

**Book Review Essay: Pitfalls in Storytelling Advice and Praxis by David M. Boje**  
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*The Springboard: How Storytelling Ignites Action in Knowledge-Era Organizations* by Stephen Denning. Boston/Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2001.

*Making Stories: A Practical Guide for Organizational Leaders and Human Resource Specialists* by Terrence L. Gargiulo. London/Westport, CN: Quorum Books, 2002.

*Myth-Makers and Story-Tellers* by Michael Kaye. Sydney, NSW, Australia: Business & Professional Publishing Pty Ltd, 1996.

*Tales for Change: Using Storytelling to Develop People and Organizations*, by Margaret Parkin. London/Sterling, VA: Kogan Page Limited, 2004.

*The Story Factor: Inspiration, Influence, and Persuasion through the Art of Storytelling* by Annette Simmons (foreword by Doug Lipman). Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing, 2001.

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Storytelling is widely acknowledged as instrumental to organization change, training, strategy, and leadership. However, at present, storytelling practice seems to be going forward without meaningful contact with academic work on storytelling. The purpose of this essay is to try to bridge that gap. To do this, I will review briefly some of the major books on storytelling in organizations that have been written for practitioners, and then I will apply an academic lens to these books to identify potential pitfalls in storytelling advice.

Some readers may be unfamiliar with academic research on storytelling and narrative in organizations. Others may have noticed the research, but found it too inaccessible to bother with. Let me begin, therefore, by summarizing five key insights that have been gleaned from scholarly research on storytelling in organizations.

1. Research has shown that stories of organizational change that adopt a single logic, a single voice-- such as stories told exclusively from the perspective of a single leader or group—are quickly opposed by counter-stories. It is virtually “impossible to sustain monological accounts of social reality” (Bryant & Cox, 2004: 580, citing Oswick & Keenoy, 2001: 224). I studied this dynamic by doing 400 hours of transcription of 100 hours of spontaneous organization talk (Boje, 1991). [DAVID: PLEASE SPECIFY IN ONE OR TWO SENTENCES WHAT YOUR STUDY FOUND AND HOW IT RELATES TO THE POINT YOU ARE MAKING] My main finding was people rarely told full-blown stories with beginning, middle, and end; they assumed listeners would co-construct meaning, by filling in the blanks, and reading between the lines; story could therefore tell tersely coded highly fragmented stories

2. Storytelling research suggests that people engage in dynamic incremental process of refinement of pre-stories by incorporating new events, trotting out old stories of successes and failures, and co-constructing story plots in a manner that is strategic (Boje, 1991; Barry & Elmes, 1997). Gabriel (2000) interviewed 130 people and classified 404 stories by plot-type (romance, tragedy, comedy, & satire); Skoldberg (1994) found organization change tellers varied tales by the classic plot-types.

3. Research has consistently shown that story performances in organizations rarely exhibit complete, coherent plots with a beginning, middle, and an end. Stories get told tersely, in fragments (Boje, 1991: 106; Czarniawska, 2004; 38).

4. Storytelling is a dynamic, distributed process spread across many storytelling places. Organizational stories tend to be performed simultaneously on many stages. You can not be everywhere at once; people's choice of storytelling sites, and their order, determine the meaning experienced (Boje, 1995; Czarniawska, 1997). [DAVID: COULD YOU PLEASE PROVIDE A SENTENCE OR TWO THAT ELABORATES ON THESE CITATIONS? CAN YOU PROVIDE AN ILLUSTRATION OF HOW CHOICE OF STORYTELLING SITE MAY HAVE DETERMINED THE ORDER OF STORIES TOLD, AND HOW THEY DETERMINED THE MEANING EXPERIENCED?]

This is based on the *Tamara* play in which theatre-goers choose which sequence of rooms in a mansion to enter; it's their series of choices that allows each spectator to construct uniquely individualized stories of the play. The audience fragments, running from room to room, chasing actors and depending on the sequence of rooms experienced, constructs quite different storylines (Boje, 1995).

