

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/300473666>

Approaches to Narrative Analysis: Using Personal, Dialogical and Social Stories to Promote Peace

Chapter · September 2015

DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-18395-4_14

CITATION

1

READS

4,010

2 authors:



Mary Breheny

Massey University

64 PUBLICATIONS 630 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)



Christine Stephens

Massey University

183 PUBLICATIONS 2,679 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



Rhetorical Analysis of Interactive Media Data [View project](#)



Health Professionals' Views of Teenage Mothers [View project](#)

Chapter 14

Approaches to Narrative Analysis: Using Personal, Dialogical and Social Stories to Promote Peace

Mary Breheny and Christine Stephens

14.1 Approaches to Narrative Analysis: Using Personal, Dialogical and Social Stories to Promote Peace

When asked to describe disruptive experiences, people turn to stories. The experience of conflict has immediate relevance to peace psychologists who may be interested in the power of narrative research to reveal the embodied experience of trauma from the sufferer's perspective, the social location of conflict situations, and the importance of historical relationships to the context of these experiences. Furthermore, narrative approaches to research have broader applications such as analyzing the cultural justifications for violence (Senehi, 2002) and understanding the struggle for independence and self-determination in situations of conflict. There are many potential applications of and many different ways to conduct narrative analysis. In this chapter we will focus on approaches to narrative analysis that may be used to interpret accounts of embodied experiences of conflict and trauma, and include recognition of the social context in which those experiences are shared with others, interpreted, and situated. We will review approaches to narrative analysis that are useful for understanding the social location of embodied selves and describe the integration of these approaches. Conflict provides the impetus for telling stories and creates a fruitful area of research for peace psychologists.

Narratives are stories that order events across time and also structure accounts of these events in ways that give meaning to the experiences of storytellers. Social scientists have recognized that narratives are used to make sense of experiences from within the storyteller's social world and to constitute social identities (e.g.,

M. Breheny (✉)

School of Public Health, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand

e-mail: m.r.breheny@massey.ac.nz

C. Stephens

School of Psychology, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand

e-mail: c.v.Stephens@massey.ac.nz

© Springer International Publishing Switzerland 2015

D. Bretherton, S. F. Law (eds.), *Methodologies in Peace Psychology*,

Peace Psychology Book Series 26, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-18395-4_14

Somers, 1994). Pioneers of narrative approaches in psychology, such as Sarbin (1986), proposed that narrative is an organizing principle for all human action. He suggested that the way we understand the world and make moral decisions is guided by narrative structures. Bruner (1990) additionally proposed that the stories people tell provide insights into the specific cultural rules for reacting and interacting and for claiming or avoiding particular identities. Following the cognitive turn in social psychology with its focus on individuals, Bruner argued for a turn to a social model of mind rather than the isolating individual model of cognitive approaches:

When we enter human life, it is as if we walk on stage into a play whose enactment is already in progress—a play whose somewhat open plot determines what parts we may play and toward what denouements we may be heading. Others on stage already have a sense of what the play is about (p. 34)

Bruner suggests that the vital organizing principle of the play of complex cultural meanings with which we interpret our experience, knowledge and interactions in the social world is narrative.

Accordingly, people often shape their reporting of experiences as stories. Qualitative researchers such as Baumeister and Newman (1994), and Good (1994) have told their own tales about recognizing that stories told by participants in their research (rather than the abstracted themes) conveyed the heart of the experiences that were being studied. So, for researchers and participants alike, narrative is a pervasive structure with which we convey and comprehend the experiences and meanings of events, account for our own and other's behaviour, or reveal ourselves to others in the way in which we would like to be seen. In doing so, we also reveal something of the operation of our social world.

Narrative-based analysis is not a method as such, but rather a theoretical approach to interpreting talk. Utilizing the notion of narrative as an organizing principle in psychology does not immediately provide methodological approaches to narrative research. Cortazzi (1993) describes sociological, psychological, literary and anthropological models of narrative in a useful account of the ways in which different disciplines have approached the notion of narrative analysis. However, despite the burgeoning interest in stories and narrative approaches to conflict (Hiller & Chaitin, 2014) there have been relatively few researchers in social psychology (for examples, see Gergen & Gergen, 1984; Crossley, 2000) and peace psychology who have used narrative methods. Therefore, we will begin by considering the aspects of narrative analysis that may be useful in answering questions that are important for understanding conflict and promoting peace.

Several authors have provided typologies of narrative analysis (e.g., Bury, 2001; Cortazzi, 2001; Mishler, 1995; Phoenix, Smith, & Sparkes, 2009) that help us to construct research questions and determine the focus of the analysis. Will our questions be best answered by pursuing the culturally available structure of narrative forms, the interpersonal relations involved in narrative construction, the constructive function of different stories, or the social forces and power relations that shape narratives? Murray (2000) drew upon the work of Doise (1986) to propose four levels at which narratives may be considered in psychological analysis: the personal,

interpersonal, positional and ideological. This structure maps well onto others that have been suggested in the literature (e.g., Langellier & Peterson, 2004; Somers, 1994) and provides a useful framework for considering the theoretical basis of each aspect in turn.

14.1.1 Personal Experience

The individual story is always the immediate focus in narrative analysis since it is stories told about everyday life that are the basis of narrative psychology. Taking the storyteller as the point of interest, narrative-based analysis may be used to understand people's experiences from a phenomenological perspective, which enquires into the nature of those experiences. In 'personal experience narratives', (Labov, 1972) events that have caused difficulties or disruption are described and resolved. People use stories to work through and explain how this event turned out, why it happened this way, what sort of self they were, and now are, in relation to the events, and why they behaved in certain ways. A social psychological perspective sees these personal stories as a way for narrators to actively achieve an identity by shaping and explaining their actions (Skultans, 2000).

