

Storying Organizational Change: A Story of a Storyteller

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Abstract

The thesis tells a story of change from the perspective of the change agent as storyteller. It explores the importance of change agents being credible and listened to by storytellers of change and the impact on change when change agents fail to deliver a story that is acceptable to the audience and enactors of change. The research adopts a storytelling approach to analysis and review and draws on the storytelling literature and the literature of change agents and change leaders. However, in exploring the literature on storytelling, the researcher takes issue with writers who tend to 'close-down' and constrain stories to frameworks that undermine the organic and evolutionary nature of stories in situ. Consequently, the exploration and analysis of the data draws from a variety of ideas, models and perspectives to enable an interpretation to emerge, and sense-making based upon grounded theory, moving to abductive analysis. This shying away from induction to abductive analysis arises from the researcher's reconsidered perspectives, developed over time and intellectual positions, aided by the methodological data analysis. These characteristics enabled enrichment of the research through the processes of revisiting data, defamiliarization of the data from its original focus, and alternative casing of the stories that emerged.

The empirical research was conducted 25 years ago and the presentation of the story demonstrates testament to the value and importance of secondary analysis of qualitative data. The data has already yielded a previous research analysis which was reviewed successfully and addressed the role and impact of senior management on change initiatives. Again, the revisiting of the researcher to empirical data collected during an era when organizations were 'hooked' on Total Quality Management, the focus of the original research, shows both the endurance of areas of organizational interest, in this case, organizational change, and the resilience of the data to enable fresh analysis and contemporary discussion and interpretation. As such, the thesis calls in to question the tendency for research institutions to propose to discard data after a relatively short period of time.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Rationale

This research examines the notion of change agent influence and control in an organizational change scenario. Much of Change Management theory belongs to the rational-adaptive perspective of understanding organizations and highlights how organizational change is led by the intentional actions of agents (Fernandez and Rainey 2006; Kickert 2010). Equally, much of the literature on the role of change agents has focused on their personal skills and competencies (Hartley et al., 1997; Hayes, 2010). Change agents are individuals or groups who help effect change and include roles and actions associated with leadership, facilitation and functional delegation (Balogun and Hope Hailey, 2008; Smith et al., 2005). According to Quatro et al., (2002) change agents secure change efforts through the commitment of their brains, hearts, courage and vision as they apply core roles of business partner, servant leader, change champion and future shaper. Such attributes and application appear little short of *heroic* in action as agents engage those they seek to influence and whose personal competencies they must develop to enable them capable of engagement. Whilst Sims (2002) advocates that everyone should become internal change agents in the process of change, reflecting the mantra of unitarism of all committed to the same goals, the main thrust of the literature on either internal or external change agents, tends to identify individuals or small groups of people purposely tasked with the aim of leading a change initiative.

As such, the internal change agent can be described as a strategic leader in the pursuit of successful organizational change. A useful way of considering the impact of change agents as strategic leaders is that expressed by Boal and Schultz (2007) who consider strategic leaders as those who use their personal capabilities to alter interaction patterns to create a new knowledge of organizational identity and vision through encouraging different dialogue and organizational narratives. In so doing, shared meanings are constructed and evolve that lead to a coalescence of interpretations of past stories, present experiences and future intentions, with strategic leaders providing the balance between the competing tensions of complete stability and chaotic disorder.

The linking of the change agent with the role of strategic leader slips comfortably into the assumptions that underpins so much of managerialist dialogue about leadership and strategy, but also opens-up the frustrations expressed by Boje (2008) in his argument that managerialist positivity is diametrically opposed to debate and different voices expressing a plurality of logics. This frustration is important to this thesis because it challenges the notion of polyphonic strategy stories, suggesting that polyphony is rare in organizations which are much more likely to experience monovocal narrative strategies. Monovocal strategies are constructed and dispersed by an expert or dominant coalition and reflect one logic and as Boje further asserts, “much of managerialist story research has focused on recirculating heroic stories of elite organization participants” (2008:242).

This reluctance of managerialist writings to address and acknowledge significant others opens-up the possibility to explore a ‘dead story’ Boje (2008) and re-view the role of a change agent as storyteller and the morphology of a strategic change that fizzled out, extinguished in the wake of a more seductive narrative. If strategic management (or leadership) is concerned with the “shaping of the destiny of an organization” (Jenkins and Williamson, 2015) the reasonable assumption is that destiny is defined and the pathway to achievement is determined and manageable through the correct following of that pathway. This is a monovocal story and if that is how organizations are led and managed, it is a rational extension to presume that strategic direction and strategic change are subject to reason and careful consideration with definition of beginning, middle and end of the strategic story. In the viewpoint of strategic decision-making and enactment, there is no scope for fuzzy parameters, messy realities and dwindling narratives from strategic leaders as this would question the essence of strategic leadership.

What this thesis presents is not a story about an organizational change, although a change story provides the context for interpretation, review and postulation. This thesis presents a story about change that has (limited) generalizability (though drawn from a specific) and is presented for interpretation as something worthwhile for consideration. The specific story will provide the vehicle for exploration, commentary and interpretation in the attempt to make a sense (amongst others) of how big stories might emerge, take centre-stage and then disappear, replaced by another big story. This dynamic tale, set within the context of corporate decision-making, whilst

seemingly lending itself to the possibility of deliberate sabotage and wilful power-playing, offers the opportunity for exploration of a more subtle, nuanced series of interactions in which the listeners to the stories and the supporters and actors of the stories take on the mantle of judge and jury as to which story will dominate and prevail. The rhetoric of strategic leadership and decision-making appear powerless as the polyphonic nature of organizational life rolls on and yet, at the heart of the dynamic is a change agent who still tells his story in line with strategic direction and change.

From a strategic choice perspective of change, the role of change leader is essential to successful change, reflecting the decisions of the principal decision-makers who determine the goals and fate of the organization. One of the key factors that impact the effectiveness and thereby success of the organization, is the quality of the strategic choices made by members of the dominant coalition and the role of the change agent is to promote both the end and means of achieving that end of successful decision implementation (Hayes, 2010). Burnes (2004) argues that once major change is on the managerial agenda, then the scope for choice and the development of political influence becomes pronounced as managers seek to intervene to direct action towards the preferred organizational interests. Pettigrew and Whip (1991) demonstrated that there are observable behavioural differences between the ways that strategic leaders manage change in higher performing organizations than those of less successful organizations. Whilst cause and effect is not necessarily a linear de facto assumption, the inference is that change leaders can impact on successful change which can only occur when those affected by the change are able to willingly commit to an agreed set of expectations aligned with the accomplishment of the organisation's new outcomes (Branson, 2008)

Whilst it is widely accepted that it is unlikely that change will be led by a single individual and will more likely involve a cast of supporting characters (Hutton, 1994, Maidique, 1980, Boddy and Buchanan, 1992) the importance of the single change champion or small band of influencers is widely accepted (Boddy and Buchanan, 1992). The notion of a network of supporters and 'movers and shakers' has considerable traction and the role of these players in the morphology of a change story is worthy of focus and attention. Change agency can be seen as a distributed phenomenon, as with leadership, a more systemic perspective, whereby 'leadership'

is conceived of as a collective social process emerging through the interactions of multiple actors (Uhl-Bien 2006). According to Spillane and Diamond (2007: 7) 'a distributed perspective on leadership involves two aspects – the leader-plus aspect and the practice aspect'. The 'leader-plus' aspect 'acknowledges and takes account of the work of all the individuals who have a hand in leadership and management practice' rather than just those in formally designated 'leadership' roles. The 'practice' aspect 'foregrounds the practice of leading and managing and frames it as a product of the interactions of leaders and followers, and aspects of their situation' (ibid). It is this linkage between the change agent as leader and the interactions with the followers and with all actors situated within the highly complex processes of organizational change that provides the focus for this research.

Using various aspects of storytelling analysis and discourse analysis, the research will explore how change, as a multi-authored process, is characterized by tensions and struggles over alternative meanings which are intertwined with the strategic speech act designed to effect the response of the audience (Buchanan and Dawson, 2007, Houston et al., 2011, Heracleous, 2006). The tensions caused by different actors competing to dominate the future direction of the organization and the consequence on story and storytelling of variations in versions of reality, allow the opportunity to explore the dynamics of story development, acceptance and change. Whilst the growing body of literature on narrative, strategy and strategic change attests the potential of narrative analysis (Brown and Thompson, 2013; Fenton and Langley, 2011) empirical work in the area remains limited (Balogun et al., 2014, Bjork, 2016). This research will attempt to add to that body of literature. It will also draw on studies on rhetorical analysis which have tended to focus on the strategic and political role played by rhetoric in meaning making especially in the areas of legitimation and persuasion to adopt particular strategic actions (Erkama and Vaara, 2010; Sillince and Brown, 2009).

The research itself commenced in 1993 and has provided the empirical basis for previous analysis conducted by the researcher (Hollings, 2013). In that instance the focus of attention was on senior management and the commitment of the senior management team to organizational change. As such the research organization is the same and the details about the organization are equally relevant to both theses and in that sense, reflect Boje's notion of 'dead' story. Contextually the

organizational details are of interest but these details are not significant to the research analysis being undertaken and are presented as previously written, there being nothing gained from changing them.

1.2 The Organization

“TRC is a major design and manufacturer of protection and control systems for electrical transmission and distribution networks. It is part of a bigger division of a dual-country owned major employer. The Division is supported throughout the world by more than 60 industrial and commercial units employing more than 14,000 and has a turnover in excess of 1,500M ECU.

The British unit of TRC is located in a small county town in the North Midlands It was originally established in 1968 to take account of the long established protection relay business of the parent company, a highly regarded and dominant organisation in global activity. The unit still enjoys a dominant position in many of the world’s markets, a position not shared by several other units in the Division which have seen their markets diminish.

In 1991 its name was changed to its current title to reflect the new European partner ownership, a significant and major change for the Company which had, until then, been one of the largest organisations under private single ownership. The unit’s European counterpart is based in France on a dual site and its history dates back over 50 years.

The main areas of activity of TRC cover:

Protection and Auxiliary Relays for power system plant, transmission and distribution networks and industrial and marine power systems. The range includes voltage, current, power, frequency, distance, differential, time delay, tripping and auto-reclose relays.

System Monitoring and Control, which is based in one of the French units and is a result of the specialist knowledge that the unit has amassed on power networks. The factory has designed and perfected a total package of equipment for the monitoring and control of such systems.

Instruments and Measuring Equipment, which is based at the U.K. unit and specialises in the manufacture of indicating instruments, electrical transducers and panel accessories, together with other specialist products, such as capacitor controllers and chart recorders.

TRC prides itself on its international reputation, and provides a number of client-centred services to ensure its reputation and market position remain dominant within the industry. The claims it makes in support of client responsiveness are:

Research and Development. The group continuously analyses the needs of its customers enabling it to design and perfect products best suited to the specifications of international markets. The product range embraces both conventional (analogue) and digital technology, although future research is to concentrate on the latter. Developments are also to encompass the concept of the integrated system as well as the traditional stand-alone products.

Applications Expertise. All units provide applications teams which are at the disposal of customers to match their requirements to the specific features of the product range. Using various state-of-the-art techniques, the applications teams can replicate all known faults to ensure the correct match of protection relays to system requirements.

Training. The Group is renowned throughout the world for the quality of its customer training courses which vary from annual sessions to several weeks of general theory and practical work on protection and control systems, to dedicated programmes on specific products.

Quality Assurance. The Group has always attempted to manufacture equipment which meets or exceeds the highest industry standards. In response to these standards becoming ever more stringent, the Group has implemented a total quality approach to ensure the excellence of its products.

After Sales Service. Since the reliability of power systems world-wide is becoming increasingly vital, a rapid and effective response to potential problems is essential. The Group's after-sales service teams are capable of meeting every known need including on-site commissioning, the supply of components and all stages of maintenance.

Commercial Establishment. A network of representatives, agents and manufacturing capability in more than 120 countries exists to ensure that the lines of communication between the Group and its customers are as short as possible.

In 1991, the British unit of TRC embarked on a programme of change which incorporated the philosophy of Total Quality Management.” (Hollings, 2013)

The context of the research is both in the present and in the past (the original research) but what ties both timeframes together is a resilience over the ever-questioning rhetoric that abounds over the successful achievement of organizational change. As exemplified by Senior and Swailes (2010) unless organizations co-exist with change they will drift out into the margins of survivability and so perish, it is clear that organisational change is critical for organizational continuity and adaptation. But, change in this context is not something that happens unprompted, organizations do not ‘co-exist with change’ that merely evolves without purpose. It is change that is purposeful and directional that is the focus of such extensive commentary and research and it is this change that is mediated through human interaction. The demand for change literature remains high as the notion of the ‘perfect’ change remains a grail of management and yet failure rates are recorded as high as 70% (Paton and McCalman, 2008; Balogun and Hope Hailey, 2004). If this is the case, then the ability of people to effect change is a critical dimension of the change process. The ‘Story telling’ approach will also critically question/interrogate the value of mainstream approaches to organizational change

On success and failure in organisations

It is important that the reader is aware of the ideological standpoint that determined the change objective and context of the original empirical research. This has also informed one standpoint for this research iteration. The introduction of TQM into the host organisation was a strategic objective identified by the senior management team. The decision to introduce TQM was intended to impact positively on organisational success which for TRC was a measure of profitability. The notion of organisational success is problematic; the literature tends to glibly refer to it as a strategic intention without identifying success factors. This is perhaps not surprising as success factors tend to be identified by each organisation’s strategic leaders and reflect their chosen corporate goals, their strategic capabilities and their ideological

preferences (Simon et al., 2011). Just as the notion of organisational success is problematic, it is equally so with the notion of organisational failure. As Argyris (1990) observes, there is a tendency for senior leaders to reinterpret failure, mitigating it in terms of less success. Failure is more often identified by observers external to the organisation or the confines of the senior leadership team.

The senior management team agreed in 1991 that following a change programme led by the TQ Manager, TQM would be practised by the employees. There was an intention and expectation that successful change could be claimed if the employees altered their behaviour to reflect the ideas, principles and practices informed by the chosen narrative of TQM. The narrative chosen was 'soft' TQM. The ideological standpoint is managerialism, in particular, strategic management and the assumed legitimacy of strategic decision-making to set the agenda and for employees to follow strategic lead. Against this standpoint, the claim that the change initiative failed is valid and reasonable. However, as the story/ies emerge, it becomes apparent that there is a far more complex set of intentions that come into play, complexities that go beyond the narratives of employee resistance identified in the organisational change literature. In this story of change, even senior managers who were part of the strategic decision to introduce TQM, appear intent on disrupting its adoption. As such, what is success and what is failure becomes obfuscated depending upon who is pursuing what intent and why they might be pursuing it.

Consequently, when discussing the success of the TQM change initiative, this research accepts the original strategic management intent and measures failure against that intent, whilst accepting that the passage of time and actions of significant others meant that the strategic intent became more remote and irrelevant. This research journeys the failing strategic change initiative but is open to and opens up the alternative intentions reflecting the preferences of other individuals and groups.

1.3 Theoretical Basis

The theory underpinning this work is drawn from a variety of perspectives. The main area is that of storytelling and its application to developing an interpretation of change within organisations but will also draw from rhetorical and hermeneutic

theories. In this case the organization provides a case-story in which the key characters interact to interpret a new organizational scenario. Narrative research has exposed different and contradictory layers of meaning to the case and in bringing them together through the medium of organizational storytelling (Rosile et al., 2013; Boje, 2008) has provided a more rounded commentary and understanding of organizational change programmes through challenging the world of narrative and sensemaking that we have previously taken for granted (Weick, 2012; Brown et al., 2008). The research reviews how the stories that emerged, evolved and were enacted had a significant impact on managerial decisions, organizational politics and organizational behaviour. What is of critical importance to understanding the impact of the failure to embed the change programme is an interpretation of how stories that were competing for acceptance became the dominant discourse and, despite the considerable strategic support for one story, another emerged and took 'centre-stage'.

To develop this thesis will require the construction of a *grand* story that will take the reader on a journey through which various themes and ideas, smaller stories, debates and discussions, analyses and possibilities, as well as the researcher's sense of pertinence and what might be all merge into, what should be, a compelling story worth being told and legitimized. That journey will follow a pathway-of-choice chosen by the researcher, it is but one pathway and, following Gabriel (2000:22) the story should have a performative-expressive quality with the researcher seeking to find a beginning, middle and end path. But, also following the work of Boje (2008) Collins and Rainwater (2005) Boje and Rosile, (2003) and Smith et al., (2010) this research will engage with antenarrative concepts to explore change and the activities of the strategic change leader, other change leaders and followers as the change meta-narrative emerged, evolved and disappeared.

What will become apparent is that successful change requires a dynamic of complementary stories if new ways are to be adopted and failure to tell/retell and enact the accepted discourse will result in lack of commitment/confidence to perform the desired change. Rousseau and Tijoriwala (1999) basing ideas on the work of Baron and Kenny (1986) present this generation of common ground as being the result of a 'shareability constraint' which acts to enable direct perceptions to be elaborated into shared cognitive structures in the process of co-ordination.

It is suggested therefore, within the change process and from a coordinating or managerial perspective, the role and credibility of the storyteller of change becomes a key feature in the adoption of change, as those who are introduced to the changes are subject to and active in the process of interpretation and acceptance. The role of storyteller might be presented as strategic leader in this type of change initiative, and Boal and Shultz (2007) suggest that strategic leader as storyteller, facilitates the coalescence of past, present experience and future intentions into a meaningful shared construct of how the organisational agents can then progress. However, to focus on the storyteller as strategic leader limits the process of change to something that needs deliberate intervention and orchestration, whereas change in reality needs to engage with the question that is not so much 'what's the story?' but which of many stories is this one? (Weick, 2001; Weick et al., 2005).

It is important for the reader of this research to appreciate the role of the researcher in relation to the TQ Manager's commitment to his preferred interpretation of TQM from a 'soft' perspective, especially the conversations he enjoyed outside of the 'formal' interview research process. As someone who saw himself as a 'people person' his commitment to the ideas supporting 'soft' TQM were well established. He enjoyed discussing TQM in general and especially the different perspectives that led to different techniques and tools being emphasised. These conversations were, on reflection, important to helping reinforce his convictions and predilections. The more enthusiastically he explored TQM, the more convinced he was that he was right and the Production Managers (principally) were wrong. The dichotomy is important to this research as his perception, and resulting position, was so entrenched that it would be reasonable to suggest that he believed that he was in a 'battle of wills'. Inevitably, there was an expectation of winner and loser.

In addition, what is also of importance, is the role of the researcher as storyteller and what will emerge is a multi-layered story or even, a series of stories that challenge the storyteller to produce an interpretation that is acceptable to the reader. Giving attention to the audience that the researcher is trying to communicate with will influence mode and style of communication, relevance to, and impact on the audience. The choice of the writer in this research is to emphasise a more creative presentation, rather than a systematic process of establishing the scientific credentials of the research. As such, it attempts to accentuate memorability through

allowing the story/ies to challenge, unsettle, reverberate and resonate the reader's pre-existing expectations and determinations (Finlay, 2009).

There is also a reasonable question that a reader might ask, that of 'Why?, why is the researcher still interested in what took place over twenty years ago, believing that it has relevance and interest to others?' The researcher has been situated in the contextual educational parameters of Business and Management, specialising in behavioural aspects of management and leadership and organisational change. However, during the early 1990s the researcher began to explore the opportunities offered by the emerging critical management thinking writers. The researcher had already started to challenge the dominant managerialist ideology surrounding the utopian benefits of team working, the feted ideals of unitarism, the unquestioned rights of strategic leaders to lead, and the belief that culture was something that could be managed and manipulated. The re-storying of these aspects of management and leadership to ensure more (seemingly) insidious types of legitimate management control techniques, fascinated the researcher and led to the original interest in 'TQM: What's in it for the workers?'

However, operating in a Business School where the dominant groups informing curriculum design were those leading and presenting the strategic management liturgy and operations management ideas, alternative interpretations of corporate organisations were tolerated as something that were quirky and not mainstream. Also, the researcher, whilst having studied Industrial Relations at Warwick University in the late 1970s under the professorship of Hugh Clegg, was drawn to the frustrations recognised by critical structuralists. However, by 1986, was a member of the Institute of Personnel and Development, teaching the curriculum identified by that professional body. Consequently, within the constraints of Business and Management, the researcher has developed a good understanding of a strategic management perspective of organisations, but holds a deep sensitivity and sympathy with the belief that to accept the neutrality of management as unproblematic is problematic itself. Consequently, researcher subjectivity is inevitably implicated in the research process undertaken and it is argued that it is the inter-subjectivity of the connections between the researched and the researcher that embraces phenomenology.

Furthermore, because the research is now very much the researcher's story of the TQ Manager as storyteller, it is the awareness of the pre-existing beliefs and bringing of a critical self-awareness of her own subjectivity, assumptions, vested interests and predilections and a consciousness of how these impact upon the research findings that will enable movement beyond the partiality of previous understandings. The acceptance of those pre-existing biases and suppositions enables examination of those beliefs within the context and situation of new evidence as well as openness to other interpretations (Hallings, 2006).

Over the total period of the research the researcher has returned many times to the story of the failed corporate intention of introducing TQM into TRC. At the end of the empirical process, the researcher was not in a good emotional position to engage with the data. There was anger that the original research question could not be addressed, anger at the HR Director for sabotaging the change programme and, anger at the treatment of TQ Manager which left him disillusioned and forced into early retirement. There were also other institutional and personal issues that meant that necessary attention to the research could not be undertaken. This is not presented as retrospective 'navel gazing', more a justification of why the research was 'parked'. It was never the intention to simply 'ditch the data', but there was no timescale set aside for resurrecting the research opportunity.

Following extensive involvement in presenting leadership and change modules to both postgraduate and undergraduate students, during which the researcher was involved in many interesting discussions and debates, there was a consistent characteristic of the organisational change literature that began to jar, that of the need for senior management commitment. The behaviour of the senior managers in TRC provided an opportunity to challenge this 'statement of fact' and the data was resurrected to explore the notion of senior management as a team and the presumed need for senior management commitment to change.

Whilst that research provided an opportunity to explore dysfunctional behaviours of the senior managers at TRC in relation to a change programme, it also provided an opportunity to explore an emerging interest in organisational change as a story and storytelling in organisations. In one sense there was an instrumentality about the research into the role of senior managers in organisational change, the researcher

was working in a 'comfort zone', and whilst the findings were interesting and useful, they were not surprising to the researcher. However, because the data was being revisited, whilst previously, the TQ Manager had been judged by the researcher as valiant and wronged, another interpretation was starting to develop. The literature on organisational storytelling triggered a rethink about the characters involved in the failed change programme, especially the role of the TQ Manager as change agent and storyteller, story types and storytelling in the process of organisational change. This research could not have been undertaken when the original research data was generated because the researcher had no reasonable awareness of storytelling in organisations, just as the original research question would have little purpose in 2020.

In consideration of the above, there is the story of the original empirical research which encompasses stories told to the researcher by those involved in the original research, some of which are based on the experience of being a participant in the change programme and some of which are interpretations of the management story of the change initiative. There is also the story of the researcher and the development of how the development of the researcher, in terms of knowledge and interest, sparked different reflective angles on the data. This research is an attempt to draw these different stories together in a way that presents a different sense-making of the events that took place and another dimension of what took place in particular, the role and significance of the change agent as storyteller. The researcher is the primary storyteller, but the story being developed is about the TQ Manager, as storyteller, trying to gain acceptance of his story of 'soft' TQM and his failure to gain audience support.

The data being analysed is, in research terms, 'old' with the empirical data being generated in the 1990s. However, the research material is relevant to contemporary organizations and Corti et al., describe a 'new culture of the secondary use of qualitative data' (2004:341) and suggest that secondary analysis of archived materials provides a rich source of materials that can be re-analysed, reworked and compared with contemporary data and settings (Corti et al., 2005). Andrews attests the advantage of re-visiting data as providing 'an exploration of that moment from the perspective of the present, with all of the knowledge and experience that one has accumulated in the intervening time' (2008:89). Heaton (1998, 2004) supports the

relevance of secondary analysis identifying the increasing interest in using secondary-analysis as a 'new and emerging methodology' (2004:35) a position recognised by Johnston (2017) who asserts that, providing systematic procedures are followed, secondary data analysis is a viable research method. This research adopts a new perspective/conceptual focus and provides a retrospective analysis on the data set from a different perspective.

1.4 Methods of Investigation

Deep concerns over the recycling of old data have been raised, especially on the grounds of temporal validity and re-interpretation of others' data, (eg. Hammersley, 1997; Mauther et al., 1998) but the arguments for its use are compelling. In this case, there is no 'other' as the data being re-interpreted was based on research by the researcher. Whilst the time period is long between the gathering of the data and this interpretation, Andrews (2008) proposes that different interpretations exist on a continuum, not as discrete, bounded categories. Revisiting data allows an interpretation of the research moment from the perspective of the present which is, inevitably, different (Maclean et al., 2015). The passage of time allows the development of another layer of understanding. Brockmeier (2006, cited in Andrews 2008)) argues that there is no *a priori moment* from which the interpreter can gain a truer and more authentic insight and that there is never a single, unequivocal meaning to a particular moment Reissman (2004).

In this reconsideration and alternative review, the researcher is not alone in identifying a different and equally sustaining interpretation. The famous Hawthorne Studies conducted at the Western Electric Company in Chicago in 1924 were revisited and reinterpreted by Elton Mayo, led to the emergence of the Human Relations School of Management that necessitates an understanding of how the social norms of work groups have a stronger influence on individual identity and behaviour than work-based rules and procedures. Whilst Linstead et al., (2009) highlight the partiality of the research conducted by Mayo, the ideas of Human Relations have stood the vagaries of organisational studies and maintain a high profile in management thinking. In particular, for the advocates of human relations thinking, worker resistance can be overcome by managers skilled in interpersonal and leadership competencies. Furthermore, and especially pertinent to soft TQM,

supported by the complementary application of social science, managers could harness the complexity of employees in the social setting of the workplace to capture their support for shared values and 'good' social experiences (Knights and Willmott, 2007). The value and importance of revisiting previous research is also exemplified by the impact of 'The Affluent Worker' studies which, whilst conducted in the early 1960s, gained widespread support and critical review in 1968 with the publication of *The Affluent Worker: Industrial Attitudes and Behaviour* (Goldthorpe et al., 1968) and were originally under-estimated as the findings disputed the powerful message of the Human Relations ideals (Bratton, 2015).

Heaton (2004) suggests that there is an interesting question regarding where primary analysis stops and secondary analysis starts as qualitative analysis is an iterative process and grounded theory especially requires the reformulation and refinement of questions over time. This potential problem is echoed by Hammersley (2010) who identifies the debate regarding fit of data to the research question and context understanding, but posits that these are by no means limited to secondary analysis and that these problems are significantly less severe once it is recognised that all data are constituted and re-constituted within the research process. As the only researcher involved in the research process, there needs to be clarity of whether the research is part of the original enquiry or sufficiently distinct to qualify as secondary analysis. In this case, the research focus is different. The previous research analysis focused on top management and its role in a failed change programme. Whilst the context and the role of the top managers are pertinent to the proposed research, the activities of the top managers are not the primary focus and add to the richness of the context in which the change agent was operating.

The case-story and the interview narratives will be interrogated using a variety of research techniques including exploring dialogue and storytelling as the change agent, as storyteller, sought to construct shared meanings (Boal and Schultz, 2007) and hermeneutic phenomenology, the chosen methodology of the previous thesis. Hermeneutic phenomenology resides within the interpretivist paradigm but focuses on developing meaning that emerges from the interpretive interaction between historically produced textual data and the researcher as reader and author (Laverty, 2003; Ajjawi and Higgs, 2007). The methodology also reflects rhetorical theory and hermeneutic analysis through some exploration of enthymemes in the narratives on

change which highlights the unstated aspects of the talk/story. The enthymemes can help reveal meanings that are often implicit and powerful in the story and impact on how the story rhetoric is interpreted and acted upon. This methodology will be informed by the work of Knight and Sweeney (2007) Feldman and Skoldberg (2002) Feldman et al., 2004, Feldman and Almquist (2012). The main research approaches will require considerable analysis of the narratives to explore the missing statements that emerge because talk is incomplete (Knight and Sweeney, 2007). By exploring the messages embedded in the narratives it is hoped to reveal through their analysis, the implicit knowledge, reasoning and assumptions that informed the narratives told by the interviewees.

According to Reissner et al., (2011) Reissman (2008) and Tsoukas (2005) the discursive approach to interpreting and seeking to make sense of change provides the most recent development following the fascination with the linguistic turn in organization studies (Ybema, 2014; Fairclough, 2005; Grant et al., 2004; Holman and Thorpe, 2003; Tietze et al., 2003; Westwood and Linstead, 2001). This research will build on that development.

The change agent (as storyteller) and stories told, create the events surrounding organisational change that are interpreted, given meaning, and complexity (may be) understood (Gabriel, 2000). Jansson (2014) and Reissner et al., (2011) identify ambiguity surrounding discursive practices and metaphor, as tools to facilitate organizational change, which provide ample scope for interpretative flexibility. Consequently, the skills of the change agent are key features of change, influencing the interpretations and responses of those exposed to change initiatives. Just as the role of storyteller is presented as active, the role of listener and responder cannot be assumed to be passive, in a similar way to how leader and followers are often portrayed (Leroy et al., 2012; Van Vugt, et al., 2008; Collinson, 2006).

Organisational storytelling is a highly creative process and, in relation to organisational change, successful only if others give credence to, and enact the story. As such, a focus of this research is on change agents as leaders of change and their relationship with those they seek to influence - followers. Although change is achieved through people, the co-constructed roles of leaders and followers are poorly developed in the literature. (Bligh, 2011; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014; Sy, 2010; and

Kelley, 2008). This is especially apparent in the dominant managerialist literature that portrays followers as 'sheep' lacking freedom of will, choice and purpose, focusing on a leader-centric perspective (Bass and Bass, 2008). Uhl-Bien et al., (2014) and Matzdorf and Sen (2016) suggest the oversight is caused by a lack of understanding about leadership as a process that is co-created in social and relational interactions where follower behaviours are crucial components of the leadership process. In this research, the stories told by the change agent and the ability of the change agent to lead is explored through the reactions of listeners and their subsequent follower response in choosing how to act on the stories, thus requiring consideration of the change agent as leader from a follower focus (Bligh et al., 2016).

