysis of their market/non-market position (Baron 1995), with the result that each individual company's approach tends to be unique. Like other abstract concepts such as 'justice' and 'democracy', the meanings attributed to CSR are part of wider debates about its application (Gallie 1956). Following Connolly (1983) this may be for three sorts of reasons. First, CSR is appraisive' or 'valued', i.e. as few firms would claim to be 'socially irresponsible' the concept is not (just) an empirical one, but is inherently value-laden. Secondly, CSR is 'internally complex' entailing, for example, the balancing of economic, legal, ethical and social responsibilities. Thirdly, CSR has relatively 'open rules of application' such that it is not easily codified or defined. Moreover, government, business, NGOs, consultants, shareholders, employees and consumers all tend to define CSR in different ways - whether their intention is to endorse, encourage, manage or criticize it.

As a topic for research CSR has attracted the interest of scholars working from perspectives as varied as agency theory (Friedman, 1970), corporate social performance (Preston, 1978; Carroll, 1979), stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984; Jones & Wicks, 1999), resource-based views of the firm (Russo & Fouts, 1997), and corporate ethics (Kornberger & Brown, 2007; Roberts, 2003). As Windsor (2006:111) asserts: 'It is difficult to disentangle science, interest, and ideology in CSR discourses.' While clearly a contested concept, there is an emergent consensus that CSR actions are those 'that appear to further some social good, beyond the interests of the firm and that which is required by law' (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001: 117). What is less obvious are the motivations, moral and economic, that lead organizations to engage in CSR activities, and the implications for them in terms of, for example, financial performance and perceived societal legitimacy (Sethi, 1975; Waddock, Boswell, & Grades, 2002; Wright & Ferris, 1997).

Scholarly debates on issues of CSR have generally been located within a tradition of examining inter-relationships between business and society (e.g. Carroll, 1999; Wood, 1991). Husted (2005: 177) cites Davis's (1973) claim that CSR refers to 'the firm's consideration of, and response to, issues beyond the narrow economic, technical, and legal requirements of the firm... [to] accomplish social benefits along with the traditional economic gains which the firm seeks'. His argument is that corporate social responsibility is a form of investment (McWilliams and Siegel, 2001) which creates opportunities for expansion and growth. Pava and Kraus (1997: 345) also take an economic-strategic view of CSR, stating that 'Financial performance is a key variable in understanding social responsibility' and that as 'with all corporate decision making, managers must attempt to measure both the short and long run financial impacts.' Knox et. al. (2005: 7) point out that 'it is now widely recognised by business leaders that their companies need to accept a broader responsibility than short-term profits'. Yet, they also note that 'there is little empirical evidence of the range of stakeholders addressed through their CSR programmes'. Indeed, some authors (e.g., Hemingway, 2005) have argued that the increase in overtly labelled CSR activity among corporations has often been part of branding and damage limitation strategies designed to mitigate the negative impact of such events as oil spills, toxic emissions, and financial scandals. The aim, in such instances, 'is for the corporation to be seen to be taking its social responsibilities seriously…regardless of whether this is actually occurring in practice' (Hemingway, 2005: 233).

This paper adopts a narrative approach to analyze how notions of CSR were discursively constituted in a single case study organization in ways which surface important processes of sensemaking and identity construction and highlight issues of power. First, we provide a brief overview of our focal organization, Credit Line, and give an account of our qualitative methods of data collection and interpretive mode of data analysis. Second, three distinct but related shared narratives centred on aspects of CSR are elaborated. Finally, we discuss the implications of our findings and methodological approach for our understanding of processes of organizing centred on CSR.

METHODOLOGY

A Narrative Approach.

A recognition that 'discourse is the principle means by which organization members create a coherent social reality that frames their sense of who they are' (Phillips & Hardy, 1997: 181) has led to an increased interest in narrative approaches in organization studies[3]. Following Rhodes and Brown (2005) we regard narratives as specific, coherent, creative re-descriptions of the world, which are authored by participants who draw on the (generally broad, multiple and heterogeneous) discursive resources locally available to them. The narrative perspective adopted here treats organizations as socially constructed phenomena (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) sustained by means of social, political and symbolic processes (Pfeffer, 1981). For us, organizations literally *are* the narratives that people concoct, share, embellish, dispute and re-tell in ways which maintain and objectify 'reality'. As the social processes from which organization emerges crucially involve the dialogical exchange of narratives, so our task as researchers is to analyze adequately the resulting polyphony

[3] We use the terms 'narrative' and 'story' interchangeably. Our understanding of these terms is derived from Ricoeur (1984: 150) who argues that: 'A story [narrative] describes a sequence of actions and experiences done or undergone by a certain number of people, whether real or imaginary. These people are presented either in situations that change or as reacting to such change. In turn, these changes reveal hidden aspects of the situation and the people involved, and engender a new predicament which calls for thought, action, or both. This response to the new situation leads the story toward its conclusion.'

(Hazen, 1993) or ‘heteroglossia’ (Bakhtin, 1981) of simultaneously and sequentially occurring vocalities (Ford & Ford, 1995).

From the standpoint of this paper, there are three important corollaries of this position. First, sensemaking, i.e. those processes of interpretation and meaning production whereby people reflect on and interpret phenomena and produce intersubjective accounts, is accomplished largely through narrative (Leiter, 1980; Weick, 1995). That is, people are predisposed to think in narratives, and our species is appropriately referred to using labels such as ‘*homo narrans*’ (Fisher, 1984: 6) and ‘*homo fabulans*’ (Currie, 1998: 2). Second, individual and collective identities are authored within discursive regimes and subjectively available to people in the form of narratives of the self and organization. Our primary interest is in the multiple, often changing, occasionally consonant, sometimes overlapping, but often competing narratives that participants tell about their organization (Humphreys & Brown, 2002 a,b). Third, and perhaps most importantly, a narrative approach explicitly recognizes that, in organizations, language is ‘the primary medium of social control and power’ (Fairclough, 1989: 3), and that the analysis of linguistic practices is key to an understanding of how ‘existing social and power relations’ (Fairclough, 1995: 77) are reproduced or transformed.

Case Context.