The experience of conflict provides an impetus for storytelling. Conflict can disrupt biographies, threaten identities and question moral positioning. Narrative analysis provides a way to understand these aspects from a social perspective. In telling stories, people must narrate who they were in the previous world order and who they became in the light of social change, while still managing a coherent and positive identity (see Uehara, 2007). Narratives provide insight into the ways in which individuals incorporate these changes across all aspects of their everyday lives (which psychology has tended to neglect). An analysis of stories is able to include not just the accounts of what happened to individuals, but the meanings these experiences have within the narrator's life situation and life history. For example, Brough, Schweitzer, Shakespeare-Finch, Vromans, and King (2012) gathered narratives of settling in Australia from refugees from Burma. Their narrative methodology focused on providing refugees with the opportunity to narrate their life experiences, negotiate the meaning of these experiences, and to evaluate the significance of the experience of resettlement in their life story. These narratives of suffering and hope pointed to the social location of the accounts and the ways the narratives were shaped by the relationship between the person and their setting (Brough et al., 2012).

Not all attempts at resolving suffering through narrative meaning-making are successful. Uehara, Farris, Morell, and Ishisaka, (2001) argue that the very nature of atrocity as outside everyday experience can mean that survivors cannot incorporate phenomenological experiences of atrocity into a narrative structure of life before and life after atrocity. This can mean 'the survivor's discourse is at some points characterized by an absence of structural coherence—confusion of contexts, tenses and time frames; unreflected enumeration of experience fragments; and disrupted

theme progression'. (Uehara et al., 2001, p. 34). This does not mean that narrative analysis is an inappropriate approach to understanding such experiences, but that it may be necessary to hear these accounts as anti-narratives that cannot achieve narrative coherence.

Somers (1994) describes personal stories as 'ontological' narratives that are used to make sense of our own lives and define our identities. At the same time she notes that ontological narratives, which embed the self in change across time, are '... above all, social and interpersonal. Although psychologists are typically biased towards the individual sources of narrative, they recognize the degree to which ontological narratives can only exist interpersonally in the course of social and structural interactions over time' (p. 618). So, we must turn to the broader social world which gives point and purpose to any construction of personal identity.

14.1.2 Interpersonal: Storytelling

Stories are told to an audience of at least one other (even diaries have an imagined reader) and so the construction of a narrative may be understood from performative and dialogical perspectives as a joint enterprise with an active audience. Rather than being simply an account of past experiences, this focus includes the time of the telling and the particular accomplishments of that moment. Langellier and Peterson (2004) draw on the work of Merleau-Ponty to describe storytelling as not only about embodied experience, but, as an embodied performance that is constructed in accordance with all of the material conditions of the telling, including who is able to speak and what may be said in the situation. Langellier and Peterson (2004) provide examples to show how narrators perform their identities through the positioning of narrator, story characters and audience. This shift in focus to include audience foregrounds research questions that ask about the reasons for particular order or structure chosen by the narrator, and about the rhetorical claims to particular identities, or rejection of others (Riessman, 2003).

De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2008) also describe the ways in which story recipients are not a passive audience but take an active part in shaping the story by rejecting some versions and contributing other views to shape the construction of a narrative. These authors point out that bringing a more interactional perspective to narrative analysis also shifts the topic from a narrow focus on identity to a broader range of social actions, including making arguments, challenging other views, and generally orienting the talk to local purposes. Beyond the immediate context of the storytelling, Seaton (2008) draws attention to the larger communal history to which personal stories belong. Communal narratives shape personal stories, which are drawn into the larger project of a communal understanding of events.

In many research situations, the immediate listener is the interviewer. Mishler (1986) has influentially argued that narratives from interviews are co-constructed by the interviewer and participant. Frank (2000) goes further by describing storytelling as a recursively elaborated relationship. Tanggaard (2009) and van Enk

(2009) have recently used Bakhtin's theorizing about the cultural basis of dialogues in everyday life to explore this dialogical view of narrative. From this perspective the interview is seen as a conversation that produces narratives (based in socially and historically available discourses). An important first orientation for the analyst is that there are at least two people immediately involved in the conversation (as well as an orientation to future wider audiences). Interviewers are not neutral bystanders and their direct contribution to shaping the narrative, as well as their representation of a broader social world to which the narrative is oriented, cannot be minimized or ignored.

These insights mean that we must consider the social context, both the immediate players in the interaction and their audience, in the production of a narrative. Narratives are constituted to anticipate the response of immediate and possible audiences and to ward off unfavourable attributions by audiences. For example, narrating ill health and pain is problematic, as the narrator can be viewed as lacking fortitude. To address this, Uehara (2007) found that Cambodian women who survived the Killing Fields of the Khmer Rouge resisted individualizing accounts of pain by situating their pain within historical and political experiences. The narrators moved between recollections of the experience of atrocity and current pain to demonstrate the social location of these experiences. Acknowledging the ways that narratives are constructed with an audience in place and in mind highlights the competing interpretations of experience that the speaker must navigate to resolve conflicts that the story has identified.