Whilst the strength of corporate storytelling has been recognized as a powerful communication strategy, (Barker and Gower, 2010) the use of storytelling during times of organisational change suffers a lack of documented research. Managers and employees can use stories to generate meaningful narrative as a valuable means of gaining support and engagement with a new direction and a separate message from routine cascaded management communications (Barker and Gower, 2010; Sinclair, 2005). Stories provide opportunities for high social presence and alignment of the story's messages with personal experience (Denning, 2005; Simmons, 2006). Many theorists agree that corporate storytelling provides a powerful technique for engendering commitment to company values and helping sustain a culture (Denning, 2005; Dowling, 2006; Boje, 1991 and 2008; Prusak 2001; Kaye, 1995). However, despite the support for storytelling as a mode to establishing shared meaning on the purpose and reason for change between management and employees, there is little evidence of storytelling as a communication strategy during organizational change (Boje, 1991; Denning 2006; Gill, 2011; Hansen, 2008; Kaye, 1996; McKonkie and Boss, 1994; Shamir, 1998, Witherspoon, 1997).

1.5 The research question and objectives

Storytelling as an internal communication generates stronger personal engagement and deeper understanding of management decisions (Gill, 2011) and as such,

corporate storytelling has a powerful role to play in building stronger commitment to change initiatives (Boje, 1991, Sinclair, 2005; Simmons, 2006, Dowling, 2006; Hansen, 2008). Organisational literature supports the notion of carefully planned narrations delivered through a story as having a significant positive impact on the change process, but there is a dearth of material on who tells the story. The literature tends to pass off this lack of detail by referring to 'the leader' but the question remains, who is the leader? This thesis argues the case for the change agent as leader and therefore the role of change agent as leader and storyteller becomes a significant relationship in organisational change and the story of change. This research aims to explore that assertion and bridge the gap in the literature. The primary research question that emerges asks:

Does the use of storytelling by change agents lead to acceptance of organizational change?

However, there is a subsequent question that underpins the story being told which is related to story types and this research also asks:

Does an understanding of different story types matter to the acceptance of organizational change?

To enable and establish a new story on change agents as storytellers the researcher will need to explore:

the literature on storytelling in organizations as applied to organizational change,
the literature on change agents to establish a clearer meaning of what is meant by change agent

and then to identify:

the linkages between storytelling and change agents as established in the literature.

This will then enable the establishment of the link between effective storytelling and leadership and to provide a clearer understanding of the role of followers in the leadership process as well as redressing the balance of leader-centric views of leadership and the importance of followers during change as they enact, or otherwise , the intentions of the story of change.

The empirical research will then enable exploration, through the medium of the case study, of the actions and activities of a change agent in leading change using

narrative, rhetorical and hermeneutic analyses within a storytelling methodology. The research data will provide an opportunity to add to and develop the literature on research methods on organizations and organizational change, and will also provide further support to the literature on the value of secondary analysis of research data in qualitative research.

1.6 The Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 2, following this introduction, will examine the role of storytelling in organizations and critically review how storytelling, as an approach to understanding organizational sensemaking has developed. Specifically, the focus will be on storytelling as an approach to understanding organizational change especially its crucial role in promoting change, stability, resistance and resilience. It will also develop a concurrent theme of the role storytelling plays in creating and sustaining organizational identity which is an essential aspect of capturing worker acceptance of, and engagement with, new ways of working. Chapter 3 will move the discussion onto a critical review of the role of change agents as conductors of organizational change. Within this discussion attention will be given to the way that change stories are constructed and shared, especially reflecting the tensions that emerge between scripted strategic stories and the stories that emerge, stick and evolve as they are passed on through the organization, recognizing that people tell more fragmented stories than the more refined 'corporate truth' (Boje, 2008). This tension created by the re-storying of the officially narrated identity by others with different logics and emotions interacting with the 'official' storyteller, leads to another area for review and discussion. Whilst focusing on change agents the review will also lend consideration to their role as strategic leaders of change. As such there will be a development of the literature on leadership but from a polemic of followership in which the researcher will assert the relationship between leaders and followers is crucial to the immersion of meaning within organizations, particularly during change programmes. These two chapters will help develop the linkage between storytelling and change agents, a fundamental tenet of this thesis and will also seek to redress the balance of the biased attention given to leadership within the dominant managerialist literature on organizational change.

Chapter 4 will establish the methodology to be used to explore the empirical data. There are two facets to this discussion. The first focuses on the original research and data collection which is over 20 years old and needs to be legitimized as valid for contemporary analysis and interpretation. The second facet addresses the refocus onto the current specific research question that emerged out of revisiting the original research and realizing that there were data that had relevance to contemporary scholars of organizational studies and change. The original case-study and the interview narratives will be interrogated using a variety of research methods based upon storytelling paradigms, some rhetorical theory, and hermeneutic analysis. The specific techniques will be described and justified but will reflect the view that storytelling scholarship and research tends to employ a wide variety of research methods.

The chapter that follows will provide the meta-story of the change but from a re-storied perspective with the key character and focus of attention being the change agent. The chapter is presented in several parts with the consideration of the relevant commentaries presented before inter-splicing these into the appropriate points in time in the story of change. This re-storied approach follows the example set by Collins and Rainwater (2005) in whom the researchers re-view the widely quoted corporate change of the Sears, Roebuck and Company case in an attempt to make space for perspectives and narratives normally hidden from narratives of change management. The approach considers a more contemporary approach to considering organizational change, a discursive approach and follows the growing interest with the linguistic turn in organization studies that emerged over the past twenty years (Reissner and Pagan, 2013; Reissman, 2008; Tsoukas, 2005; Tsoukas and Papoulias, 2005; Fairclough, 2005; Grant et al., 2004; Holman and Thorpe, 2003; Tietze et al., 2003; Westwood and Linstead, 2001). The meta-story also provides the context in which the interviews took place.

Following the re-storying of the case with the focus on the change agent, the 'new' story is subject to analysis and discussion. The analysis explores different lenses and the emergence of competing stories. These different stories enable the opportunity to explore the role of the Change Agent as story-teller from these different lens perspectives and provide a basis for a better understanding of how Change Agents might employ storytelling more effectively. The proposal is that the

key dynamics interacting the co-construction of storytelling in organisational practice are the credibility of the storyteller and the experiences, aspirations and expectations that the audience brings to the storytelling event that will filter and influence their perceptions (Reissner and Pagan, 2013). The chapter concludes with a reflection on how the case can be reconsidered from different perspectives using different poetic tropes, leading into Chapter 6 which addresses the different lenses that have been introduced and the implications for interpretation.

Chapter 6 presents the discussion of the findings leading to the researcher's preferred conclusions emerging from the process of abduction. The chapter focuses on the change agent as the key actor in this research. The story is reviewed focussing on the episodes that impacted upon the attempt to introduce TQM and follows the failing process of change. The chapter concludes with a proposal that change-agents as storytellers need to build credibility very early on and to effect a theatre of change in which the audience is immersed and encouraged to participate in improvisation to enable the story to evolve and develop. The role of the audience as followers is essential and their relationship with the change agent as leader demonstrates the importance of followers and followership in the leadership process. The chapter finishes with the implications and contributions of the research and potential avenues for further research.

Chapter 2: Organisational Change – A Storytelling Approach

2.1 Introduction

Given that the focus of this research is on storytelling in the study of organizations, the telling of stories to support organizational change and development, and that storytelling has evolved to employ a wide variety of research methods (Rosile et al., 2013) what follows is a review of the development and debates that underpin storytelling in organizational research design. This review is important to this research, which deliberately uses various facets of storytelling to explore the different levels of stories that present a multi-dimensional, complex and dynamic entity of the organization (which is subject to a here and now interpretation of what happened then). The expectation is that the richness of the study of the organization under review and the change programme, that is the focus of inquiry, can be potentially enhanced through multiple lenses.

As an example of how different lenses have had an impact upon the analysis of this case, it is perhaps worth sharing the different iterations of how the failure of the introduction of TQM into the research organization have been developed and rejected over time and why, with more contemporary and alternative approaches to organisational analysis, a more thorough and satisfying analysis has occurred. Hopefully, a brief introduction to the previous research will help the reader understand the references to that research and its place within this thesis.

2.2 The Story of the research

The original data collection and empirical activity was conducted in relation to a research question of *TQM – what's in it for the workers?* At the time, the research organization seemed to provide an excellent base on which to explore the impact of TQM on worker experience. Unfortunately, as the change initiative progressed with time but not in integration, the researcher became more perplexed by the behaviour of key managers in the change process and their impact upon the failure of the TQ Manager to secure the acceptance of TQM. More problematic was the observations that the researcher was making about the impact of dysfunctional behaviours upon the TQ Manager and after he had left the organization, the researcher experienced a

deep sense of loss and anger about what had happened. Not only was the change programme a failure, but the research integrity had been compromised as there was no way that the impact of TQM on worker experience could be explored. There was special anger felt towards the HR Director who 'should have known better'. At that time, the researcher was too emotionally involved with the experience and shocked by what had happened to the TQ Manager, an individual with whom the researcher had established a good rapport and had shared his hope about the impact of TQM on improving worker control and job satisfaction. The researcher knew that she was in an emotional place that was not sustainable for well constructed research analysis and it was several years before the 'finger-pointing' at the HR Director was replaced by a more mature review of the actions of the whole of the senior management team.

Consequently, the original precursory analysis reflected the managerial context in which the research was undertaken, which led to an analysis and conclusion that was essentially linear and deductive in its construction. The analysis was based on an interpretation of a power struggle between the senior managers, exemplified by the Director of HRM who 'won through' and secured the failure of the TQM programme that would have meant a diminution in his power base. The interpretation reflects the view of Linstead et al., (2009) who suggest that organisations are created by continual contestation and power struggles and that mismanagement by senior management is just one example amongst many of power in action.

Understanding the way that organisational discourses are constructed and how they emerge is paramount in understanding how power and politics establish relationships within organisations and their relational nature. What can be seen as essential are how all organisational members play their part in creating, reinforcing and sustaining such relations (Buchanan and Badham 2008). As such, following the original empirical research process, preliminary investigation of the interviews and reviewing the case concluded that the Director of HRM needed to sustain his reputation and power base. With the support of the Trade Union representatives and through manipulating the senior management team, he was able to secure his goal by diminishing the power base of the Director who had the responsibility for implementing the TQM programme and ensuring that shop floor support for the programme was undermined. In short, this was an act of sabotage that was for personal gain and whilst he would never have admitted to doing this, his behaviour

was instrumental in the failure of the TQM initiative. As Clegg and Hardy (2006) point out, people are reluctant to classify themselves as being motivated by power for fear of being typified as Machiavellian or ruthless. Nevertheless, the actions and personal strategy taken by the Director of HRM led resolutely to this conclusion. Significantly, he was not acting as a single malcontent and alone in the destruction of the change initiative.

Whilst this current interpretation still focuses on the HRM Director as a significant antagonist to the change process, he was not the sole cause of failure. Unfortunately, his behaviour was not the only anti-change strategy that was being played out. The previous research (Hollings, 2013) identified that the senior management could not respond as a team, something seen within the managerialist literature as being essential for the success of the introduction of TQM, and this lack of unity was hugely detrimental to the ability of the TQ Manager to secure successful change. Despite assertions of support for the programme and commitment of significant financial support, the research found that commitment to the introduction of TQM was superficial and unsustainable. From a strategic management perspective, this conclusion challenged the managerialist and corporatist literature that assumes unity and support from the senior management team for a corporate decision that has been made and a shared intent to help others in their sense-making (Paton and McCalman, 2008; Smith and Tushman, 2005).

However, over time, the discomfort to the researcher generated by this conclusion has been challenged by the review of change that treats it not as a series of linear events, but as a complex, iterative, temporal, multi-dimensional evolving process where unforeseen critical events during the change process can redirect the route of change. Critics of the management discourse of change, including Dawson (2003) Hughes (2010) Clegg and Walsh (2004) suggest that it lacks academic rigour by biasing the analysis towards managerialism and proposing management as being neutral and rational. The tendency has been to present the management of change as a mechanistic grand narrative (Grieves, 2010) which becomes self-reinforcing and non-contestable. Whilst TQM was seen as being associated with the planned change approach with which Organisational Development is associated, the tendency to apply Organisational Development (OD) techniques only partially led to TQM being mechanistic and prescriptive.

The linear interpretation was being challenged by studies undertaken by Dawson and Palmer (1995) but it was the organisational storytelling literature that motivated the desire to re-discover the case and provide an alternative explanation that was less controversial and damning of a single person and a more compelling and (probably) more realistic interpretation of the events that took place. The discursive perspective to organizational change is especially sensitive to both the need to stabilize an ever-changing experience and to capturing on-going change. Furthermore, the richness posed by narrative sense-making leads to the recognition that giving voice to otherwise hidden or ignored stories, leads to different sense-making and, that alternative interpretations could have as much credibility as those preferred by linear analysis and the dominant voice in management theory (Shaw, 2006).

This chapter, therefore, is concerned with organisational storytelling (Boje, 1991) and especially the significance of stories and narratives as they provide clues and pointers to knowledge generation, sensemaking, power relationships, communication networks as well as individual and group identities (Rhodes and Brown, 2005). Gabriel (2000:5) presents stories as very special phenomena and occurrences in which they 'interpret events, infusing them with meaning through distortions, omissions, embellishments, and other devices, without, however, obliterating the facts'. Storytelling is a research technique that recognises the pluralistic and diverse nature of organisations and the inevitable and inherent differences of understanding that members create when making sense of their workplace. Stories taken from a variety of sources enable the researcher to reconsider and challenge the hegemonic managerialist narrative as expressed by the dominant authority and expose those 'other interpretations' that may have been missed, silenced or ignored (Clegg and Baumeler, 2010; Rhodes, 1996; Gabriel, 2000; Vickers, 2008). Stories and storytelling are created through local situated communicative activities and those interactions are always evolving in such a way that, despite the intentions of a dominant group, the practices of local communities cannot be predicted or totally controlled. As suggested by Gabriel (2017) stories provide the thread through which culture, as a binding cloth, is woven.

This chapter will fall into three sections. The first will explore the literature on organisational storytelling and how it has emerged as an approach to understanding

organisations as polysemic, rather than monological, constructs, with many different, distinct and legitimate understandings of what the organisation is. From such a potential chaos of meanings, the second section will look at how organisational storytelling can re-focus attention on alternative voices in change programmes and, how re-viewing change as a discursive process with multiple, competing narratives, could provide a more relevant interpretation of change practice. As such, it will seek to present storytelling as a language of stability. The third section will provide a brief discussion of the important narratives that were informing the change programme implemented at the research organisation. This discussion is provided here to enable the reader to interpret the research against a knowledge platform that provides the opportunity for more focused consideration and sense-making, especially given the competing nature of the narratives in action (Dawson, 2003).

2.3 Approaches to Storytelling

A storytelling approach to understanding organisations is not without its critics, Eisenhardt (1991) and Sarbin (1986) described the approach as not being rigorous research and puerile and more akin to play, while Lieblich et al., (1998) suggest that the study of narrative is more art than research. However, the genre is now seen to be well established (Brown et al., 2009; Buchanan and Dawson, 2007; Brown and Humphreys, 2003; Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Boje, 2001; Czarniawska, 1997, 2000, 2004). The acceptance that organisational members make sense of their experience through storied lives is at the heart of what Watson (1994) describes as the language we use to describe the world and what Alvesson and Willmott (2002:627) propose accomplishes identity formulation, maintenance and transformation. Gabriel (2000) distinguishes between facts-as-information and stories that are facts-as-experience a feature of stories that is developed by Brown et al., (2009). They suggest that with the emphasis on stories and storytelling, there has been an increasing acceptance of the plurivocality of small narratives in which authority and authorised views are challenged by the voice of personal experience. Consequently in the review of the case-story and the accompanying interviews, rather than rejecting those comments that were not supportive of the dominant theme that was emerging, the different perspectives become significant and worthy of greater scrutiny. They raise the question why are they different and why do they

persist? These smaller narratives allow a reflection on how the dominant/preferred story fails to establish a hold.

Stutts and Barker (1999:213) postulate that organisational storytelling research has produced a rich body of knowledge unavailable through other methods of analysis. In answer to critics of the approach, Rhodes and Brown (2005':168) suggest 'the *fact* that any series of events can be narrated in a plurality of ways is less of a *problem* for research, it is an issue that has as its core how researchers should take responsibility for their research' (researcher's own italics). In the case-story, the variety of sources of information and their authorship was of key significance to the way in which the 'story' could be interpreted and analysed. The case itself is largely bounded by secondary source material that provides commentary and contextualisation. The main storyteller is the TQM Manager, but there are many documents that add to his account. The interviews are with different groups of people exposed to the introduction of TQM and their commentary and experiences remain unstructured and fluid. Whilst the general context was an agreed agenda, the experiences and interpretations of what it meant to each person and group was quite different and the stories are diverse and, in many ways, unbounded. However, whilst managing the research process of gathering the stories from the other participants was without research complications, the researcher was more than aware that she was becoming part of the story for the TQM Manager as the process was still on-going. In sharing his experiences and aspirations about TQM and its potential impact on organisational success with the researcher, it was increasingly problematic to remain impartial and remote. The relationship became most problematic as the failure of the project became more obvious, and the researcher became both aware of the decision to bring in a new leader for the change programme and of the demoralisation, resentment and frustration felt by the TQM Manager.

Perhaps at the heart of the debate on the role and credibility of storytelling as an approach to organisational analysis is the deliberation about where it sits within the growing field of narrative scholarship. For Brown et al., (2009:324) the storytelling research community is distinguished by its tolerance of epistemological, ontological, methodological and ideological difference as it embraces pluralism and heterogeneity. For them, stories and narrative and the manner in which they are told

and dispersed as storytelling and narrativisation, are interchangeable. Indeed, from a broad structuralist perspective, the difference between stories and narratives is minimised as the terms are made equivalent through the emphasis on narrative as a cognitive scheme (Polkinghorne, 1988, 2007; Czarniawska, 1997; Rosile et al., 2013). The richness of the methodology comes not from what they see as a sterile attempt to engage in definitional issues, but with how researchers engage in accounts of events that have been constructed from a complexity of occurrences, plots, sub-plots that in their formation reveal something of significance. The richness of a story is not necessarily in the accuracy of its telling, but in the meaning that it is given by those who listen and engage in its telling and enactment (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2004).

Boje (2008:1) challenges this willingness to treat narratives and stories interchangeably. He suggests that as modernity has dominated the approach to studying organisations narrative has become a *centripetal* force for control and order, whilst story counteracts as a *centrifugal* force for diversity and disorder. Narrative represents the centred force of self-organizing; and story represents a decentred, counter-force of self-organizing, almost anarchic response to ambiguity, alienation and multi-levelled interpretation of organisational life. Whilst anarchy in organizations is of interest to those of a critical management persuasion, there have been only a few that have sought to explore its impact upon organisational and management studies.

However, Burrell, (1992) writing on alternative organizations and Land (2007) Parker (2011) and Parker and Thomas (2011) writing on radical and very-often anarchistic practice that have taken place in specific historical contexts, show that there is good reason for anarchy to be treated seriously as legitimate response to corporate domination. But even then, it is not an 'either/or' but an interplay of different ways of sensemaking, both narrative and story in a realisation of the complexity of organisational life. Boje (2008:7) suggests that narrative is retrospective and often linear, seeking to provide a beginning, middle and end to create a coherent interpretation that will change little over time. Story takes place in the present, the 'now' and is prospective and draws on multiple pasts, nows and futures as participants co-construct an 'emergent assemblage sensemaking' from various different standpoints.

This sense of stories being more complex and less monological than narratives reflects the critique of narrative analysis presented by Bakhtin (1973) and Derrida, (1979, in Forrester, 1991) who each considered the multiple logics, voices and inclusivity of others present in stories and often denied in narratives. It is also suggested that narratives tend to pursue the dominant idea of BME-typology (beginning-middle-end) whereas the notion of the antenarrative as presented by Boje (2001) suggests that, prior to a story emerging there is a chaotic process of incoherent speculation that does not respond to the tidy linearity preferred by narrative analysts. It is not surprising therefore, that researching organizational life through stories that are plurivocal, in part incoherent and unformed, and which morph as they travel, creates a tension and frustration for those who value research as a logical and commensurable process.

Addressing the need for some means by which this complexity of organizational experiences, which are at constant interplay both in terms of how they are explored and made sense of, Boje has sought to establish a scholarly definition of story/narrative used in business and management into 5 classifications using two dimensions, whole-parts and retrospective and antecedent to establish categorization as outlined in Figure 2.1 below:

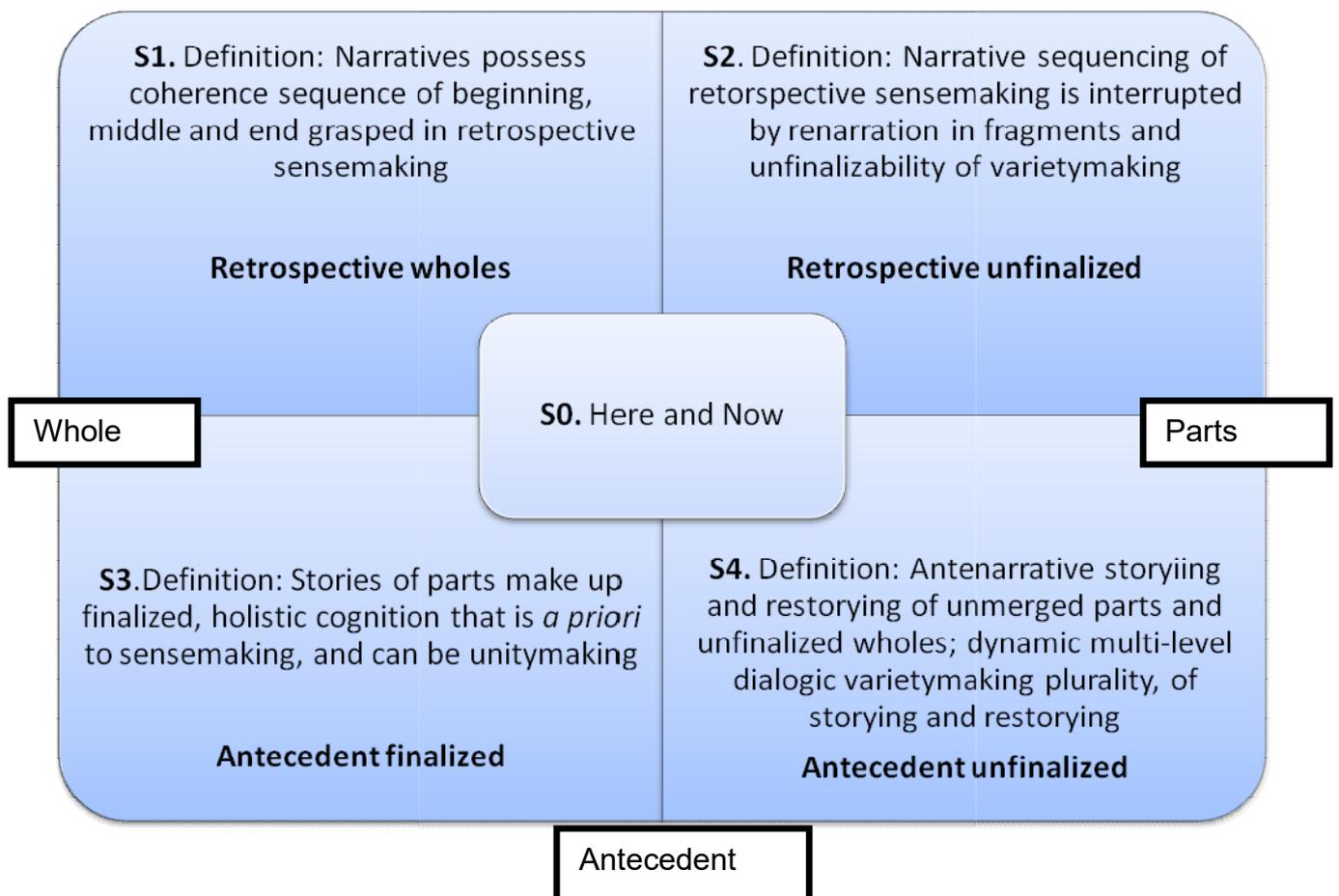


Figure 2.1 Adapted from Boje (2006) *Presentation to the 2nd International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry*

Retrospective Wholes (S1) are the dominant narrative forms in the field of business and management and reflect the work of Weick (1995) and retrospective sensemaking that aims to secure a coherent narrative with clearly identifiable causally ordered sequencing of events. Retrospective wholes are those of managerial control which seek to establish ‘this is the way that it is’.

Here and Now (S0) is based on the work of Gertrude Stein (1935) and her belief that there are many ways to tell what we tell and we do not always tell things in the same way. Consequently the present unfolds in a diversity of different telling and interpretations with listeners choosing to listen to whatever they choose.

Retrospective parts (S2) considers that story is not some whole text that is agreed upon, but these stories unfold in conversations and challenge, reinterpret and revise the stories and narratives that participants are exposed to and engage with.

Participants embellish what they hear with their own experiences and commentaries and fill in blanks and silences in a story with what they feel appropriate to satisfy the co-telling/co-listening experience. The experience is dynamic and active.

Boje argues that Antecedent Finalized stories (S3) represent the second most utilized story approach to understanding management and business. These stories represent Weick's enactment frames (Weick, 1995) which establish the essence of the organization, its ethos and its 'way-of-being'. Participants draw inference from independent and disconnected elements of experience through the story as conduit of meaning. From this perspective Boyce (1995) defines storytelling as 'a symbolic form by which groups and organizational members construct shared meaning and collectively centre on that meaning' (1995.107) and explicitly that 'Story and storytelling clearly express organizational culture' (Boyce 1996.21).

Finally, Antecedent Parts (S4) reflects the multiplicity of interacting discourses and the fragmented, non-linear, incoherent and un-plotted ways of collecting interpretations and constructing meaning. Boje reports the 'sideways look' adopted by Collins and Rainwater (2005) as they reinterpret the Sear's transformation, going beyond the accepted tale to be told and heard. Collins and Rainwater present storytelling not as being viewed as reflection of organizational reality, but as organic and vital constituents of organizing (2005.20). It is to this segment, exemplified by Collins and Rainwater, to which this research owes much of its methodological underpinning and the researcher's belief that storytelling is not something that can be easily 'boxed'. Furthermore, whilst Boje's framework provides opportunity for ex post facto analysis of an event/events; stories and storytelling as they co-constructively emerge defy 'managing' and it is this 'herding of cats' quandary which provides the challenge to the managerialist assumption of communication control and strategic intent.

Whilst Boje's attempt to frame his justification for the difference between narratives and stories creates a too restrictive scaffold for the researcher, he does provide a useful means of exploring and interpreting stories that form (or not) in organisations (Boje, 2008.6). He creates a useful typology of stories that represents narrative ways and story ways of sensemaking as a dynamic of 8 types. He classifies the types through the key relationships among retrospective, prospective, now, reflexivity and

transcendental ways of sensemaking. Types 1-3 are narrative – BME (beginning, middle end) Retrospective Narrative; Fragmented/terse Retrospective Narrative; and Antenarratives (Prospective). Types 4-8 are story – Tamara; Emotive-Ethical; Horsensense (now); Dialectics (Reflexivities); and Dialogisms (Transcendentals). In essence this case represents narrative and the interviews story. The research analysis will show how the two weave together and lead to what Boje refers to as a critical antenarratology method (a means by which a living story can be traced and deconstructed) which will examine the interplay between the managerial control narrative and the liberating forms of emergent story (Boje, 2008:242, Vickers and Fox, 2010; Vickers, 2008).

Thus Boje (2001:1) presents stories as 'self-deconstructing, flowing, emerging and networking, not at all static, which he sees as being distinct from narratives that are constructed, plotted, directed and managed to produce a monological tale of organisational happening. This 'tale' becomes a corporate (hi)story, a means of organisational sense-making (Weick, 1995) that denies the polyphonic nature of stories as constructed by workers in their attempts to explain their experiences. The experience and consequent story constructed by workers is most likely to be different and should not be ignored or silenced as being invalid.

However, Gabriel (2000) is less fixed in his need to distinguish narrative from story, defining stories as special, fragile and valuable webs of narratives, while Boje 2001 stresses the need to differentiate between them (Auvinen et al., 2013). The researcher has chosen to adopt the more fluid interpretation of Gabriel, Brown et al., Czarniawska, Rosile et al., and Polkinghorne, although accepting the value of aspects of the analytical framework of Boje. As such it is important to continue to explore how writers have attempted to provide a basis for organisational analysis especially in relation to organisational change, with the caveat that the rigorous deconstruction frameworks provided by Boje, create tensions for the researcher in relation to the fluidity and organic nature of stories as presented by Gabriel.

Storytelling as a method to explain organisational phenomena, especially change in organisations, has become increasingly attractive to writers critical of the attempts to present organisations as linear, non-chaotic entities (Brown et al., 2009; Driver, 2009; Gabriel, 2000, 1995; Brown 2006; Brown and Humphreys, 2003; Czarniawska,

1998, 1997, 2004; Dawson and Buchanan, 2005; Boje, 2008, 2001). In particular, stories have been found to reveal the messiness of change (O'Connor, 2000) in a way that traditional research methodologies cannot and especially how storytellers can both construct new interpretations and disrupt images of self and organisation.