5. Official corporate stories tend to be contradicted by less flattering counter-stories told by internal and external stakeholders. Examples include Disney (Boje, 1995, 2000; Vann Maanen, 1991; Brannen, 2004), Nike and Reebok (Boje, 1999, 2001; Landrum, 2000), Enron (Boje & Rosile, 2003; Boje et al, 2004), and McDonald's (Boje & Rhodes, 2005a, b; Boje, Driver & Cai, 2005).

To sum up, research suggests that stories in organizations have "materiality." They are registered in annual reports, speeches, training programs, audits, hallway conversations, and the act of their telling is accomplished in a myriad languages, from gestures, to accounting, techno-speak, marketing, and executive speech acts. Storytelling from these verbal, written, gestural, and even some architecturally-aesthetic modes is part of *being* an organization. It is having historicity and the struggles over different memories and ways of forgetting. It is a struggle between those with power and those marginal to power. As academics, we are just beginning to understand some of its complex modes of *being*, and how organizational transformation through the use of stories actually works.

The essay turns now to the industry of storytelling practice, the potential pitfalls I found in the books, and to the gaps in academic scholarship that present for this audience some researchable ideas.

## **THE STORYTELLING INDUSTRY AND SIX TYPES OF STORYTELLING BOOKS**

Organization storytelling is a consulting industry that has come a long way since the 1980s and 1990s when Tom Peters recommended CEOs learn three minute stump speeches, to spur employees onto to greater acts of customer service, devotion, and quality (Peters & Waterman, 1982). Today, Amazon.com lists 1,103 storytelling books, of which about 50 apply to leadership or management (the rest are not-management related) [DAVID: WHAT WERE THE OTHER 1053?] These books tend to be of one of six types. I think the contrasts between the six types of books open up space for important academic research into story leadership, story training, story consulting, and storytelling organization systemics. Indeed, one only has to contrast the claims of the respective books to find contrary and testable propositions that need to be researched.

The first is the kind of book written by CEOs turned story writer. A good example is David M. Armstrong (1992), president and CEO of a 100-year-old maker of steam, air and water systems. Armstrong's approach is to systematically collect an arsenal of customer service stories, and to use the stories to train employees. Armstrong's (2002) latest book is entitled "Chief Storytelling Officer: More Tales from America's Foremost Corporate Storyteller." Although his book contains many ideas, there has been no serious research to assess their effectiveness.

The second type of storytelling book is written by consultants who pitch their advice at CEOs to help them bring about successful change. Most of the books I reviewed fit into this genre. They all say stories are the most important tool that leaders possess. Of the books of this type, one by Stephen Denning (*The Springboard*) has cornered much of the market. The coaching advice it offers to CEOs (more specifically, to their staff members) is to construct a "springboard" story, "a story that enables a leap in understanding by the audience so as to grasp how an organization or community or complex system may change" (xviii). The characteristics: (1) story from perspective of single protagonist in prototypical business predicament; (2) explicit story familiar to the audience; (3) stimulates their imagination; (4) must have a positive or happy ending (xix, 124, 126, &198). Springboard story model is quite up front about exploiting tacit knowledge, so for example, listeners will reinvent the knowledge in their own local contexts (Denning, 2002: x). The book contains six main stories he used with consulting to the World Bank, about Zambia, Yemen, something from fellow consultant John Kotter, Central Africa Republic, a prayer by Seth Weaver Kahan, and the Pakistan government. There are some inconsistencies in the advice. For example, one criteria Denning (p. xvi, footnote 5) chooses is ironic, given that he invokes Bakhtin (1973) *Problems with Dostoevsky's Poetics*, in particular the idea of polyphony. What is ironic is the list is monological, mono phonic, & happy ending features in Denning are ones that neither Bakhtin nor

Dostoevsky endorsed. Two more ironies: first, Springboard stories do not possess such fuzzy qualitative relationships; second, Descartes' Cartesian philosophy dualizes not only mind/body, but the ideal inner world of storyteller from the outer world of storytelling organization. Besides a strange reading of Bakhtin, the book gets its main inspiration from Descartes (see pp. 3, 109-113); i.e. resulting in the rather curious idea of plotting narratives into multi-dimensional non-linear spatiality equations (pp. 112-113). Yet, Denning ends with a testable research idea: "The fact that narratives are not mathematically precise, and in fact are full of fuzzy qualitative relationships, seems to be a key to their success in enabling us to cope with complexity" (p. 113).