Headquartered in the USA, Credit Line was a publicly quoted bank holding company. Founded as an independent entity in 1995 by 2005 it had become a leading player in the US credit card industry, with a global customer base of 49.1 million, and managed loans totalling $81.6 billion. In 1996, Credit Line began operating in the UK, and in 1998 opened its first major European working HQ in Middletown a large city in

England. Credit Line employed more than 18,000 people worldwide of which 2,000 were in Europe, (mainly in the UK). In its official communications the success of the company was attributed to its sophisticated use of I.T., and in particular its proprietary Information-Based Strategy (IBS) by which it tailored products and managed customer acquisition and retention. Recognition was also accorded to Credit Line's employees who were described as 'the brightest and most talented' (Credit Line web site), and the organization's culture, at the heart of which were said to be two key values: 'excellence' and 'doing the right thing'. Since 2003 Credit Line had received numerous awards and accolades on both sides of the Atlantic, and senior managers used these to represent the organization as high-performing, an excellent place to work, and a good corporate citizen.

This research was focused on the UK division of Credit Line in Middletown which was housed in two newly refurbished, large, adjacent, open-plan buildings in the city centre. The operation was overseen by a European Executive Team (EET) which headed an eight Tier pyramid numerically dominated by 'Tier eight' call centre operatives. The several hundred managerial grade staff were divided into discrete functions such as 'marketing', 'communications', 'HRM' and 'I.T.', were mostly white British males, university graduates, and in their 20s and 30s. Credit Line was perceived by employees to be a prestigious place to work, and most interviewees spoke enthusiastically of the rigorous and competitive recruitment and selection procedures which placed great emphasis on academic achievement and analytical (especially numerical) ability. Most people said that while they worked hard they nevertheless enjoyed theselves, that it was a 'fun' place to be employed, and that their level of identification with Credit Line was both strong and positive. However, a significant minority said that the company's espoused commitment to being a good employer and the relatively generous remuneration packages masked underlying problems in the psychological contract between employer and employees. These people spoke of increasingly intrusive bureaucratic controls, intense peer pressure to work long hours, a lack of opportunities for empathy and friendship at work, and an unforgiving performance appraisal system that resulted in good employees being made redundant.[4]

Data Collection.

Access to Credit Line was granted by the Executive Vice President (Europe) on the recommendation of the Head of CSR. Our main sources of data were 64 formal semi-structured interviews conducted with employees between March 2004 and June 2005. All the interviews were conducted in Credit Line's offices. The duration of the interviews varied from 50 to 80 minutes, with a median length of 62 minutes. Our questions were broad-ranging, focusing on aspects of organizational identity, identification, and CSR. For example, we asked interviewees what they considered to be central, distinctive and enduring about Credit Line, the extent to which they defined themselves in terms of their employing institution, and questions relating to aspects of CSR – e.g., its centrality to Credit Line, their personal commitment to it, and their thoughts regarding the likely future of CSR at the company. The interviews were recorded on to audio tapes and fully transcribed before being subject to analysis. In addition, a substantial number of additional informal interviews and observations made in the same time period, and a range of documentation including internet pages,

[4] Interviewees noted that those taking 'exit packages' were contracted to leave without speaking to colleagues.

internal policy reports, marketing brochures, and newspaper reports also contributed to our 'rich picture' (Geertz 1973) of the organization. The main practical problems we faced arose from the extreme time pressures and tight deadlines to which managers were subject. These meant that interviews were often postponed or cancelled at short notice causing rescheduling problems both for us and Credit Line employees.

Data Analysis.

In analyzing our data we have been influenced by the 'linguistic turn' in the social sciences (e.g. Alvesson and Karreman 2000: 136) which has led to a recognition that language is a form of social practice that 'constitutes situations, objects of knowledge and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people' (Wodak 2003: 187). Focusing on how individuals and groups deployed narrative structures to account for their, and the organization's, activities, we subjected our transcripts and other data sources to a form of thematic analysis. Our method was to derive coded categories relating to key protagonists, actions, motivations, events and plots, in an inductive process of interaction and integration of theory and empirical data (e.g. Putnam 1983; Strauss and Corbin 1990). The codes, and the data they labelled, were gradually collapsed and refined into three coherent identity narratives that we here refer to as *idealism and altruism, economics and expedience,* and *ignorance and cynicism*[5].

[5] Our presentation of the case in narrative form needs to be understood against the backcloth of the '*crises of representation and legitimation*' that researchers face in seeking to account authentically for the experience of the 'Other' (Denzin and Lincoln 1994: 576). These crises have prompted profound questions to be raised regarding the epistemological and ontological status of, and relationships between, researchers, those they research, their data, and analyses (e.g. Van Maanen 1979).

NARRATIVES OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

In 2001, recognizing a need to be more corporately socially aware, the European Executive Team (EET) created a new position termed 'Head of CSR'. To this post was appointed Susan Rivers[6], a woman in mid 40s with a background in marketing. To her reported a Community Relations Manager, Carol Wright[7], who had been in post since 1999 and had a substantial budget, and a dedicated secretary. This 'new' function was located within the Corporate Communications Department, and the Head of CSR reported to the Director of Corporate Communications[8]. Susan and Carol were given considerable latitude to determine their own objectives and means of accomplishing them and they set out a vision of the future in which 'every associate at Credit Line considered CSR in every decision made' driven by 'a deep… engagement in CSR principles' and 'systems and processes that support CSR' (Internal CSR Report, April 2004). In pursuit of this vision they had worked out a five year action plan designed to ensure that Credit Line met all legislative requirements, had nationally recognized workplace practices, was a market leader in one key aspect of social responsibility (yet to be defined), had consumer group recognition for good customer practices, an above average industry reputation amongst customers and opinion formers, and was the number one nationally recognized company for community initiatives. The CSR team worked, in part through a 'Community Committee' which consisted of people sympathetic to CSR drawn from across departments at Credit Line.

> [CSR will achieve] …a good corporate reputation, associates who feel proud to work for Credit Line, reduced legislative infringements, improvements in retention/commitment and improved share price (CSR Group Presentation to European Executive Team).

---

[6] A pseudonym

[7] A pseudonym

[8] In May 2005 a Tier 8 associate was co-opted into the team on a short-term part-time basis to work on a specific project designed to raise awareness of CSR issues.

In this section, we construct three distinct but related narratives centred on issues of corporate social responsibility (CSR) culled from our data: ‘idealism and altruism’, ‘economics and expedience’ and ‘ignorance and cynicism’. Together, these narratives provide a rich account of the most significant CSR-oriented stories that were told to us by our respondents. They must, however, be understood within the broader context of large scale and pervasive change at Credit Line in the UK which had evolved from a small, highly flexible, risk-taking start-up to a large, increasingly bureaucratic and hierarchical operation in which notions of ‘having fun’ and a norm of rapid promotion were fast eroding:

> What has evolved is a more status quo as regards to that whole way of working. And there are structures in place. They’re more recognised through the structures that have been produced. But it’s just evolved and grown up I guess (Head of Internal Communications).