As discussed above, story and storytelling form part of the research portfolio covering narrative research, which itself is considered to be both incoherent and diverse (Andrews et al., 2008). In the light of the work of Boje (2001) and Gabriel (2000) which stress both 'polyphony' and 'polysemy' as being key features of narrative and storytelling, the aim is not to construct and attempt to explain what really happened as though there is but one account, but to expose different interpretations that have an equal right to be heard and considered.

In pursuing the need to provide clarity and distinctiveness of different stories in organizations, Boje (2006, 2008) frames how story is used in management consulting, arguing for re-storying which 'is not rooted in managerialism or in monological conceptions of whole-system theory' (2008.187). The new story unfolds from the exploration of the varieties exposed from collective memory, the complexities of the dynamics and textures of real time and space interactivities between the narrative and story. Re-storying will be used in the approach to making sense of the failure to introduce TQM in TRC. Boje suggests that re-storying requires a dialogic process of deconstruction that is antecedent to sensemaking retrospection of experience (ibid). Again, he is drawn to compartmentalize his analysis into a framework which is presented in Figure 2:1 below:

D1: Dialogue. This approach most closely represents the reinforcement of managerialism when alternative and multiple points of view are driven out by actions to congregate narratives. In the parlance of Knowledge Management, tacit knowledge is mined (Boje, 2006) and potentially undermined as consensus of thought and thinking, actions and acting become the 'organizational goal'. D1 represent management control stories.

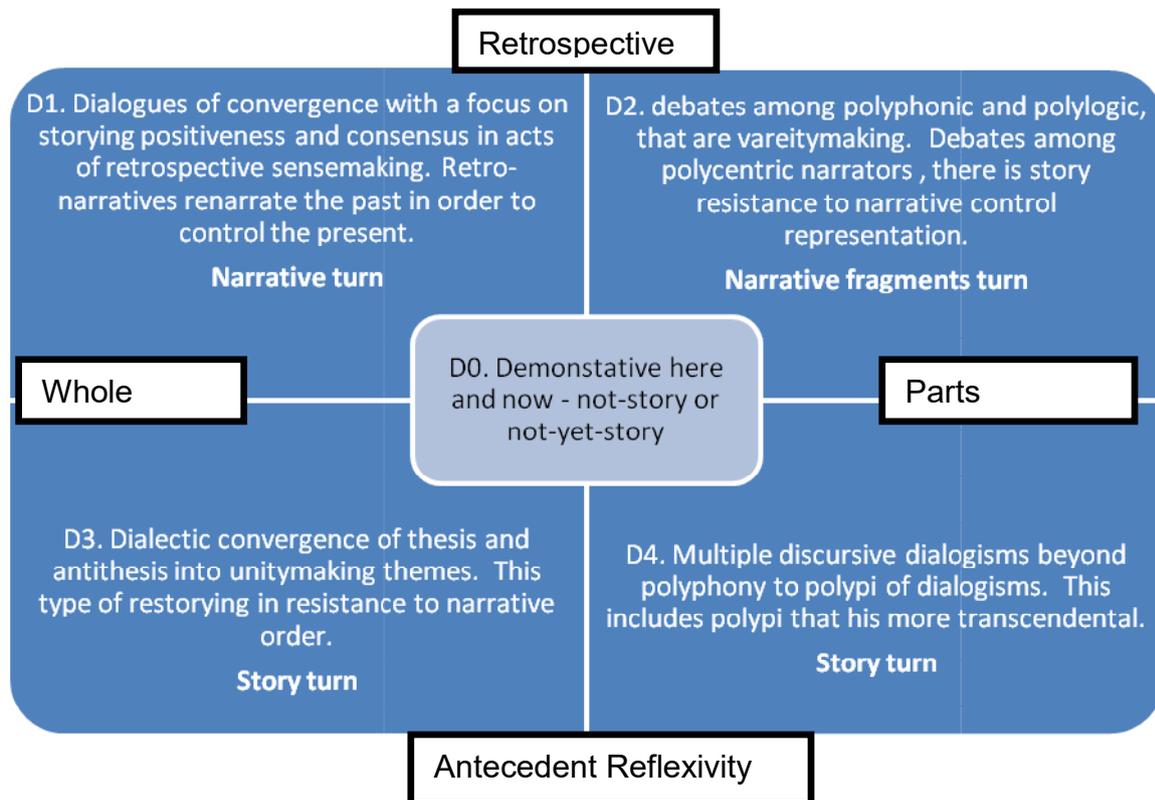


Figure 2.2 Types of Storying and Restorying of Answerability in OD Praxis. Adapted from Boje (2006, 2008)

D2: Debate. This is more about multi-lineal collective memory and takes account of the wider interests of powerful sub-groups. Debate reflects the rivalry between local groups of narrators and storytellers who interact to try to secure an interpretation of a collective story.

D3: Dialectic. In this form of consulting, Boje represents the 'I-Me' dialectic in which the 'I' and 'Me' are socially constructed in 'we' storytelling animals (Boje, 2008.193). Storying cannot be done independently of the social control of the generalized 'Me's'. Social control is the role-play/silent conversations that a body has with itself when asking, What would X do in this situation?

D4: Dialogic. Boje argues that there are not multi-discursive consulting approaches. In the dialogic/discursive approach to storytelling consulting, multiple discourses are intertextual to one another. This approach is directly participatory and reflects the plurality of multi-voiced viewpoints where none takes primary importance.

Whilst the framework provides a method for fitting different types of story into the different boxes, the tendency is to say 'so what?' how does this deconstruction of organisational life reflect the complexities and fluidity of storying in organisations? It is rather like the practice of deconstructing popular desserts, all that remains is a series of different tastes, textures and components but they do not in any way provide the original dessert, only essences of it. Whilst Boje's frameworks provide the opportunity for clinical retrospection and placing of 'what fits in where', the continuing refinement and need to provide a 'best-fit' approach to understanding stories has seemingly led Boje to mirror the popular determinism models of strategic management which seems paradoxical and not entirely helpful. The problem for the researcher is that all of these types of storying exist in the organisation and all fit within D4 to create polypi of dialogisms.

Considering the organisation as a forum for stories, both competing and reinforcing, dynamic and static, emerging and retreating, conscious and unconscious; stories allow the researcher to identify and challenge traditional assumptions about what organisations are and how they are managed and develop. In so doing they provide a more critical creation of conceptual awareness through reflective scepticism and identification of alternatives. Narrative research and storytelling in particular, provide the researcher with the opportunity to explore and expose the alternatives as valid and consequential, that organizational stories are not simply a celebration or reconsideration of reality but that they are creators of meaning and contributors to organisational realities (Collins and Rainwater, 2005). In support of this view of narratives and storytelling, it is useful to consider the paradoxical nature of narrative in drawing from the past to create meaningful experience of the present as well as informing where a story might go; whilst the opening up of the future also acts back on how the past has informed it and further scaffolds present experience. This lends strength to the iterative, non-linear flow of narrative sense-making. Stories, especially stories of change, have tended to be presented in a way that shows a logic of narrative that is necessarily temporal by connecting events over time (Shaw 2008). However, that logic is construed and moves towards an obvious ending. Stories in organisations are not so tidy.

Kearney (2002) suggests that storytelling and stories provide a creative, re-description of the organisational community in such a way that hitherto hidden

patterns of meaning can be explored and (de)constructed. Furthermore, it is proposed that the multiplicative, plurivocality and multi-dimensional nature of stories ensures that far from there being one story to be told and accepted de facto, each event and experience is susceptible to multiple interpretations, each providing the storytelling community with a valid construct of organisational life (Rhodes, 2001).

The community is also subject to continuous co-construction and deconstruction as narrative research inevitably follows a process of constant negotiation of meaning between the messenger(s) and the recipient(s) who each interpret the content of what they experience against a frame of reference that is completely idiosyncratic (Reissmann, 2008; Andrews et al., 2008). The focus on storytelling in organisations has been underpinned by the consideration that stories are more than mere reflections of reality within organisations, thereby reinforcing the view that stories take on a role that goes beyond myth. It is argued that it is they that actually give meaning to organisational experience and thereby construct the understanding of 'what is'. However, that reality/'what is' will be subject to both convergence and divergence of meaning as it represents only what each member of the community has constructed in terms of their own reality and identity.

2.4 Stories, Meaning and Storytelling

Whilst Boje is convinced of the power and significance of stories as creators of organisational reality, Gabriel (2000) notes some reservation about the robustness of stories. In echoing the view of Latour (1987) he suggests that because of their susceptibility to modification, translation and retranslation as they travel, they expose their fragility making generation of shared meaning difficult. However, he believes that stories and narratives are linked to issues of sense-making, knowledge, power and an understanding of self as people in organisations lead storied lives (Gabriel, 2000, 1995.) a position shared by Rhodes and Brown (2005) and Soderstrom et al., (2014).

Having suggested that Boje's frameworks may not provide the research support that this researcher is seeking, it is useful at this point to return to Boje (2001) and his proposal that stories and narrative are different and how time, space and location provide a need to explore sense-making. He suggests that within the concept of the *antenarrative* stories precede narrative. He describes how, from the fragmented

discussions, multiple meanings and interpretations generated by different members of the organisation a narrative emerges as the dominant voice. It is this development of the dominant tale that is a crucial feature in the successful integration of new ways of behaving in organisational life and is dependent upon there being enough assimilation of similar interpretations and understandings to generate shared meanings. Despite participants not being in the same space and time, there is enough shared perspective, rationale and context assimilation to generate a sense of a future general state. It is also that these antenarratives lead to transformation and change and support the generation of what Boje refers to as Tamara (1994,1995) a storytelling sensemaking that transcends the fact that people are not all together in one time or space and yet have a shared understanding of the organisation to enable it to function as a coherent whole. In the research case, Tamara is represented by the TQM programme which the management intended to introduce as a new way of thinking and behaving. As Boyce (1996) argues, stories provide cues to organisational cultures and the TQM programme was an attempt to bring about culture change. Tamara, in the research case provides a good opportunity to see a connection between the story and failure to implement change.

Whilst Gabriel (2000) does not share Boje's view that stories and narratives should be considered as separate he also introduced the concept of 'proper stories' which are special forms of narrative and have plots, characters and crucial incidents, but which in themselves may not lead to factual verification. 'Proper stories' emerge from plots, interpretations and re-interpretations that develop through the additions that storytellers use to gain audience commitment to their accounts and satisfaction of those accounts. But even with this degree of conceptualisation, Gabriel still feels it necessary to distinguish stories from 'opinions' that might have within them some factual or recognisable symbolic material but no structure; and from 'proto-story' that might have some semblance of a structured plot but not enough substance to sustain it; and from 'reports' that are factual, historic renderings of events. However, none of these offer the richness of the polyphonic 'proper story' reflecting the flowing dynamic and plurality of organisational life. Gabriel sees proper stories as being more than simply about description, they require emotional engagement with an audience, and they are about creating and sustaining meaning and about discrediting other views and, in this research, are reflected in the introduction of TQM

through the establishment of the preferred and acceptable management led programme of change.

A further distinction for consideration might suggest that 'reports' and 'histories' offer the researcher credibility through factual verification and, in so doing, provide some sense of 'containability' or 'bounded rationality' to their rendering; stories are organic and emergent. It is this lack of containability that has presented storytelling with the greatest barrier to gaining research respectability. Stories depend upon the skill of the storyteller to both inform and entertain the audience and on the willingness of the audience to accept the account the storyteller is giving. There is a delicate relationship between the storyteller and the audience members and both the credibility of the story and the storyteller are dependent upon the audience satisfaction of what is being presented.

It is in relation to the role of the audience that Collins and Rainwater (2005) suggest that Gabriel introduces a paradox in his explanations of audience activity. In highlighting those in the audience who seek clarification of the story through questioning and interruption, he suggests that they are changing the 'story' into 'history' and reducing the listener to passive participant in so far as the audience then merely accepts the storyteller's account. On the one hand he argues that the very richness of story is that it exposes the fluidity, flux and fragmented nature of the organisation and yet, in describing those who seek clarification and confidence in the story as 'pedants and bores', he is exempting the storyteller from those forces. In essence the role of the audience is not to engage in re-interpretation and active involvement but to lead to the containment of the view being presented. For Collins and Rainwater (2005:22) the audience should not be restricted in their interpretation but should be justified in reinterpreting the account to establish another legitimate denomination. It is this shortcoming in the work of Gabriel that is challenged by Collins and Rainwater and which provides the opportunity to review and restate this research case. The majority of the workforce, in not accepting the TQ Manager's (as storyteller) story (for whatever reason) caused the failure of the introduction of TQM. What is essential and important in this case is that despite this being a management supported initiative, with considerable resources being used to support the introduction of TQM, this was not enough to gain workforce acceptance. It is this

inability to gain the support and acceptance of the workforce to TQM that is the main focus of this re-consideration of the research.

Czarniawska (2004) and Rhodes and Brown (2005) argue that the nature of stories in having a plot that allows organisational members to make sense of chaotic and disorganised life at work and to move from one situation to another, means that sensemaking through story will always be temporal rather than static. Far from being passive in the relationship, the listener is using the story to help make sense of the organization by 'reducing the equivocality (complexity, ambiguity, unpredictability) of organizational life' (Brown and Kreps, 1993:48). In an earlier writing of Czarniawska (1997, 5-6) stories are presented as providing the main source of knowledge in the practice of organizing shared values and meanings. The presentation of stories, tit-bits and chat provide the weft and warp of sequenced events in which the listeners can, with the help of the storyteller, identify the plots that link together the complexities of the organizational community into unifying wholes that reveal what is important to that community (Brown et al., 2009, Gabriel, 2008; McCarthy, 2008; Brown et al., 2005; Brown and Duguid, 2000) and has symbolic significance (Gabriel, 2004; Fineman and Gabriel, 1994; Steuer and Wood, 2008). To develop the metaphor further, this review and reconsideration will look to establish why this rich tapestry could not be completed, certainly in the way that the designers (management) had intended.

Steuer and Wood (2008) citing the work of Spink (2004) suggest that the process of narrative production is achieved through dialogic conversation between teller and listener during which both parties draw on each others' and their own interpretative repertory; thereby making sense of their surroundings and its complexities that satisfy each parties need for order. Clearly the implication is that as members of the organization meet to discuss the context in which they operate and function, they are exposed to constant salvos of sensemaking. The stories that unfold and to which an attachment is made, constitute the continuous development of organizational meaning and organizational realities (Collins and Rainwater, 2005).

What is evident from all these writers is that the storyteller is instrumental in establishing a frame of reference that provides the back-cloth on which the listener then constructs his/her interpretation. Further support for the emerging scene that is

developed is given throughout the ensuing accounting, recounting and revisions of the story being told. What emerges as a fully-fledged rendering that has the commitment and support of the listener, must in itself have been dependent upon the credibility of the teller, for without that credibility, the listener would have 'switched-off'. It is this relationship between the storyteller and the audience which is critical to the change process and the attempt to manage change. Essentially, it is the storyteller who has to have the relationship credibility and as Dennehy (1999) observes, storytelling will depend on the skill and craftwork of the storyteller. This again will be a focal point of the review and re-consideration of the case and will inevitably lead to the need to consider change leaders who are skilled storytellers.

In the context of organizational change and the authorisation of a new and unknown state (which must be antenarrative) those that seek to bring about change must have credibility with those they seek to change. As Rhodes and Brown suggest (2005.167) authoring a story is always a creative act and the construction of a new state/position/direction is a process of creative thinking and futuristic design. The story that is presented is just one of several that could have been created and in its telling could be one of several interpretations. The opportunities for challenge and non-acceptance are great, so the reliance on a persuasive and credible teller is equally great. Consequently the review will focus on the TQM Manager as change leader and main storyteller to establish whether it was his inability to carry the story and gain audience acceptance that was the main reason for the implementation failure of the change initiative.

Furthermore, Rhodes and Brown (2005.171) also suggest that from a postmodern perspective, stories should be seen as 'being ontologically prior to sensemaking' as what people are making sense of are not events in themselves, but accounts of events. Whilst this might be a useful way of accessing a story, for Collins (2011 in a discussion with the researcher) their approach is too 'phased' and he would prefer the story to be within an overall parcel of understanding. The storyteller can therefore be considered as the person giving the account that is then interpreted by the listeners/observers who then, reflexively make sense of their context and give it meaning. The role of storytellers in a change programme cannot be underplayed, especially given that the account of the event is of something that has not yet happened, a promise of things to come and their skill in storytelling becomes a

significant feature in the establishment of meaning of organizational life. Buchanan and Dawson (2007) identify that change is multi-authored and that there are a myriad of competing stories with any change story being authored from many different perspectives that may be self-serving, politically motivated, ill or partially-informed, a position supported by Leitch and Davenport (2005). However, Ng and De Cock (2002) and Clausen and Olsen (2000) suggest that in the competition for audience acceptance, the storyteller/narrator who has the greatest credibility with the audience is the most likely to win approval and support for their story. It would seem therefore, that storytelling requires a considerable skill in crafting the tale to be told.

Gabriel (2000) also argues that storytelling is a narrative craft. What is more, stories can be used to alter one meaning and interpretation of a context to promote another view of reality. Dawson supports the linkage between story and skilled craftship suggesting that 'a well-constructed story is likely to be a good vehicle to promote a certain view, especially when it is combined with an effective storyteller' (2003.7). What is also important when considering the authenticity of story and the storyteller, is that the story is likely to have been distorted, embellished and 'tinkered-with' to entertain as well as inform the listener and many corporate change programmes have been accompanied by corporate events characterised by publicity hype and designed to energise the workforce. O'Neill (2002) suggests that whilst the organisational story may lack accuracy, it does not lack meaning to the recipients. Gabriel (2000, 1991) describes stories as 'facts-as-experience' and argues that their factual validity cannot be challenged and that whilst many organizational stories might be inaccurate when compared with official historical events, despite these inaccuracies stories may prove to be more useful and informative regarding the perceived reality of the organisation.

It is this respect of the validity of experience that has enabled storytelling as a research approach to give credibility to the small narratives that were the voices of the marginalised, underprivileged, powerless social groups and individuals. Rather than subjecting these previously silenced stories to the rigours of identifying underlying patterns of structure or triangulating stories with facts, it is suggested by Brown et al., (2009) that there is a willingness to accept the given text without prejudice and a need to subject it to a drive to find one authorised interpretation of an explanatory understanding. Storytelling, rhetoric and narrative in organisations are

based on an interpretivist approach to organisational research but they also align to a constructivist perspective (Flory and Iglesias, 2010). It is the complexity and diversity that characterises narrative research that persuades Reissman (2008) to suggest that there is no single way to conduct research in this area. Stories are a part of narrative research and their analysis is a valid feature of understanding organisations and how they change. The creation and telling of organizational stories is clearly a powerful medium through which organisational members make sense of their location and also their identity within it and as Brown and Duguid, (2000) and Feldman et al., (2004) suggest, a complete analysis of organizations requires due consideration of the stories that are integral to their development.

Yet stories operate in very different ways within organizations and across different levels and boundaries. Reissner and Pagan (2013) identify three different levels, macro-view stories that focus on storytelling in creating organizational realities, meso-view stories that focus on the role of business-related storytelling designed to foster sensemaking, and the micro-view stories that are personal and focus on the weaving and strengthening of the social fabric of the organization. Their research provides a criticality to the role and responsibilities of co-constructing stories and the reciprocal relationship between storyteller and audience. Certainly with stories of change, the acceptance of the story by the audience and then the choice to act accordingly is critical to integration, or otherwise, of the change process. The decision to act is also said to be linked to where, in time, the story is located (Sims et al., 2009; Izak et al., 2015). Future-orientated and past-orientated stories through which situations are understood can lead to avoidance and as change programmes are always future-oriented, the ability of the storyteller to instil a sense of ‘this’ story being about ‘me’ and is happening ‘now’ is important to securing engagement.

2.5 Story Types

Whilst various writers have described different types of story that occur in organisations, among them “comic”, “tragic” and “epic” (Gabriel, 1991) “fantasy” (Putnam et al., 1991) “dramatic”, “romantic” and “humorous” (Browning, 1992) and “ironic”, epic/heroic”, “tragic” and “romantic” (Beech, 2000), O’Neill (2002) has drawn these story types into a single story typology framework. His more *fluid* model of organisational story typologies uses the dimensions of ‘colour’ and ‘employee need

fulfilment' to distinguish four story types and incorporates 'time' into his framework by linking into story memorability and longevity. The concept of story colour relates to the emotional appeal that the story has. Stories with more colour can be assumed to be more enduring as employees demonstrate greater attachment to them. O'Neill defines colour as 'structural elements, including lyricism, picturesque description, and vivid detail; and plot content such as heroic, comedic and/or romantic elements' (2002,10). He asserts that high-colour stories will be the most enduring and therefore have the most influence on longer-term strategies.

Also associated with longevity is the notion of employee-need fulfilment. Stories can satisfy both the needs of the listener by providing ways to serve their needs for greater certainty, reducing anxiety or stress through providing more knowledge and information (Weick and Browning, 1991) and satisfy the needs of the storyteller to engage with others and impart the knowledge that is contained within the story. What is interesting here is that there is an important dynamic that exists between the teller and the listener. The teller will tell the tale and depending on how interesting and or valuable the story is to the listener, then the listener will make his/her choice to embrace the tale, pass it on or reject it. The teller can tell the story well or badly and as Dennehey (1999) Morgan and Dennehey (2004) and James and Minnis (2004) acknowledge, some storytellers are better than others. The significance of this is that stories are dependent upon both how well they are relayed and how much is of worth to the listener. Consequently, stories will be changed as they are passed on, told, retold, de-constructed, re-constructed, challenged and/or rejected. Furthermore, once the teller has discharged his/her story, then how it is re-told is no longer within his/her control. The capacity of the storyteller to influence their intended audience is increased if they are aware of the discursive nature of their practices and the type of story they are telling. Consequently, and of particular importance to this research, the relationship between storyteller and listener is absolutely fundamental to how the story is spread and the role of the listener is not at all passive. For successful dissemination, it would seem necessary for the storyteller to be highly sensitive to the needs of the listeners and for the story to be able to satisfy those needs in some way. As such, the active relationship is one of mutual inclusivity and a precarious balance between the two parties.

To address this conundrum the researcher has found the ideas presented in the framework by O'Neill (2002) as being useful. As well as 'colour' he also suggests that stories provide a level of satisfaction for the listener which will impact on whether they are likely to be repeated and proposes that whilst the storyteller may or may not intend to fulfil fundamental needs of the listener, the listener independently makes a determination regarding whether or not the story has done so, and therefore, whether to repeat the story. As such, stories can range from having very low to very high levels of employee need fulfilment (2002:10). The ideas are represented in a matrix (figure 2.3 below) and the researcher has found the notions of colour and need fulfilment as well as the transcendental dimension of time as having a constructive connectivity with the case under review.

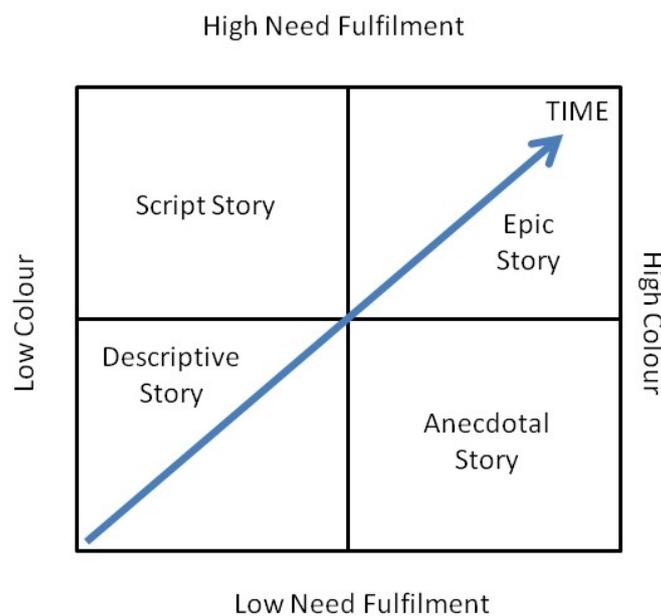


Figure 2.3 Organisational Story Typology. Adapted from O'Neill (2002.12)

The Descriptive Story is one that may be accurate and detailed but lacks appeal to the recipient in so much as the story has little or no plot in the form of comedy, tragedy or organisational heroics or villainous content; and neither does it serve to satisfy needs that the recipient might have in relation to how they feel. The descriptive story may serve to provide job support but has limited value over time. It is perhaps most akin to a report or a reporting of events.

The Anecdotal Story is likely to be entertaining and have high appeal to the recipient because of its colour, but has little emotional engagement for the recipient other than

as a tale worth listening to. O'Neill suggests that the anecdotal tale may be one that reflects Gabriel's (1998) view that some stories are more valuable to the teller than the recipient. As a good story it might be re-told to others but in terms of organisational significance, anecdotal stories are more associated with the social experience of work than with the achievement of strategic goals and intentions.

The Script Story represents organisational mantras that serve to establish norms and patterns of behaviour and consensus over how things are considered. They form a significant part of culture reinforcement and accord with what Schein (1992,1996) describes in the first and second levels of his three levels of culture, the artefacts and the espoused values. The artefacts are tangible phenomena such as the people employed, the myths, stories, logos, heroes and villains that form part of the visible and sensed experience of work. The espoused values represent the consistent beliefs about which the employees have an emotional investment and are expressed in organisational speeches, corporate media or other writings that establish answers to questions about 'what to do' and 'how to behave' (Jordan and Lindebaum, 2015; Vince and Gabriel, 2011; Clegg and Van Iterson, 2009; Knights and Willmott, 2007, Fineman, 2011). They also accord with Schein's earlier view on socialisation as they represent those stories that are considered important enough to be retold to new members of the organisation (Schein, 1985, 1992). Clearly these stories are important for strategic purposes and operate across the whole of the organisation.

The Epic Story has the greatest impact on the organisation as it has high appeal in terms of both entertainment and need fulfilment. It has an enduring quality that transcends a significant time period and also reaches beyond the confines of the organisation's boundary. It reflects the essence of the organisation and presents richness in elements of colour such as lyricism, picturesque description and vivid detail as well as plot to engage the recipient such as comedy, tragedy, crisis and heroics. These stories encourage organisation members to commit to the organisation's plight. Epic stories play a major role in creating long-term social reality and are strategically very important and have a strong link to the underlying basic assumptions of Schein's third level of culture. By way of re-balancing the idea of the rich epic tale, Collins and Rainwater (2005) and Gabriel (2000) present Epic Stories in less rich terms. They suggest they are about action and movement, more directional than ambiguous and enriched with polyphony. They suggest that the

'epic' tale has a rather simple plot-line that is episodic and linear, tending towards achievement and closure rather than opening up intricacies and ambiguities of character development. As such, they lend themselves to the mantra of managerialism, that of organisational success.

The introduction of TQM as a turnaround strategy to lead a company to competitive advantage would be constructed by the management as an epic story. However, as discussed earlier, the successful integration of the story depends very much on how the recipient interprets the tale being told (Reissner and Pagan, 2013) and this will provide a useful framework to assist in the analysis of the case. The introduction of the new way of thinking and behaving, of trying to establish a new culture and create a new social reality is reflected in a new text or story of culture. Cultural texts are powerful forces for structuring behaviour within organisations (Carter et al., 2008) as people seek to establish their identity within the community of the workplace. Furthermore, whilst there might be a dominant discourse which is the preferred story (Diefenbach, 2007) there are many competing stories which may find greater favour with those being exposed to the managerialist doctrine? Story acceptance, despite (for example) the compelling managerial rationale for TQM, cannot be guaranteed.

It can be accepted therefore, that any change story can be written, narrated and constructed from many different standpoints depending on who is doing the narrating at any given time (Clausen and Olsen, 2000). The outcomes of the change process can reasonably be explained by exploring how the change was authored and scripted and then how it was edited, revised and articulated through the change process and by whom. In particular, emphasis needs to be given to the role and performance undertaken by key narrators of the story and the encounters of competing narrators and the subsequent impact on the original story. This complex, multi-authored dynamic of change stories will have a significant impact of how those listening to these stories will respond, the paths that they will choose and therefore the shape and direction of the change (Buchanan and Dawson, 2007).

Grant et al., (2005) suggest that in order to understand organizational change more comprehensively, it is important to engage with change as a discursively constructed feature. They propose that discourse analytical approaches can contribute to the

understanding of change in five significant respects. Specifically, discourse analysis allows the researcher to associate with:

- Organizational change as a socially constructed reality
- Organizational change as a negotiated meaning
- Organizational change as an intertextual phenomenon
- A multi-disciplinary perspective of organizational change; and
- An alternative approach to the study of a variety of organizational change related issues.

In relation to the socially constructed reality within the case organisation, the TQM programme introduced a new set of terminology and language as well as new behaviours. The discourse of TQM established the boundaries within which acceptable and legitimate ways of discussing and talking about the change initiative were presented (Grant et al., 2005, Hall, 2001). Meaning is established following various discursive interactions between organizational actors that involve the negotiation of meaning (Mumby and Stohl, 1991) and the plurivocality of these discourses implies that the dominant meaning that emerges has done so by marginalising and silencing alternative discourses (Fairclough, 1995; Hardy, 2004, 2001). Intertextual studies of organizational discourse identify and analyse 'small' stories and micro-level discursive activities and locate them in the context of 'big' stories or 'meta' discourses (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000). The introduction of TQM is a 'grand' discourse and the negotiation of meaning takes place within a complexity of socially, culturally and historically produced texts that are under constant review and evolution (Grant and Hardy, 2004).

To study changing organizations requires consideration of discursive practices beyond the specific change under scrutiny, recognising the importance of discursive interactions at other levels and at different times on how change is interpreted (Keenoy and Oswick, 2004). Discourse analysis is multi-disciplinary in origin and so researching change can draw on a variety of methodological approaches. Narrative and storytelling analysis is one approach and can be supported by analysis of the conversations and analysis of the metaphors and rhetorical devices used by the key participants involved in organisational change. It is argued by Grant et al., (2005. 9) that discourse analysis of organisational change has generated new insights into

change related issues. Change is not considered as an ordered, objective, directed product of a change agent's plan or strategy, change occurs through the way people talk and interact in the context of their lived work experience. Stability is not an ordered property of the change leader, it is constructed through the discussions and actions of people at work as they make sense of their surroundings (Tsoukas, 2005, Tsoukas and Chia, 2002).