In trauma narratives, the narrator must trust the audience to receive the account without minimizing the experience, denial, or victim blaming (Uehara et al., 2001). Historically, Holocaust survivors have contended with disbelief, or the audience's inability to comprehend the extent of survivors' suffering. At times, attempts to narrate experience fail to relay the weight of atrocity (Kraft, 2006). The response of the audience confirms whether the narrator has succeeded in revealing the gravity of the experiences. When audiences respond in terms of their own difficult life experiences, this indicates they have failed to appreciate the narrative of atrocity as beyond the limits of everyday experience. The ways that narratives actively hail audiences and attend to possible argument, dissent, or minimizing strategies makes them particularly instructive for understanding conflicting accounts.

14.1.3 Positional: Constructing Identities

A broader interest in narrative research in recent years has been fuelled by new interest in social identities based on ethnicity, gender and disability (Langellier & Peterson, 2004; Somers, 1994). Narrative approaches have shown how people use stories to define who they are to others (Somers, 1994) and in terms of others. Narratives cannot escape the structuring effects of identity, even when the story does not explicitly make identity claims. For example, Gobodo-Madikizela, (2012) analyzed the way that medical students, reminiscing about their experiences of medical

training in Apartheid South Africa, were disrupted by the recollection that Black students were excluded from postmortem classes when white bodies were the subject of the class. This story disrupted the nostalgic tone of the narrative and situated all the speakers in terms of racial identity. In response to this, the medical students responded with angry denial, distancing themselves from the practices of exclusion that were part of their medical training to avoid being seen as benefiting from and therefore complicit in these practices. Thus, narratives always locate the speaker within possible identities. Even narratives that do not begin with the narrator claiming a specific identity cannot escape the ways that social identity pervades how, when, and to whom speakers can narrate their experiences.

Riessman (2003) notes that narratives do not reveal an 'essential' self, but rather a preferred version of the self, which is appropriate to the social context of the telling. These preferred selves may include a myriad of different identities such as a masculine man, feminine woman, heterosexual man, or a general 'good sort'. Taking a discursive theory perspective (e.g., Davies & Harré, 1990) means that possible subject positions or identities, and the power relations involved in these positions, may be taken into account when interpreting narratives. Langenhove and Harré (1999) provide a theoretical account of narrative positioning to explain the interplay of biographical identity and the social situation of the account. Wilén (2014) provides an example of the movement between conflicting identities as women in her study narrated their experience of joining the military in Burundi. These women moved between accounts of themselves as feminine women and as competent soldiers, a typically masculine identity. Through their storytelling, the women carved out an identity as a 'good soldier', which acknowledged their femininity and sought to promote this as an advantage in the military. Although allowing women to enter the Burundi military was based on notions of equality, these women narrated their impact on the military in terms of accounts of femininity, reinforcing the gendered differences the inclusion of women was designed to resist.

Morality, in particular, has been revealed as a powerful positioning force that can be illustrated by survival narratives. To lack fortitude or to be overwhelmed in a crisis or traumatic situation is to risk being seen as a personal failure. Through narratives of trauma, narrators work hard to position themselves as heroic survivors. As a specific example, Uehara et al. (2001) analyzed an interview with a man who survived the Killing Fields of Cambodia as a child by eating the food meant for animals and strategically befriending the Khmer Rouge. The man narrated this story as an account of survival, drawing upon a recognizable storyline of triumph over adversity through using skill and cunning. In producing this narrative, the speaker must navigate moral positioning in terms of guilt about survival, and guilt regarding how survival was achieved (Uehara et al., 2001). Attending to the positioning force of morality reveals both the immediate identity of the storyteller and a broader social imperative to be a certain sort of person.

As Radley and Billig (1996) have argued, people tend to position themselves as worthy citizens within ideologies which naturalize and perpetuate social inequalities. Intergroup conflicts are often framed around identity, and the conflict itself can become a key element of group identity (Senehi, 2002). Narrative analysis

provides a tool with which to trouble the enmeshing of identity and conflict. Both acknowledging and resisting the narrative positioning of competing identities can provide the impetus to overcome the ethnic, class, ideological, and cultural differences that create barriers to peace. For example, Nepstad (2001) analyzed the story of Salvadoran martyr Archbishop Romero to promote solidarity between the Central American church and US Christians. By focusing on the religious identity of the narrator, a shared religious identity was prioritized over differing national allegiances. Narratives make available a range of identity positions, from broad identity categories such as ethnic affiliations or gender to moral identities such as being a ‘good father’ or ‘cunning survivor’. Emphasizing a shared identity in a narrative account provides one way to progress beyond diverging accounts of conflict and to move towards peace.

14.1.4 Ideological: Culture and Society

Rather than attending to the interactional and positional work of narrative, the researcher may pay more direct attention to those broader social and cultural systems of shared beliefs and representations in which narratives are embedded. Somers (1994) describes these culturally shared stories as ‘public narratives’; those shared by members of families, institutions, or states to explain historical events (Carretero & van Alphen, 2014), understand the causes of conflict (Hagai, Hammack, Pilecki, & Aresta, 2013), and make attributions about the motivations of characters in a story (Slocum-Bradley, 2008). Somers (1994) separates such cultural stories from broader ‘metanarratives’ such as those of progress, human rights, or freedom, which are created within societies, shared, and used unconsciously to provide locations for personal stories. It is these metanarratives that provide subject positions or moral identities, both for the speakers and those in their social networks. Carretero and van Alpen (2014) use the more popular term ‘master narratives’ to describe such socially available narratives. Langellier and Peterson (2004) also drew upon post-structuralist theorizing to develop the notion of master narratives. They point to the importance of the reflexive nature of storytelling. Narrators have heard stories from others, and are a narrator, character, and audience to their own story. Reflection of public narratives in personal stories means that stories can both reproduce public narratives and transgress or resist normative meanings and relations. Langellier and Peterson apply the principles of discourse analysis to show how storytelling constructs multiple identities and constantly destabilizes and resists fixed master narratives. Conflict not only disrupts personal lives, it also destabilizes the norms and values that people use to make meaning, and the institutions that structure social life (Lykes, 2013).

