

Daniel Hjorth and Chris Steyaert (eds) (2004) *Narrative and Discursive Approaches in Entrepreneurship*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

This is a timely book that presents an antidote to much of the literature on entrepreneurship that takes a narrow, Eurocentric and uncritical approach to the subject. This collection of papers presents a range of approaches of studying entrepreneurship which draw on methodologies from literary studies, anthropology and elsewhere to explore the processes of entrepreneurship. Filling a gap in the literature on entrepreneurship, the chapter authors draw on a range of disciplinary approaches, with common themes of using rich descriptions, examining entrepreneurship in its cultural context and as part of everyday life, examining the use of language and metaphors and documenting the positionality of the author. Despite these approaches being well developed in the social sciences, the introduction points out that they have been slow to be incorporated into organisation studies and studies of entrepreneurship.

Chris Steyaert presents a challenging chapter linking the papers together, drawing on the issue of prosaics or the enactment of entrepreneurship through everyday life. He stresses the importance of examining the 'messiness' of the lived experience of entrepreneurship and how this can be studied through the examination of language and communication. These themes are developed by Sami Boutaiba who presents a text about the process of entrepreneurship interpreted through readings of a detailed story of a company start up process of a group of Danish consultants.

Monica Lindh de Montoya draws on anthropological approaches to examine the process of entrepreneurship and the economic and social circumstances encouraging innovation. She goes beyond the idea of the entrepreneur as a heroic figure to examine survival strategies of Venezuelan female and male taxi owners based on their narratives. The narrative approach is used to explore the different perspectives of concepts such as work, capital, and success. Robert Smith and Alistair Anderson also challenge widely held views on entrepreneurship and the perception of the 'righteousness of

entrepreneurial actions' as the 'friendly face of capitalism'. Through examining published texts of well known entrepreneurs, they examine the social construction of enterprise as presented in novels, biographies and newspapers.

The issue of entrepreneurial identity and how it relates to an individual's life course is addressed by Lene Foss who draws on the case of a theatre enterprise in Norway to examine the narrator's identity as a driving force in entrepreneurial activity and how this identity is shaped by both ethnicity and attachment to place. Ellen O'Connor presents a contrasting case of the an entrepreneurial team in the internet boom and examines how individuals in the team built legitimacy through conversations among themselves and with an external audience, with the 'company story' being reshaped as it is retold. Torben Damgaard et al draw on the narrative from a drama enacted by the authors to evaluate theories concerning entrepreneurship and its relationship to consulting and counselling.

The lack of attention to illegal behaviour in entrepreneurship research is addressed by Alf Rehn and Saara Taala. Through drawing on economic anthropology, they examine the issue of entrepreneurship in the Soviet Union and in drug dealing in Detroit, to discuss the 'moralizations' inherent in the types of entrepreneurship research that concentrate on the heroic and neglect entrepreneurship that does not conform to the idea of the entrepreneur as an 'amiable' capitalist.

Katarina Pettersson presents another critique of much entrepreneurial research from a feminist perspective. Through examining research and other texts concerning entrepreneurship in one location (held by many as a role model), she shows that women's contributions are not examined despite the fact that they make up one third of the entrepreneurs. The theme of bias in research that excludes entrepreneurial women is developed in the chapter by Kathryn Campbell. The final chapters reflect on earlier chapters, offering alternative readings and interpretations as well as drawing out methodological implications.

While the individual empirical chapters offer fascinating and insightful examples of entrepreneurship research, the introduction and overview chapters are less penetratable using language that will obscure this fruitful area of research to those not already familiar with it. Like much writing on the cultural and linguistic turn in social sciences, there is the ironic position of authors stressing the importance of examining the use of language and discourse in a way that excludes those not versed in the language of cultural studies.

The wide range of subject matter and the international contexts covered by the chapters are a welcome addition to the subject matter that often concentrates on the 'heroic' entrepreneur operating in a European or North American context. Through the detailed studies of particular contexts there are useful insights into the hidden aspects of entrepreneurial activity.

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