It is also important to consider the role of the researcher in articulating their analysis of change and Buchanan and Dawson (2007) argue that narratives of change are themselves 'discoursed' to reflect the expectations of the audience to which the research is targeted. The researcher is also a storyteller and as such, makes choices about what to include in the analysis and how to articulate the resultant analysis. Buchanan and Dawson use Deetz's (1996) 'dimensions of contrast' to highlight the links between researcher narrative voice and the target audience. They argue that change narratives are scripted according to the assumptions that the researcher has about the intended audience for their research and Deetz's analytical ideal types provide a framework for valuable researcher analysis. There are two dimensions of contrast. One is based on sources of ideas and concepts, in dialogue with participants or established by the researcher from theoretical considerations and is referred to as 'local/emergent' versus 'elite/a priori'. The other dimension is based on the relationship between research aims and the dominant social discourse, with the intention of establishing 'consensus' versus 'dissensus' that is confirming unity of understanding or exposing conflict and tensions (Buchanan and Dawson, 2007.678).

The four ideal types of discourses in organization research that Deetz (1996) identified are:

- Normative that is characterised by elite/a/priori sources of concepts and problems and an aim to achieve consensus with respect to the dominant social discourse.
- Interpretative that is also seeking to establish consensus but with a local/emergent source of concepts and problems.
- Critical which links elite/a priori problem and concept source with an aim to identify dissensus with respect to the dominant social discourse: and

- Dialogic which also aims to identify lack of shared meanings within organisations and a local/emergent focus for problem and concept sources.

What is postulated is that a researcher who favours a normative discourse would not, for example, seek to expose that discourse to an audience which was sensitive to and more persuaded by critical thinking on organisations. Furthermore, Buchanan and Dawson (2007:630) suggest that researchers may even re-script their research to ensure that it is commensurate with the frame of reference of different target audiences. Recognising the role of the researcher in authoring a change account is also something that concerns Dawson (2003) when he argues that case construction can be informed by not only the purpose of the case but also the conceptual and research interests of the researcher. As such multiple accounts of the same research data are likely and that case-study write-up is expected to accommodate and reflect the expectations of the intended audience.

The value of the work of Buchanan and Dawson is that it creates opportunity for organizational researchers to recognize the consequences of misaligning research approach with intended recipients and the potential for rejection if the alignment is incongruous.

A normative discourse characterises the typical management research genre and will seek to establish the one accurate version to narrate. Conflicting accounts are not tolerated and are explained away as aberration and uninformed views. The objective is to achieve conformity and reinforcement of the dominant social discourse.

An interpretative discourse accepts that reality is a myriad of conflicting assessments, explanations and interpretations and that these are all equally valid. Individuals are regarded as sense-making and involved in a continuous attempt to co-create social structures and shared local meanings and interpretations. Research here attempts to represent the diversity on interpretations as honestly as possible. Conflicting socially constructed accounts are anticipated but the aim is to seek local consensus grounded in social and organisational practices.

A critical discourse recognises organisations as continuous sources of political struggle and the research objective is to identify and discuss how organisational

structures and social practices reinforce power differentials and silence alternative perspectives. Conflicts are resolved after radical social reform.

The dialogic discourse accepts that organisations fail to establish a coherent reality as they are sources of disjointed narratives. The aim of this research genre is to identify complexities, lack of shared meanings and differences and challenge the illusion of taken-for-granted assumptions as there is no single reality of the organisation and coherent view.

Dialogic discourse reflects the work of Boje (2008) on dialogisms, a word created by Bakhtin (1968) but used by Boje to explain how, in business, people with different logics, or frames of reference, “come together at the same time and place and engage in something transcendental, on their differences, allowing for the possibility of something positive to happen out of their exploration” (2008.22). He is adamant that dialogism is not about consensus, nor will a single logic sway others to accept its validity, and yet through exchange, a new logic or story emerges that the group can adopt. However, Boje also points out that whilst this best-case scenario is a possibility, narrative control by a powerful individual or coalition will often silence debate, reflexivity and co-construction of a new meaning, rendering the opportunity for intended change to be denied.

The research undertaken here adopts an interpretative perspective, but the researcher accepts the compelling underpinning ideas of both the critical and dialogic discourses. However, as the story emerges there is clear support for the interpretative discourse, especially when recognizing the impact of institutional processes on competing narratives within the case. Importantly, rather than be constrained by the normative tendency of classic institutional theory, there is the acceptance of shifting institutional preferences and rationalizations leading to different interpretations and possible explanations (Dacin et al., 2002, Townley, 2002, Kostova and Roth, 2002).

This discussion of researcher preference and choice is important when considering that the object of this research is a re-visit, a re-view and a re-interpretation of ‘old’ data. However, as Andrews (2008.98) posits, “far from being problematic, this characteristic of narrative data is evidence of its resilience and vitality, and of its infinite ability to yield more layers of meaning when examined from yet another lens”.

Whilst the original interpretation sought explanation from a normative perspective, this review using an interpretative discourse is providing a much richer field on which to develop an alternative interpretation of what happened.

The possibilities of re-storying organisational change cases are discussed by Collins and Rainwater (2005) in their review of the Sears, Roebuck and Company case that was presented originally by Rucci et al., (1988). They use narrative and storytelling approaches to draw out the different voices that were not represented in the original exposition of the corporate transformation and reveal the polysemic and polyphonic nature of change. The original discussion as presented in the *Harvard Business Review* is very much representative of normative discourse and presents sequential and linear understandings of change which are considered by Collins and Rainwater as being too simplistic.

Collins and Rainwater (2005, 23-29) re-story the turnaround of Sears from alternative story types to the epic tale that is presented in the original article (Rucci et al., 1988) namely as tragedy and as comedy. They base their approach on the eight poetic tropes identified by Gabriel (2000) who argues that a number of which are essential for 'proper stories'. These constitute: *motive* that pertains to the purpose of the story; *causal connections* that link actions through cause and effect'; *responsibility* that identifies where blame or success might lie and with whom; *unity* that establishes communities and groups of like-minded people; *fixed qualities* of the key actors and groups who demonstrate that they are consistent in their behaviour/values/intent; *emotion* that is an outcome of the story that those engaged can expect to feel; *agency* whereby the wish, desire, preference or option is either raised or diminished; and *providential significance* which is important in certain tales where justice and order may be attributed to the intervention of higher forms, often seemingly beyond the control of those involved directly. These eight tropes can then be organised in such a manner by the storyteller to construct the poetic mode so that the story takes on the characteristics of:

- 'comic' stories (with emotional qualities)
- 'tragedy' stories (that focus on undeserved misfortune)
- 'epic' stories (that emphasise struggles) and

- 'romantic' stories (that are characterised by love and humanity)

Gabriel recognises that some stories do not fall easily into one mode or another and may be hybrids of two or more. Whilst this ambiguity of story mode supports the earlier discussion of O'Neill's presentation of a more comprehensive typology, the significance here is of the use of story construction to re-tell what had been accepted as a 'classic' management case of successful organisational change and to present equally valid tales of explanation and experience. Collins and Rainwater present a credible challenge to the dominant discourse on the Sear's case and, in doing so demonstrate that this case and many similar sanitised corporate accounts of change are merely reinforcements of the managerialist post hoc rationalization of the change process. Their re-storying indicates both the potential and the importance of revealing the complexities and ambiguities of organisational change management.

More recently, Kendall and Kendall (2012) have presented stories as falling into four types depending upon whether they are normative or descriptive in intent and underpinned by action (practical) or cognition (philosophical). They draw their approach from the work of Campbell (1964) and Young (2004) condensing their discussions of myths, by which Kendall and Kendall take a more classical meaning of myth as being stories that are deep and enduring, into four functions of common stories:

1. The experiential function – stories that describe experiencing what the organization universe is like.
2. The explanatory function – stories that attempt to explain the organizational universe.
3. The validating function – stories that try to maintain the organizational value structure.
4. The prescriptive function – stories that recommend correct and proper behaviour in the organisation.

What is significant about this framework is that all these common stories have content that is known from the start or is revealed to the reader/listener in the process of interpretation and that they are explicit. As Izak et al., (2015) suggest, this assumption of explicitness should be 'problematized' and that just as relevant to understanding organizations and the way that stories and storytelling help sense-making, so untold stories also have a part to play in interpreting experience. Those

stories that have been ‘lost’ intentionally or unintentionally, or are silent, provide an equally important point of reference to challenge dominant discourses and preferred meanings of experience. So in considering the following framework of Kendall and Kendall, it is helpful to consider that note of caution.

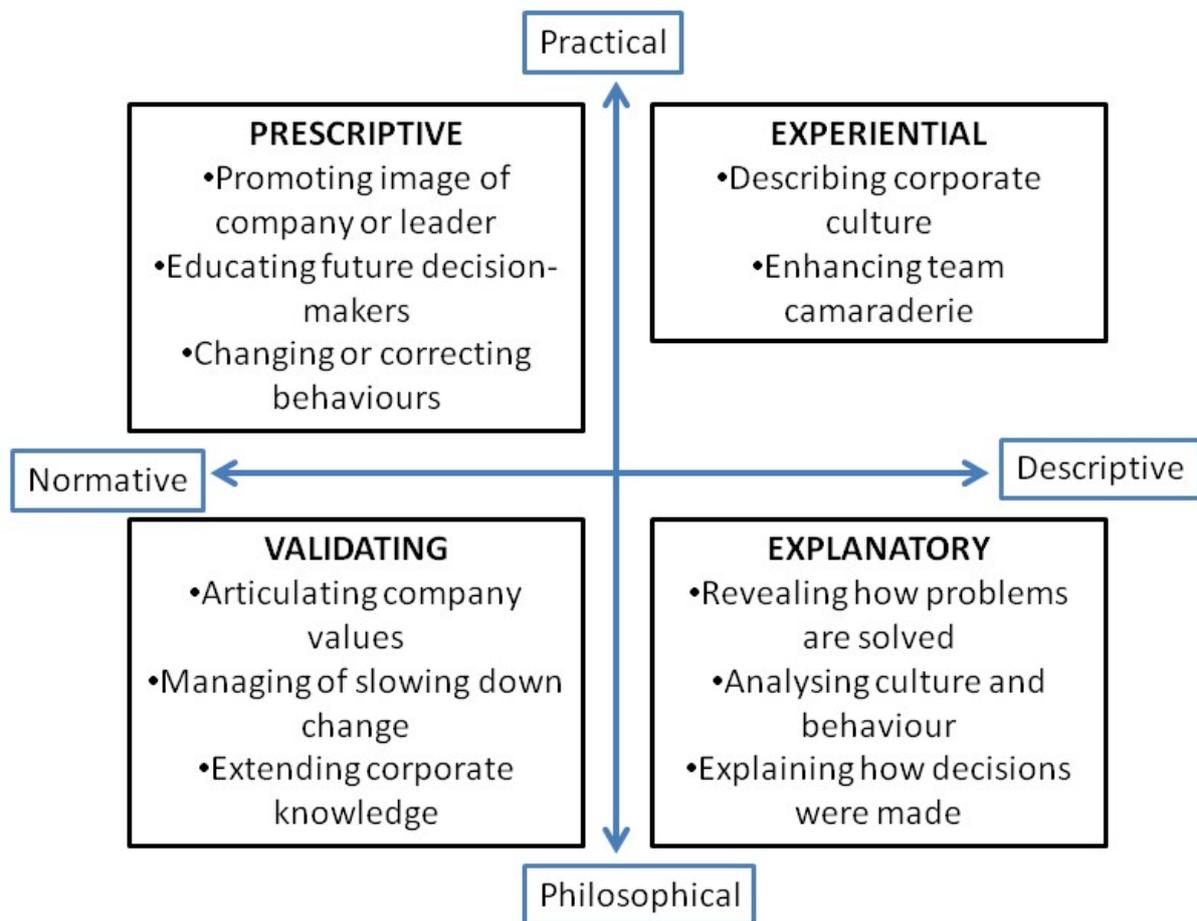


Figure 2.4 Adapted from Kendall and Kendall, 2012:171

Understanding the function of the story enables an important interpretative process to emerge. The storyteller, with preconceived ideas and agendas may choose to tell stories from different functional perspectives, depending upon the role and purpose of the story being unfurled. The role of the storyteller may change from hero to messenger, leader to follower, protagonist to antagonist whilst constructing the patterns and elements with which to capture the interest of the audience and help the story to resonate. It is the more organic nature of these frameworks of story types and the flow dynamics of being able to move through different types that appeals to the researcher and provides a preferred platform for analysis and interpretation.

What has been presented thus far is a discussion about organisational storytelling as an approach to understanding competing narratives of change. The discussion challenges the normative preference of change descriptions of sequential, single-voiced stories, to support the view that change is complex, multi-voiced and subject to many different and equally valid interpretations. The discussion explores some of the contemporary ideas and debates on organisational storytelling and stories and how organisational change can be better informed by analysing change from this perspective. However, there is one further development that needs to be discussed which relates to the process of sense-making that is not necessarily discussed within the mainstream literature on story development and telling in relation to change.

When organisational change is the subject of research, it almost always deals with change that is significant in terms of extent and impact on employees. Change is also expressed in terms of 'the unknown' and uncertainty. This means that when people are involved with and in change they are operating within a context that is new and of which they have no prior knowledge.

Flory et al., (2010) identify two forms of not knowing, the first is associated with a lack of knowledge about something that will become knowable – such as exposure to change; and the second about the internal thoughts, motivations and attitudes that employees have – which unless stated will remain unknown. Drawing on the work of Weick (1995) Tsoukas (1997) and earlier research, Simpson and French (2006) suggests that if something is not known, then the process of social construction has to be based on sense making that draws on what actors in the situation consider to be relevant and pertinent experiences of the present and the constructs, narratives and stories that might be used as possible building blocks for the construction process.

However, the co-construction of meaning has to take place within a social exchange and when dealing with unknowns, there are no formal rules of engagement. Consequently, in order to develop and make sense of the unknown the informal nature of storytelling, play and improvisation may establish the forum upon which meanings are built, based on resonant meanings to others. Sense and meaning are constructed through trial and error and fabrication of text(ure). In the absence of a known script or comfortable narrative, employees have to extemporize and ad-lib, be

creative and perhaps even think laterally. As Flory et al., (2010) point out, the implications for leaders of change in directing this progression from the unknown to the known is crucial.

Sandelands (2010) suggests that through the process of play the life of the community takes shape and has meaning that generates a dynamic of creation in which the community takes on new forms and new arrangements. However, in order to play with others, people have to feel confident and open to new experiences and to not feel inhibited by the strangeness of what they are encountering; there have to be high levels of trust and confidence, not only in what needs to be done, but with the others that are party to the play. This is an area that is particularly pertinent to the introduction of TQM. Not only were people being asked to do things very differently, but they were also being asked to establish very different working relationships, often with people they did not know. This aspect of the change is a critical part of listener - story engagement and the storyteller is a crucial director/actor in encouraging others to engage in the process of sense-making of the unknown. To direct others through play, improvisation and sense-making requires considerable skill and sensitivity (Adamson, et al., 2006; Denning, 2000).

2.6 What was the story? Understanding Competing Rhetoric: Hard and Soft TQM and BPR

What follows is a contextual story to enable the reader to familiarise the issues of the main case and stories that inform the investigation and research. It presents a dead story (Boje, 2008) in as much as the debate is historical, although the consequences are relevant to contemporary management literature.

The story of TRC is about a failed change programme that was focused on the introduction of Total Quality Management (TQM). However, to have an opportunity to understand the dynamics of the change process, the reader needs to have a fundamental understanding of the differences between the most popular discourses that aimed to try to change organisational practices of the time, namely Total Quality Management and Business Process Engineering (BPR). Furthermore, TQM needs to be refined further into Hard TQM and Soft TQM as there were two quite distinct

paradigms that created tensions both in the literature and in practice. These discourses can be seen as ways of providing the means by which sensemaking can be encouraged and realities constructed (De Cock and Hipkin, 1997; Fredriksson and Izaksson, 2018). The preferred 'planned change' approach that was adopted represented an attempt by senior managers to define the normative expectations of their employees' actions and roles. There was an expectation that by constructing meaning and reality in one way as opposed to another, willing engagement in the preferred way would assure a new control system.

The ability to lead and influence the process of encouraging adoption of new meaning and discouraging adherence to an opposing viewpoint, was a highly valued leadership skill and future organisational success was the prime objective of such programmes of change (Weiner, 2009; Herold et al., 2008). Consequently, in any organisational change, especially organisation-wide transformation change, the choice of discourse and the leaders of the change process are critical decisions in terms of impact on likely take up of the chosen discourse and resulting employee adoption and behaviour change.

There were two basic approaches to TQM. The first to emerge emphasised TQM as a universal technical solution to organisational problems related to performance and competitiveness. Exemplar key writers of this approach were Crosby (1979,) Deming (1986) Fiegenbaum (1983) Ishikawa (1985) Juran (1992) and Oakland (1993). Often the approach was linked to operations management because of the emphasis given to statistical controls and measurements, layout, design processes and procedures, and was referred to as the 'hard' approach. The second approach was much more associated with the roles and responsibilities of employees and faced the general assertion that quality is everyone's responsibility and should encourage the involvement of people in the obligation for quality. This view became the 'soft' approach and focuses on the management of human resources with a particular emphasis on culture change. The key feature is prevention is better than detection (Juran, 1989). Writers of the soft approach to TQM, especially from a pragmatic perspective and linked to a contextual awareness of TQM, include Hill (1990,1995) Wilkinson et al., (1991, 1992, 1997) Hill and Wilkinson (1995) and Wilkinson (1999). From this perspective, the effective implementation of TQM requires commitment from all employees - top management to the shop floor, for continuous improvement

as part of their daily work. Such commitment would be achieved through leadership, team-working, recognition and training (Wilkinson and Willmott, 1995; Wilkinson et al., 1997). Here the implications of human resource management in the implementation of TQM were prioritized, especially employee relations considerations and employee influence over the management processes.

A further literature emerged that viewed TQM from a more critical perspective. These writers were particularly concerned about the impact on worker experience. Whilst seeing problems associated with TQM as a form of social control and intensification, they tended not to recognise that TQM has been implemented effectively in organisations and has created opportunities for autonomy, involvement and job satisfaction (Psychogios et al., 2009). Exemplar writers of this critical approach were (Delbridge and Turnbull, 1992; Sewell and Wilkinson, 1992; McArdle et al., 1995; Kerfoot and Knights, 1995; Wilkinson and Willmott, 1995; and Knights and McCabe, 1999).

TQM was seen as providing major and long-term challenges to organisations with emphasis being given to management style and organisational culture driven by empowering employees to take on responsibility for delivering customer satisfaction and continuing improvements. It was often associated with being adopted during periods of crisis where a reorientation onto quality was seen as means of achieving organisational survival. As Schein (1985) notes, during crisis organisations tend to be amenable to large scale change, where fear and anxiety over job security reduces resistance to change and focuses employee attention on the need to help achieve stability.

However, TQM was also linked to a large numbers of failed change programmes (Mosadeghrad, 2014, Venkateswarlu and Nilakant, 2005). David and Strang (2006) noted that when TQM was booming, consultancy firms supporting the interest tended to field management generalists to provide advice to companies. Once the trend dwindled, TQM consulting tended to be populated by specialists with quality control expertise. Their research suggested that fashionable practices return to their technical roots after the hype around the trend is over. Their research on TQM tends to suggest that the enduring roots are with operations management.

Researchers identified significant resistance to the narratives of TQM. Boyce (1995) and De Cock (1998) identified reluctance on the part of the senior managers to share critical analysis of change initiatives when the themes and stories emerging in the critiques did not confirm the desired direction presented in the change discourse. Parker (1997) argues that because organisational members are not passive agents in the change process, easily seduced by stories of TQM, then they will accept or reject as they see appropriate. Furthermore, members will quickly assimilate inconsistencies between the sense-making and meaning underpinned by their experience and the assumptions that are espoused by the change discourse (Wilkinson et al., 1997). Consequently researchers were identifying weaknesses in the promises presented in the rhetoric and reluctance at all levels to be inveigled into accepting the initiatives without question of it being a panacea for all their ills (Nwabueze, 2001).

Whilst TQM was often associated with transformational change following an organisational crisis, and was often associated with failure, Grant et al., (1994) questioned whether TQM with its emphasis on incremental improvements is irreconcilable with radical strategic change. Wilkinson et al., (1998) propose that TQM might even be more compatible with already successful companies wishing to maintain and slowly improve their market position, presenting a more 'comfortable' approach to change. Research undertaken by Fotopoulos and Psomas (2009) proposes that quality improvement and the consolidation of the company's market position are influenced mainly by adopting "soft" TQM elements and "hard" TQM elements have a secondary impact. Whereas Rahman and Bullock (2005) found that while 'hard' TQM had the most significant impact upon organisational performance, 'soft' TQM was a necessary requirement to ensuring the diffusion of 'hard' TQM across the organisation. As a highly popular approach to change designed to bring about organisational success, there were considerable inconsistencies and different interpretations about what TQM was and on what it needed to impact if organisational advantage was to be attained. The definition of TQM was not considered straightforward, almost every writer on the subject had been seen as having their own definition, reflecting their own beliefs, prejudices, and business and academic experiences (Gonzales-Benito et al., 1999)

Perhaps it is not surprising then that consultants and companies began to look for another change approach that offered equally seductive rewards and proponents of Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) were critical (McCabe and Wilkinson, 1998; Wilkinson et al., 1998). Their main area of attack was on the failure of TQM to transform structures and to work within the existing processes rather than replacing them with entirely new ones (Hammer and Champy, 1993, 1994). They proposed that BPR would bring about a fundamental rethink and radical redesign of business processes to achieve dramatic improvements in organisational metrics of performance and success. Their main argument was that whereas TQM focused on what organisations already did but to do it better, BPR was built on the premise that what was already there was failing and enhancing it was futile. Whilst TQM and BPR have been positioned at the two extremes of a spectrum of approaches focused on organisational change (Elzinga et al., 1995) others questioned whether there is a difference between TQM and BPR (Valentine and Knights, 1998).

Part of the attraction to senior managers and shareholders of the BPR approach was its emphasis on senior management led large projects offering quicker results (Wilkinson et al., 1998). Tennant and Wu (2005) found that the main drivers for introducing BPR were external competitive pressures, productivity improvements and internal cost reduction presented as strategic change. According to Dale et al., (1997) top management support and commitment is key for the integration of TQM and lack of it is one of the main reasons for TQM failing. Interestingly with BPR, where top managers are more in tune with the need for radical improvement in processes to maintain competitiveness, this barrier to TQM might be overcome. However, BPR attracted criticism based upon its narrow focus of implementation and its lack of recognition of the importance of a culture of participation and involvement, for failing to be integrated into wider changes taking place within the organisation, and for failing to take account of people issues and removing the fear that it was simply a means of downsizing (Tennant and Wu, 2005; Leach, 1996; Hall et al., 1993)

The literature tended to present TQM for continuous improvement and BPR for radical redesign. However, a further literature developed which saw the two approaches being combined. Love and Gunasekaran (1997) presented TQM as a good starter for BPR and MacDonald and Dale (1999) propose a joint use of BPR

and TQM since they share many common features. This idea of joint usage and in some cases a symbiotic relationship was further recognised by Ahmad et al., (2007) and Herzog et al., (2007) who identified seven factors critical to successful implementation of BPR that drew on factors resonant of TQM. The factors are teamwork and quality culture, quality management system and satisfactory rewards, education and training and effective change management, less bureaucratic and employee cooperation and participative, effective information technology support/information system, management commitment and project management; and adequate financial resources. Pollalis (1996) and Senthil et al., (2001) agree that TQM and BPR should be integrated in order to deliver changes as both are helpful in gaining competitive edge. Conversely, Wilkinson et al., (1998) suggest that BPR was less likely to succeed because it used similar methods and processes to TQM but it lacked the training, experience and organisational infrastructures of TQM.

Some writers went further suggesting that they were co-dependent. Salegna and Fazel (2006) suggested that a short-term, radical change achieved through BPR programs should be followed by TQM's long-term continuous improvements. Senthil et al., (2010) focused on TQM and considered that the ultimate objective of TQM was more likely achieved if BPR concepts are integrated within the change process. They further claimed that high integration of these two concepts would offer enhanced quality levels and higher productivity.

At the time of the research, organisations in the UK were very open to TQM and it was regarded as the major innovation in management practice and thinking of the late 1980s and 1990s. As to whether TQM faded in favour of BPR, one argument was that TQM became 'normalised' and embedded into the day-to-day activities of organisations and was no longer a headline movement (Hill and Wilkinson, 1995). Mueller and Carter (2005) suggested that the rhetoric became 'routinised' as the mystery of newness faded as experiences became normalised and institutionalised. As Wilkinson et al., (1998) posit, perhaps the adoption of TQM into everyday practices is a feature of organisational success rather than failure.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to draw together ideas of storytelling, focusing especially on those writers who have sought to construct a framework around different types of stories or classifications of stories. Whilst the researcher has some sympathy for these endeavours, the neatness of constraint detracts from the essential unbounded nature of stories in action and the richness for research caused by the complexities and uncertainties of how stories spread and get accepted. All the ideas presented piqued the interest of the researcher, some resonated more than others, and yet none provided a satisfactory interpretation of the dynamics and travel of stories and storytelling. As such, what follows is the story that the researcher wants to tell and an interpretation of the story that draws on a variety of ideas, approaches and frameworks in part. Making sense of the story leant on a far wider source of support rather than a preferred framework for review. As with stories in action, where listeners pick and choose how and what they will use to underpin their decision about the story to which they are exposed, this research follows a route that is both direct and indirect. However, before the story is presented, there is a discussion of change agents as leaders and storytellers of organizational change.

Chapter 3: Change Agents as Change Leaders and Storytellers

3.1 Introduction

In a survey of over 3,000 senior managers, Meaney and Pung (2008) found that two-thirds of the respondents reported that their organizations had not succeeded in achieving any significant change in performance after implementing organizational change initiatives. Probst and Raisch (2005) suggested from their research that organizational change efforts actively precipitated organizational crises resultant of poor management of the change process. In their study of change readiness, Rafferty et al., (2013) highlight the importance of internal context enablers of change in which change agents and leaders are core components of antecedents of readiness. The observations of these researchers pose a sobering point for reflection on how so much can be recognised as being important and yet have such limited success.

The Final Report of the Change Management Consortium (Balogun and Hope Hailey, 2009) identified three causes of concern with regard to poor outcomes of change programmes and change capability. These were a tendency for change leaders to over rely on the machine metaphor for organizations which led to an emphasis on structures, systems, prescription and rhetoric; a lack of understanding and learning about change at senior levels leading to unrealistic expectations; and an inability to translate strategic intent and rhetoric into meaningful and tangible consequences for the organization as a whole but, more importantly, the individuals within the organization. Linking these three causes is an underlying theme of poor, ill-informed leadership. These were further incorporated into a report produced for the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2014) aimed at improving transformation change and achieving organisational success.

Sidhu (2013) identifies that effective change managers have to demonstrate mastery of change principles, processes and practices, knowledge and understanding of how to identify, initiate, influence and sustain change and the skills and behaviours to engage, manage and support others through change. Clearly the role of the change agent, change leader or change manager is key to the success of any change

programme and the need for personal competence and capability are essential components of effective leadership of change.

According to Weick (2011, 2001) the content of change programmes accounts for nothing special to explain success or failure, it is the extent to which the programme initiates Weick's four essential components of change, these components being: sustained animation; direction; attention; and respectful interaction. It is reasonable to suggest the change agent has a significant role to play in triggering participant response to a change story and ensuring that the four components are followed through. Change agents have much to do in helping others make sense of what is unknown and abstract. Managing the process of change requires active perceptual organization and the allocation of attention to points of focus (Chia, 2005) and, from the teasing out of many competing stories, to get others to give their attention to the one that is preferred (Weick, 2011). Weick acknowledges the role of the change agent as one that draws on the application of power in a political process as the agent attempts to draw attention of others to a preferred way of perceiving the situation.

Burns (2009) describes this exercise of power skills during the process of change, when change agents seek to influence the recipients of change to accept the change, as back-staging and Buchanan and Boddy (1992) consider this an essential skill. Wilkins and Stuart-Cox (2017) and Kouzes and Posner (2011) highlight the importance of the credibility of the change agent in building trust and confidence and the support of those whose actions are required to embed change. The ability to influence others but also gain their willing engagement in the change process depends on high level interpersonal skills. Senior and Swailes (2016) identify the critical role of the change agent in the Organizational Development approach to change expressing the significance of personal capabilities as being essential to successful change. Dawson (2003) reinforces this central element of the role of the change agent, particularly in relation to power plays and political manoeuvring that are symptomatic of organizational change programmes. It is useful to note the recognition of the change agent role by Dawson as well as Senior and Swailes, as the writers represent differing foci of interpreting the approach to change. The former more sympathetic of the Emergent approach, whilst the latter more sympathetic to a Planned approach.

What follows in this chapter is an exploration of the role of change agents and what change agents need to be able to achieve in order to fulfil that role. Already in the introduction it has been indicated that those tasked with facilitating and leading change should have command of a plethora of competencies and capabilities that range from the very subtle and sophisticated actions that need to be demonstrated to engage others in the change process, to more overt and rudimentary strategies for action. Inevitably this strong influencing role encapsulates leadership and influencing, power and politics and, strategic choice, design and delivery, all of which rely on the effective application of communications skills to enable enactment. But perhaps the most important aspects of the role of change agent are those which are within the control of the others with whom the change agent interacts, the followers, and to explore the role without exploring the role of the partners in change would be naïve and remiss. As Grint suggests (2005:38) 'the power of leaders is a consequence of the actions of followers rather than the cause of it'. Battilana and Casciaro (2012, 2013) highlight the lack of research on the relational nature between the change agent and followers, especially the limited attention given to the role of a change agent's intra-organizational social network in overcoming resistance to change.