In conflict situations, social and cultural narratives can function as strategic narratives; narratives that provide a convincing case to explain current events and link these events to competing interests, future goals, and actions to achieve these goals (Coticchia & De Simone, 2014). The media provide a rich source of cultural nar-

ratives that characterize the players in conflict in particular ways. For example, Slocum-Bradley (2008) examined media representation of the Rwandan crisis to identify the storylines the media promoted to justify the massacre of the Tutsi minority. These storylines narrated a version of reality in which 'ethnic cleansing' was logical and ethnic diversity was destructive. Similarly, the root narratives about the Israeli and Palestinian conflict provide culturally situated accounts that position characters as either victims of interlopers or as attempting to live in peace and therefore defending themselves (Hagai et al., 2013). Like the Rwandan storylines, these root narratives situate the speakers in terms of an 'other' who is attempting to disrupt the freedom to pursue a valued and morally correct life. These accounts portray ethnic groups according to culturally available characterizations to narrate an identifiable story of morally superior in-group members cast in opposition to the immoral motivations of the out-group.

In addition to examining the role of master narratives used by the storyteller, there is a case for using researcher knowledge of the social situation of storytellers. This means being aware of historical and structural situations of which narrators themselves are not always aware. An important critique of interpretivist approaches is that personal accounts alone provide only one view of social life experience (Smith, 1987; Williams, 2003). For example, Hershberg and Lykes (2013) examined the lives of four girls in transnational families living between the USA and Central America. The girls' narratives described their experiences and meaning making around family and encounters with US immigration and deportation. However, to more fully comprehend these narratives, the analyst situated them in terms of the gendering of family and migration processes, and in the context of social inequalities in Central America and the USA. These social processes demonstrate the ways that versions of history structure what can be said, even when the narrator is unaware of these structuring effects. Peace psychologists have a role in providing such critical analyses of narratives to expose the racism, sexism, and other inequalities that form the foundations of conflict. By working alongside local communities, peace psychologists can support local people and organizations to analyze the underlying causes of conflict (Lykes, 2013).

Bell (1999) showed one way in which we can account for the constraints placed by social structure and available cultural narratives on the performance of personal stories. While paying attention to the social construction of knowledge within social practices and relationships, she included historical changes outside the stories themselves. Bell reproduced the stories of two women diagnosed with cancer in their early thirties after being exposed to diethylstilbestrol (DES) medication before birth. Using narrative analysis, she showed how their personal stories were related to public narratives from two particular sites for the production of knowledge about women's experiences of cancer: medical science and the women's health movement. Because the stories were located in two different times, Bell was also able to show that personal stories were connected to the medical and feminist contexts of the times. One woman's response to her DES cancer diagnosis was possible because of newly transformed power relations between women and physicians. By the time of the second women's story, the power relations that she described (activist

organizations as heroes and doctors as villains) were specifically related to recent feminist activism around DES cancer. What can be storied changes over time. The current social milieu influences what can be recounted, so an account of experience given at one time will be different from an account given years later.

In addressing the influence of the broader social environment, other researchers have included consideration of the effects of the storytellers' social position in terms of structural categories such as socioeconomic status, social class, race, or gender. Riessman (2003) drew on the sociological theorizing of Bourdieu (Bourdieu et al., 1993) in regard to the embodiment of social structures, to show that a reading of two men's stories, from a performative perspective alone, could not take into account the importance of the difference in their social locations. Leonard and Ellen (2008) similarly describe the ways in which social structures influenced the stories of people with HIV. They highlighted the power of certain narratives and the dominance of a certain type of HIV story produced by powerful social actors. Leonard and Ellen's research shows very different kinds of stories produced by people who are living with HIV in poverty and under surveillance by state institutions. Similarly, Lykes, Blanche, and Hamber's (2003) accounts of narrating survival and change also suggest the importance of going beyond what is simply told to investigate the social relations and material conditions in which accounts are produced.

In terms of social and cultural narratives, accounts speak through what is absent as well as what is present in the telling of social, cultural and historical narratives. Situations of atrocity and conflict may succeed in erasing the narrative traces of particular marginalized histories. Narratives that lack currency within a particular group will not be circulated (Senehi, 2002) and over time may disappear. For example, contemporary accounts of pioneer life in the Ozark Mountains do not include the presence of Black slaves. This absence provides an account of what is unspeakable. Brandon (2013) used archaeological evidence of Black people's contribution to pioneer life in the Ozark Mountains to challenge the prevailing history. Using this evidence, the narratives of eighteenth-century Ozark Mountains changed to include the role of Black slaves in this community. This re-storying was not unproblematic, however, as these new narratives resisted accounts of exploitation and slavery and instead offered narratives of inclusion and care of slaves. This points to the possibilities not only of challenging marginalizing narratives, but also offers a caution in the recognition that people are active interpreters of the accounts they hear. They construe narratives in light of current positioning, as well as historical and social accounts, and altering a narrative is complex.