> Things are very much more tied down. I guess the management structure has changed, the flexibility, the ability to take risks, and to try new things has been eroded. I would say the trust in associates has eroded (Business Continuity Analyst).

Having been reconstructed from multiple sources, none of these narratives was related to us in the ‘pure’ form that they are presented here. Indeed, in many instances in telling ‘their story’ many individuals borrowed from each of these three narratives, often in confused and apparently contradictory ways. Our separation and refinement of these storylines is our attempt to deal with the complexities inherent in representing even one aspect of a polyphonic storytelling organization (Boje, 1991; Hazen, 1993).

Idealism and Altruism

This narrative emphasized that organizations such as Credit Line have moral responsibilities to multiple constituencies ranging from employees to customers, the local community and the environment. The Community Relations Manager, for example, said that Credit Line was now aiming to ‘provide very much an efficient caring service, not just going down the traditional ways of running a credit card company and offering traditional credit card offerings, but looking at different ways for the good of consumers'. More generally, while the notion of 'CSR' was considered relatively novel, there was a consensus that the new initiative was consonant with the organization's core value of 'doing the right thing', and that Credit Line had a long-standing commitment to being socially responsible:

> At Credit Line we believe that a great company must hold itself to the highest standard, so we take our role as a corporate citizen seriously. We believe true corporate success is measured not simply in the ledger but rather in a company's positive impact, both in the community and in the workplace (Credit Line website).

The European Human Relations Director confirmed this view, arguing: 'I think there is something around altruism...we have two values in the organisation, *do the right thing* and *excellence* and I think in terms of doing the right thing, our values are an attempt to move us away from a purely analytical basis for decision making'. All the senior managers, members of the CSR team and many others at different levels and different functions expressed enthusiastic personal support for the idea that Credit Line should be increasingly ethically-aware, and for a range of specific initiatives that they defined as addressing issues of CSR. These were linked to, for example, community support, workplace diversity, being a good employer, servicing without exploiting the needs of customers, and the environment. The idea that corporations had far-reaching ethical responsibilities was a key theme as the Community Relations Manager explained: 'Are we looking at it from the wider picture? Not just the money and the profitability, but are we making business decisions in mind with an ethical approach?' The Director of Corporate Communications was keen to express a personal engagement with the notion of organizational responsibility:

> It's a realisation that corporations do not have the right to plonk themselves down like a spaceship, suck resources in at one end in the morning, send them out knackered at the other end in the evening and then sit back and count the profits. You know, I really believe that an organisation of this size, of 2,000 plus people, so third largest private employer in one of the 8 core cities of England… has a responsibility to contribute to its community and it's environment and I don't think it can be ducked and I don't think it should be ducked. (Director of Corporate Communications).

This level of individual enthusiasm for an ethical approach to financial business was evident throughout the senior management and was often expressed as a responsibility beyond financial performance. For example, the Vice President Head of European Markets argued that 'we do have a responsibility to help people avoid getting into trouble and there are many ways for us to get better at that'. The Director of Marketing and Analysis was more explicit in describing Credit Line's approach to business as:

> About this organisation taking responsibility for not just profit but the environment in which it operates, the people that it touches and the impact that it has on individuals beyond selling them something and making money.

This narrative emphasized the importance that people attached to being able to take pride in working for their organization, and made an important connection between an organization's ethics and individuals' level of identification with Credit Line. Associates cited Credit Line community initiatives which they felt were particularly commendable and worthwhile, as the Community Relations Manager explained: 'I think the fact that we will work with prostitution, child abuse, and we do it because it's the right thing to do and not because we can put our logo on it, makes me feel proud'. Personal pride in the organization was also seen as an important factor in enhancing job satisfaction when working for a credit card company which was associated with ‘a lot of heavy mail marketing’ (Customer Relations Assistant). The Director of Corporate Communications was unequivocal about his feelings:

> You need to be proud of what you’re doing, you need to be able to put your head on the pillow at night you know, thinking I’ve made a difference today and you need to be able to tell your Mum what you’ve done.

In particular, many interviewees including more junior personnel pointed to the fact that the majority of Credit Line employees were personally involved with what were loosely defined as ‘good causes’. Credit Line permitted all employees to take one day off from work in order to engage in any non-employment related activity each year. While some chose to pursue various forms of entertainment, large numbers spent their time painting classrooms in local schools, reading to under-privileged children or writing software for the local police force. As an I.T. specialist explained: ‘I’m very proud to work for Credit Line for a number reasons. I feel good when I can tell people that I work for this company. And I think some of that definitely comes from the fact that we do go out and help people’ (I.T. Specialist). Pride was sometimes tinged with incredulity as a Finance Group Manager said in talking about his colleagues: ‘I’m always absolutely proud and gob smacked when we see you know, how much effort people will put in to the community days’. Indeed associates, particularly those above Tier 7, were powerfully aware of the range of community and ethical activities carried out by their peers:

> We support associates to go out for an hour a week and read with children in local schools. We do community days whereby the whole team get together for a day a year and we went off and painted a school for the blind last year and we went and cleared a ditch for some sheep the year before We have a Community Committee and we make donations to women’s refuges. We also, donate time, so I think the I.T. folks went off to some Police HQ and set up a database which they would then be able to use for whatever they needed it for but they didn’t have the I.T. skills in the force to do that (Marketing Analyst).