The notion of followership is not new; Hollander and Webb (1955) proposed that far from being polar concepts leadership and followership were interdependent. Zelenzik (1965) focused on the dynamics of subordinancy. Steger et al., (1982) whilst not defining followers or followership presented a model of followership based upon two dimensions – followers' desire for self-enhancement and followers' desire for self-protection. Zierdan (1980) proposed that the contingency theory of leadership should focus on subordinates not managers. However, it is the works of Kelley (1988) and Chaleff (1995) that provided a forum for a more popular acceptance of followership as a key role in the change process and deserving of greater study. Even though these writers highlighted the importance of followership and the role of followers, Goffee and Jones (2006) commented that the analysis of followership had barely started, an observation supported by Bjugstad et al., (2006) who exposed the research into followership as an area that was much understudied. Despite the recognition that followers played a clear role in the implementation of change, the literature has tended to remain focused on leadership and by comparison, there is a

dearth of work on followership (Baker, 2007; Kellerman, 2008) and research has been given short shrift (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014).

Whilst research into organisational change has improved understanding of the challenges raised when trying to implement organizational changes, there is still much to learn. Battilana and Casciaro (2012) suggest that research has not presented a systematic characterisation of how change initiatives are adopted in organizations. Klonek et al., (2014) present change agents as those who must successfully communicate and promote change to those who must then enact change the new requirements. In fact they go as far as to suggest that to communicate the necessary changes, organizations are reliant on change agents, placing the role of the change agent as a key contributor to successful change. Consequently what Klonek and colleagues propose is that the role is simply not enough to secure change.

Furthermore, the relationship between change agent and recipients of the messages of change are what determine whether or not, and to what extent, the recipients respond. As such, Klonek et al., (2014) are suggesting that the skills of the change agent also cannot guarantee successful change. There appears to be a compelling need to explore the role of the change agent, the skills, competencies and attributes of change agents, and also the complexity of social interactions and networks as co-determined by those affected by change. In addition, despite shared consensus that effective communication is the key to engaging in understanding successful change management (Doolin, et al., 2013; Oswick et al., 2010) wider research has yet to explore the communicative dynamics at the core of the change management process. It is proposed that one way of drawing all these three aspects of change agency together is to explore the change agent as storyteller, with storytelling being the means by which role, skills, competencies, attributes and relationships can be brought together for interpretation under the umbrella of stories of change and storied change. As such, the role of change agent as storyteller will draw upon the ideas presented in the previous chapter to enable interpretation of the case of TRC and the role of the change agent in the change process. This means of recognising the complexity of the who, what, how and why of change agents lends itself to the notion of change agent as 'bricoleur', the concept first put forward by Levi-Strauss (1955). The concept has since been utilised in relation to visionary leadership and

strategic management and the need to have those who have interactive and social ability to read situations, recognise the essential requirements and understand and deal with those involved, as well as to project these essential understandings as foresight and attainable visions (Westley and Mintzberg, 1989).

The following subsections have within them a necessary introduction of a variety of listings relating to roles, skills, competencies and responsibilities. These lists are included to demonstrate the tendency of writers to provide a sense of comfort in the notion of developmental, acquired and attributional characteristics that are resonant of the lists of key writers on how to manage change. They promote the emphasis on the managerialist desire to see leadership, and related roles, as something that can be deconstructed and then re-constructed in line with preferred ways of operating. These approaches often produce prescriptive models that obfuscate the distinction between leadership and leaders (Iles and Preece, 2006) focussing on what a person *has* rather than what a person *is*, a tendency replicated in the work on change agents.

3.2 The Role or Roles of Change Agents

Burnes (2009) is emphatic in his belief that change has to be managed, that someone has to take responsibility for the implementation and progression of a change initiative. Whilst the concept of the change agent was most focused on the organizational development approach to planned change, as advocated by Lewin (1947, 1951) the value of Lewin's approach has been both criticised and rendered unfashionable (Dawson, 1994; Hatch, 1997) and then recognised, developed and reappraised as having contemporary legitimacy (Burns, 2004; Burnes and Bargal, 2017). Lewin saw the change agent as very much as a facilitator of change where the emphasis was on development of those involved to enable them to generate better insights into themselves and their circumstances.

Over time this role of facilitator changed to one that was more directional with a focus on solution provider whose solution others implemented (Burns, 2009; Bullock and Batten, 1985). As such, the change agent became someone of immense focal interest in the process of change – whether planned, emergent or processual, and, alongside the developments in heroicism in leadership, change agents of heroic

actions and events became the doyens of many change programmes led by consultants, senior organizational managers and those keen to establish reputations in the field of transformational change. Such 'faddism' led Clarke and Salaman (1998) to suggest that the analyses, presentation and theories offered by management gurus provided very attractive conceptions of the role of managers, which envisioned the modern manager as a heroic, transformational leader. Attention to whom and what constituted the change agent led Caldwell (2003) and Burnes (2009) to suggest that developments led to an obfuscation of the role and competencies of the change agent rather than clarification.

Much of the criticism of the Planned approach to change and therefore the role of the change agent, related to its simplicity and inability to recognise the complexity of the contemporary organizational context (Arndt and Bigelow, 2000; Black, 2000; Stacey, 2003). Furthermore concern about the emphasis on incremental and discrete change, whilst seemingly unable to deal with radical and transformation change, led to concerns about its relevance (Dawson, 1994; Pettigrew, 1990; Dunphy and Stace, 1993). Other criticism related to the assumption that successful change stemmed from the ability of the change agent to secure common agreement, thus lending the debate the need to address the realities of organizational conflict, power and politics, differing perceptions and agendas, change spectrums, and dominant managerial philosophies (Stace and Dunphy, 1994; Hatch, 1997; Dawson, 1994).

What is also of interest to this discussion of the criticism of the Planned approach during the past twenty years, is the seduction of Guru Theory (Huczynski, 2012). This could explain in part, the enduring interest in the need for such tools and techniques to aid implementation such as Guiding Principles (Pettigrew, 1997) the Cultural Web (Johnson and Scholes, 2008) Kotter's Eight Steps to Successful Change (1996) and The Ten Commandments for Executing Change (Kanter et al., 1992). Far from completely undermining the notion of the staged approach as presented by Lewin, they merely reinforce the idea that there is no basis to a debate about Planned and Emergent approaches (Burnes, 2004). Universality of the recurring themes of Guru Theory, much of which relates to change, was also identified by Weick (2001) who focused upon a relevance gap between management academics and managers. For Weick, that the manager held attraction for guru assertions was in part because of the fixation that management academics had with

fundamentals and abstractions. Whereas the former craved universal generalities that supported preferred solutions, for the manager practitioner, the idiosyncratic and unique circumstances of change contexts were a distraction.

Re-appraisal of the main architect of the Planned approach to change has suggested that far from being a naïve and inadequate means by which change leadership can be constructed, Lewin's Four Pillars of Planned Change offer a far greater application to contemporary organizational change. Writers propose that there is both now a better understanding of the intention of the work and its values are seen as providing a better alignment with the major challenges facing organisations in the 21st century (Burnes et al., 2018; Burnes, 2015; Burnes and Cooke, 2013).

Furthermore, in moving the debate into the current century, By et al., (2011) highlight the moral and ethical underpinning of Lewin's approach that they suggest is less obvious in the Emergent approach to change. They suggest that the Planned approach is informed by an ethical base associated with democratic-humanist values. As such they link Lewin to Maslow (1943) and Rogers (1951) and humanistic psychology that informed so much of the neo-human relations school of organizational thinking. As a participative approach, which seeks to involve all those concerned as equal partners, it implies satisfaction of the needs of all the parties involved by ensuring equal access and say in the analysis, planning and implementation of change which is linked to the collective good of the organization. However, Rollinson (2005) is less convinced by the high-level ideals of humanistic-led Organization Development and suggests that in practice, the approach could be regarded as managerialist and exploitative of employees. As such, a debate seemingly emerges regarding the ethical stance adopted by protagonists of the two approaches.

The Planned approach recognises both the need for personal growth and learning and personal control and responsibility for action. "Therefore, the Planned approach adopts the utilitarian objective of seeking to achieve the greatest good for the greatest number" (Burnes and By, 2012). They argue that the Emergent approach does not explicitly acknowledge an ethical base, but rather promotes egoism and potentially self-serving behaviour by leaders based upon manipulation, power and political activity. Whilst they recognise that egoism is in itself not a guarantee of

unprincipled behaviour, self-serving strategies are less likely to be challenged as change is seen as being uncontrolled and uncontrollable (Weick, 2000). What emerges is yet another means by which change agents are drawn into a 'sexiness' that seemed to underpin a celebration of leadership that rewards the ability to seize the moment, make things happen and deal with the consequences, perhaps most persuasively expressed in the metaphor *winning the turf war* (Buchanan and Badham, 1999, 2008).

What is perhaps the most significant development between the two approaches is, the determination of the Emergent approach to focus less on the change agent and more on change agency (Buchanan and Storey, 1997) recognising a plurality of characters involved and a number of potentially distinct roles. Such plurality also suggests the need for different skills to be applied as well as implications for taking on different roles and switching between roles – a behavioural dexterity that implies sophistication and flexibility (Ferris and King, 1991). Whilst the notion of emergent change, reflecting the Mintzberg et al., (1998, 2005) typology of an organic evolved change, is almost *laissez-faire* in theory, in practice such whimsy is unlikely, evolution is subject to tensions and struggles as different influencers seek to take control. Whether planned or emergent, whether reactive or proactive, there will be those who seek to take control of change opportunities.

According to Johnson et al., (2005:519) change agents are individuals or groups who help to effect change in an organization, which immediately links change agents with a purposeful action that has approval by the sponsors of change. Using this type of definition, change agents can be seen as having an assigned role tied to a managerial goal. However, following that narrative assumes the unchallengeable supremacy of unitarism and the singularity of a change story to which all subscribe. Yet such an assumption of complicity, conformity and compliance lack traction in complex organizations where even the notion of a single, unified senior management team is questionable (Hollings, 2013). As such, change follows a route of actions, it is not simply allowed or enabled to develop unfettered and serendipitously. Change is brought about by individuals in pursuit of some purpose and there are those involved in that directional activity who will be seeking to influence the behaviour of others. Complexity is also recognised in the multi-role perspective outlined by Tearle (2007) who suggests that from diagnosis of the problem, recognition of the approach

to take, to the achievement of the desired end state, the change agent plays the roles of facilitator, designer, educator, marketer, observer and influencer.

Whilst the notion of the single change agent in sole charge of a change programme appears problematic, Buchanan and Storey (1997) seek to alleviate this oversight by recognising plurality of players through the concept of change agency. They identify 8 roles of change agency which they present for analytical purposes and are perhaps resonant of change agent as bricoleur. These roles are:

- Initiator: the ideas person, the main champion of the project or process.
- Sponsor: the main beneficiary, the focal person and the overall protector of the project.
- Driver: the main promoter, implementer and deliverer of the project and often presented as the project manager.
- Subversive: this role recognises the need to challenge dominant arguments to ensure atrophy and staleness do not become the norm. Subversives, aim to divert, block, interfere, resist and disrupt proceedings.
- Passenger: this role recognises the dynamics of change and the moments when the momentum carries the participants along the change programme.
- Spectator: this role is one that watches others change.
- Victim: this role sees this person as a sufferer of changes introduced by others: and
- Paramedic: this role recognises the need to help others through the traumas of change.

As Buchanan and Badham (1999) recognize, these roles may be played by several people and/or individuals who may be taking on more than one role concurrently or consecutively, but what is being presented is a dynamic of change processes that change momentum, rhythm and story. What is also interesting is the questionable authenticity of someone caught in the process being both driver and victim, which

despite seemingly being mutually exclusive, is not unreal in practice when a driver recognises that successful change may lead to disadvantageous personal consequences¹.

Buchanan and Storey's identification of the roles of change agency present a clear indication that leadership is inherent within several of the roles, notably Initiator and Sponsor. In comparison, Balogun et al., (2005) are clear that there is a distinctive separation between internal change agents and leaders, a position adopted by Hartley et al., (1997) where the former have responsibility for implementing change, whilst the latter have sanctioned authority associated with business leaders. This separation is helpful to their contribution to the debate on change agency and change agent skills and practices in the role of boundary-shakers. Their exploration of this role also reflects their view that there is very little research on understanding the roles of internal change agents as most research has been preoccupied with 'leadership', again a point made by Hartley et al.,. Whereas this distinction is useful to their discussion of change agents as boundary-shakers involved in networks of people making changes that alter internal boundaries, reconfiguring the ways work and relationships flow throughout the organization and challenging the status quo of homeostasis; their description of people involved in influencing the behaviour of others and enrolling them to the change cause, seems to support the intention of change agents to be involved in leadership. Indeed, Balogun and Hope-Hailey (2004) describe the role of change agents as leading change. Consequently, whilst accepting the need to keep change agency and leadership as distinctive roles and practices (Balogun et al., 2005), the implications of boundary-shakers as influencers, involved in power and politics and calling to action others in pursuit of a shared cause; the tacit reference to leaders and followers cannot be discounted. As such, the role of boundary-shaker adds much to the complexity of understanding what role(s) change agents perform.

Battilana et al., (2012) further develop the role of change agents within networks to include them in a brokerage role allowing divergence from stifling tendencies

¹ Interestingly, the paradox was not lost on various Total Quality Managers who were operating at the time of this research when, in discussions during MBA sessions, they commented on how, if they did their jobs properly, they were doing themselves out of a job. However, in those discussions, far from seeing job redundancy as a negative consequence, successful implementation of TQM was seen as a personal success and likely to be rewarded by a move to another significant role.

towards maintaining the status quo. Their research focuses on an exploration of structural holes concluding that networks rich in structural holes allows change agents the opportunity to explore non-redundant information. Exposure to non-redundant information is likely to engender creative thinking rather than repetitious and conforming tendencies brought about by cohesive networks and closure. The researchers introduce the notions of *reach* and *tailoring*. Reach relates to a change agent's social contact with the constituencies affected by a change project and their understanding of how the change will benefit those constituencies and how best to communicate those benefits. Tailoring refers to a change agent's control over information and communication techniques when choosing when and how to persuade diverse groups to act in support of a change project. What Battilana et al., are describing is a need for sophistication in political acumen and awareness of a portfolio of skills and competencies in order to fulfil the role requirements.

There is, however, an interesting discussion within the proposal of Battilana et al., that change agents have most impact when the proposed change presents considerable divergence from the existing patterns of practice and there are structural holes in the agent's network that provide scope for political behaviour. Where there was little divergence from the existing norms and the institutional status quo, change agents with relatively closed networks fare better. Much of the previous writing in this chapter has focused on the change agent seeking convergence with the proposed changes, a central theme very much in line with Lewin's views that change is a participative and personal learning process in the pursuit the change objective and that employees are expected the support organizational changes by implementing new desired behaviours (Armenakis and Bedeian, 1999).

There seems to be a disparity between expectations of employee reactions to change initiatives. Battilana et al., (2012) suggest that to assume convergence with the objective at the initiation of the change process does not give the change agent opportunity to deliver, for example boundary-shaking change, to best effect. Divergent change offers the change agent, as the only connecting presence among otherwise disconnected network contacts, brokerage opportunity to tailor the use of information to, and adjust their image in accordance with, each network contact's preferences and requirements. With divergent change, the extent of the structural holes in the change agent's network and the political skill to lever connectivity

provides the scope for change. Where change is not divergent, a change agent with closure in their network is likely to be more successful.

The researchers reflect on the tendency for change initiatives to be isomorphic (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) leading to convergence whereas the opportunity for more divergent change rests with different skills of different change agents with different networks. As such, whilst writers in the tradition of change as a unitarist process would see conformity to objective as the key success criteria, and the change agent's role is to develop convergence, Battilana et al., are proposing a contingency approach to change agents, with some providing a best fit for some circumstances and other agents with different skills and networks, providing a best fit for less controversial change.

If there is little to specifically describe the role of change agents (Van der Linde-de Klerk et al., 2015) then it is worth reflecting on developments that go beyond change managers and consultants of change having agency to be change agents and change leaders. Bushe and Marshak (2009) introduce the notion of dialogic change as opposed to diagnostic change that reflects traditional problem-centred approaches to change management. By contrast dialogic change explores the processes of social construction and sense-making of change conversations that take place in largely unscripted scenarios and depend upon improvisation for progression. Such conversations cannot ever be managed successfully as the conversationalists are operating in the moment and never in a fully controlled situation – akin to Boje's Tamaraland (2008). Such undermining of conventions of change agency offers scope for more innovative and critical research (By et al., 2011) and Weick (2011) provides example of such a move from tradition as he explores change agents as change poets.

The emphasis of Weick's proposition is that change agents as change poets deal with flux and hunches. Flux deals with the concrete experiences that are subject to normative tensions and embody the concrete of what is and what is preferred. Hunches are beyond something that is articulated and understood as of the moment. Hunches represent conceptual thinking as opposed to perceptual reality (Locke et al., 2008; Perin, 2005). Weick argues that change poets deal with forcing reinterpretations of the concrete into abstractions, from flux to hunches, but then also

seek to enable hunches to return to flux as participants in the change process are helped to increase the meaning of their present experiences (Weick, 2011). What Weick is proposing challenges the perceived reality that change is resisted because the prospect of uncertainty is problematic and uncomfortable. His notion goes further and suggests that without the support of change poets able to help in the reconstruction of flux to hunches and from hunches to flux, change will be resisted because what is on offer seems too far removed from the perceptual reality of what is known to have any relevance or meaning. Weick uses the notion of poet, but it does not seem unreasonable to present the poet as storyteller especially as poetic tropes are seen as essential to proper stories (Gabriel, 2000).

3.3 Responsibilities of Change Agents

Whilst there appears to be a reluctance to shed clear light on the role of change agents, some authors have provided suggestions in terms of responsibilities. Caldwell (2003) proposes that the responsibilities of change agents are to initiate, sponsor, manage and implement a specific change initiative or complete change programme. For Caldwell, these responsibilities involve the change agent throughout the change process. Alfes et al., (2010) do not seem to claim the same sense of involvement suggesting that change agents establish what is required, involve people in planning and managing change, provide advice on how change should be implemented, and communicate to people the implications of change. The change agent in this scenario seems to be more hands-off with others taking on more operational responsibilities. According to Ford et al., (2008) change agents have a responsibility to communicate frequently and enthusiastically about change, a point shared by Lewis et al., (2006). But they also posit that simply communicating change to achieve understanding will not lead to action. Change will only be enacted if the change conversation is linked to performance, that there is a call for action and that change recipients understand and can engage in what is expected and why.

Hardy (1994,1996) presents a set of responsibilities that are more political, where she describes the change agent as having responsibility to address and engage the power of the system through manipulating and skilfully negotiating power interdependencies to enrol staff to the change cause. This political perspective is shared by Clark (1995) who suggests that change agents have a responsibility to

create an impression of usefulness by convincing their seniors of their value and quality and is perhaps more akin to the notion of internal consultant. This idea of reputation and impression management was something that Pettigrew (1975) recognised as being important in change and the theme that blends these three authors together is the emphasis on creating an impression and building reputation to capture the commitment of others to the change intent. This emphasis relates to storytelling, the creation of a rich narrative and accompanying behaviours and resources that capture the imagination and support of the audience. The notions of reputation and impression are echoed by Armenakis and Harris (1993) in their view that change agents exercise responsibility for change through their credibility and interpersonal and social dynamics as they create a process for change readiness and enhance their reputation (Doyle, 2002). Ford et al., (2008) suggest that resistance to change is presented as irrational and dysfunctional and those preferred views favour change agents supporting the propositions of writers such as Eccles et al., (1992) to suggest eight preconditions for successful change and encourage change agents to analyse the likely organizational response to the preconditions in an attempt to predict whether resistance is likely to be high or insignificant. Furthermore, Eccles et al., (1992) suggest that careful analysis will also indicate a managerial judgement about timing and predisposition and suggests that the readiness factors can be managed, again a responsibility of the change agent.

This emphasis on readiness is something that has been brought to the forefront in change literature and although not a new construct, lack of readiness has been identified as major factor in change failure (Rafferty et al., 2013). Readiness has been defined as an individual's beliefs, attitudes, and intentions regarding the extent to which changes are needed and the organization's capacity to successfully undertake those changes (Armenakis et al., 1993: 681). This is refined further to include the emotional affective correspondence that individuals feel when making judgments "the extent to which an individual or individuals are cognitively and emotionally inclined to accept, embrace, and adopt a particular plan to purposefully alter the status quo" (Holt et al., 2007: 235). Rafferty et al., (2013) and Bartunek et al., (2006) propose that a responsibility for change agents is to identify which cognitive and/or affective components of change readiness are weak. Such analysis will enable change agents to determine whether a more intense execution of one or

more influence strategies is needed to improve the cognitive and/or affective components which in turn, can increase the likelihood of successful organizational change.

Furthermore, in increasing the readiness for change, empirical research has demonstrated that high-quality communication about the changes taking place increase acceptance, commitment to change and openness in discussion. Conversely poor quality communication results in the opposite including cynicism and rumours which often exaggerate the negative consequences of impending changes (Reichers et al., 1997; Wanous et al., 2000; Bordia et al., 2004, 2011). Such research highlights the need for the change agent to take responsibility for generating high-quality communication strategies. These strategies need to influence both feelings and thinking, and different forms of communication need to be implemented to influence both individuals' and groups' feelings and beliefs during change to ensure positive emotions and support (Brown et al., 2017; Rafferty et al., 2013; Fox et al., 2001).

Whilst the responsibilities of change agents provide a context in which they seek to influence the actions and behaviours of others, achievement of those responsibilities relies on the exercising of a complex portfolio of skills and competences. Lunenburg (2010) identifies change agents as anyone who has the skill and power to facilitate and provide direction to the change effort where success depends upon the quality and transferability of the relationship between the change agent and key decision-makers. Lunenburg is alluding to the contextual reading and political acumen that the change agent needs to wield.

Having discussed the role of the change agent in relation to being the storyteller of change, the next section reviews various sources that focus on the attributes that change agents are said to need.

3.4 The Skills and Competencies of Change Agents

The ability to influence change has been identified as a key management competence for the 21st Century (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2019; Worley and Lawler, 2006; Nikolaou et al., 2007; Woodward and Hendry, 2004). Paton and McCalman state that one of the key factors in change management is that effective

change needs competent change agents (2008:283). The concept of competence as applied to management emerged in the UK in the late 1980s following the initial development by Boyatsis (1982). The Training Commission established a definition of competence in 1988 and the Management Charter Initiative published competence-based standards for different levels of management in 1990.

Despite reservations about the rigidity of competency-based approaches to management and management development (Burgoyne, 1988; Smith et al., 1989) Buchanan and Boddy (1992) published a seminal text based upon research undertaken which included diary analysis of eight project managers and survey analysis of 114 usable responses to a national survey from which they constructed fifteen competences of the change expert. Whilst the competences appear unremarkable, as Buchanan and Boddy point out, simple possession of the competences does not secure successful change management. They argue that an understanding of the process of change and the context in which change is being undertaken is crucial. The expertise of the change agent is developed through the diagnostic and judgemental capabilities that the change agent employs when choosing to deploy those competencies appropriately, which in turn implies skilled competence.

Buchanan and Boddy (1992: 92-93) identify five competence clusters and fifteen attributes based upon the analysis of the diary transcripts. These are presented in table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1 Buchanan and Boddy (1992) Competencies and Attributes of the Change Agent

Goal Setting	Role Specification	Communications	Negotiation	Managing Up
<p>1. Sensitivity to changes in key personnel , top management perceptions, and market conditions, and to the way in which these impact the goals of the project in hand.</p> <p>2. Clarity in specifying goals, in defining the achievable.</p> <p>3. Flexibility in responding to changes out of the control of the project manager, perhaps requiring major shifts in project goals and management style, and risk-taking.</p>	<p>4. Team building abilities, to bring together key stakeholders and establish effective working groups and clearly to define and delegate respective responsibilities.</p> <p>5. Networking skills in establishing and maintaining appropriate contacts within and outside the organization.</p> <p>6. Tolerance of ambiguity, to be able to function comfortably, patiently and effectively in an uncertain environment.</p>	<p>7. Communication skills to transmit effectively to colleagues and subordinates the need for changes in project goals and in individual tasks and responsibilities.</p> <p>8. Interpersonal skills, across the range, including selection, listening, collecting appropriate information, identifying the concerns of others, and managing meetings.</p> <p>9. Personal enthusiasm, in expressing plans and ideas.</p> <p>10. Stimulating motivation and commitment in others involved.</p>	<p>11. Selling plans and ideas to others, by creating a desirable and challenging vision of the future.</p> <p>12. Negotiating with key players for resources, or for changes in procedures, and to resolve conflict.</p>	<p>13. Political awareness, in identifying potential coalitions, and in balancing conflicting goals and perceptions.</p> <p>14. Influencing skills, to gain commitment to project plans and ideas from potential sceptics and resisters.</p> <p>15. Helicopter perspective, to stand back from the immediate project and take a broader view of priorities.</p>

While the survey results offer equivocal support for the general applicability of the diary analysis, the researchers recognise that the competences are not comparable; they present a mix of skills, cognitive styles and personality traits that could or could not be subject to development interventions and with no suggestion of how they are related. Further, the context of change is essential to a full appreciation of how the 'tool-kit' might be used. Left as a list in an idealised, context-free state, they offer little as the expertise of the change agents emerges as adaptability to the context is enacted. Finally, the list appears to be nothing special in terms of a unique set of skills and attributes aligned to change management.

However, where Buchanan and Boddy seek to differentiate their analysis is by placing the change agent at the centre of process of change in which the change agent has responsibility to orchestrate the social construction of the process through their actions. "The change agent constructs the process, through time, faced with these facilitating and constraining contextual issues through the mechanisms of communication, justification, presentation, legitimation and negotiation – some front house, some backstage" (1992:115). Understanding of the context of change is paramount if the change agent is to be successful and secure support from those subject to the change.

The researchers also identify three agendas which impact the expertise of the change agent. These agendas concern the content of change, the control of change and the process of change. They apply their analysis to two different scenarios of change which they refer to as low vulnerability context and high vulnerability context. In low vulnerability context, content and control agendas take priority where the technical expertise of the change agent and conventional control techniques take priority. In high vulnerability contexts, process and control agendas take priority which requires different skills manipulation and expertise in processual models of change are perceived as being more relevant. What Buchanan and Boddy are accentuating are the differences between hard and soft models of change (Paton and McCalman, 2008; Senior and Swailes, 2016) and support for the previous analysis by Battilana et al., (2012) of the contingency approach to change agency and Hartley et al., (1997) who identified that whilst much of the literature on the role of change agents focused on their personal skills and competences, there is a need

to recognised the importance of the wider organizational context to informing how change agents should respond.

The divergence presented between hard and soft approaches to change is reflected in the research undertaken by Crawford and Nahmias (2010). The researchers found that there were significant differences between what Project/Program Managers do and what Change Managers do, with the former representing hard systems approaches and the latter using techniques and tools associated with soft systems approaches. They recognise that whilst the literature suggests a greater similarity between the competences expected to be used by Project/Programme Managers and Change Managers, their research suggests that Project Managers and Programme Managers may not possess the required competence or perform the full activities that Change Managers need when engaging with change that needs high levels of change in behaviours but a weak supporting culture and/or leadership. They identify a range of competences and activities that are needed to manage change and again highlight a review of the context to help decide what approach is best. These eight competences are leadership, stakeholder management, planning, team selection/ team development, communication, decision-making and problem solving, cultural awareness/skills and project management skills. The problem with this list is what Buchanan and Boddy sought to address by refocusing these seemingly general management competences into specific competences reliant to the management of change. Crawford and Nahmias suggest that this needs to be addressed by the professionalization of the role (2010:411).

Several writers are critical of the creation of universally-applicable abstracted lists of competences which are often far removed from the actual experience of management in situ (Alvesson and Wilmott, 1996; Argyris, 1990, 1997; Weick, 1995). They also argue for a deeper understanding of how competence is defined in specific situations, leading to competence being considered a subjective interpretation and preference based upon what managers are actually experiencing. Successful change management inevitably relies upon the relationship between those seeking to bring about change and those being required to change. How well that change is communicated is at the heart of the change process. Specific verbal behaviours by change agents can trigger resistance to change by change recipients (Klonek et al., 2014) and just as easily encourage readiness. The skill of the change

agent to understand how they impact on others and what can be done to influence desired change through recipient reaction, is seemingly a statement of competence, yet the contextually bound nature of management competence leads to a need for a linking mechanism. That mechanism could arguably be storytelling where stories and storytelling provide the means by which management competence is experienced, interpreted and validated within a specific context (Boje, 1995; Boyce, 1996; Gabriel, 1991; McKenna, 1999).

Presenting the change agent as storyteller suggests that the skill of the change agent-storyteller is predominant in capturing the attention of the recipient of change and persuading them to act in the desirable way. Karkan and Agarwal (2000) highlight the following key qualities of change agents and propose that change agents should have the subject knowledge required to implement the change initiative. They should be seen as caring but unbiased in their dealings with others. They should have a high level of energy and enthusiasm in order to keep others engaged and excited by the change opportunity. They should have sufficient influence to create readiness for change among those affected by the changes, and any perception of lack of credibility will render the change attempt unworkable. They should be feedback-oriented being able to provide and receive both positive and negative feedback and sensitive with their handling of feelings and sentiments. They require high level analytical abilities to enable them to correctly assess and resolve problems. Their approach to solving problems should be proactive instead of reactive supported by an ability to visualise and examine the consequences of their actions. Severini (2012) proposes the following attributes are critical for change agents: trustworthiness; resilience; conflict management skills; coaching skills; facilitation skills; communication skills; emotional intelligence; tolerance of ambiguity and the ability to manage polarities; a service mind-set; and a love of learning. Additional to this set of attributes, Weiman (1991) contends that it is not just the perceived credibility of a source that makes an opinion leader, the person's "strategic social location" (p. 276) is equally important. As such the contextual setting of the change agent is important in establishing credibility and trust.