A third category of books coaches CEOs (& HR specialists) on how to tell a better story. Terrence Gargiulo (*Making Stories*), for example, gives a popular guide to leaders and HR specialists on how to use stories to "empower a peaker," "create and environment," "bind and bond individuals" for active listening, negotiate differences, encode information, use stories as tools for thinking, and as "weapons" (p. 163-164). His story examples range from "Jack and the story of 'Shazam,'" various CEO stories (e.g. 'The Story of Lilly's on the Pond'), "The canary in a coal mine" and "Cold War propaganda." Stories are used to identify strategies to change corporate culture, allow employees to manage change, and for leaders to communicate more effectively. The book has many types of exercises to help leaders and HR trainers learn to construct and use stories. In one exercise, a deck of 52 cards, with a phrase on each card (e.g. "change in pressure," "acts of revolt," "soar like an eagle") and drawing a hand of five cards (face down) you get to make up a story for each one [DAVID: NOT CLEAR ON WHAT THIS EXERCISE CONSISTS OF. PLEASE CLARIFY. "Joanna Macy's Learning to See Each Other" is an exercise in meditation (about Great Peace) where you and a partner stare into each other's eyes, then discuss it afterwards. Whereas Denning coaches CEOs to craft only positive (happy ending) stories, Gargiulo cautions that stories can be weapons, acts of propaganda, and storytelling taken to an extreme is what con artists do (pp. 35-36). Gargiulo (pp. 99-100) stresses we learn from his book to become more aware of our stories, and to exercise power over them. He also urges us to assemble our story toolbox (a vast index of stories & triggers to use them contingently). This results in our use of "story mind: "synthesizing data and facts to render an interpretation" (p. 101). Story research could be conducted on the effectiveness of these various exercises in creating more effective leadership communication and bringing about change.

A fourth type of book is for the executive too busy to collect stories like Armstrong, develop Springboard stories, or do story exercises. If that is all too difficult, then Margaret Parkin's (*Tales for Change*) is the book for you. She provides 50 stories. The stated purpose of the book is "to add passion to a presentation on the future of an organization, as part of a change management team briefing session, as discussion prompts in training sessions or for individual coaching or private contemplation" (p. 9). I will give you examples of the various types of stories she describes, so you get an idea of their diversity. Each is abbreviated to a page or two. The types include fairytale writers, Aesop fables, Native American stories of tricksters, Greek mythology, hypnotherapists, humorists, Sufi and Buddhist tales, and an assortment of other writers (e.g. Machiavelli's, Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Charles Handy, and one from Gargiulo's book, reviewed above). There are also examples abstracted from CEO biographies (James Watt) and from stories

told by professional storytellers (Ben Haggarty), and even one someone told her one in a smoky hotel bar. The point of this extensive list is to give the reader an idea of the many types of stories being appropriated for the busy leader or HR trainer, who does not have the time for *Making Stories* or inventing a *Springboard Story*. After each of the 50 stories is a chart the reader can fill in, with five trigger/reflection questions. Parkin cites the Denning and the Gargiulo books. I have several concerns about Parkin's book. A major concern is that each of Parkin's stories is rewritten as a linear narrative story model, that begins with "once upon a time," proceeds to "then one day," adds "because of this" then comes "the climax" always followed by "the resolution" and "the moral" (p. 7). In most cases the original full-blown stories are quite a bit more complex. Of equal concern, the purpose of the book is "adding passion" by use of storytelling, makes organization change using story appear far too easy[DAVID: NOT SURE WHAT YOU MEAN BY THIS LAST SENTENCE; PLEASE CLARIFY]. It is possible that the linearly in her stylized and truncated versions of far more complex stories may lead organizational participants away from more nuanced and dynamic understandings.