Economics and Expedience

This narrative focused on the benefits, both tangible and intangible, that were expected to accrue from a deliberate strategy of making CSR a more salient priority at Credit Line. In April 2004 Carol and Susan gave a presentation to the European Executive Team in which they set out what they considered to be the 'business case' for Credit Line to continue to invest in CSR. They pointed out that 82% of the FTSE top 100 companies issued a Social and Environment Report including many of their principal competitors such as Egg, Barclaycard, and NatWest. Carol and Susan also cited research which suggested that in 1998 FTSE companies with good family friendly policies enjoyed a 141% share price rise compared to a FTSE 100 average of 78%. Their presentation suggested that an increased emphasis on CSR would have beneficial implications in terms of brand/reputation, the attraction, retention and motivation of staff, Credit Line's licence to operate in the local community, and might even improve the company's share price. The culture of Credit Line meant that people were particularly attuned to, and preoccupied with, the financial implications of new initiatives, and a robust business case for CSR was perceived by many to be a *sine qua non* for further investment. This view was clearly expressed by the Marketing and Auditing Manager who said: 'The stuff around corporate social responsibility, while it's great, it's also nice to have … we are here at the end of the day to make money for shareholders, as far as the general business principle is concerned, we're not a charity…we're here to make money'. Senior managers above Tier 4 were very aware of the balance sheet implications of an effective CSR policy with a Business Analyst suggesting that:

> There's two reasons why you would think CSR is important, either just because in principle, it's something that you feel is right or because you think it helps your bottom line. If we manage to make the second generally believed, then it would be quite easy, I mean this is a company

> and people do whatever helps the bottom line, so it would almost be part of your daily business (Senior Business Analyst).

Outside of the CSR team there was some evidence that this narrative was gaining 'traction'. For example, an HRM associate argued that 'there may well be some kind of positive NPV [Net Present Value] impact'. There were three broad areas in particular where managers agreed that an astute handling of CSR issues was commercially important for Credit Line: recruitment and motivation, brand and reputation, and license to operate. First, the CSR team's message that 90% of graduates considered high ethical standards to be an important factor when deciding whether or not to work for a company had evidently had an impact, and some people argued that attention to CSR could usefully assist recruitment and retention of staff:

> I think there is a competitive advantage in terms of attracting and retaining staff. I think there is a competitive advantage in terms of the lives that other constituencies see themselves. So in terms of the local relationship with Middletown and other groups here, we have a very positive foundation to build on (Vice President European Markets).

> It's the sort of the icing on the cake but it's not going to be the sort of core thing that you look at when you're choosing an employer but if they happen to do that as well, you think, oh that's kind of nice (Director of Marketing).

Second, the CSR team's use of a 2002 Mori Poll which indicated that 44% of the British public believed a company's CSR performance was important when buying a product (up from 28% in 1998) struck a chord with some employees. Echoing this finding, a few individuals said that for a financial services institution such as Credit Line issues of 'brand', 'image' and 'reputation' were crucial, and that the organization needed to be seen to be taking CSR seriously. The importance of reputation is best understood in the context that Credit Line was seeking to re-brand itself as a mature, up-market corporation and 'challengers of the market for the sake of the consumer'

(Executive Vice President, Europe). In this state of transition it was even possible, though far from certain, that senior managers might choose to build the public image of Credit Line with some kind of CSR link:

> It's an image thing and it's very important. Anything that differentiates it from a competitor has got to be interesting. I'd like to think there was more integrity and a corporate sense of the right thing but I think a lot of it's going to hinge around brand and image (Head of Solutions Delivery).
>
> You don't want to be seen as a company of, look how great we are because all of what we did for charity because that just sounds a bit shallow. But in the same way, you want people to know, OK, we're not just sitting here taking all your money, we're putting stuff back into the community as well (Human Resources Administrator).

Third, a number of our interviewees considered that well publicised investment in the local community was likely to bolster Credit Line's ability to operate effectively within Middletown, for example, making it easier to obtain permission for new developments, and to counter bad publicity. An Audit Manager was unabashed in seeing the potential commercial benefits of such well-publicised community actions: If you make a donation to I don't know, some charity that's local to Middletown, how well does that get you on with the Board of Councillors and therefore you get planning permission for buildings and all that stuff'. Members of the CSR team such as the Community Relations Manager were able to cite examples of other organizations which had gained similar advantages from ethically-based policies claiming that '60% of the value of CentreParcs [another organization with a Middletown base] was down to their environmental strategy because they can get planning permission where other people can't because they've got such a good reputation for the environment.' Other associates saw a *quid pro quo* argument for CSR and Community initiatives diminishing the negative publicity effects of credit-card business operations:

> It does counteract to some extent the bad press you get around having a call centre on the premises. You have people protesting outside about sweat shop call centres, we can turn round and say, yeah but we've donated money to this, that and the other, local, so some of it is very good local … there's a benefit there I think to doing this kind of stuff, if we publicise it well enough and get on the right side of the local paper (Marketing Associate).

Some associates, clearly products of the Credit Line recruitment policy, were extremely analytical in their approach to the effects of CSR policy on reputation and hence performance. The Marketing Director for example argued that, 'it's not worth going after being the leading corporate socially responsible citizen but let's make sure we're in the top quartile and get credit for being there'. Indeed the effect of CSR on recruitment, retention and consequently financial performance was clearly identified by the European Director of HR who argued that:

> From a business case point of view, I think the fact that our associates are as proud to be working for Credit Line as they are, I think has a lot to do with the community relations stuff that we've done which is you know, a significant plank of our CSR activity. If our associates are proud to work for Credit Line, they're less likely to leave you know and all that good stuff flows through eventually to the bottom line, through lower attrition and high levels of morale, high levels of productivity. So I think there is a business case to be made around the impact that it has on attracting, retaining and motivating associates and the impact that ultimately has on the bottom line.

Ignorance and Cynicism

This narrative concerned the lack of understanding and sophistication that many, especially more junior employees, expressed regarding CSR issues, and the palpable cynicism of large numbers of junior and middle managers. When invited to comment, Tier 8 operatives often explicitly recognized that their level of comprehension of what was meant by the term 'CSR' was low, and referred to it in general terms as 'all that stuff that we do with regard to, you know, our work in the community and supporting charities' (Manual Review Analyst). Another Tier 8 Customer Relations associate when asked about CSR replied ‘corporate is to do with work, social is to how you interact, so responsibility is how we interact with people when we’re dealing with corporate matters’. Even relatively senior managers often confessed that they had little appreciation of what the phrase ‘Corporate Social Responsibility’ implied, or how such issues impacted on Credit Line, their function or their job. A Tier 4 Business Analyst for example defined CSR as:

> It’s just basically about being a thoughtful company really and considering use of resources, where the materials that we use come from whether it’s fair trade or isn’t, how efficiently we recycle a million things … just being thoughtful about a number of things really.