Stagl (2009) suggests the key characteristics of successful change agents are competence and capability with systems thinking whereby they can see the relationships between moving parts. Specifically they identify those who are adept at

cultivating relationships at multiple levels of an organisation; are analytical and can manipulate data and measurements to assess progress; able to use multiple forms of influence to encourage people to try new things and adopt different behaviours; demonstrate resilience by effectively dealing with difficult, changing situations; have excellent facilitation skills and guide conversations between key stakeholders in the organisation and manage difficult conversations between organisational members; apply effective communication strategies that go beyond conversations by compiling and disseminating key messages in order to ensure that information is shared continuously and consistently; have energy and drive and display conviction that the change must and can happen; and are observant and socially skilled, able to detect what employees are thinking and feeling and their level of resistance in order to design appropriate interventions.

These characteristics of change agents suggest someone who is politically astute and practiced in approaches to securing support and followership. Lunenburg (2010) adds support to these characteristics when suggesting that successful change agency occurs when there is a sense of similarity between the change agent and the organizational members so that shared understanding leads to acceptance; empathy towards others and their feelings aids communications; collaboration in shared activities helps a sense of sharing in the process and structuring the change effort supports the shared design and implementation of the approach; a sense of proximity aids openness, transparency and trust. Other requirements are the need for rewards and positive outcomes in recognition for making changes and physical and psychological strength and energy to maintain action and overcome the energy sapping challenges of day to day pitfalls and knocks.

The ideas presented by Karkan and Agarwal, Severini, Stagl and Lunenburg emphasise the richness and diversity of personal attributes that are needed by change agents in attempting to gain the trust and commitment of others to learn to do things differently. Furthermore they allude to the need for change agents to develop complex storytelling techniques as they seek to develop new relationships and behaviours in those affected by change and that storytelling underpins competency in action (McKenna, 1999). Deep within the expectations of successful change agents is the notion of employee commitment to the change being implemented, which implies a need to engage and commit to the rigid story of

strategic vision and identify with the organization (Millar et al., 2012). Interestingly, research undertaken by Swailes (2004) provides a further opportunity that enables the change agent to go beyond the confines of grand organizational narrative and engage in more localised foci for commitment and in so doing, employ the rich narratives and discourse techniques associated with storytelling and stories. The previous chapter explored the literature on storytelling in organizations in more detail and provides a further research lens on the processes associated with storytelling with which the change agent, as storyteller, may knowingly or unwittingly engage.

Before leading to a conclusion about change agents and their activities and actions in the process of change, it is important to return to the actions taken by those exposed to change initiatives. Commitment to change requires a positive response by those that are affected by change. For recipients of change initiatives to engage in change, there needs to be something in the future state for them that are better than what they have now, or better than trying to reject change. As Schein (1996) points out in relation to Lewin's three-stage approach to change, the future state must provide a sense of safety if people are going to move. Consequently, change can provide both positive and negative reinforcement (Skinner, 1954) both will lead to the required behaviours associated with accepting change. Individual decisions to change will be based upon sense-making and how recipients of change interpret how proposed changes are communicated to them (Ford and Ford, 2009). The relationship between change agents and recipients of changes is a dynamic interaction situation and the verbal behaviour of change agents in influencing change recipient responses is a key component of resulting recipient behaviour (Amis and Aissaoui, 2013; Klonek et al., 2014). Important to this relationship is a recognition that the focus of attention is not necessarily on what is being driven by the change agent, but how that story is being interpreted by the recipient and that the interpretation can, and is likely to change over time, thus the relationship reflects a relational dialectic perspective (Montgomery and Baxter, 1998). What might have been interpreted favourably at the beginning may, over the course of the change taking place, be interpreted differently leading to other behaviour responses such as resistance, indifference, ambivalence and rejection (Ford and Ford, 2008; Lehmann-Willenbrock et al., 2011).

3.5 Change Agents and Followers

Inevitably when change agents embark on a programme of change they are seeking to win over any potential resistance and disruption to change by engaging support and commitment from recipients and followers. As argued by Swailes (2004) and Du Gay (1997) follower support and commitment is not simply a consciously 'nice' thing to have, but a means of achieving control over employees who are identifying with new ways of working and new values. However, far from being a passive relationship orchestrated by the superior skills and actions of the change agent, followers are co-equals in the relationship and have freedom of choice as to whether they follow and to what extent (Heller and Van Til, 1982; Kellerman, 2006; Baker, 2007).

The relational nature between followers and change agents as leaders of change needs to be explored and the assumption that followers take an active role in success or failure of organizational change builds on the work of Graham (1988) Kelley(1988) and Chaleff (1995). These three writers were greatly influential in their challenge of the dominant managerialist view that focused on leadership that motivated and inspired others to passive acceptance of the preferred way of thinking and behaving. Active followers (Follet, 1996; Hollander, 1992) create an interdependent relationship within a process of leadership in which both parties share responsibility for the success (or failure) of their relationship and thereby goal attainment (Howell and Shamir, 2005).

The recognition of both roles within a co-dependent relationship also requires that there is an acceptance of self-identity and self-concept in the roles being played out (Gardner et al., 2005; Collinson, 2006) and an understanding of how the roles impact upon each other. This co-influential relationship places significant potential power at the disposal of the followers and, given the idiosyncratic nature of sense-making, the consequences for change agent influence suggest a precarious position in terms of leadership power. Despite this potential diminishment in power for the change agent as leader, the task remains the same, to win over as many followers as possible to accept the changes being proposed. The complexity of the multiple relationships between the change agent as leader and followers as recipients of change is echoed in the importance of the recognition that followers are not all the same. Freedom of choice, to whatever extent that is perceived, leads to decisions about the extent to

which an individual chooses to engage in change and it is the follower's degree of involvement that determines the success of the change-agent/follower relationship (Kellerman, 2006).

It would appear reasonable to assume therefore, that if change agents are to win over multiple recipients of the change story, then the story has to contain significant depth and texture to appeal to many. As proposed by Dailey and Browning (2014) stories and storytelling require a more sophisticated understanding of the inherent complexity of narratives that transform and shift over time and telling. Furthermore, that perceived judgments of change agent legitimacy are crucial in maintaining support, or otherwise, of either their role or the story being told (Huy, et al., 2014). Klonek et al., (2014) and Ford and Ford (2008) present another complexity dimension, that change agents can themselves trigger resistance to change. They suggested that emergent resistance to change followed a potential dynamic interaction in agent-recipient conversations (Klonek et al., 2014) especially in relation to behaviours that constrained personal freedom where agent response designed to overcome recipient resistance merely entrenched resistance further.

What the writers were observing was a 'battle of wills' as recipients tried to communicate feedback to change proposals, interpreted as resistance (Ford et al., 2008). Consequently, where feedback was interpreted as negative, change agents tried to push through their preferred agenda, rather than engaging recipients in helping find shared solutions. As such, change agents can both inhibit or trigger recipient resistance and by exploring interactions, the dynamics of resistance can be identified. This relational and reciprocal engagement between agents and recipients presents a very important implication for storytelling. It is not enough for a change agent to be able to tell a good story, it is essential that change agents listen to recipients' change talk and to hear and respond to those they are seeking to influence (Catley et al., 2006, Moyers et al., 2009, Ford and Ford, 2009). The story itself now takes on a dynamic, as the change agent responds to the recipient reactions and unless the change agent can interpret those reactions appropriately, the impact of the story will diminish.

It is apparent that a tension emerges between the change agent responding to the reactions of the recipients and the need to tell 'the story' that the change agent wants

to achieve. If the change agent moves too far away from the intended story, then change will not be achieved in the way it was first designed and intended. If the change agent tries to enforce the intended story, then the change will not be accepted and resisted. It seems reasonable to conclude that as long as the story has currency and legitimacy to the recipients, as followers of the leader, then the change may have a chance of success, otherwise, without support and engagement, change will fail. The decision rests not with the change agent and the leadership and management of change, but with the choice of acceptance by those exposed to the decision. Interestingly and significantly, regardless of how well the decision to introduce change was constructed and researched, if the recipients to change cannot be convinced of the need to change, or lose conviction, the change will not be implemented. A further question emerges in relation to discretion, specifically how much discretion the change agent has to change the story? If the change agent has no discretion to move, then the likely consequence is stalemate, too much discretion and there is potential loss of leadership control.

Oreg and Sverdlik (2011) found that change recipients' personal orientation toward change interacts with their orientation toward the change agent. Specifically, in cases where recipients have a positive orientation toward the change agent, demonstrating high trust in management, good engagement and identification with the organization, then the relationship between employees' dispositional resistance to change and ambivalence was positive. The opposite pattern emerged among employees with a negative orientation toward the change agent. Their research suggests by accounting for, and predicting, recipient ambivalence, it may provide a more accurate explanation of employees' responses to change. Furthermore, they suggest that previous researchers may have been misinterpreting employees' reactions to change by not focussing on the possibility that some may simultaneously hold strong, yet conflicting, views about the change and that agent-centric perspectives of change are myopic in their demonization of resisting employees (Oreg and Sverdlik, 2011; Ford et al., 2008; Gaingreco and Peccei, 2005; Dent and Goldberg, 1999). Michel et al., (2013) also add support to the idea of context and relationship being important precursors of change acceptance rather more so than dispositional change as identified by Oreg ((2003). They suggest that even where individuals might have a dispositional tendency to resist change, their

conduct and actual resistance can be influenced by situational variables, such as group norms and the way change is managed.

These arguments present further support for the importance of the story in the change process. What can be assumed from the work of Michel et al., (2013) is that for some employees, despite having an inherent tendency to resist change, that an external influence can over-ride their internal predisposition. Whilst Oreg and Sverdlik (2011) are proposing that a dislike of the change agent's personality can lead to ambivalence towards the change or even resistance, what emerges from the more refined position of Michel et al., (2013) is a reasonable supposition that a good story in a well conceived and presented change programme could win over dissent, despite a dislike of the storyteller. This development of trust is supported by Langer and Thorup (2006) who found that the application of a polyphonic approach to organisational change communication and storytelling created a stronger connection and involvement in the change process.

A consideration of research on perceived justice undertaken by Lind and Tyler, (1988); Folger and Konovsky, (1989); Cobb et al., (1991, 1995) suggests that when employees perceive that the organization has treated them fairly, they may respond with loyalty, commitment, and trust. Even if the outcomes are perceived negatively, employees have been found to still respond positively, or be less likely to react negatively (Brockner, 1988; Konovsky and Folger, 1991). Loi et al., (2006) found that by focussing on the necessity to develop perceived organizational support in order to gain acceptance of the need for change and support for it; failure to justify the change through effective communication of the change could signal a lack of support from the organization, in turn affecting the willingness to embrace a change initiative. It would be reasonable to presume that as some employees lose a perception of organizational support as change progresses, so their support will diminish. The extent to which the change follower has faith in the change agent to deliver, thus demonstrating trust, is a fragile relationship. The act of trusting someone is tempered by the inherent risk of betrayal and where a relationship is based upon transactional reciprocity, withdrawal of trust and support is a greater risk (McAllister, 1995; Goto, 1996).

The building up of trust, and withdrawal of trust, also reflects the notion of nested reciprocities as presented by Wagman and Miller (2003) which in turn reflect the idea of 'standing patterns of behaviour' (Barker, 1968). These reciprocities are built upon an understanding of how behaviour is understood within different behaviour settings and how participants interpret the independence of individual behaviour settings from other settings. As such, the behaviour setting within corporate change process links the personal influence of the individual with institutional forces that inform specific behavioural response. Rather than seeing noncompliance with, or resistance to, a change agent's agenda as a personal rebuttal, it could well be more meaningful and constructive to understand reluctance to change as being the result of the attempt to alter an existing powerful influence structure (Francovich, 2008). This contextually-bound emphasis of change offers a more robust means by which change and change agent influence behaviour can be understood and supports the work of Klonek et al., (2014) and their work on the dynamics of resistance to change. There can be no doubt that the change agent-centric focus of traditional approaches to change are too simplistic and ignore the implications of complexity caused by personal influences, structural forces and naïve/ill-judged change agent behaviour. Furthermore, there are a myriad of dynamic flows of acceptance, resistance, ambivalence and engagement with change which presents a more plausible setting in which change occurs. The skill of the change agent is in ensuring that the overall balance of these flows is in the preferred direction of change.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an exploration how change agents influence change within organizations and proposed the change agent as bricoleur. The chapter focussed on the role, responsibilities and skills and competencies of change agents in an attempt to shed light on what change agents do, why and how they do it. However, the discussion based upon the existing literature tended to ignore the influence and significance of the follower as subject to and recipient of change interventions. There was considerable emphasis given to the need to have effective communications and the importance of presenting a normative 'good story' in which followers could position themselves and make sense of the change initiatives. The previous chapter helped identify the inadequacies of a monovocal story that

assumed acceptance and legitimacy, by focusing on the polyvocal nature of stories and storytelling. Traditional change agent-centric approaches tend to present the follower as passive in the relationship and the change agent as leader as the key influencer of change within the process. To counter-balance the over-emphasis on the role of the change agent as key architect and leader of change, the chapter then went on to discuss the role of followers in the change process and identified that there is a complex relationship between how followers construct meaning and make sense of change and the intentions of change agents as leaders of change. In developing the discussion on the significant role of followers, the chapter introduced the notion of the dynamics of change and how the change agents as storyteller needs to be aware of the impact of the change story on followers as individuals, groups and collectives. The chapter introduced the notion of the importance of how the dynamics of change vary and how the overall balance of acceptance and non-acceptance can impact on success or failure to achieve change. As discussed in the previous chapter, there are competing narratives in polyvocal organisations and many different opportunities to change allegiances and interpretations. This research will explore the dynamics of a change programme, with particular attention being given to the ebb and flow of acceptance and resistance. The intention is to identify the pivot point in the change process at which the balance between success and failure was breached and the change agent lost support of those previously willing to engage positively.

The following chapter will explore the research methods that will enable an exploration of the dynamics of change, the actions of the change agent and the responses of the followers as they sought to make sense of the change and, in time, their changing allegiances. The focus will be on storytelling as a key communication technique used by change agents in the process of change. Storytelling as a technique and storytelling methodologies allow the dynamics of change as a story to emerge and in so doing, will provide a means to explore the case of a failed change intervention.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Stories provide a linkage by which the past can be related to the present and the present to the future. In that sense they are purposeful in directing attention, perception and sense-making. They help employees grasp a sense of continuity through change and help the process of engagement with change (Boal and Shultz, 2007). However, reflection on the process of change that informs the story(ies) of the introduction of TQM at TRC, the case-story, shows that far from providing continuity, stories rise in the collective consciousness of the workforce, are sustained through the process of collective storytelling and then melt away when they lose relevance and are replaced by another more seductive story. It is this rising, sustaining and ebbing of a highly supported story that forms the focus of the analysis of the data. The use of multiple methods will enable opportunity for richer reflexivity, transparency and rigor of the research (Mays and Pope, 2000). Through multiple constructions of events and experiences it is intended to achieve greater authenticity and a more compelling interpretation for consideration, especially given the historical nature of the data.

This chapter discusses the approach to the research design, conduct, analysis and interpretation of the research data. There are two points of focus to the overall research approach. The first focuses on the original research that generated the data. The second addresses the redirection of the original research onto the different research question that emerged following re-examination of the research data. Both points of attention for the methodologies applied are underpinned by the interpretive research paradigm, presenting examples of qualitative research that emphasises discovery, meaning and descriptive rather than prediction (Laverty, 2003). As the latter is dependent upon the former, an evaluation of both the first research approach and the acceptability of secondary analysis are essential to ensuring the re-interpretation of the data meets the requirement for research validity. It is an essential aspect to all research that a carefully embedded research question is formulated (Sandberg and Alvesson, 2011) that enables the researcher to pose an innovative research focus that leads to interesting and significant results.

4.2 Secondary Analysis of 'Old' Data

In this research, the research process is already challenging and different because the primary research was completed over twenty years ago and is being re-examined in order to explore a different research question. And perhaps, this is where the opportunity to re-examine the data has provided a much richer vein of data for analysis than was ever envisioned with the original research that was focused on one particular aspect of organizational experience – TQM: What's in it for the workers? The original research design was constructed to respond to that question and proved to be inconclusive because TQM was never adopted in the host organization, even after six years of an organizational change programme. But what has happened since then is a re-awakening of the researcher into re-interpreting the data to explore what might provide an explanation as to why TQM was never introduced, and what can this tell organizational researchers about organizations in transition and change.

What the data have provided is the opportunity to explore the failure of the introduction of TQM through various lenses, previously through an examination of the Senior Management Team and its role in change failure, and in this research, an examination of the role of the change agent as storyteller. As Otake-Ebede and Sparrow (2016) found when researching into employees' perceptions of fairness and procedural justice, a multiple lens approach to HRM research in this area proved to be valuable and significant in helping deconstruct judgments and meaning construction. A multiple lens approach will be used in this research and draws on a definition of institutional work that highlights the interplay of individuals, groups and organizational structures, agencies and processes which create, maintain and disrupt institutional dynamics through reflexive and goal-orientated actions of capable actors (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2009; Battilana et al., 2009).

In essence, this research is much more akin to problematization and not gap-spotting - which is seen as the most dominant way of constructing research questions (Sandberg and Alvesson, 2016). Following Foucault's (1985:9) conceptualization of problematization, which proposes that the researcher seeks to know how, and to what extent, we can think differently rather than focusing on what is already known (Webb et al., 2014) re-thinking the dominant discourse of

'purposeful' and 'managed' change from the perspective of storytelling may allow the researcher to challenge the assumptions underpinning the dominant ideology in a significant way (Bartunek et al., 2006).

. As already stated, the data being used is 'old and the case for resurrecting this data has already been introduced.. 'Importantly, there are two pertinent points to make about the secondary analysis of the data the original research generated. Firstly that the data has already been analysed in relation to a previous research question that accepted the dominant ideological perspective that top management support was an essential requirement for successful organisational change The research explored the role of top management teams in organisational change, specifically from a point of organisational change failure and called into question the notion of a top management team as being unproblematic. Aspects of that research will inform some of the analysis of this research. Secondly, this interpretation of the data locates the research within a framework and paradigm of praxis and managerialism and explores something completely different and goes beyond the confinement of the assumptions of a dominant organisational ideology. The data being used is much wider than that which informed the previous research. Consequently, the richness of the data generated has to provide some basis for supporting the proposition that qualitative secondary analysis can reveal fresh insights from already existing data, especially from analysing old data from a new research perspective (Tate et al., 2018; Irwin and Winterton, 2011; Gladstone et al., 2007; Bornat, 2010; Holland and Thomson, 2009).

The research question being examined applies several different, but complementary research approaches to explore the phenomenon, all under the general umbrella of storytelling analysis. Each approach presents a different focus to add texture and depth to the ensuing development of interpretation. Specifically the research will apply *narrative analysis* (Reissner and Pagan, 2013; Reissner 2008, Gabriel, 2008) in which narrative is refined to address temporal chains of inter-related activities, actions, happenings and events undertaken by actors; *story* (Reissner and Pagan, Gabriel, 2008) as the 'small' focused narratives with plots, characters, interventions, conversations and twists that lead to interpretations and individualised meanings; *storytelling* (Kendall and Kendall, 2012; Boje, 1992, 2001, 2008; Brown et al., 2009; O'Neill, 2002; Sole and Wilson 2002, Baker and Gower, 2010) with particular

emphasis on the multiple perspectives of the emerging stories and on who is telling the story; and *rhetorical analysis* with some peripheral reflection on revealing implicit understanding through enthymemes (Knight and Sweeney, 2007; Hamilton, 2005). This distinction is, in itself, not without problems and there will be considerable attention within the chapter given to Storytelling and the development of different paradigms of approach to storytelling research. Such analysis will be based upon a discussion of facets of storytelling research design that proposes a clear tension between narrative philosophies and living story and how antenarratives provide a process connection between the two to enable interpretation and sensemaking to emerge (Bakhtin, 1981; Boje, 2011; Rosile et al., 2013).

It is obvious to the reader that the data being analysed is now over twenty years old and its relevance to contemporary organizations might be called into question. Certainly the context in which the original research took place is no longer a high-profile feature of management interest, that is, the introduction of TQM into a manufacturing organization. Consequently, the narratives that were recorded and the interactions that took place gave rise to intertextuality and conversations commensurate with that time and space (Gee, 2014). However, what retains a resilience is the notion of organizational change and the contribution of change agents to change programmes (Battilana and Casciaro, 2012; Cummings and Worley, 2014; Huy et al., 2014). The research undertaken provides a unique insight into the role, actions and emotions of a change agent in his attempts to secure change and it is contested that the context provided only the setting for that action to play out, the messages gleaned from what took place are as relevant today as they were then. It is posited that a body of data can reasonably support more than one analytic interpretation as themes previously unexplored are addressed leading to new inferences, explanations and possibilities about the original experiences (Heaton, 2004; Fielding and Fielding, 2000; Irwin and Winterton, 2011).

Heaton describes the increasing interest in the use of secondary analysis as a 'new and emerging methodology' (2004:35) and suggests that it is the utilisation of existing data that has been generated for the purposes of a prior study, in order to pursue a research interest that is distinct from the original study (Heaton, 1998:1). Heaton's description of secondary analysis implies the need for the work to be conducted by the original researcher, or a researcher who has access to the original

researcher a feature borne out by research undertaken by Gladstone et al., (2007) Bishop (2007) and Andrews (2008). However, Mason (2007) and Van den Berg (2005) do not accept the premise that the primary researcher's presence is important to establish validity and Moore (2006) proposes that re-use of data should be considered more as a re-contextualisation of the data. Irwin and Winterton cite the work of Savage (2005) especially his notion of abstraction which he used to great effect in his re-use of the data of Goldthorpe and Lockwood's seminal work on *The Affluent Worker* (1968) from which Savage was able to reveal new interpretations that were inhibited by preconceptions of the original researchers. Furthermore, Seale (2011) suggests that as qualitative data can be exposed to analysis by a wide range of methods different from those used in the original analysis, the assumption made by critics of secondary analysis that the methods will be the same, is fallacious. However, in this instance, the researcher is the primary researcher and this negates some of the criticisms posed by Hammersley (1997) and Mauthner et al., (1998) who suggest that the peculiarities of the original context are lost to subsequent researchers and this impinges upon the value to be gained by primary researchers in having a specific and privileged relationship to the data they generate.

Andrews (2008) makes an important point in support of secondary analysis reflecting how researchers develop analysis based upon acquired knowledge, sense-making and understanding which is not static. Consequently, a researcher returning to data not only brings new experiences and new understandings of old experiences, but also interpretations of the lives of others. This fluidity of interpretation presents an exciting proposition for the qualitative researcher re-using data and presents a compelling rationale to re-visit data and open up to new possibilities of interpretation. This sense of opportunity is identified by Reissman (2004) who suggests that there is never a single authorised meaning of data, simply different readings and she identifies the sense of layered complexity of re-visiting and re-analysing data. Furthermore, it is suggested that the opportunity to yield more interpretations by exploring data with a new lens, is evidence of the resilience and vitality of narrative data and that any interpretation is only provisional, it being subject to more readings as is the data (Andrews, 2008:98) Providing the data collection meets with the practices and principles of good research collection, the suggestion is that there is no moment in time that lends itself to a truer interpretation than any other

(Brockmeier, 2006). Interpretations exist on a continuum, linked by the original data but not bounded by finality. As Irwin and Winterton suggest, the value of secondary analysis treats 'research projects as a means to an end and not an end in their own right' (2011:8).

Perhaps a further way in which the data can be considered valid as a source for contemporary theorizing is through the reflection on the actual approach to data generation, review and analysis. In the original process of collection the research was underpinned by Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and an expectation of emergence of theory from the data. The key feature of grounded theory is the notion that theory would emerge without theoretical preconceptions, contamination and bias, yet this purity of thought seems naïve in relation to the reality of research praxis. As pointed out by Timmermans and Tavory (2012: 170) the inductive process of theory generation that grounded theory established created an epistemological and practical dilemma. Grounded theory required the researcher to cast adrift any pre-existing theory but also required the researcher to demonstrate theoretical sensitivity based upon a familiarity with existing theories. As such, Timmermans and Tavory suggest a greater logic for theory development is through abduction which is distinct from both induction and deduction. They suggest that

“abduction is the form of reasoning through which we perceive the phenomenon as related to other observations either in the sense there is cause and effect hidden from view, in the sense that the phenomenon as seen is similar to other phenomena already experienced and explained in other situations, or in the sense of creating new general descriptions.”
(2012:171)

At the core of abduction is, what Fann (1970) described as, a set of ideas that lead to a synthetic inferential process that progresses to the production of hypotheses. In this process, the development of new hypotheses stems from the researcher drawing on research evidence that is unexpected and then through creative inference an explanation is constructed. Identified by Pierce (1934) who saw abduction as the only logical operation which introduces any new ideas, the process provides the category into which observations fall, that is, starting with the consequences and then construct the reasons. In secondary analysis, consequences can be uncovered and reinterpretation provides the opportunity to construct reasons. As with history, there are many interpretations to be told about

what did, did not, may or may not have happened. Through a process of re-description and re-contextualisation abduction enables new meaning to be given to already known phenomena (Danermark et al., 2002; Meyer and Lunnay, 2013).

Habermas (1978) suggests that the process of abduction provides a *modus operandi* to broaden knowledge and stimulate the research process. In doing so abduction shows how something might be. Abduction allows and encourages the researcher to go beyond the theoretical framework of deductive inference and identify data that are not constrained by the initial theoretical premise (Meyer and Lunnay, 2013). Abductive analysis aims to enable the generation of fresh theoretical intuitions and insights that reinterpret empirical findings in a distinctive way (Timmermans and Tavory, 2012). Building on imagination and creativity as the means by which associations are formed, abduction enables the researcher to identify relations and connections not necessarily evident when constrained by an a priori theoretical framework. What is also apparent is that revisiting the phenomenon is essential to abduction and that revisiting experiences leads a re-experiencing of the phenomenon, it is perceived and made meaning of in a different way. This difference of interpretation echoes Andrews' (2008) point about the richness of returning to data and interpreting data through a new 'self' and often seeing things in a different way. The data is not new, but the examination and re-thinking is new because the researcher is 'new'. As Haig (2008) suggests:

Theory is broader than both the inductive and hypothetico-deductive accounts of scientific method. The abductive theory of method serves as an organising framework within which a variety of more specific research methods can be located, combined and used to give the abductive theory method of method operational bite. (p1019)

The original data will be reinterpreted using two complementary points of research focus to explore the phenomenon of the change agent as storyteller. The first lens is linked to a classic BME story that provides the context and frame of reference in which the change took place. As such, this story reflects what Reissner and Pagan (2013) and Gabriel (2008) define as a narrative which is bigger and constitutes more complex frames of meaning drawn from a wide range of stories. In this research the narrative tells of the introduction of TQM as a new approach to management in TRC. It follows a programme of change that started in 1991 and ended in 1997. Essentially this is a narrative of organizational change about the introduction of TQM. The

compiler of the narrative of the change is the researcher. The story being told about TQM is told by the change agent to other organizational actors and to the researcher, clearly at different times as the researcher was never witness to the activities where the change agent formally presented the story of how TQM was to be enacted in TRC. This type of storytelling reflects the idea of storytelling as a management tool (Collins, 2012) exemplified in practitioner publications such as Clark (2004) Denning (2005, 2007) and Smith (2012). The key point here is that the change requires new learning of ways of working and the prevailing story was to engender new behaviours and experience (Reissner, 2005). This requires individuals to create new meanings of their workplace and thereby impact upon the culture and value system in operation.

The second focus examines more closely the accompanying transcripts taken at two points during the change programme, 1994 and 1997. These transcripts are the exact responses of the interviews conducted by the researcher and provide a different type of storytelling which is much more perceptive and unbounded in terms of what is being said. Despite the parameters of the conversations between the researcher and the interviewees being loosely governed by the interview questions, the ensuing conversations were allowed to flow in the direction led by the participants. Consequently, this more natural-style storytelling of the experiences of the participants of TQM links more closely to the ideas of storytelling described in the academic literature (Bruner, 1986, Boje, 1991, 2008, Boyce, 1996, Czarniawska, 1997, 2004, Gabriel, 2000, 2008, Rhodes and Brown, 2005). These stories are also akin to 'living stories' (Boje, 2008; Rosile, 1998) they reflect the personal experiences, reminiscences, values, highlights, lowlights and interpretations of those who were interviewed. The analysis of these stories will provide the basis for the review of the change agent as storyteller. Their stories about a story enable the researcher to explore the changing dynamics of the storyteller's ability to influence the recipients of the story he told. Some additional analysis will draw on the rhetorical method for analysis of talk that attempts to reveal implicit understanding through enthymemes, as espoused by Knight and Sweeney (2007) Herakleous (2006) and Hamilton (1997, 2005). The overall approach to reinterpretation of what took place between those years will draw on the classic works of Collins and Rainwater (2005) in which the researchers offer a reanalysis of a tale of corporate

transformation, and Vaughn (2004) whose reanalysis of The Challenger disaster led to the uncovering of major flaws in the managerial decision-making processes at NASA.

4.3 Re-storying stories of change

It is intended that by re-storying (Boje, 2008) the story of the change to focus on the change agent and then reanalysing the interviewees' stories to explore the reactions to the storyteller by those subject to the story, a different interpretation of the change agent as storyteller may emerge. This in turn will address the realistic expectation that simply by presenting an agent of change with a 'good' story, successful change cannot be assumed. By linking the stories to the narrative of the change programme, which was unsuccessful, the analysis should be able to follow the development of the story as narrative from an epic story to a tragedy and the change agent from hero to 'nobody' (Collins and Rainwater, 2005). The extent to which the change process can be sustained is dependent upon the popularity of the reception the story can generate. The reception depends on particular social expectations being justified, shared and aligned so that the story becomes legitimate. As long as the story has relevance, credence and value to the listeners there is a chance that the story will be sustained, but this is where organizational storytelling becomes relational and not simply an act of, and by, management (Izak et al., 2015; Reissner and Pagan, 2013).