14.2 Integrating Levels of Analysis

The examples offered in the previous section show the difficulties of separating different categories of analysis. Murray (2000) emphasized that his schema of levels (the personal, interpersonal, positional and ideological) is not simply about how narratives are structured (they include all of the levels all of the time), but rather

about his concern to work towards integrating different levels of analysis for use in psychology. Many of the authors cited above explicitly integrate more than one aspect.

In narrative research we are usually interested in how at least some of these aspects work together. For example, in constructing personal stories individuals must use culturally available forms and master narratives; the identities that narrators construct rhetorically only make sense if we consider them within these wider socially available discourses; and we can only understand resistant stories in the face of normalizing discourses. Radley and Billig (1996) have argued strongly that accounts are both ideological, in that they perpetuate and normalize a range of social inequalities, and dilemmatic, in that people must account for themselves to other people while establishing their own identity in the world. In analyzing narratives of youth identity in the context of conflict, Hammack (2010) identified intertwined analytic levels: the personal story told by Palestinian youth about their own experience; the interpersonal co-creation between narrator and interviewer; the interpretation of these stories collectively as ideological narratives of the burden versus the benefit of collective identity for youth in such societies; and the public narratives that include positions for moral and social identities. Similarly, Uehara (2007) demonstrates how narratives are simultaneously phenomenological accounts of intensely personal experiences of pain and suffering and critiques of the social and political origins of suffering. Moving between phenomenological account and political critique, Uehara argues that the narrator unsettles the audience and through this unsettling, the audience must acknowledge the social location of personal experiences.

Qualitative approaches that focus on individual experiences and accounts provide only limited understandings of conflict. Wider social explanations for conflict, such as enculturated or sedimented practices and power relations, are not always available to individuals (see Blaxter, 1997; Williams, 2003 for examples in health psychology). Including theories of social structure to frame participants' accounts shows how behaviours are enmeshed in the broader structures of daily social life. Narrative approaches offer opportunities to include both these social and individual levels of explanation.

Murray (2000) was particularly interested in showing how narratives of experience could be used to reveal social processes and work towards social justice by challenging master narratives that damage lives. For example, in regard to HIV/AIDS in Africa, Mabala (2006) has described the way in which dominant groups (including politicians and foreign aid providers) focus on individual behaviours for HIV prevention interventions and neglect the powerful evidence for the role of income inequality. Mabala highlighted the damaging and oppositional effects on progress in HIV/AIDS prevention of this powerful and dominant perspective. The anthropologist Farmer (1999, 2004) was a pioneer in using a narrative approach; he influentially described how narratives were employed to develop a shared understanding of the arrival of HIV/AIDS in Haiti. Over time, the telling of stories about the disease produced shared representations that were used to explain subsequent experiences. He has subsequently described how the accounts of those in power, including programme directors, pharmaceutical companies, health

practitioners and politicians directly affect the access of the poor to health care, and how diseases develop in populations along structural fault lines. Leonard and Ellen (2008) also argue that stories about living with HIV/AIDS from powerful social actors dominate and obscure the illness experiences of poor and institutionalized patients while shaping their lives. Work in this vein suggests that the next step should be to use narrative enquiry to study the culture and actions of the powerful, rather than just the knowledge, decisions, and behaviours of the disadvantaged and victimized, who are often constructed as responsible for their situation by dominant narratives (see Stephens, 2010). Such an approach could focus on the inclusion of broader social theory and show how different accounts are structured by these social differences. We can also put the stories of those in powerful positions in post-conflict societies up for scrutiny. If peace psychologists undertake more research to investigate and reveal the ways in which powerful groups control the dominant narratives, then these understandings can contribute to promoting more receptive social environments in which the needs of the poor and powerless are heard.

14.3 Methods of Narrative Research

The very word narrative suggests spoken and written stories. There is certainly a very strong tradition of discursive and textual analysis in narrative research. Most of the work cited above has relied on this tradition and much of the data for these sorts of analyses is collected in interviews. Accordingly, there is a rich literature on narrative inquiry (see Clandinin & Connelly 2004) and narrative interviewing in particular (e.g., Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000; Mishler, 1986; Wengraf, 2001). Furthermore, there is ongoing discussion within the narrative research literature about the nature of stories as objects for research. For example, Phoenix and Sparkes (2009) discuss the legitimacy of 'big stories' (the grand narratives of a life) versus that of 'small stories' (those told during interaction about everyday occurrences) as the focus of analysis. Kraft (2006) describes episodes or 'small stories' as discrete events based on deeply felt emotions and physiological experiences. These episodes are strung together in sequence as the story moves through time and place and the episodes are shaped in accordance with narrative conventions (Kraft, 2006).

Stories may be related using media such as words, imagery, sound, movement, or combinations of these. Keats (2009) describes the use of spoken, written and visual texts together in narrative analysis. Spoken texts are usually recordings of interpersonal or group interviews and also more informal group discussions or commentaries. Written texts may include transcripts of recordings, journals, emails, letters, books and articles. Visual texts may include objects, photographs taken for the research or brought to the research setting, art work and any collected artefacts that bring meaning to the stories. These forms refer to and reflect on each other. For example, people may comment on their own interview transcripts, and photographs are often used to elicit discussion. Keats provides a detailed approach to the analysis

and presentation of results from this kind of research project, which is particularly appropriate for including understanding of complex contextual issues.