The fifth type of book comes from a smaller niche of consultants, who frequent the Jonesborough (TN) storytelling conference. Of this genre, I selected one by Annette Simmons (*The Story Factor*) for review. Simmons does not write in the traditional manner of "how-to" books, give linear sequence models (e.g. Parkin), or help the CEO to develop story tools (e.g. Denning and Gargiulo). Yet, the book, despite being more academic and having more complexity, seems to sell well at Amazon. Her advice on "how to tell a good story" begins with a Jewish Teaching Story, and like Gargiulo stresses the importance of gestures and facial expressions. Her book is as much about listening as it is about story-crafting-and-telling. As a student of storytelling festivals, her focus is more on performance of the story (timing & pause); and doing that performance without props or notes. Unlike the one or two paragraph stories assembled by Parkin, or the sound bite stories of Gargiulo and Denning, Simmons prefers more epic stories (pp. 135-137). Unlike the first four types of books, she has researched the topic more completely, including work done by storytelling researchers (Gabriel, Martin et al, Morgan & Dennehy, Terkel, & Wilkins). Like the Gargiulo book, Simmons stresses the importance of people in organizations learning to disclose stories about themselves, but not just the stories with the happy endings (i.e. Denning). She helps people tell "who I am stories," and to the consultants and leaders, the "why I am here" stories including what is in it for them. Her classification is completed with the "vision," "teaching," "values-in-action," and the "I know what you are thinking" (i.e. shared when people around you seem to know what you are thinking or try to sabotage your efforts) stories. She also includes stories about "telling your superior [when] he is wrong." She includes stories of resistance to hierarchical power, and old epic stories of injustice (pp. 143-144).

Finally, there is a category of book that looks more at the total organizational system of storytelling than the previous types. Like Simmons, it is a story consultation and story praxis that is informed by theory, and does not limit stories to only the "happy ending" type as in Denning's work. Michael Kaye's (*Myth-makers & Story-Tellers*) work goes beyond the importance of story listening skills (i.e. Denning, & Gargiulo) to making a persuasive case for the *in situ* inquiry into the systemic features of the *Storytelling Organization*. Kaye takes a more balanced view than Denning, and a less linear approach

than Gargiulo and Parkin. Instead of a CEO stump speech or a Springboard story, or a tool box of indexed stories, Kaye's approach is, I think, both more practical and more dynamic. Kaye concludes that making up a good [Springboard] story, or importing an Ugly Ducking tale, does not change the on-going dynamics of any *Storytelling Organization*. The difference in effectiveness between Springboard, an import fairytale or fable, and a story from the organization's particular history is an empirically testable proposition. The hypothesis is that stories are contextual and the decontextualized stories (e.g. Parkin's top 50 list) are not transformational. They can raise consciousness, be a platform for discussion; all that is quite true. It also means that forming a story circle, and collecting what passes for "tacit knowledge" in the stories treated as in-place-metering-devices, cannot possibly work. Stories and myths are part of history which is quite voluminous; it is part of the on-going sensemaking and sense-forgetting of the organization, and it is part of the *being* of storytelling, which is in a state of constant proliferation and rehistorization. That rehistorization is just hard to capture in a dynamic relational database. The storytelling complexity of *in situ* performance is such, that all the nuances of the story cannot be stored in the currently limited memory capacity of organizations' computer information system (e.g. see Snowden's IBM work below); that too is testable. Kaye died some years back of cancer, but had a thriving *Storytelling Organization* consulting and training practice in Australia, which his wife now continues.