The discourse of organizational change involves stories, myths, narratives, untold stories and silence (Jansson, 2014; Bathurst et al., 2010; Buchanan and Dawson, 2007, Vaara and Tienari, 2011, Izak et al., 2015). All combine as individuals seek to make sense of their experiences and construct some sense of reality. Grant and Marshak (2011) pose the question about 'how do discourses construct social reality during organizational change?' and this research aims to review that question by exploring the way in which discourses were initiated, developed, contradicted and changed. The ability to construct meaning through the telling of stories (Reissner, 2005, Bruner, 1986) and to construct social reality (Weick, 1995; Reissner, 2008) ensures that analysis of narratives and stories are important and valuable research methods in the field of organizational change. Through dialogues and stories being

told, change agents as strategic leaders of change shape evolving participant interactions that enable shared meanings to emerge (Boal and Shultz, 2007). Successful change, interpreted as the implementation of intended outcomes, requires a dynamic of complementary stories if new ways are to be adopted, whereas failure to tell/retell and enact the accepted discourse will result in lack of commitment/confidence to perform the desired change. Baron and Misovich (1999) present this generation of common ground as being the result of the 'shareability constraint' which acts to enable direct perceptions to be elaborated into shared cognitive structures in the process of co-ordination.

The stories during change are dynamic and multi-dimensional and the ability of the change agent to maintain support for, and adherence to, the purposeful intent of a change programme requires skilled intervention. It is in the creating, telling and retelling of significant stories that change agents attempt to influence the adaptation of the organization as past, present and future coalesce and connect. The future of the organization is inextricably linked to its past (Pettigrew, 1990) so change needs to be construed historically (Van de Ven and Poole, 1995, Reissner, 2005) and by understanding the stories of organizations, researchers are able to construe some interpretation of visible behaviours (Iedema, 2003). Storytelling within organizations allows individuals to share their explicit knowledge and their implicit understandings of the context in which they are operating, so the outcomes of storytelling depend heavily on the situation in which the process takes place.

If the storyteller is to be able to influence the audience in any meaningful way, the storyteller needs to be able to assure the audience of his/her authority in that context. Consequently, as discussed earlier, inevitably, storytelling is also linked to notions of power and politics (Ford and Ford, 2009; Grant and Marshak, 2011; Jansson, 2014). Viewed this way, the storyteller in change becomes a strategist attempting to persuade others towards an intended goal, a new way of thinking and behaving. In this sense the story being told is intended to capture the hearts and minds of those who hear the story and compel them, through choice, into following. Far from being a passive relationship, the co-construction of new ways of working accepts the power of the follower to resist and rebel, ignore and deny the preferred outcome of the storyteller. Consequently, the change agent as storyteller presents a story which is precarious and represents and reflects a continuing tension between

those who would lead in one direction and those who are tasked to follow (Barry and Elmes, 1997, Foucault, 1994, McCabe, 2009).

4.4 Methods of Analysis

What follows is a discussion of the various methods that will be used in the analysis of the data. The epistemology is essentially constructionist and assumes that reality is constructed as a social process through the interactions of organizational actors. This stance supports the claim that social constructionism makes no ontological claims (Berger and Luckmann, 1966: Burningham and Cooper, 1999). This position is not one that denies the existence of reality, but rather focuses on the meaning of reality being socially constructed. Social constructionism presents reality as a subjective construct and researchers present their findings not in objectivist terms but through the plausibility of their findings (Andrews, 2012). The findings of research from a social constructionist epistemology are presented as one of many discourses in an attempt to lead debate and generate change following the research process that has inductively developed a theory or pattern of meanings for discussion and review (Creswell, 2003).

The social nature of constructionism is important, especially in relation to the current research focus on storytelling. Social constructionism focuses on the everyday interactions between people and how they use language to make sense and meaning of their experiences to create their reality (Young and Collin, 2004). Although this research is underpinned from a social constructionism perspective it is useful to mention the distinction between social constructionism and constructivism although, as Charmaz (2002, 2006, 2008) points out, they are often used interchangeably. More strictly, the latter focuses on the much more psychologically informed understanding of how individuals mentally construct experience through cognitive processes rather than the social focus of social constructionism (Young and Collin, 2004) and whilst this distinction is presented here, it has to be said that Charmaz's observation may also be true in some of the readings reflected in this review.

It is also useful to explore the relationship between social constructionism and grounded theory - an important link, as the original research design was grounded theory (Glazer and Strauss, 1967). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, grounded theory is seen as having its roots in positivism that was dominant in the mid-20th Century with its attention on seeking to answer 'why' questions. The grounded theory expressed by Glazer (1978, 1992, 1998) tends to be more from an objectivist perspective seeking to explain rather than interpret. Charmaz (2002, 2006) indicates ways in which to move the method more towards a social constructionist perspective where both 'what' and 'how' questions underpin the research process and emphasize a more abstract, less rationalistic, understanding of empirical phenomena located in the specific circumstances of the research process (Silverman, 2010, Holstein and Gubrium, 2008). This discussion of the move towards a more interpretative perspective of grounded theory is useful because it does not deny the more positivist platform that informed the original data collection but enables a more satisfactory appreciation of the various methods that will be used in the ensuing research, including the application of rhetorical analysis which is based upon logic, a clearly rational activity. The logic of rhetoric, especially the use of syllogisms and enthymemes, has been used successfully by Feldman and Almquist (2012) to analyse how storytellers intentionally or unintentionally use the telling of stories to assist in getting their message across to their audience.

This thesis draws on two integrated analyses of the empirical data. The first is the establishment of a case-study that is now presented re-storied and providing a meta story (McCormack and Milne, 2003). The second draws on hermeneutic phenomenology and focuses on in-depth analysis of the two sets of interviews from 1994 and 1997. This deep analysis will enable a more informed interpretation of the interviewees' experiences and opinions of the role undertaken by the TQ Manager and his attempt to introduce TQM.

Primary and secondary data were collected during 1994 and 1997. There were four methods of data collection. The most difficult to organise method of primary data collection were the employee interviews intended to allow participants to reflect on recent experiences. Where possible, the interviews were conducted either in the interviewees' normal work area, or a room that was close to their normal work area. This was done to help the interviewees feel more comfortable in being in a research

environment that would not disrupt useful conversation from being in an alien setting and, in which the researcher also can experience a congruent frame of reference setting as those being interviewed (Wilson, 1977).

A second source of primary data was generated following attendance at a Board Meeting, held in 1995. The main agenda was to discuss the introduction of TQM and the author, with the TQ Manager, made a presentation on the research to date, but was also allowed to be present for the whole meeting enabling the researcher to observe and record the senior management of TRC in a team setting.

The third method of establishing primary data was through informal discussion with the TQ Manager and towards the end of the data gathering process, the Customer Services Officer. The informality of these meetings encouraged both actors to express their personal feelings far more readily. Neither requested their comments be treated off-record and, as the content was focused very much on the research topic, it was not possible to ignore the content of these discussions.

A fourth method of primary data collection was from attendance in meetings with individual managers at their request, the most significant being with the Quality and MIS Director in 1996 in which the TQM Manager Designate was also in attendance. Unlike the meetings with the TQ Manager and his assistant, these were formal requests for attendance and the meeting agenda was led by the manager who had made the invitation.

It is quite clear that the researcher in data collection methods two, three and four was adopting more of an ethnographic approach during which the researcher was both observer and immersed in the settings, and in some instances, participant. During these meetings there were no indications of the others in attendance being uncomfortable with the presence of the researcher and no attempt at censorship of the meetings' content were attempted.

The informal discussions with the TQ Manager and his assistant, the attendance and participation in the Board meeting, and the ad hoc senior manager meetings were quite clearly two-way discourses. What is also contested is that these discussions have taken on a more significant role in terms of the 'new' research. Daniels (1983) suggests that 'real conversation' has the potential to make interviews more honest, morally sound and reliable creating a picture that is more realistic. However, the

situations in which the researcher was acting as participant observer were not formal interviews. More helpfully, Adler (1985) suggests that the researcher must try to adapt to the world of the individual being studied and that only by sharing concerns and outlooks can anything be learned at all. Iacono et al (2009) agree, proposing further that participant observation adds to the researcher being able to capitalise on their unique circumstances to produce academic research which is interesting, contemporary, accessible and relevant to scholars alike. These meetings offered opportunities to uncover rich data that were not being accessed by the more formal interview method, a point in favour of participant observation (Anderson, 2008). The contention is that the discussions do provide valid research data. Furthermore according to (Holstein and Gubrium, (2016: 79) 'the challenge of framing the interview as a thoroughly active process is to carefully consider what is said in relation to how, where, when, and by whom narratives are conveyed, and to what end' and these meetings that were captured and noted offer important research data for the analysis of the change agent as storyteller.

Informal meetings took place with the TQ Manager on nine occasions, usually over coffee or lunch. There were two informal meetings with the TQ Manager and the Customer Services Officer. The Board meeting took place in early 1995. Informal meetings took place with the Quality and MIS Director in late 1996, at which the TQ Co-ordinator designate was also in attendance for the second part of the meeting. The Manufacturing Director held two informal meetings with the researcher in 1995 and 1996, during which he further expressed his dissatisfaction with the MD and the HR Director.

Despite the acceptance of the presence and participation of the researcher, there could be ethical issues that are thrown up by the research process, in particular, the possible significance of the discussions between the researcher and the TQ Manager. Following general principles as identified by Silverman (2010) consent was freely given and participants were told that they could redact anything that they felt may compromise their position, identity or feeling of comfort. In particular, as 'gatekeeper' throughout the research process, the TQ Manager could not have misconstrued his involvement. More than any other person involved from TRC the TQ Manager knew what was happening and the role, intentions and objectives of the

researcher. At no time did he specifically request that anything he said be either not recorded or expunged. There was throughout an assurance of confidentiality. Also, whilst at the beginning of the research the TQ Manager did express some concern that his comments might make him identifiable and he wanted right of veto (a request that was nominally accepted) towards the end of the research, when he knew that he was leaving, his commentary became richer and more explicit. As such, the author would assert that the TQ Manager gave implicit consent to the informal discussions being included in the data. None of the other participant asked to see their contributions or expressed any concerns about what they said or presented as data.

At no time through the research process was there any attempt to deceive the participants and especially the TQ Manager about the role and purpose of the research. However, where a moral dilemma for the researcher did emerge, was in relation to what the researcher knew of the future of the TQ Manager and his replacement. This information was not known by the TQ Manager. This inevitably caused some requirement for deception during later discussions because to divulge such information would have broken ethical codes of confidentiality elsewhere. What was extremely difficult to deal with was the extent to which the TQ Manager was upset by the news of his replacement and the internal conflict that the author felt in knowing that her reaction to this 'news' was not genuine. Furthermore, there was also the very delicate situation regarding trust that would have been severely affected had the TQ Manager become aware that the author had known the information prior to himself. However, the future of the TQ Manager was already a point of interest during the 1997 interviews, so the subsequent solution was one of several possible outcomes that were in common discussion.

As Bulmer (1982) suggests "Identities, locations of individuals and places are concealed in published results, data collected are held in anonymized form, and all data kept securely confidential"(p.225). At no time during the research was information gained from the discussions with the participants divulged explicitly to other respondents. Sometimes the information was used to inform questions, but the source was never acknowledged or presented in a way that the source could be identified. However, as in all cases, the respondents could be clearly identified

because they had been chosen by the TQ Manager following discussion with various other managers. Where this was likely to cause a dilemma for the author was in the writing of the case-study. However, because the case-study has now changed focus, the use of narrative is different and the comment owner can be more obscured. In this sense the respondents are better protected, and given the time lapse, many of the 'players' are no longer in situ.

One of the features of the research that the author found difficult to cope with towards the end was the sense of having 'let down' the TQ Manager. Clearly the author had internalised the sense of despair that the TQ Manager so often displayed and the author felt very much party to that experience. There was the feeling that the TQ Manager had been betrayed by both the management and the author, for different reasons. In the case of the author it was because she had known the intentions of the senior management. However, whilst at the time the author felt upset by what was taking place, to assume that she could have changed anything was naïve.

In considering the standpoint of the author in the research process, reflection has allowed a more objective evaluation. Whereas during the period immediately following the research the author felt considerable emotional discomfort by what she had experienced, the author is confident the research undertaken was morally and ethically sustainable and the methods used legitimate and valid. Furthermore, that the re-focusing of the research has enabled a critical evaluation of the TQ Manager as change agent and storyteller, and that the data gathered during the research process will provide reliability in the ensuing analysis.

Supporting secondary data was collected from a variety of sources. The company published several different documents on the introduction of TQM, specifically an employee magazine produced monthly and a weekly bulletin for the staff notice boards. The manual for the *Introduction to TQM* training that was intended to be presented to all staff on a rolling two-day programme, was shown to the author, but not allowed to be taken away for deeper review. The training programme included clear statements about the aims and objectives of TQM within TRC, and introduced

expectations about future employee participation and contribution. Additional notices about Total Quality activities in the form of ad hoc notices for the notice boards or information leaflets distributed in the communal areas were also provided for review and consideration.

The final sources of secondary data came from memoranda and printed communications between and were supplied by individuals during the research process. As these sources were subject to personal bias depending on the agenda of the contributing person, reliability could have been compromised by their partiality. However, because they were frequently used to support a point that an interviewee was making, face value was high and this positively impacted their credibility.

Field notes were kept throughout the data collecting process and added considerable support to the development of the ensuing case-study of the change programme at TRC. It is proposed that the use of various different methods of data collection was important to the reliability, validity and quality of analysis.

According to Stablein (1966) case data types share a common representational process of multi method immersion, most commonly described as 'triangulation'. Denzin defines triangulation as "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" (1979:297). Two types of triangulation were used in the original research, data and methodological triangulation. The various sources of data enabled corroboration and allowed validity and reliability to emerge. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) suggest that triangulation strengthens qualitative research providing an opportunity for greater data convergence validation and of gaining multiple perceptions to clarify meaning and verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation (Stake, 1994). Methodological triangulation provides the researcher with a more holistic view of the setting and helps corroboration (Mason, 1996; Morse, 1996).

The choice of interviewees presented an interesting compromise for the researcher. Sensitive negotiations were required between the TQ Manager, who took on a *gate-keeper* role and the senior managers with the objective of gaining trust and acceptance of the importance and credibility of the research. At this stage, the researcher was not given the opportunity to address the senior managers and all discussions were conducted with/through the TQ Manager. A fundamental

requirement for the researcher was the need to have access to employees representing all levels of employees. The researcher was strongly advised that any attempt to establish a sample on the basis of statistical determination would be ignored, potentially putting the research project at risk. Following negotiations between the researcher and the TQ Manager and subsequently the TQ Manager and senior management it was agreed that the following would constitute the research group:

Managing Director

Personnel Director

Manufacturing Director

TQM Manager joined in 1997 by the Customer Services Officer

Chief Development Engineer

Tendering Manager

Production Manager A and B (the first interviewee A took early retirement and the second interview was with his replacement B)

3 Trades Union Representatives (representing E.E.T.P.U., A.U.E.W.,

T & G W. U.)

5 Production Operatives from Relays Assembly (chosen by the shop stewards)

5 Production Supervisors: done in two groups.

5 Production Operatives from Instruments Engineering

5 Staff Personnel

Although not entirely satisfactory to the author, one-to-one interviewing was not an option. It was agreed that to generate as little disruption as possible, the meetings with the supervisors, trades union representatives, operatives and staff personnel would be group interviews. The group meetings were conducted in rooms close to

their work stations, whilst the managers were, without exception, interviewed in their own offices. There were thirteen interviews conducted in 1994 and thirteen in 1997.

There was a significant gender imbalance in the interview groups. There were no female managers in 1994 and only one in 1997. However, this reflects the male dominated gender balance throughout the company. Within the supervisors' study group, only one supervisor was female and out of the three groups of production operatives and staff personnel, only 4 of the 15 participants were female. At the time of the research 80% of the workforce was male, 97% of managers were male and at the supervisory level, only 5% were female. Systemic misogyny was exemplified in the interview process when three of the male supervisors would not be interviewed with the female supervisor present. They insisted that she would not understand their views as her experience was not the same, declaring she did not know what she was talking about and should not be treated in the same way as them. Given that the interviews were set up with this preference unchallenged demonstrates the degree to which the management of TMC were prepared to tolerate sex discrimination.

Easterby-Smith et al., (1991:72) suggest the most fundamental of all qualitative methods is in-depth interviewing enabled through un-structured interviews. The flexibility generated by the unstructured interview over structured interviews provides a greater breadth of rich information. The aim of the empirical research was to generate the information that would describe and help understand the knowledge and behaviours of those involved and exposed to the introduction of the new working practices. It was also important that interviewees were able to express their experiences without being forced into a framework that reflected the prior understanding of the researcher.

In keeping with suggestions of Fontana and Frey(1994) the interviews started with a session in which the respondents were asked to explain their *biographical* details in relation to their employment with TRC. Firstly it was important to establish to what extent they had experience of the current practices of TRC and therefore their ability to comment on change. Secondly, biographical information is unthreatening to the respondent and was used to help provide an element of comfort. When the interviews tackled more sensitive topics and it was hoped that the respondents

would not feel threatened and would answer the questions without fear of repercussions. All the interviewees were assured of confidentiality and the author took time to explain the purpose of the research and the research process. An essential requirement of the interview process was to fully inform the interviewees about the process in which they were involved and ensure they considered that their rights were being properly regarded. The extent of willingness of the respondents to share their feelings and experiences was gratifying.

Throughout the interviews questions were formulated on the basis of laddering (Easterby-Smith et al.; 1991). The researcher took care to ensure that there was enough information on which to base comparative analysis and to enable the coding process to occur. Also, information gained in the earlier interviews, inevitably, influenced the questions posed to those at the end of the interview schedule, and the researcher needed to ensure that researcher bias did not develop because of the freedom gained from conducting unstructured interviews (Kumar, 1996:109).

The first set of interviews were both tape-recorded and noted. Lofland, (1971) and Ghauri et al.; (1995) suggest that this approach to recording information is most useful. Silverman (2010) reflecting contemporary technology suggests recording provides the most accurate account of what was said, including nuance and vocal expression. However, some of the respondents commented on feeling inhibited by the available equipment and two of the managers asked that their interview was not recorded. Furthermore, setting up the equipment and making sure that the microphone was close enough to the interviewee to obtain a clear recording proved disruptive and unsettling for several of the respondents. Another problem occurred because the interviews took between one-and-a-half and two hours. There was a need to stop the interview while the tape was changed which disrupted the flow and dynamics of the interview and interviewees felt that their concentration was impaired.

On checking back over the tape recordings and the notes taken, there was not much that was gained by taping the interviews. In fact, the author found several advantages of the note taking process. Firstly it required the researcher to concentrate and maintain attention throughout the interview. Secondly, because the interviewer was not looking at the interviewee she could not prompt/dismiss a

response by making any suggestive facial expressions. Thirdly, and helpful to both interviewer and respondent, because note-taking helped pace the interview there were more periods of quiet and reflection, Fourthly, taking notes enabled the interviewer to formulate questions more effectively and this helped gain greater control of the process. On balance, the interviewer decided that note-taking had been more effective and that tape-recording would not be used for the second set of interviews. Interview quality congruency between 1994 and 1997 was reviewed by Dr. J. Chandler in 2012 during the prior research review.

Following the interviews care was taken in the field notes to record important points and observations regarding the interviewees and their demeanour during the interview process. This reflective process added 'colour' to the interviews and reinforced the feeling that there were multiple interpretations in relation to TQM in TRC. The transcripts were written within days of the interviews and field notes incorporated into the case-study.

Once the transcription of the interviews had taken place, the process of open coding as described by Corbin and Strauss (1990) was undertaken. Because the author was following an inductive process precoding was not preferred, rather the author chose to see how the data was embedded in its context and to establish a code-in-use (Miles and Huberman, 1994:58). Rather than following a line-by-line analysis, coding by sentence or paragraph was preferred. The codes that emerged after the first interviews were deliberately kept general and refinement was intended to take place over time, specifically when the workforce had experienced more of the phenomenon of TQM. Codes that emerged were:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>*Organisational Heroes</i> <i>*Organisational Baddies</i> <i>*Contra-indicators</i> <i>*Empowerment</i> <i>*Personal Contributions</i> <i>*Personal Failures</i> <i>*Influencers and Contributors</i> <i>*Employment Relationships</i> <i>*Feelings of Hope</i> <i>*Measurements of Personal Success</i> <i>*Experience of TQM</i> <i>*Autonomy and Freedom</i> <i>*Myths and Stories</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>*Management of Change</i> <i>*Culture</i> <i>*Leadership</i> <i>*Teams</i> <i>*Initiative</i> <i>*Workforce Perspective on Management</i> <i>*Management on Management</i> <i>*Frustrations</i> <i>*Perceptions of the HRM Function</i> <i>*Management Style</i> <i>*Role of the Workforce</i> <i>*Communications</i> <i>*Opinions on the Workforce</i>
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<i>*Equal Opportunities</i> <i>*Training Needs</i> <i>*Perceptions of the Company</i> <i>*Perceptions of Organisational Successes/Achievements</i> <i>*Expectations</i>	<i>*Commitment</i> <i>*Rewards</i> <i>*Changing Behaviours</i> <i>*Structure</i> <i>*Personal Wish-lists</i> <i>*Significant Changes</i>
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These codes fell into six categories that reflected those depicted in the mid-range accounting scheme of Bogdan and Biklen(1992) to establish “etic” categories into which the more specific “emic” codes existed.

TQM Properties:

Empowerment
Autonomy and Freedom
Equal Opportunities
Culture
Commitment
Initiative
Leadership
Teams

Intergroup Perspectives

Perceptions of the Organisation
Perceptions of Organisational Success
Perceptions of Organisational Failures
Workforce Perceptions of Management
Management Perceptions of Management
Opinions of the Workforce
Perceptions of the HRM Function

Internal HR Processes

Employment Relations
Training Needs
Rewards
Structure
Communications

Organisational Dynamics and Transformations

Management of Change
Changing Behaviour
Significant Changes
Experience of TQM

Personal Experiences and Interpretations

Personal Contributions
Personal Failures
Feelings of Hope
Frustrations
Expectations
Personal Wish-lists
Measurement of Personal Success

Organisational Impressions

Organisational Heroes
Organisational Baddies
Influencers and Contributors
Myths and Stories
Contra-indicators

As such, how the resulting case-study was constructed presents a significant difference from the original intended research design. Whilst, in 1997 refined coding of the interviews was to take place with the intention of creating the case-study through the narrated data intended to catalogue worker experience of TQM; because that data was not likely to yield the response to the research question, the interview data felt redundant. However, because of the other sources of data, particularly the internal publications, fact-sheets, memoranda, meetings with significant others outside of the interview process and the discussions with the TQ Manager and other senior managers, a case-study of organisational change emerged that chronicled the events of the change programme. The categories were used to frame the case and were loosely incorporated into the intrinsic case-study of organizational change (Stake, 2000). The original case tended towards what Stake (2005) distinguished as an instrumental case presenting a specific case from which general principles could be developed. Not surprisingly, as the case follows the corporate driven change project, essentially, the case-study a linear sequence of beginning, middle and end exemplifies what Boje describes as managerialist narrative organisational development and features as a 'retrospective whole' in his 'four ways practice develops storytelling organisation' (2008: 189). However, in the attempt to bound and control the story, the result tends towards a single-faceted, monologic convergent story which arguably, denies the multiplicity of diverse local voices and polyphony.

To address the tendency towards simplification of the complex storytelling organisation, this research approach has re-introduced the narratives presented during the interviews at the commensurate time points. What is now presented is what Stake (2005) refers to as an expressive study, where investigation has taken place because of the unique features of the case which may be generalizable to other organizations. Furthermore, as Easterby-Smith et al.; (2012) point out, such cases may well offer both characteristics when the phenomenon under investigation

within the case offers the opportunity to develop general principles. It is argued that this case with the increased emphasis on the additional deep narrative analysis offer such an opportunity.

This case-study has now been re-storied through re-focussing the original story of corporate change and the integration of TQM onto the actions of a particular individual. The central actor in the story is the TQ Manager himself. The original case study demonstrated what could be described as typical management consultant narrative, relating the story of a management initiative and monitoring the progress against the corporate goal. In this case, story progression mirrors the failure to secure the management expectation. The case contained more 'business-speak' with more information about the financial and technical aspects of change which demonstrated the researcher's holistic business awareness. The original intention was to catalogue the events and actions of those involved in a clear strategic intent, so that the actions of senior managers as a team and individuals were central to the corporate story of change. This reflects much more a study of organisational decision-making (Kwon et al, 2009).

With the re-focussing of the story now on the TQ Manager as change agent, the re-storied case, following Gabriel (2000) captures the action of the TQ Manager and those connected with him; moves the lens from a clear managerialist narrative displaying the control associated with corporate change initiatives, to one that is more ethnographically sensitive. The re-storied case is presented as an epic tale of unselfish intent. The protagonist is the Managing Director (1991-1993) and the object is a corporate turnaround strategy to secure competitive advantage for TRC. The story involves the whole of the workforce in a collective rescue and it is a tale of personal crusade. It involves the following tropes;

Motive: Ensuring the future of TRC and reshaping worker experience.

Causal Connections: The change programme including the training programme and action projects.

Responsibility: the TQ Manager is leading the change programme.

Unity: the commitment and coalescence of everyone behind the change – unitarism.

Fixed qualities: the commitment, persistence, integrity and honesty of the TQ Manager.

Agency: The TQ Manager

Providential significance: A strong belief that 'Soft' TQM enriches worker experience and provides a 'win-win' for all involved

To produce key:

emotions: Pride, success, happiness, fulfilment

organisational benefits: high performance,

employee engagement, new working behaviours

Most of the original financial, technical and corporate information has been 'stripped out' except for where the information has a potential impact upon the interpretation of the change process as led by the TQ Manager. As such, the story becomes much more intuitive and emotive as feelings and experiences come to the fore, reflecting the approach applied by Prieto and Easterby-Smith (2006). Far from being redundant, the interviews are now key to helping develop potential explanations of the actions and reactions of the players to the story of change as presented by the TQ Manager. This re-storying reflects research undertaken by Humphreys and Brown (2008) in which complicated processes and multiple characters become interwoven in ways which are, necessarily, often ambiguous and uncertain.

What is being described is how the original research design and what is presented in this thesis differ so markedly. The original intention was for the case-study to be part of methodological triangulation and the post-positivist inquiry aim of prediction and control (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). What is now presented is an attempt to gain understanding of an example of the phenomenon of storytelling in organisational change through the reconstruction of the story of the TQ Manager's leadership of the introduction of TQM and the point-of-experience interviews analysis to assess his ability to gain support through his storytelling. The combination of two qualitative methodologies to the research is supported by Morse and Neihaus (2009) and Johnson et al. (2010) who specifically link multiple method research to the grounded theory approach of the original research approach.

In-depth analysis of the interviews:

The aim of the new research study is to examine whether storytelling can impact positively upon a change agent's activity during an organisational change process

and thereby engage change agents with the potential opportunities posed by organisational storytelling to support organisational change. It specifically addresses the activities of a change agent and his ability to influence the introduction of change in line with a senior management corporate goal (reflecting the wisdom of the dominant managerial literature) and then to review the experiences of those exposed to the actions and activities of the TQ Manager as change agent. What is posited is that success or failure of a change initiative does not depend upon the expectations of the senior management as expressed through the corporate goal, but more on the ability of the change agent to gain employee commitment to the corporate goal through impactful storytelling. Consequently the focus of the research has changed from examining the experiences of those exposed to TQM, and especially those workers in organisational hierarchical terms at the bottom of the organisation, to now focus on the individual charged with leading the change initiative on behalf of those who initiated the change goal, that is, those at the top of the organisation. It is also important to recognise that what follows in explaining how the interviews were deconstructed to establish the meaning units for analysis, was undertaken for the previous iteration of this data. However, the approach was undertaken with the intention of providing a research approach that would enable a discrete review of the role of the impact of a senior management team on organisational change as well as the wider review of the current research on change agents and storytelling. Consequently, because what is being described is historical and informs what was done, there are inevitable similarities between this presentation and what was produced for the previous iteration.

The interview transcripts provide another set of research data for the examination of change agent behaviour in a change programme. These narratives have been separated from the rest of the empirical data presenting another focus of the research approach through hermeneutic phenomenology (Heidegger, 1962). Hermeneutic phenomenology places attention on interviews which are used as a means for gathering stories about the experiences being researched in the participants' own words. Significance is also placed on the need for the researcher to establish a sense of conversational relationship with the participants to inform the meaning they are attributing to those experiences (Ajjawi and Higgs, 2007). According to Ajjawi and Higgs (2007, 613-614) involving the interpretive paradigm

leads to the way in which 'meanings are constructed by human beings in unique ways, depending on their context and personal frames of reference as they engage with the world they are interpreting'. The importance of hermeneutic phenomenology in this research is the emphasis given to revealing aspects of the phenomenon that were not originally sort, in this case, storytelling in organisational change. It is the opportunity to highlight dimensions of human experiences that enable new aspects of attention and provoke new thinking, especially how the phenomenon transforms over time and working with the data in emergent ways. The attention for interpretation is on how the researcher and the interviewees, through their narratives, interpret their organisational contexts and hermeneutic analysis attempts to merge their horizons of meaning.