In direct contrast with the narrative of ‘altruism and idealism’ this narrative emphasized the irrelevance of both corporate morality and individual ethics in the decision making processes and actions of people at Credit Line. One guise that this cynicism took was in representations of Credit Line’s CSR activities as a set of rhetorical practices or ‘gloss’ that distorted the reality of working life and the products sold and serviced by the company. A Business and Continuity Analyst took the view that ‘it’s trying to project a young, up and coming, financial company that’s doing the bits for the underdog…trying to look after its customers and desperately trying to look like a company that is very good to its employees’. The view that Credit Line was merely using CSR to enhance its organizational image and reputation was prevalent particularly among the lower tiers of Credit Line as a Tier 8 call-centre Sales associate observed ‘I think they’re doing it for the business, for the market share and place in the market’. Similar views were expressed by some more senior associates who took a business-analytical view of the rationale for Credit Line’s CSR policy. This was exemplified by a Human Relations Business partner’s comment that ‘There must be an element of “it won’t do our brand any harm’, that sounds really cynical but if it was going to cost money and there was no impact on the customer base or no impact on customers, I can't see why we would do it.' Another perspective here was that CSR activities were actually more for the benefit of Credit Line associates than for the community at large:

> But even when you organise the community day, it's like, oh great, a day out of the office to go and have a laugh as a team rather than great, we're doing something for needy children, it's kind of … well maybe it's not that black and white but you know, we're doing it for our benefit as well because we want a day off (Market Analyst).
>
> For some [who do community work] it's a blessed relief to get away from the constant conveyor belt of life (Manager, Design and Build).

Even those who expressed considerable personal commitment to CSR and who believed that the company was genuine in its efforts to promote CSR initiatives recognized that corporate ambitions were quite limited and that no major changes were likely in the near or medium-term future:

> Slow growth… we're going to create a new function and we'll give it money, give it resource, there's a balance, it will be in the pot, no question, it will be considered. Realism to me would suggest we'll do something, we won't do as much as we could do (Executive Vice President, Europe).
>
> In terms of kind of community and charitable giving, well I hope we're doing … yeah, a little bit more but I would doubt it's some sort of huge step change (Marketing Auditor).

Most people said that any projected incremental CSR-related change likely to occur in the future would be linked to specific business targets which would enhance the efficiency and performance of the company. Although the Vice President Head of European Markets predicted that Credit Line would 'become a more diverse and flexible workplace' and the Vice President Customer Development and Strategy thought that 'We'll have probably got our act together in terms of environmental activity and be less wasteful' these forecasts were always tempered by senior managers' notions of commercial focus and financial gain:

> I think we will have ironed out a number of the things that we do from a commercial perspective, so the things that we have in our products and the way we market them and the way we service them, that you could argue were damaging to the markets we operate in, I think we'll have got rid of most of those, if not all of them (Director, Marketing and Analysis).

Other employees were still more overtly sceptical regarding issues of CSR at Credit Line. One Human Resources Business Partner was scathing: 'I think that much of what is done is reactive, we don't want to be sued'. Another associate saw a difference between the rhetoric and the reality of CSR at Credit Line particularly in recruitment: 'the theory is that we try and recruit people from inner City areas - never seen it' (Manager, Document Letter Management). Many junior associates were cynical about their senior managers advocacy of a CSR policy seeing it as a straightforward pragmatic business policy designed, for example, to help 'keep customers because we're losing them at a rate that we can't replace' (Customer Retention Analyst). A Tier 8 sales associate manning the telephones was adamant that 'if there was no return, they wouldn't do it, would they'. The cynicism was sometimes self-directed, as one Tier 7 I.T. associate replied when asked if ethical issues were important to her personally: 'Well it's obviously not that important or I wouldn't work for a credit card company'. As a marketing associate said:

> I think I'd tend to be a cynic, I'd think there's got to be something in it for us (Marketing Associate).

At senior levels within Credit Line there was also a realisation that CSR could only survive with executive financial sponsorship and, given the background of most senior executives, this would always be a difficult case to make. As the European HR director observed:

> Take people like L who's responsibility is to deliver the Profit and Loss targets...if you said to L, actually we want you to carve out 3% of your budget next year to spend on CSR because we think that would be good for the business, I think L would say 'no'. So I think that what we need to be able to do is to convince some of those people who are in those roles that we think there's a sufficient return...and demonstrate what that return is.

DISCUSSION

To summarize, in this paper we have sought to re-construct the distinctive CSR narratives drawn on by members of Credit Line in their efforts to read meaning into their working lives (cf. Brown, 1994). In general terms, this study has elaborated a view of organizations as story-telling systems in which narratives have significant collective sensemaking and identity-constituting roles, and are primary vehicles through which power is exercised. In this discussion, the three narratives are re-considered in the context of on-going debates centred on CSR in the UK, and the importance of narratives to our understanding of processes of organizing.

Narratives and Sensemaking

The CSR narratives at Credit Line had evolved at a time when the ethics of providing credit to vulnerable, often financially unsophisticated consumers, was an increasing topic of concern for both the UK government and the media. While historically there have been other periods of heightened interest in CSR, notably in the late 1960s and early 1970s, 'CSR has never been more prominent on the corporate agenda' than it is today (Smith (2003: 53)). The key pressures of corporate competitiveness, corporate governance, and corporate citizenship have been exacerbated by recent accounting scandals, concern over excessive executive remuneration, the environment, Third World debt and worker safety, leading to increased calls for business to be more socially responsible. Despite having a long-standing commitment to supporting local communities, for most employees ethical issues had only started to feature in Credit Line's business processes within the last 18 months. Everyone we interviewed accepted that Credit Line was reacting to a perceived change in the environment, that the brand was not likely to be re-positioned as a market-leader in CSR in the near future, and that the threat of legislation and negative publicity were key drivers of current CSR initiatives.

Theoretically, we have sought to represent and to analyze Credit Line as discursively constituted through sets of shared stories. In so doing we have drawn on a rich heritage of suggestions that narratives are expressive of organizational distinctiveness (Clark, 1970), vehicles for uniqueness claims (Martin et al, 1983), and means for collective centring (Boyce, 1996). We have in particular made use of Boje's (1991) understanding of organizations as storytelling systems, views of organizations as networks of texts (Taylor & Cooren, 1997) and Czarniawska's (1997) theorizing of organization as continued processes of narration. Our work illustrates not only that communities tell multiple narratives about themselves, but that organizations 'exist to tell their collective stories, to live out their collective stories, to be in constant struggle over getting the stories of insiders and outsiders straight' (Boje, 1995: 1000). These narratives are psychosocial constructions that draw on the discursive resources which constitute the broader society (macro-culture) in which an organization is embedded. That is, cultures are characterized by what have variously been described as 'webs of interlocution' (Taylor, 1999), 'cultural repertoires' (Somers & Gibson, 1994) and 'narrative structures' (Evans & Maines, 1995) from which people in organizations borrow in their efforts to render sensible their idiosyncratic versions of the institutions with which they identify.