Spoken and written narratives may continue to be the main resource for narrative analysts and we have an increasingly rich literature to draw upon as guidance in the elicitation and analysis of those stories. However, there are also situations in which language may not be the best resource. Leonard and Ellen (2008) describe the difficulties of establishing a narrative relationship between two cultures. In their study of institutionalized persons with HIV/AIDS they noted that the interviews were not a conversation. Their ‘participants’ initially saw the interviews as additional surveillance in their lives and talked only in the terms used for such intrusions. Leonard and Ellen note that research

...in public or collective projects like peer or outreach education programs—is not as simple as listening to the words that are available to render these actions meaningful. In part, this is because people cannot always find a language for their experiences, or that language might not be readily accessible to them. (p. 54).

Similarly, Mayan women found that performing narratives of pain and resistance offered possibilities for personal transformation that went beyond the possibilities of spoken narrative accounts (Lykes, 2013). For reasons such as these, researchers are turning to other types of data that can provide narratives of everyday life.

14.3.1 Photographs

Photographs have already proved useful in a number of narrative enquiries. Bell (2002) describes how photographs have long been used to tell stories and reproduce societal myths using narrative forms. Photographs can both reflect and resist dominant public narratives of gender, family, class and illness. Spence used photographs to consciously create stories that resist the power of Western science and medicine. She contested the reduction of people to bodies and body parts and the creation of passive patients in the health care system. A new and growing focus is on the use of photographs taken by research participants to contribute to the sharing of experience. Radley and Taylor (2003a; b) used interviews and photographs taken by research participants to explore patients’ experiences of recovery during and after their stay in hospital. They used a recursive approach to the analysis of photographs and participant comments together to ensure that the visual objects retained their immediacy and material meaning. These meanings included the graphic representations and the material objects themselves, as well as the act of taking the photographs. Radley, Hodgetts, and Cullen (2005; 2006) used similar photo elicitation techniques to study the everyday lives of homeless people in the UK. Murray (2009) also describes the use of video films that are particularly appropriate for capturing stories that include movement from place to place. Photographic or video narratives can help put the participants’ own agendas in the foreground of the story.

These narrative approaches have immediate practical applications in both therapeutic and community work. Community researchers are using ‘photo-voice’ approaches in increasing numbers to give disempowered people an opportunity to tell their own stories. For example, Lykes (2000) adopted this approach to develop a participatory action research project using oral history interviews and photography to communicate, analyze, and share women’s stories in rural post-war work. The women photographed their own and others’ stories of daily life, which documented the ongoing effects of war, eventually creating an exhibition that travelled around Guatemala. The women developed ethical strategies for analyzing and presenting their collective record to others and critically reflected on their own and the group’s work ‘developing a shared vision towards collective action for change’ (Lykes, 2000, p. 393).

14.3.2 Archives

As part of a process of recognition, remembering, reconciliation and peace building, archives of testimonies about atrocities have been developed. These include the Apartheid Archives Project, Holocaust archives and genocide archives of Rwanda. The Apartheid Archives Project collected narratives of the everyday experiences of South Africans to document the impact of Apartheid on daily life in which personal memories of experience were specifically solicited (Stevens, Duncan, & Sonn, 2010). Narratives collected for this purpose differ from those collected in interviews with researchers in several ways. Firstly, the act of testifying lacks the interactional movement between the speaker and the immediate audience, which is usually the interviewer. Kraft (2006) notes that testimonies in the Holocaust archives produced mostly spontaneous remembering. The survivors produced mostly uninterrupted accounts lasting up to 40 minutes, without the imposition of structure from the interviewer. Secondly, those testifying to such events may be aware of multiple audiences who over time will listen to and evaluate the accounts they provide. Rather than attending to local interactional expectations, the narrator may orient to these potential audiences. Thirdly, Kraft (2006) notes that these testimonies are bounded; there is no possibility to prompt the speaker to elaborate or provoke the narrator to justify their account of what happened and why.

Narratives are accounts of experience through time, and archival materials include at least three aspects of time: the time when the experience happened, the time between the experience and the telling, and the time since the telling and the analysis. All need to be acknowledged in the analysis. When did the story happen and what were the social and historical pressures at that time? Is the speaker recounting recent experiences, or experiences they have co-existed with over a long period of time (Kraft, 2006)? What social changes have occurred since the testimony was provided? These elements provide ways to examine the impact of social change on narrative possibilities.

14.4 Conclusion

People tell stories and understand their world in terms of stories that are shared and reproduced, and embroidered and altered to accommodate personal and historical circumstances. Stories are designed to connect with others, and are able to be interpreted within particular cultural contexts. Narrative analysis can be used flexibly. Narratives provide an orientation to the way we organize our world. The use of narrative forms and stories in everyday life can be observed by using a wide range of methods that go beyond talk to include visual narratives and place. Furthermore, stories may be interpreted using an armoury of theoretical approaches that support an integrated approach to analysis. Narrative analysts may draw upon phenomenological, communication, dialogical, poststructural, and other theorizing to interpret individual experience. Using these interpretive tools, researchers are able to explore particular embodied experiences by analyzing narratives, the very form that humans have developed as a highly sophisticated mechanism with which to share meanings and purpose, constitute agency and power, or resist the operation of particular dominant ideologies.

Since the ‘narrative turn’ in the social sciences some critics have become concerned about the enthusiastic use of narrative approaches to any research questions (e.g., Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). Narrative analysis cannot be taken as a direct route to personal experience, and personal experiences do not explain everything about experiences of conflict. A single perspective or voice may not be able to provide the level of interpretation that is required by a research question, and written and spoken texts may not always be the appropriate source of data. When structural relations are recognized beyond the text, talk between researchers and members of disempowered groups in society is often complicated by the very power relations that we may wish to investigate. Taken together, these issues suggest that researchers must be careful to choose an approach that is relevant to the research question rather than being driven by the method. Most importantly, they must be ongoingly reflexive about their reasons for the research, their role in the research, the needs of research participants, and the importance of the relationships that are developed in the research context.