The practitioner books I have reviewed provide students of organization with researchable propositions if one compares one recipe to another. There are several propositions in the books I have reviewed that are contrary to storytelling research: (1) stories with positive ending are said to be more transformational than stories with negative ending; (2) practitioner books argue that simple storylines can be more useful for coping with organizational complexity than stories that are nonlinear or full of many voices; (3) practicing the telling of simple stories is said to improve leadership effectiveness; (4) Stories imported from more stylistic genres such as folklore or fables are said to be more transformative than contextual stories from organizational history; (5) more cohesive storylines with beginning, middle, and end are said to be more effective than more complex or more fragmented stories; (6) changes in elite storytelling is said to transform *in situ* storytelling organization dynamics; (7) tacit knowledge is said to be captured and retrievable in story databases.

Next, I look at potential pitfalls of the advice given in practitioner oriented storytelling books. By a pitfall I mean a storytelling practice that when followed has a possible downside for leadership or organizational effectiveness.

## **STORYTELLING PITFALLS**

The first pitfall is turning a blind eye to the scholarship on system complexity of storytelling. The consequence is that storytelling systems are viewed as easily changeable by simple recipes. Stories are treated as tools rather than studying the variety of simple

and more complex, coherent and terse stories in their performative context. Denning, for example, has only one tool in his tool box (*The Springboard*); Gargiulo gives exercises to build an index of story tools; and Parkin just hands you a box of 50 tools ready for any use at all. Denning dismisses scholarly storytelling research by saying there is none that matters; Gargiulo cites Denning (7 other story gurus); and Parkin merely catalogs the work of many types of story writers, citing no organization story scholarship at all. Obviously there is abundant story research since Simmons cites a good portion of it. Therefore, besides, turning a blind eye to more complex storytelling, there is also blindness to storytelling systems. Work by Simmons and Kaye is I think the exception; it does not buy into separating practice and scholarship, such as in the text of industry leaders of story praxis (i.e. Denning, Gargiulo, & Parkin). The assumption of these authors is that more complex treatments of story-in-context are just not marketable to the practicing management audience; I disagree, because the more complex approaches get closer to people's lived experience in organizations [MARKETABLE TO WHOM? AND WHY IS MARKETABILITY SUDDENLY AN IMPORTANT CRITERIA?].

A second potential pitfall is that storytelling interest can degenerate once the simple recipes espoused in practitioner books fail to yield the promised results. When storytelling books peddle simple solutions to complex problems they fail to deal with the concrete systematicness of storytelling in context. Instead of analyzing story themes and trends in context, quick fix story practices are being sold. The word "systematicness" as well as "systematicity" comes from Bakhtin (1990). It conveys the idea that complex systems are dynamic, that there is systematicity, such that the system is not full-realized in being, that its whole is unfinalized, and that the chaotic elements are in unmergedness (PLEASE TRY TO RESTATE THE PREVIOUS SENTENCE IN SIMPLER, MORE ACCESSIBLE TERMS).

What I call '*systematicity*' refers to a "yet-to-be accomplished systematic unity" (Bakhtin, 1990: 276). For example, "Even a philosophical system is closed and consummated only externally whereas internally it is open and infinite, for the unity of cognition is always a yet-to-be-achieved unity" (Bakhtin, 1990: 210). Keep in mind Bakhtin stressed this idea in his early (1920s) work, long before we began to distinguish between closed and open system thinking.

YOU CAN ADD THE FOLLOWING IN BODY OR FOOTNOTE TO ADD MORE CLAIRITY

In late 1930s Bakhtin (1973: 4) explored how Dostoyevsky's novels were marked by "the plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses and the genuine polyphony of full-valued voices," a *systematicity* that is "unfinalizedness [in] its open-endedness and indeterminacy" (p. 43) and gives rise to "the polyphonic manner of the story" (p.60).

Bakhtin (1973) foresaw what we now call 'open system' wanting to move beyond closed "systemitized monological philosophical finalizedness" (p. 26), and look instead at polyphonic "unfinalizability" (p. 38) of "unmerged voices and consciousnesses" (p. 4).