The narratives that our interviewees related were one important way in which they attempted to make sense of their organization's efforts to deal with the topic of CSR. In specific terms, our case exemplifies the difficulties that organization members may experience in seeking to comprehend why their employing institution is engaged in apparently 'novel' courses of action. In this instance, the narratives made their experiences relevant, contextualized occurrences, and helped people to make connections between events in ways that made them seem coherent, unifying, and complete. These CSR-narratives were the means by which people engaged in 'the never-ending construction of meaning' (Ng & de Cock, 2002: 25), and were both emotionally involving and attention-provoking. As Weick (1995) has made clear, stories are a form of sensemaking that aid comprehension, are suggestive of causal order, enable people to talk about absent things, serve a mnemonic function, guide action and convey shared values and meanings. The narratives that our interviewees drew on indicate that sensemaking involves both discovery and choice, for as Fisher (1987: 65) has noted, 'The world as we know it is a set of stories that must be chosen among in order for us to live life in a process of continual re-creation'.

Narratives, Identity and Power

The identities of both individuals and collectives are constituted through processes of narration which are appropriated from the grand narratives of the societies and cultures to which they belong (Rappaport, 2000: 6). In short, not only do 'we make sense or fail to make sense – of our lives by the kind of story we can – or cannot - tell about it' (Dunne, 1995: 146), but 'storytelling literally is 'the permanent re-elaboration of our identities' (Wallemacq & Sims, 1998: 129). At Credit Line, almost everyone we interviewed expressed favourable attitudes towards CSR. However, with some notable exceptions, most obviously the CSR team, many people found it hard to integrate a normative case for CSR with their preferred version of Credit Line's narrative identity which had, and continued to be, centred on economic imperatives for new initiatives. It was also apparent that for most of our interviewees CSR was not a key personal concern, but a minor theme which featured only minimally in their narrative conception of self. If it is true that ethics in business 'will always be a personal matter and the sensible corporation will always need to be built and grounded in individual conduct' (Roberts, 2003: 251), then perhaps it should be no surprise that people who had chosen to work for a young, aggressive, US-owned bank that specialized in providing credit to those with no or poor credit histories, shared self and collective understandings that were not immediately receptive to CSR.

The CSR team was engaged in a political struggle to persuade individuals to incorporate CSR issues into their on-going understandings of their work selves and the identity of Credit Line. The stories the CSR team told about the normative and economic cases for CSR constituted an exercise in power designed to legitimate new sets of understandings. They were also an explicit attempt to alter existing power structures in ways which favoured the CSR team (cf. Brown, 1995). Had Susan and Carol been able to alter people's social and collective narratives in ways which accommodated and made more salient the CSR-oriented agenda they wished to pursue, then they could have expected to be rewarded with the allocation of more staff, increased budgets, higher performance appraisal grades, and, perhaps, promotions. That this had not happened was testament to the inertial tendencies of established collective identity narratives which predisposed people to regard the business case for an initiative as more important than normative or ethical arguments. This was experienced as problematic for Susan and Carol who readily acknowledged that the financial case for the kinds of policies with which they were concerned was not overwhelming. This is in line with recent research findings. Some studies have shown that ‘negative CSR associations ultimately can have a detrimental effect on overall product evaluations, whereas positive CSR associations can enhance the product evaluations’ (Brown & Dacin, 1997: 69). However, there is little evidence that a significant proportion of consumers will pay more for CSR (Smith, 2003). Employees at Credit Line were adamant that their consumers were preoccupied almost solely by the rates of interest and credit limits associated with the credit cards that they marketed. There is evidence, for example in the form of consumer boycotts, that companies can suffer if they are seen to flout societal norms regarding what constitutes appropriate commercial behaviour. But this was not an immediate and pressing concern for Credit Line.

Middle and junior ranking employees evaluated the CSR messages and initiatives in the context of an ‘official’ corporate identity narrative that placed a premium on economic performance. Consequently, whatever they read or heard they remained unconvinced that statements regarding CSR reflected a deep commitment on the part of senior managers. For most employees at Credit Line CSR was ‘an exercise in proclamation’, a new form of corporate self-presentation with little influence on what was being (or would be) done in the name of the corporation beyond that associated with good public relations (Roberts, 2003: 25). In Roberts (2003: 250) terms, CSR was a cheap and easy ‘prosthesis, readily attached to the corporate body, that repairs its appearance, but in no way changes its actual conduct’. Credit Line’s culture-inpractise was centred on the myth that its activities did not have an important moral dimension, and that the products it sold, its marketing, HRM policies, and so forth did not involve ethical judgements. People's failure to embrace the idea that 'business relationships are unavoidably ethical' (Roberts, 2003: 250) made embedding pro-narratives centred on CSR, and the systematic pursuit of CSR initiatives at Credit Line very difficult.

Perhaps the most significant contribution that our study makes is to illustrate the 'heteroglossia' that characterize organizational life - the competing speech practices that constitute struggles between convergent and divergent meanings (Bakhtin, 1981). In particular, the case highlights the substantive difficulties of meaning that organizational employees currently face when grappling with notions of CSR. It also casts in relief some of the practical difficulties associated with 'broad' conceptions of CSR that relate it 'to the role of business in society' and focus on 'all the moral obligations that maximise the positive impact of the firm' (Salmones, et. al., 2005: 369). These generic conceptualizations, which lack precision and provide little practical guidance, may spawn confusion, cynicism and even resistance in organizations. Our findings are consonant with other research which suggests that although CSR has become an increasingly salient concern for governments and for businesses worldwide (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001; Smith, 2003), there remains 'little consensus on [its] substantive content or decision-making processes' (Windsor, 2006: 111). This dissensus, may, in part, account for employees of Credit Line being uncertain regarding the future of CSR in their organization, and may be a limiting factor on the further growth of CSR initiatives more generally.