References

- Baumeister, R. F., & Newman, L. S. (1994). How stories make sense of personal experiences: Motives that shape autobiographical narratives. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 20, 676–690.
- Bell, S. E. (1999). Narratives and lives: Women’s health politics and the diagnosis of cancer for DES daughters. *Narrative Inquiry*, 9(2), 1–43.
- Bell, S. E. (2002). Photo images: Jo Spence’s narratives of living with illness. *Health*, 6(1), 5–30. doi:10.1177/136345930200600102.
- Blaxter, M. (1997). Whose fault is it? People’s own conceptions of the reasons for health inequalities. *Social Science & Medicine*, 44(6), 747–756.

- Bourdieu, P., Accardo, A., Balazs, G., Beaud, S., Bonvin, F., Bourdieu, E., & Wacquant, L. J. D. (1993). *The weight of the world: Social suffering in contemporary society* (P. P. Ferguson, S. Emanuel, J. Johnson & S. T. Waryn, Trans.). Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Brandon, J. C. (2013). Reversing the narrative of hillbilly history: A case study using archaeology at Van Winkle's Mill in the Arkansas Ozarks. *Historical Archaeology*, 47(3), 36–51.
- Brough, M., Schweitzer, R., Shakespeare-Finch, J., Vromans, L., & King, J. (2012). Unpacking the micro-macro nexus: Narratives of suffering and hope among refugees from Burma recently settled in Australia. *Journal Of Refugee Studies*, 26(2), 207–225.
- Bruner, J. S. (1990). *Acts of meaning*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bury, M. (2001). Illness narratives: Fact or fiction? *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 23(3), 263–285.
- Carretero, M., & van Alphen, F. (2014). Do master narratives change among high school students? A characterization of how national history is represented. *Cognition and Instruction*, 32(3), 290–312.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2004). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Cortazzi, M. (1993). *Narrative analysis*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Cortazzi, M. (2001). Narrative analysis in ethnography. In P. Atkinson, A. Coffey, S. Delamont, J. Lofland, & L. Lofland (Eds.), *Handbook of ethnography*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Coticchia, F., & De Simone, C. (2014). The war that wasn't there? Italy's "Peace Mission" in Afghanistan, strategic narratives and public opinion. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 1–23. doi: 10.1111/fpa.12056.
- Crossley, M. L. (2000). Narrative psychology, trauma and the study of self/identity. *Theory and psychology*, 10, 527–546.
- Davies, B., & Harré, R. (1990). Positioning: The discursive production of selves. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 20, 43–63.
- De Fina, A., & Georgakopoulou, A. (2008). Analysing narratives as practices. *Qualitative Research*, 8(3), 379–387. doi:10.1177/1468794106093634.
- Doise, W. (1986). *Levels of explanation in social psychology* (E. Mapstone, Trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Farmer, P. (1999). *Infections and inequalities: The modern plague*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Farmer, P. (2004). Sidney W. Mintz Lecture for 2001: An anthropology of structural violence. *Current Anthropology*, 45(3), 305–325.
- Frank, A. W. (2000). The standpoint of storyteller. *Qualitative Health Research*, 10(3), 354–365. doi:10.1177/104973200129118499.
- Gergen, M., & Gergen, K. (1984). The social construction of narrative accounts. In K. Gergen & M. Gergen (Eds.), *Historical social psychology*. Hillsdale: Erlbaum.
- Gobodo-Madikizela, P. (2012). Remembering the past: Nostalgia, traumatic memory, and the legacy of Apartheid. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 18(3), 252–267.
- Good, B. J. (1994). *Medicine, rationality and experience: An anthropological perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gubrium, J., & Holstein, J. (2002). From the individual interview to the interview society. In J. Gubrium & J. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context & method* (pp. 3–32). London: Sage.
- Hagai, E. B., Hammack, P. L., Pilecki, A., & Aresta, C. (2013). Shifting away from a monolithic narrative on conflict: Israelis, Palestinians, and Americans in conversation. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 19(3), 295–310.
- Hammack, P. L. (2010). Identity as burden or benefit? Youth, historical narrative, and the legacy of political conflict. *Human Development*, 53(4), 173–201.
- Hershberg, R. M., & Lykes, M. B. (2013). Redefining family: Transnational girls narrate experiences of parental migration, detention, and deportation. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 14(1), Art. 5.
- Hiller, P. T. & Chaitin, J. (2014). Their lives, our peace: Narrative inquiry in peace and conflict studies. In R. Cooper & L. Finley (Eds.), *Peace and conflict studies research* (pp. 137–160). Charlotte: Information Age Publishing.