I believe it is counterproductive to just rip a story out of one systemic context, tidy it up, and put into some unsuspecting organization with its own complex systematicity. It is a pitfall because there is already a complex story practice there, and the stories have material being. The consulting and coaching practice risks becoming a vacuous methodology; it is one that can, without exaggeration, be called arbitrary, arrogant, and naïve. Where story is separated from the living performance *in situ* context, and rendered into abstract typology, its dimensions for methodological advice result in ignoring the storytelling that is in place here-and-now. Storytelling is tidied up, rendered artistically-valuable by classification (e.g. Parkin's the typology is: change, creativity, leaders & teams, stress, & emotional intelligence).

Third is the pitfall of tacit knowledge storage costs. Books by Denning, Gargiulo, and Parkin, in particular, promote storytelling as the repository of tacit knowledge. The presumption is that tacit knowledge is easily captured, primarily from stories, and that story information system engineers can appropriate tacit story knowledge into the management information storage systems for easy search and retrieval. The idea is that such stories can be captured and preserved in low cost datasets, and with the proper software, knowledge can be retrieved to use by the knowledge workers, and controlled by the knowledge managers, to produce what is called the "*Knowledge Organization*" or Denning's "*Learning Organization*" in the 'Knowledge' era.

Dave Snowden, for example, does storytelling workshops for the government that capitalize on tacit story knowledge extraction. Previously the European director of IBM's 'Institute of Knowledge Management,' Snowden is now director of a non-profit organization in IBM called 'Cynefin Centre.' Cynefin is a global network of so-called experts in storytelling, narrative and qualitative analytic approaches from anthropology, psychology, and theology, as well as experts from government agencies and industrial firms. In those workshops stories are viewed as tacit knowledge repositories, which can be data-banked, and using math yet-to-be-invented can be mined to look for patterns and archetypes. Snowden's (2002:8) model is not only managerialist, it is hierarchical and linear, "Expert communities resent any knowledge below the lower level as it involves reengaging in a level of conversation which they have passed some time ago – they will visit to teach, but not to collaborate." Stories are collected in what Snowden calls "story circles," which he describes as a knowledge mapping exercise, a quite low-cost way to gather the "'unofficial' elements of knowledge within an organization."<sup>1</sup> The story fragments are then to be entered into a computerized database. Software and hardware are used to retrieve story bits, at the right time, and get them to the knowledge workers and manager, who can apply them in ways that give a firm its competitive edge. This includes training agency and business leaders how to spin a story to appeal to values of audience segments. A pitfall that needs to be discussed is the relationship between privacy and story databases. Snowden (2002: 12) summarizes his story-control and complex system model:

The ability to convey high levels of complexity through story lies in the highly abstract nature of the symbol associations in the observer's mind when she/he hears the story. It triggers ideas, concepts, values and beliefs at an emotional and intellectual level simultaneously. A critical mass of such anecdotal material from a cohesive community can be used to identify and codify simple rules and values that underlie the reality of that organization's culture,"

An alternative perspective from story research is that storytelling has contextualized meaning (O'Conner, 2002).

There is another issue: Info is also entered into story databases from tapping email and cell phone conversation, and then coded into story archetypes. This issue here is one of narrative ethics; just because we can, should we? The idea is to use a variety of technologies of surveillance combined into massive database to build an "electronic dossier" on U.S. citizens and anyone who visits the U.S.<sup>1</sup> The technology is called "Lifelog" part of the "Defense Advanced Research Project Agency" (DARPA) that gathers every conceivable voice and text element of a person's life into a database, where narrative threads trace human relationships and experiences, and analysts weave these bits into storytelling using narrative persuasion techniques to communicate their analysis to policy makers. According to the Total Information Awareness Office (2002) developed a 150 page document on how to convert surveillance into story profiling.<sup>11</sup> The moral of this story is that there is already surveillance use to which story praxis work is being put; yet there is no apparent academic debate about the ethics. **[please try to summarize the concerns raised in the last several paragraphs—beginning with "Dave Snowden.."**  
**This section seems overlong and repetitive]**