CONCLUSION

In this paper we have adopted a narrative approach to the analysis of organizational processes in order to explore how individuals in one organization dealt with relatively novel issues of CSR. Our argument has been that because narratives emphasize order and sequence they are 'A highly effective way of analyzing how identities are continuously constructed… fragmented, and …reconstructed' (Gabriel, 1999: 196). A narrative perspective also gives 'access to and appreciation of context', or specific characters, events and relationships, that yield sensitivity to salient situational particularities (Tsoukas & Hatch, 2001: 998-999). Further, a focus on narrative permits researchers to 'render complexity with complexity' (Mink, 1978: 131), and thus to draw attention to the plurivocity of organizational life (Brown, Humphreys & Gurney, 2005). This is especially important because by elaborating shared narratives we can better comprehend how discursive resources are deployed in the exercise of power (Brown, 2006). In short, at a time when the linguistic turn in organization studies is attracting increasing attention, a narrative approach valuably locates language at the centre of processes of organizing.

The empirical contribution of this paper has been to provide an in-depth case of one of many contemporary organizations seeking to come to terms with notions of CSR. Martin Wolf (Chief Economics Writer, *Financial Times*) has commented that CSR is 'an idea whose time has come' (2002). Clive Crook (Deputy Editor, *The Economist*) has observed that 'over the past ten years or so, corporate social responsibility has blossomed as an idea, if not as a coherent practice' (2005). Companies increasingly report on their (notionally) CSR activities, appoint personnel, develop policies and processes to manage CSR and create managerial and directorial responsibilities in the area. There has been a growth in socially responsible investment funds and analysts and a burgeoning of CSR consultants (Fernandez Young et al 2003), vanguard organisations and membership organizations devoted to CSR. There are increasing numbers of dedicated CSR media (e.g. Ethical Performance, Ethical Corporation), and networks (e.g. CSR Chicks, Lifeworth). For senior managers at Credit Line susceptible to both external pressures from customers, shareholders, regulatory bodies and government, as well as internal demands from employees, being seen to ignore CSR was not an option. What were less certain were the practical ethical and philanthropic implications, if any, of their storytelling efforts centred on CSR.

REFERENCES

Alvesson, M. and Karreman, D.: 2000, Taking the linguistic turn in organizational research: Challenges, responses, consequences. *Journal of Applied Behavioural Science,* **36**: 136-158.

Bakhtin, M.: 1981, *The Dialogic Imagination*. C. Emerson and M. Holquist, Trans. M. Holquist (Ed.) Austin, TX, University of Texas.

Baron, D.P.: 1995, 'Integrated Strategy: Market and Nonmarket Components' *California Management Review* **37**: 2 47 - 65.

Barry, D and Elmes, M.: 1997, Strategy retold: Towards a narrative view of strategic discourse, *Academy of Management Review,* **22**: 429-452.

Berger, P. & Luckmann, T.: 1966, *The social construction of reality*. NY: Anchor.

Boje, D.M.: 1991a, The storytelling organization: A study of story performance in an office-supply firm, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **26**:106-126.

Boje, D.M.: 1995, Stories of the storytelling organization: A postmodern analysis of Disney as 'Tamara-Land'. *Academy of Management Journal*, **38**: 997-1035.

Boyce, M.E.: 1996, Organizational story and storytelling: a critical review. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, **9**: 5-26.

Brammer, S and A Millington, 2003, 'The Effect of Stakeholder Preferences, Organizational Structure and industry Type on Corporate Community Involvement' *Journal of Business Ethics* **45**: 213 – 226

Brown, A.D. (1994). Politics, symbolic action and myth making in pursuit of legitimacy. *Organization Studies*, **15**: 861-878.

Brown, A.D. (1995). Managing understandings: Politics, symbolism, niche marketing and the quest for legitimacy in IT implementation. *Organization Studies*, **16**: 951-969.

Brown, A.D. (2006). A narrative approach to collective identities. *Journal of Management Studies*, **43**: 731-753.

Brown, A.D., Humphreys, M. & Gurney, P.M. (2005). Narrative, Identity and Change: A case study of *Laskarina Holidays. Journal of Organizational Change Management*, **18**: 312-326.

Brown, M.H. and Kreps, G.L.: 1993, Narrative analysis and organizational development. In S.L. Herndon and G.L. Kreps (Eds.), *Qualitative research: Applications in organizational communication*. 47-62. Creskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Brown, T.J. & Dacin, P.A.: 1997, The company and the product: Corporate associations and consumer product responses. *Journal of Marketing*, **61**: 69.

Bruner, J.: 1991,. The narrative construction of reality. *Critical Inquiry*, **18**: 1-21.

Clark, B.R.: 1970, *The distinctive college: Antioch, Reed, and Swarthmore*. Chicago, IL: Aldine.

Carroll, A.: 1979, A three dimensional model of corporate performance. *Academy of Management Review*, **4**: 497-505.

Carroll, A. B.: 1991, 'The Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility: Toward the Moral Management of Organizational Stakeholders', *Business Horizons* **34**(4), 39–48.

Carroll, A. B.: 1999, 'Corporate Social Responsibility – Evolution of a Definitional Construct', *Business & Society* **38**(3), 268–295.

Clegg, S.R.: 1989, *Frameworks of power*. London: Sage.

Connolly, W.: 1983, *The Terms of Political Discourse* 2nd ed Oxford, Martin Robertson.

Crook, C.: 2005, 'The good company' *The Economist* 22.1.2005 3 - 17.

Currie, M.: 1998, *Postmodern narrative theory*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Currie, G. and Brown, A.D.: 2003,. A narratological approach to understanding processes of organizing in a UK hospital. *Human Relations*, **56**(5): 563-586.

Czarniawska, B.: 1997, *Narrating the organization, dramas of institutional identity*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Davis, K.: 1973, 'The Case For and Against Business Assumption of Social Responsibilities', *Academy of Management Journal*, **16**: 312–322.

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y.S, eds.,: 1994,, *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Dunne, J.: 1995, 'Beyond sovereignty and deconstruction: the storied self'. *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, **21**: 137-157.

Evans, W.J. & Maines, D.R.: 1995, Narrative Structures, and the analysis of incest, Symbolic Interaction, **18**: 303-322

Fairclough, N.: 1989,. Language and Power *(Language in Social Life Series)*, London Longman.

Fairclough, N.: 1995, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language (Language in Social Life Series)*, London Longman.

Fisher, W.R.: 1984, Narration as a human communication paradigm: the case of public moral argument. *Communication Monographs*, **51**: 1-22.

Fisher, W.R.: 1987, *Human communication as narrative: Toward a philosophy of reason, value and action*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.

Ford, J.D. and Ford, L.W.: 1995,. ‘The role of conversations in producing intentional change in organizations’. *Academy of Management Review*, **19**, 756-785.