- Jovchelovitch, S., & Bauer, M. W. (2000). Narrative interviewing. In M. W. Bauer & G. Gaskell (Eds.), *Qualitative researching with text, image and sound* (pp. 57–74). London: Sage.
- Keats, P. A. (2009). Multiple text analysis in narrative research: Visual, written, and spoken stories of experience. *Qualitative Research*, 9, 181–195. doi:10.1177/1468794108099320.
- Kraft, R. N. (2006). Archival memory: Representations of the Holocaust in oral testimony. *Poetics Today*, 27(2), 311–330.
- Labov, W. (1972). *Language in the inner city*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Langellier, K., & Peterson, E. (2004). *Storytelling in daily life: Performing narrative*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Langenhove, L., & Harré, R. (1999). Introducing positioning theory. In R. Harré & L. Langenhove (Eds.), *Positioning theory* (pp. 14–32). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Leonard, L., & Ellen, J. (2008). “The Story of My Life”: AIDS and ‘Autobiographical Occasions’. *Qualitative Sociology*, 31(1), 37–56.
- Lykes, M. B. (2000). Possible contributions of a psychology of liberation: Whither health and human rights? *Journal of Health Psychology*, 5(3), 383–397.
- Lykes, M. B. (2013). Participatory and action research as a transformative praxis: Responding to humanitarian crises from the margins. *American Psychologist*, 68(8), 774–783.
- Lykes, M. B., Blanche, M. T., & Hamber, B. (2003). Narrating survival and change in Guatemala and South Africa: The politics of representation and a liberatory community psychology. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 31(1/2), 79–90.
- Mabala, R. (2006). From HIV prevention to HIV protection: Addressing the vulnerability of girls and young women in urban areas. *Environment and Urbanization*, 18(2), 407–432.
- Mishler, E. G. (1986). *Research interviewing. Context and narrative*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Mishler, E. G. (1995). Models of narrative analysis: A typology. *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, 5, 87–124.
- Murray, M. (2000). Levels of narrative analysis in health psychology. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 5(3), 337–347.
- Murray, L. (2009). Looking at and looking back: Visualization in mobile research. *Qualitative Research*, 9(4), 469–488. doi:10.1177/1468794109337879.
- Nepstad, S. E. (2001). Creating transnational solidarity: The use of narrative in the U.S.-Central America peace movement. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, 6(1), 21–36.
- Phoenix, C., & Sparkes, A. (2009). Being Fred: Big stories, small stories and the accomplishment of a positive ageing identity. *Qualitative Research*, 9(2), 219–236. doi:10.1177/1468794108099322.
- Phoenix, C., Smith, B., & Sparkes, A. C. (2009). Narrative analysis in aging studies: A typology for consideration. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 24(1), 1–11. doi:10.1016/j.jaging.2008.06.003.
- Radley, A., & Billig, M. (1996). Accounts of health and illness: Dilemmas and representations. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 18(2), 220–240.
- Radley, A., & Taylor, D. (2003a). Images of recovery: A photo-elicitation study on the hospital ward. *Qualitative Health Research*, 13(1), 77–99. doi:10.1177/1049732302239412.
- Radley, A., & Taylor, D. (2003b). Remembering one’s stay in hospital: A study in photography, recovery and forgetting. *Health*, 7(2), 129–159. doi:10.1177/1363459303007002872.
- Radley, A., Hodgetts, D., & Cullen, A. (2005). Visualizing homelessness: A study in photography and estrangement. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 15(4), 273–295.
- Radley, A., Hodgetts, D., & Cullen, A. (2006). Fear, romance and transience in the lives of homeless women. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 7(3), 437–461.
- Riessman, C. K. (2003). Performing identities in illness narrative: Masculinity and multiple sclerosis. *Qualitative Research*, 3(1), 5–33.
- Sarbin, T. R. (Ed.). (1986). *Narrative psychology: The storied nature of human conduct*. New York: Praeger.
- Seaton, E. E. (2008). Common knowledge: Reflections on narratives in community. *Qualitative Research*, 8(3), 293–305. doi:10.1177/1468794106094078.
- Senehi, J. (2002). Constructive storytelling: A peace process. *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 9(2), 41–63.

- Skultans, V. (2000). Narrative illness and the body. *Anthropology & Medicine*, 7(1), 5–13.
- Slocum-Bradley, N. R. (2008). Discursive production of conflict in Rwanda. In F. M. Moghaddam, R. Harré, & N. Lee (Eds.), *Global conflict resolution through positioning analysis* (pp. 207–226). New York: Springer.
- Smith, D. E. (1987). *The everyday world as problematic: A feminist sociology*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
- Somers, M. R. (1994). The narrative constitution of identity: A relational and network approach. *Theory and Society*, 23(5), 605–649.
- Stephens, C. (2010). Privilege and status in an unequal society: Shifting the focus of health promotion research to include the maintenance of advantage. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 15(7), 993–1000. doi:10.1177/1359105310371554.
- Stevens, G., Duncan, N., & Sonn, C. C. (2010). The apartheid archive: Memory, voice and narrative as liberatory praxis. *Psychology in Society*, 40, 8–28.
- Tanggaard, L. (2009). The research interview as a dialogical context for the production of social life and personal narratives. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 15(9), 1498–1515.
- Uehara, E. S. (2007). “Disturbing phenomenology” in the pain and engagement narratives of Cambodian American survivors of the killing field. *Culture, Medicine And Psychiatry*, 31(3), 329–358.
- Uehara, E. S., Farris, M., Morelli, P. T., & Ishisaka, A. (2001). ‘Eloquent chaos’ in the oral discourse of killing fields survivors: An exploration of atrocity and narrativization. *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, 25(1), 29–61.
- van Enk, A. A. J. (2009). The shaping effects of the conversational interview. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 15(7), 1265–1286.
- Wengraf, T. (2001). *Qualitative research interviewing: Biographic narrative and semi-structured methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Wilén, N. (2014). Security sector reform, gender and local narratives in Burundi. *Conflict, Security & Development*, 14(3), 331–354.
- Williams, S. J. (2003). Beyond meaning, discourse and the empirical world: Critical realist reflections on health. *Social Theory and Health*, 1(1), 42–71.