To summarize, I am critical of the approach of book writers such as Denning, Gariulo, and particularly, Parkin because the advice does not square with storytelling research. At the same time, I think that the work presents the field with propositions that are testable. For example, that tacit knowledge is so easily storable, that a database can be revised to keep current with story revisions, and the proliferation of tacit knowledge. Another key proposition is that stories can be collected, stored, and retrieved in databases without the willing consent of story authors. A general research question is: What results from just ignoring the *in situ* context and systemics of the storytelling organization (which Kaye stresses) and the resistance stories (which Simmons stresses), while focusing on managerialist uses? Finally, a pitfall is ignoring the storytelling scholarship that can save executives and HR trainers from implementing advice that destroys the storytelling fabric and shifts the dynamics of their own storytelling organizations.

## WAYS TO PROCEED

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Rosenzweig (September 08, 2003). Defending the Pentagon's Total Information Awareness System. Fox News. Rosenzweig is a fellow at the Heritage Foundation  
<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,96694,00.html>

Gaps between scholarship and practice are holding back the development of story praxis. I will suggest ways to proceed. An alternative approach to Denning, Gargiulo, and Parkin is to treat storytelling as a socioeconomic act of performance, crossing organizational boundaries, interacting everywhere with context, and indeterminately consummating systematicness [not sure what the previous sentence is saying; please rephrase/clarify]. We can use the springboard and transplanted fairytale, spiritual stories, and stories from other organizations as ways to get people to reflect on their own story practices. But, the risk is that only stories that have beginnings, middles, and ends with embellishment, likegood fairytales, will get considered. The terser, boring use of accounting statements, even the famous Enron footnotes, will be ignored. Finally, the systematicity of storytelling, in all its interactive and dynamic complexity has been stressed in this essay. While story is compositional, its form is also interactive, intertextual, and interdeterminate with system and environment activity, and an organization's historical becoming. It is absurd to propose to invade and transform an aesthetic system of organizational storytelling by positing a formal construction to story, for their dead (archetype, e.g. Springboard, Story tool box, or Parkin's linear plot model) typification (unclear on what this last sentence is saying; can you please rephrase?); again, the good news, is that such propositions can be empirically studied.

The idea that personal tacit knowledge (taken most often to be stories of the workers & technicians) can be rendered into proprietary-explicit knowledge (used in computer retrieval systems of an organization) and can become publicly explicit knowledge (such as distributed in books and Internet), which people read to become publicly shared (common sense) knowledge (Boiset, 1998). The model is appropriated in story consulting work of Denning and practitioner-Snowden, in particular, in ways that do not hold up to empirical testing (so what if they are not empirically testable? Much of the research you have summarized doesn't offer empirical tests; it only describes forms and types of stories. Help us understand why it is an issue that they are not testable?).

As reviewed above in works by Kaye and Simmons, stories are not so easy to retrieve, the stories of workers are experientially conceived, and extracting that knowledge would make the workers obsolete (surely a worker could be useful even if her story has been stored somewhere on a computer. Please explain how the worker would become obsolete), and their craft (its knowledge appropriated) can be outsourced. There is opportunity in the books I reviewed for students of organization to offer advice grounded in research. There is opportunity for story researchers to work with the exemplars that Parkin has assembled, but go back in time to their full text & context, and then to learn to tell stories with happy as well as unhappy endings, situated in our time. Finally, it is possible to begin the scholarly work of looking at the dynamics of storytelling organization from a complex system standpoint. We can begin with ways Denning and Snowden imagine as managerialist (manager's perspective only), and in the forms of resistance that Kaye and Simmons focus upon resistance to official storytelling; in this way students of organization can explore the dynamic between the two dialogic forces: managerialist and resistance.

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<sup>i</sup> IBM story circles <http://www.actkm.com/actKM%20meeting%20presentations/Softlaw/3>

<sup>ii</sup> For documentation of Total Information Awareness Program Version 1.1 July 19, 2002 see <http://www.epic.org/privacy/profiling/tia/tiasystemdescription.pdf>