Friedman, M.: 1970, The social responsibility of business is to increase its profits. *New York Times*, September **13**: 122-126.

Gabriel, Y.: 1999, Beyond happy families: A critical reevaluation of the control-resistance-identity triangle. *Human Relations*, **52**: 179-203.

Gallie, W.E.: 1956, ‘Essentially Contested Concepts’ *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* **56**: 187 – 198

Knox, S. Maklan, S. French, P.: 2005,. Corporate Social Responsibility: Exploring Staakeholder Relationships and Programme Reporting across Leading FTSE Companies, *Journal of Business Ethics*, **61**: 7-28

Geertz, C.: 1973, *The interpretation of cultures.* New York: Basic

Hazen, M.A.: 1993, Towards polyphonic organization, *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, **6**: 15-26.

Hemingway, C.: 2005, Personal Values as A Catalyst for Corporate Social Entrepreneurship, *Journal of Business Ethics*. **60**: 233–249

Humphreys, M. and Brown, A.D.: 2002a, Dress and identity: A Turkish case study. *Journal of Management Studies*, **39**: 929-954.

Humphreys, M. and Brown, A.D.: 2002b, Narratives of organizational identity and identification: A case study of hegemony and resistance. *Organization Studies*, **23**: 421-447.

Husted, B.W.: 2005,. Risk Management, Real Options and Corporate Responsibility, Journal of Business Ethics, **60**: 175-183.

Jones, T. & Wickes, A.: 1999, Convergent stakeholder theory. *Academy of Management Review*, **20**: 404-437.

Leiter, K.: 1980, *A primer on ethnomethodology*. NY: Oxford University Press.Levi-Strauss, C. (1966, *The Savage Mind, Chicago IL, The University of Chicago Press.*

Kornberger, M. & Brown, A.D. (2007). ‘Ethics’ as a discursive resource for identity work. *Human Relations*, **60**:.

Martin, J, Feldman, M, Hatch, M-J and Sitkin, S.: 1983, The Uniqueness Paradox in Organizational Stories, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 38: 438-453.

McWilliams, A. & Siegel, D.: 2001, Corporate social responsibility: A theory of the firm perspective. *Academy of Management Review*, **26** (1): 117-127.

Mink, L.O.: 1978. Narrative form as a cognitive instrument. In R.H. Canary (Ed.), *The writing of history*. pp. 129-149. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Ng, W. and de Cock, C.: 2002, Battle in the boardroom: A discursive perspective. *Journal of Management Studies*, **39**: 23-49.

Pava, M.L. & Kraus, J.: 1997,. Criteria for Evaluating the Legitimacy of Corporate Social Responsibility, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 16: 337-347.

Pfeffer, J.: 1981,. 'Management as symbolic action'. In L.L. Cummings and B. Staw (Eds.), *Research on organizational behavior* Vol.**3** Greenwish, CT: JAI Press. 1-52.

Phillips, N. & Hardy, C.: 1997, 'Managing multiple identities: Discourse, legitimacy and resources in the UK refugee system'. *Organization* **4**: 159-185.

Preston, L. (Ed.).: 1978, *Research in corporate social performance and policy*. Vol.1 Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Putnam, L.L.: 1983, The interpretative perspective: an alternative to functionalism. In L.L. Putnam & M.E. Pacanowsky (Eds.), *Communication and organizations: an interpretive approach* (13-30). Beverly Hills: Sage.

Rappaport, J.: 2000, Community narratives: Tales of terror and joy. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, **28**: 1-24.

Rhodes, C.: 2000, Reading and writing organizational lives, *Organization.* **7**: 7-29.

Rhodes, C. & Brown, A.D. (2005). Narrative, organizations and research. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, **7**: 167-188.

Ricoeur, P. *Time and narrative*. Volume 1. Translated by Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer. Chicago, Il: The University of Chicago Press. 1984.

Ricoeur, P.: 1991, Narrative identity, trans M.S. Muldoon. *Philosophy Today*: 73-81.

Roberts, J.: 2003, The manufacture of corporate social responsibility: Constructing corporate sensibility. *Organization*, **10**:(2): 249-265.

Russo, M.V. & Fouts, P.A.: 1997, A resource-based perspective on corporate environmental performance and profitability. *Academy of Management Journal*, **40**: 534-559.

Sethi, S.P.: 1975, Dimensions of corporate social performance: An analytical framework. *California Management Review*, **17**(3): 58-64.

Smith, N.C.: 2003, Corporate social responsibility: whether or how? *California Management Review*, **45**(4): 52-76.

Somers, M. & Gibson, G.: 1994, Reclaiming the epistemological 'Other'. In: C. Calhoun (Ed.), *Social theory and the politics of identity*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Strauss, A. & Corbin, J.: 1990, *Basics of Qualitative Research, Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques,* London, Sage.

Taylor, J.R.: 1999, 'The other side of rationality, socially distributed cognition'. *Management Communication Quarterly*, **13**, 2, 317-326.

Taylor, J.R. & Cooren, F.: 1997, What makes communication 'organizational'? How the many voices of a collectivity become the one voice of an organization. *Journal of Pragmatics*, **27**: 409-438.

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 Maanen, J.: 1988), Tales of the Field: on writing ethnography, Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Wallemacq, A. and Sims, D.: 1998, The struggle with sense. In D. Grant, T. Keenoy and C. Oswick (Eds.), *Discourse and organization*. pp.119-133. London: Sage.

Weick, K.: 1995, *Sensemaking in organizations*, Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Westwood, R. and Linstead, S.: 2001, Language/organization: introduction. In R. Westwood and S. Linstead (Eds.), *The language of organization*. 1-19. London: Sage.

Windsor, D.: 2006, Corporate Social Responsibility: Three Key Approaches
Journal of Management Studies **43**(1): 93-114

Wodak, R.: 2003, 'Discourses of silence, anti-semitic discourse in post-war Austria' in *Discourse and silencing* Thiesmeyer, L. (ed.), pp. 179-209. John Benjamins, Amsterdam.

Wolf , M.: 2002, 'Confronting the Critics'' *New Academy Review* **1:** 1 62 - 65.

Wood, D. L.: 1991, Corporate Social Performance Revisited, *Academy of Management Review,* **16**(4), 691– 718

Wright, P. & Ferris, S.: 1997, Agency conflict and corporate strategy: The effect of divestment on corporate value. *Strategic Management Journal*, **18**: 77-83.