In keeping with the ideas presented by Sloan and Bowe (2014) Laverly (2003) and Ajjawi and Higgs (2007) the methodology resides within the interpretivist paradigm. Meaning is developed from the contemporary analysis of the interpretive interaction between the historically produced textual data and the researcher as reader and author. The narratives have provided the researcher with the text from which to capture appearances of storytelling and then craft meaningful interpretations that resonate with the audience. The appeal of this approach is the acceptance of the biases and assumptions of the researcher are considered essential to the interpretative process and are embedded within the interpretation and help inform it (Laverly, 2003). The researcher is reflecting back on the research undertaken 25 years ago and, inevitably, has developed in terms of knowledge, experience and curiosity. The opportunity to address the research data and interpret it from a distanced standpoint has led to a more critical and dispassionate review and evaluation and, it is contended, provides a richer and more reliable analytical process.

The interpretative research paradigm is underpinned by the epistemology of idealism basing the development of knowledge on social construction and, drawing on different approaches, establish how various claims as to what is construed as truth and reality construct everyday life experiences (Easterby-Smith et al.; 2012, Higgs, 2001). The goal of this research is to access meanings of participants' interpretations of the TQ Manager's story of TQM reflecting the contexts in which they are set and

their frames of reference informing the meaning they construct and the sense – making they undertake of their experiences (Crotty,1998; Weick, 2001). The values held by the researcher influencing the interpretative process and analytical subjectivity is seen as a positive attribute (Ajjawi and Higgs, 2007). It is also contended that the time lapse between data collection and data analysis, the justification of the inclusion of the researcher’s values and experiences developed during the intervening time, added another aspect to the research process and gives credibility and validity to the research. Another consideration was that, as hermeneutic analysis is based on the reflective interpretation of text to develop a meaningful understanding and is especially applicable to a study in history (Moustakas, 1994; Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell, 2004) the research methodology emerged as the most appropriate and enables the establishment of conceptualisations from the ground upwards (Lamsa and Savolainen, 2000). It also provides a combination of a control narrative and emergent story and the interspersing of the narratives analyses provides a challenge to the simplifying and unifying stance of the single-plane managerial corporate story.

Whilst the transcripts presented actively constructed narratives in which the participants had been encouraged to speak freely about their experiences, the refocussing of the research required further analysis of the narratives. It was considered that the existing narratives could not be treated as giving a direct access to experiences to be treated as a clear descriptive study of the new research focus (Silverman, 2010). The analytical approach was informed by Moustakas, (1994) Elliot (2005) and Malterud, (2012) in which the full transcripts were divided into meaning units which delineated the transcripts into discrete significant statements that could be a phrase, sentence or series of sentences which provided an idea, set of perceptions or fact (Burnard, 1994) and provide a piece of meaning to the reader.

Every significant statement was treated as having equal value and whilst in some studies repetition is treated as irrelevant and repeated statements are deleted, in this research repetition was considered as a significant reinforcement of feelings or opinions (Moerer-Urdahl and Cresswell, 2004). The meaning units were then categorised thematically following extensive review of the delineated text. To support the validity of the process, the researcher asked another researcher to develop her

own category system from a sample of the transcripts and then discussed the categorization process to check for congruency. Despite differences in the actual names the categories demonstrated considerable similarity and the themes were established. The categories were labelled by a letter and the meaning units were then classified into those categories after being labelled with the appropriate letter and sorted to establish the populated categories. Chronological distinction was established by different fonts allowing any emerging themes relating to the year of interview to be recognised.

The categories that emerged from the synthesis of the data are:

A	What qualifications I have/do not have.
B	Is change necessary?
C	The role of HRM
D	What is TQM?
E	Lack of HRD
F	Senior management visibility
G	Barriers to the implantation of TQM
H	Are communications effective?
I	What I do as a senior manager.
J	What I do as a manager.
K	How I describe me.
L	What are the changes that have occurred?
M	Achievements; Perceptions of success.
N	Who led the change?
O	Views on TQM
P	As a senior manager am I committed to TQM?
Q	Do I/we think other senior managers are committed to TQM?
R	What I think of my colleagues on the SMT.
S	What I think of the TQ Manager.
T	What I/we think of other managers.
U	What I think of the senior managers – the view from below.
V	Unclassified comments

There are four important points for consideration. The first relates to a number of statements that did not fall into any category and these have been left as a separate

group at the end (category V). As these statements have value but cannot be reconciled into any of the other categories they cannot be considered as 'dross' (Field and Morse, 1985) and have been 'parked'. The second issue relates to the origins of the text and what the interviews were conducted for. As such, there are many categories that are not necessarily significant to the current focus of study and these contain potential research material for another analysis. They are legitimate as categories and need to be recognised, but their value to this research is marginal. The third issue relates to the variation in the number of meaning units that inhabit each category, for example, Category O containing 158 meaning units whereas Category M has, by comparison, 32, and Category B only 11. However, it is argued that the whilst the larger categories have been subject to further delineation for analytical purposes, the variation in the numbers of comments drawn from the unstructured interviews provides important commentary on what was being experienced in relation to the integration of TQM.

Fourthly, it is important to recognise that the researcher is telling a story which itself reflects choices and options. Stories are inevitably powerful as they form the basis upon which sensemaking occurs. In connecting with a story it helps reflection of our past and shapes our intentions and futures. However, as stories are organic, they remain incomplete. As LeBaron and Alexander (2017) propose, stories connect us to people in organisations with whom we feel some sense of attraction, and because of the abstract nature of stories, these connections can be with people who exist in the present or existed in the past. Furthermore, stories also disconnect us from others with whom we choose not to relate. Consequently, because of the way we connect with particular stories and because of how stories develop, they will be informed by biases, unconscious expectations and preferences as well as purposeful trajectories and choices. Stories will tend to reinforce preferred images, identities and narratives and the aim of storytelling and storytellers is to attract more and more people into the web and texture of the storied account.

Once the categories had been populated the researcher could then start to see patterns in the data and also develop sub-categories in those categories that contained large numbers of statements. The sub-categories greatly assisted the ease by which emerging patterns were recognised and so aided the development of discussion and interpretation. Using different lenses to resituate the impact of the TQ

Manager (as change agent) on the failure of the change initiative, enables the researcher to build a framework for rediscovery. As such, it is necessary to explore a number of assumptions that underpin the researcher's frame of reference.

Firstly, in the context of failure of the change programme, the researcher holds the view that there needs to be a challenge to the simplistic interpretation of blame thus triggering the re-examination of the interviews, The analysis of the narratives pertaining to change agent as storyteller, will use the categories which have been considered hierarchically following the ideas of Frontman and Kunkel (1994, cited in Johnson and Christensen (2008:512). Essentially the hierarchy develops a deconstruction of the considerations that lead to the primary judgement of what had been achieved.

The hierarchy is based upon the following linkage of constructs to establish meaning: the achievements of the change programme are the outcomes and depend upon how well the story has been told and adopted. Consequently there are several categories that reflect upon the outcomes and these are considered next. However, the choice about changes that have occurred is affected by other knowledge-based information about the story and TQM and the categories dealing with this knowledge provide a separate and further response. There are features of the experience of going through the change that can affect the knowledge of that which is supposed to be experienced and these are considered next. Finally there are features that also impact upon the experience that present a contextual arena for the change and these are also considered.

These considerations lead to the following categories for analysis:

Achievements:

This category examines what the respondents thought were the achievements of the change process. This presents the starting point of the levels of analysis and attempts to establish shared perceptions of outcomes. It is based upon the assumption that if the story has been told effectively then employees would know the expected characteristics of success implementation of the change and will be able to identify and reflect them in their narratives.

The next categories present 'cause and effect' relationships whereby recognition of achievements is linked to there being a perceptual exploration of whether change was necessary and links the willingness to engage on the appreciation of whether the respondent thought that TRC needed to change and what changes had actually been perceived.

- Was Change Necessary?
- What Changes Have Occurred?

These two categories establish inference of a level of readiness for change and an indication of what the respondents have taken notice of having been exposed to the change process. For example, if there was no expectation of change being necessary, then awareness of changes will be limited by the interpretation of *everything is OK as it is*.

The next set of categories provides 'attributional' relationships linking them to the awareness of the story of TQM and the understanding of the respondents of their role in the change process.

- What is TQM?
- Are Communications Effective?
- Views of TQM?

These categories offer a different level of analysis, which presents the opportunity for further inference analysis and assumptions to be drawn. For example, if there is a poor understanding of TQM then people will not be able to make a reasonable judgement of the achievements and success of the change initiative. This would help establish the basis upon which judgements are being made.

This understanding is impacted by further perceptual-based information about the story and how it was shared and creates a further set of cause and effect relationships.

- Was the SMT Committed to the introduction of TQM?
- What I think of the TQM Manager

- Who Led the Change?

This set of categories helps establish a how people perceived the leadership of the initiative and to whom they were referring for information and support. If, for example, all were confident that the TQ Manager was the leader of the initiative then it would be reasonable to find a confident analysis of his approach by the respondents.

Another layer of 'attributional' relationships is then considered and these relate to contextual awareness and their impact on successful adoption of the story.

- Barriers to Change
- The Involvement of HRM
- Lack of HRD

This group of categories provides an opportunity to analyse the perceptions of potential problems to the introduction of TQM and enables other inferences and assumptions about how skilfully the TQ Manager presented his story and understood the context in which he was operating. For example, the literature suggests that HRM has a key contribution to the introduction of TQM. If HRM were seen to be disengagement then this could generate contra-experiences of TQM.

The analyses of the categories will all have to reflect the timing of the interviews so that changes between 1994 and 1997 can be established. They will then be interwoven into the case-study providing a richer basis upon which to explore the different and alternative readings of the change management process at TRC.

Secondly, following the work of Gabriel (2000) and Collins and Rainwater (2005) different interpretations of the change initiative will be introduced using different poetic tropes (motive, causal connections, responsibility, unity, fixed qualities, emotion, agency and providential significance) and poetic modes (Epic, Tragic, Comic, Romantic). Gabriel (2000) argues that sensitive organization of these tropes allows for the construction and unearthing of different plots and characters and thus allows the researcher as storyteller, to produce a number of different "poetic modes". This research will attempt to uncover different re-views that can challenge the blame for failure levelled at the Change Agent. The Classic BME of the case-study will be

considered as a developing story, and is essentially chronological, linear and monovocal. The BME also enables the different poetic modes to be situated in time which helps sense-making of the dynamics of what ensued. The analyses of the narratives provide an opportunity to combine and inter-weave elements of a narrative approach with processual/contextual analysis enabling a polyvocal approach and a fuller appreciation of the case study (Gabriel, 2000; Boje, 2001, 2008; Buchanan, 2003, Buchanan and Dawson, 2007) and a more informed analysis of change agents as storytellers.

The key characters in the story of change at TRC are the:

The TQ Manager – Change Agent: Interviewed in 1994 and 1997

Managing Director No 1 (1991-1993): Not interviewed – very influential in the first stages

Managing Director No 2 (1993 onwards): Interviewed in 1994 and 1997

The HR Director: Interviewed in 1994 and 1997

The Manufacturing Director: Interviewed in 1994 and 1997

The Production Manager A (1991 – 1995): Interviewed in 1994

Production Manager B (1995 onwards) Interviewed in 1997

Production Supervisors: Interviewed 1994 and 1997

The Workers: Interviewed in 1994 and 1997

Union Representatives: Interviewed in 1994 and 1997

Staff Employees; Interviewed 1994 and 1997

Customer Services Officer (1996 onwards): Interviewed in 1997

The QIS Director (1994 onwards) Not interviewed but the researcher was invited to attend meetings

Chief Accountant (1991-1995): Not interviewed but influential and a mentor to the TQ Manager

External Consultant (1991-1995): Not interviewed, very influential early on

Other characters emerge and withdraw and are influential to a less significant degree.

TRC is split into two manufacturing units:

'Relays' which is the larger unit and the most profitable and

'Instruments'

Inevitably, repetition of themes will occur as the analysis progresses, but the researcher argues that repetition reinforces the developing abductions.

The assumption that is crucial to this research and the re-consideration of the role of the change agent as storyteller using a storytelling methodology is that essentially, the story of TRC is of a senior management driven change initiative that failed in terms of the expectations of the corporate decision. The easiest interpretation of the cause of the failure is to blame the TQ Manager as change agent. This interpretation would find support with the more managerialist interpretations and models of change which lead to distorted understandings of organizational dynamics based upon reliance on single-voiced and authoritative renderings of the change process (Buchanan, 2003). In essence, these interpretations tend to preserve managerial authority and position. However, a storytelling approach allows many different and distinct voices and understandings of organization and change, and by recapturing and resituating the flow and plurality of the organisation, the analysis attempts to discover the potential impact of polyphony and polysemy on the simplistic interpretation. Essentially, the researcher is attempting to demonstrate that by re-storying the case, the 'finger-pointing' and subsequent actions, may well have been based upon false premise.

The findings were linked to the literature and other research findings in an attempt to provide further validation of the discussion and debates that emerged and to give credibility to the conclusions. Throughout the analytical process care was taken to ensure that the voices of the participants and the researcher are manifest in the text in an attempt to ensure authenticity (Lincoln and Guba, 2000).

This research was conducted using the interpretative paradigm drawing on constructionist research designs of ethnography, narrative methods, storytelling, case-method and the hermeneutic phenomenology approach as informed by Heidegger (1962) and van Manen (1997). Informed by grounded theory, the data were collected through several methods, repeat semi-structured interviews, focus groups, company documents and informal meetings. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and all data collected was used, to some extent, to establish the texts that

were used for data analysis. Narrative data analysis focused on 'meaning units' as the basis of developing the inductive category system. The interpretive paradigm enabled the researcher to access the meanings of the participants' experiences and the hermeneutic approach and the use of secondary analysis of revisited data allowed for new layers of interpretation and re-interpretation of the data providing a new angle for making meaning of the phenomenon. Revisiting the data enabled a entirely different interpretation of events to emerge and reflection on the discussion and debate presents the researcher with a more confident story about the failure of the change programme and the impact of a key group within the change process. The use of multiple methods and sources of data collection enabled the achievement of richer reflexivity, transparency and rigor of the research (Mays and Pope, 2000) and the multiple constructions of events and experiences enabled the research to achieve greater authenticity, especially given the historical nature of the data.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

The initial empirical research was conducted over 20 years ago. All participants agreed to their involvement in the research and the researcher assured the participants that all contributions would be treated anonymously and that there would be no contemporary access to the data by anyone other than the researcher. The name of the company has been changed and the participants are referred by either their job title or by another name to ensure that no-one can be identified and comments attributed accordingly. All the comments made were freely given and there was no evidence of any participant engaging in the research process through coercion or under duress. All recordings of interviews and field notes, company documents and artefacts were kept in a secure cabinet and access was limited to the researcher. During the research process participants had access to the researcher and could change, add to or delete any comments that they made. No-one took up the opportunity to change any statements made. Since conducting the original research many of those involved in the interviews have left the company, but some of the participants are still in employment at TRC, although the company has re-structured several times and some parts of the company no longer exist, and several have been promoted to more senior positions. Several interviewees are no longer

living. There has been no contact with the company since the original research was completed and no contact from the company to the researcher. As such there has been no attempt to verify the research findings with any of the participants. Given the safe-guarding of the data and the participants, it is proposed that ethical consideration has been given due process and there are no risks to any individual or the company from the research process.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to explain the rationale behind the decision to adopt various approaches to the research being undertaken, especially the decision to move from the inductive approach of the original research to abduction based upon the recognized evolution of interpretations and re-thinking of ideas over time. These reconsidered perspectives, drawn from different experiences and knowledge development, allow for a richer analysis and more assertive interpretations to be generated. The chapter has also presented an argument for the validity of using old data and secondary analysis and, as the researcher was the primary actor in the research process both then and now, the rationale for the value and significance of using secondary analysis is, hopefully, compelling.

The following chapter presents the findings of the review of the case-study, which chronicled the introduction of TQM into TRC to its subsequent replacement by BPR, and the analysis of the narratives recorded in 1994 and 1997. The re-storying of the case and the narratives' analysis emerge from a change of the attention of the researcher to now focus on the change agent, the Total Quality Manager, as the story-teller of the change. The change process was, at the time, an emerging story, one in which the researcher became immersed some three years after the original introduction of TQM to the company. Consequently, the case was already part history. However, the case is now a historical narrative of the events that took place, written by the researcher and the narrative analyses need to be sensitive to how it has been shaped by its context and time (Mitchell, 2018).

Chapter 5: Interpretation of the empirical evidence

5.1 Introduction

Change requires the involvement of the right people to influence its introduction and on-going embedding. As such, who leads the change is a crucial decision. As Lines et al., (2015) discovered, organizations that did not identify a change agent to lead the change were four times more likely to face resistance to change. They also observed on-going involvement in the change and day-to-day discussions with those affected by the change were also key attributes to organizational change success. Most research on organizational change tends to be management-centric with great attention given to the change agent's point of view and actions (Bartunek et al., 2000) However, it is very important consider the experiences, meanings and actions of others involved, not just those communicating the purpose of change. Those affected by change need also to have a voice especially how they interpret, accept or reject the changes they are encouraged to take on board (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2016). As such the narratives of those affected by the change are being analysed, especially in relation to how the interviewees were or were not persuaded by the story of TQM, and their opinions regarding the ability of the storyteller to influence their decision to become involved with TQM as well as the changes being recommended by the management of TRC. Parker (1997) identifies a potential problem arising from the observation that narratives are potentially unstable, as they are open to revision over time, as organizational knowledge is first scripted, then selectively retold for other audiences, sustained, then revised and ultimately replaced. In answer to this potential problem the researcher suggests that as the narratives and the story have remained exactly as they were first produced, then revision has been kept to a minimum. Furthermore as part of the justification of the value of old data, the opportunity to successfully review this data from a different lens provides testament to the robustness of the empirical research.

Additionally, in developing the approach to this research the researcher takes note of Buchanan and Dawson (2007) who argue that a narrative approach should be used to inform research designs that adopt a contextual/processual perspective as this can offer valuable insights in furthering our knowledge and understanding of organizational change processes. Consequently, the analysis of change narratives

will be interlinked with a processual/contextual analysis of change within the organization and this approach has informed the subsequent findings and analysis from a polyvocal stance. What follows is an attempt to combine narrative and processual approaches. In so doing it will present conflicts of interpretation between what was vocalized, what was documented, and what happened. The passage of time has allowed the researcher to be able to stand at a distance from the original research experience and to look beyond the emotions of that time. The challenge of the previous research (Hollings, 2013) already demonstrates that the initial interpretation of the research experience was naïve and single layered. This analysis will seek to explore the complexities of the change process as explored through the monovocal longitudinal case-story and enrich its texture by drawing from the narratives of the people involved in the change, taken at two contextual points of time in the change process. These narratives provide pluralistic accounts of the changes that were being experienced and their interjection into the case will provide an opportunity for the researcher to challenge hitherto meaning and sense-making.

The chapter is split into four parts:

Part 1 is the analysis of the two sets of interviews from 1994 and 1997;

Part 2 1991-1994: this includes the re-storying of the case-study to change the perspective lens to focus on the TQ Manager: and culminates with the analysis of the 1994 narratives which are integrated into the re-storied case-study at the relevant point in time.

Part 3 1994-1997: Following the analysis of the narratives in 1994, the re-storying continues and incorporates the analysis of the 1997 narratives at the appropriate place in time

The integrated analyses are included to establish a richer text upon which to make an informed interpretation of what took place and what the findings might inform the literature firstly on storytelling as an approach to exploring organisational change and secondly on secondary analysis of research data. .

Part 4: demonstrate how different interpretations can be constructed to reveal distinct stories, reflections for consideration and the conclusions of the chapter.

The following people and groups were interviewed:

Managing Director 2	Total Quality Manager (joined by the Customer Services Officer 1997)
Manufacturing Director	Production Manager A (1994)
HRM Director	Production Manager B (1997)
Chief Development Engineer	Trades Union Representatives
Tendering Manager	Production Supervisors (Relays)
Instruments Operatives and Relays Operatives (separately)	Staff Employees

Analysis: Part 1

5.2 Analysis of the Narratives from 1994 and 1997

According to Parkin (2006) storytelling can be used to develop people and organizations, and for Denning (2006) it is important that the narrator composes the story from a perspective that will resonate positively with the audience. The role of the change agent as leader of change is crucial in creating a story that engages employees in the change process. Burns (2009) is emphatic in his view that someone has to take responsibility for leading the change and in the case of TRC, that role was given to the TQ Manager. Consequently, the ability of the TQ Manager to gain the trust and support of the employees at TRC is essential to their willingness to engage with and apply the principles and practices of TQM. Langer and Thorup (2006) found that the application of a polyphonic approach to organisational change communication and storytelling, created involvement in and enactment of organisational change based on employees' own values and stories. As such the ability of the change agent to create a beguiling story from which employees can develop a meaning commensurate with the desired direction of change is a crucial skill. We know already that the change programme failed in terms of adopting TQM and seeing those principles and practises embedded in the working methods of the employees at TRC. We know also that TQM was superseded by an attempt to

introduce BPR. We also know from previous research undertaken by the researcher that Senior Management commitment to the TQM programme of change could not be supported because the senior managers never acted as a team and an effective senior management team is considered an essential requirement for successful strategic change.

This next aspect of analysis examines the role and impact of the change agent as storyteller, based upon the categorical analysis outlined in the previous chapter.

Analysis of comments relating to the change agent as storyteller.

There are two main approaches to analysing the comments. Firstly, a more positivist approach that simply looks at numbers of comments relating to each set of interviews. The inference is that where there are more comments, TQM has a greater significance to the interviewees. Secondly, an analysis of the content of the comments, presenting a more nuanced interpretation and examples of those comments are included in the following text.

Category M: What were the achievements?

The category relating to Achievements numbers 27 comments of which only 6 are from 1997. Interestingly the responses indicate a clear delineation between Instruments and Relays where acceptance and engagement with TQM in Instruments has been more successful. The respondents put this down to there being a service ethos in Instruments and a recognition that the culture in Instruments was different and more susceptible to the principles of TQM.

In 1994 the comments are more positive about what has been happening with expressions of hope and interest being much more dominant. Respondents identified the changing role of the workforce with 50% of the workforce being involved in TQM. The involvement of senior and middle management was identified as being improved with the MD identified as being supportive. Furthermore, the link between middle and senior managers was characterised as being 'very good', with the TQ exercises having improved communications. Respondents commented on their own roles having changed with people getting more involved in decision-making, considering more about how work should be done and making people look more into the long-term and the future. There are 11 comments that specifically refer to TQ initiatives in

a very positive way and other comments link to the improvement projects and indirectly to the TQ initiatives.

Comments such as:

“The fact that the Management Team has involved more and more of the workforce must be to the betterment of the operations and for the workforce to be involved in decision-making.”

“We are doing things differently and this has been brought about by the change in people. A major emphasis has been a much closer examination of the methods we have been using.”

“I didn’t think that we would have got as far as we have and there are definite signs of other people taking up TQ ideas....”

“I think we are in the good position that we are in at the moment because of the TQ initiatives and the fortunate position the industry is in.”

Indicate a level of enthusiasm and optimism about the TQ programme. However, there are three contra-indicators:

“There has been a part de-skilling with a reduction in the added-value of personal input.”

We’ve reduced the amount of return to work but we’re still treated like second-class citizens.”

“We started to produce better quality information and expected other departments to do likewise but it didn’t happen to the same extent, if at all.”

These three comments suggest that people were engaging with the programme and process of change but their personal experiences of TQM have not met expectations. In the first two comments personal satisfaction is being challenged which is not in accordance with the ideas underpinning Deming’s (1982) approach to TQM. People are key to successful change and he calls for management to change the organizational culture with top management leading the drive for quality improvement.

The third comment is more problematic for the overall change process as it indicates very different interpretations and expectations of what people believe other groups should be doing. Here we have one group changing the quality of its communications to other groups but the respondent identifying the expectation of

reciprocity being violated which has changed their consideration of change as to whether it will happen at all.

Consequently, whilst on the one-hand there is hope and optimism in 1994, there are also signs of disgruntlement and violated expectations.

The 6 comments relating to Achievements from the 1997 interviews are far less convincing given that the programme has been running for 6 years:

The Managing Director claimed that

“We have had some very positive results from many of the projects that have been undertaken”.

In itself, this is hardly fulsome praise for the change programme. In one area that had a strong customer service approach the respondent (The Tendering Manager) recognised that

“There has been considerable success and the relationships between contracts and tendering have really improved.....we have much better dialogue between engineers, sales and contracts”.

So for this respondent in a service department, TQM had been a useful adoption.

The most telling comment however, comes from the reflection by the TQ Manager who reveals that

“The exception has been in Instruments where TQ has been implemented into the day-to day activities and isn’t seen as a burden.”

This self-appraisal of the change process by the change agent gives a clear indication of a failure to engage the whole workforce in TQM. Whilst one part of the operations that had always been more susceptible to the ideas of TQM was demonstrating TQM in practice, the other area of manufacturing was not, and worse still, TQM was *seen as a burden*. That phrase alone damns the activities that had been undertaken as TQM is intended to encourage everyone in the organisation to share a set of common interests and values, posing a positive, hopeful message to workers of personal growth and challenging but satisfying work (Wilkinson et al., 1998).

Far from developing the hope that had been expressed in 1994, the intervening three years had seen the project fail to deliver on the expectations of the TQ Manager. To that extent, on contemplating the achievements he said that

“I do find it difficult to see my own achievements.”

It is not enough however, to assume that the failure to implement TQM into TRC is directly attributable to the TQ Manager’s inability to engage the audience in the story at this juncture.

It is important to establish the perceptual context in which the introduction of TQM took place. To do this we need to explore whether the respondents thought that change was necessary (Category B) and what changes were perceived as having occurred (Category L).

Category B: Was Change Necessary?

There are 11 comments which address the need to change specifically, 8 from 1994 and 3 from 1997.

The overall view from 1994 was that change was something that was needed, despite the recognition that this is not something TRC was good at, although there was also recognition that the organisation did not shy away from change. It was felt that there was a need to be proactive but also

“There do need to be some major changes here.”

“We have to change the products (to digital) if we are to maintain our market dominance, that means we have to change the way people are trained.”

“There is a definite need to change because we couldn’t stay how we were.”

The reference to training is interesting as it indicates that the workforce need direction and support and this emphasis is repeated in other comments:

“I certainly acknowledge that we need to concentrate on the training aspects of change and on trying to convince people of its necessity, but old habits do die hard, but I remain confident of success.”

“ISO 9000 has been helpful in establishing a firm basis for identifying training needs as a procedure.”

“The supervisory role will change to one of mentoring, guiding and supporting rather than one of monitoring.”

The first of these three comments was made by the M.D. and whilst in isolation it looks very supportive of the process and the TQ Manager's programme of training, this comment was made in 1994, three years after the introduction of TQM and he refers to the need to convince people of the importance of training suggesting ambivalence towards the training initiatives. Of further interest is the reference to ISO 9,000 an internationally accepted quality standard that can stand alone from TQM. Was TQM seen as ISO 9,000? If so, then there was considerable lack of appreciation of what TQM entailed.

However, another comment by a senior manager relates back to 1991 and there being:

“very much an attitude of why do we need change? 3 years ago we went to a hotel in Wigan with the consultant to examine how a TQM programme could help. There is now very much an acceptance of the level of challenge to our way of thinking.”

This comment suggests that the TQM approach was recognised as something that had been recommended by an external supplier and the senior management team had gone along with that recommendation. However rather than having embraced the ideas of TQM, they had let others take on the initiative. Consequently, the following comment, from one of the senior managers, suggests that there was still considerable questioning of why change was necessary:

“Yes I think that there is some confusion. Why introduce TQ? Is it to impress the customers? They keep saying that it's to improve the way we do things and our methods but we've been doing that continually for years.”

In 1994 there appears to be a general commitment to the need for change but the change approach does not appear to have been understood or accepted across the board.

By 1997 the comments suggest that there has been little to dispel the confusion and increase a commitment to change. The three comments give a clear indication that change was still not seen as necessary and that people were struggling to engage.

“One of the biggest disadvantages to TQ is the fact that TRC is still the most successful company within the group. People still ask why they need to change and they still need guidance and direction.”

“The atmosphere has not changed, perhaps a bit more unrest. But there is still a feeling of complacency. People don’t want to do anything differently. People still don’t see the need to do things differently.”

“The trouble is that this company is in a fur-lined rut. It believes that it is safe and I don’t think that it is. It must change its culture from one of a lugubrious elephant to a demented wasp if it is to address the competition with an intention to succeed.”

These comments come 6 years after the start of the TQ programme and suggest that the establishment of the need to change has been undermined by the fact that the company is seen as successful and will remain so. This starts to beg the question whether change actually was necessary, or whether it had been assumed that the changes that were seen as desirable had been accepted by the workforce. What is beginning to emerge is that the readiness for change had not been instilled and that people had made choices based upon their understanding of what was needed.

What is also of concern is the reference to people still needing guidance and support. Two things need more consideration. Firstly, is the observation of a need for guidance and support because the workforce can’t do what is needed, and that brings into question the training that has been undertaken, or that they won’t do what is needed and that suggests subversion? Secondly, after 6 years of exposure to TQM, what guidance and direction is needed? What is it that people are not doing? It also appears that the change in the supervisory role that had been identified in 1994 to being one of mentoring and support had not materialised as that support and guidance would have been happening if the mentoring role had been embraced.

In reviewing these comments over the three year period, it would seem that whilst in 1994 there was support for change albeit with some confusion as to what and why; by 1997, the comments take on a more resigned tone of acceptance of the lack of change. The strong impression from the comments in 1997 is of a workforce that would not change even though change had been necessary. This presents a clear indication that the change story had not been communicated well enough to engage the workforce. However, was the lack of adoption because of the inability of the change agent to tell and sell the story, or because competing, more powerful stories were having an impact (Ford et al., 2008)?

Category L What are the changes?

The TQM programme at TRC was based upon the work of Deming (1986). The underpinning philosophy of Deming is founded upon the three precepts of customer orientation, continuous improvement and quality is determined by the system (Drummond, 1992). Linked to these precepts is the emphasis on greater autonomy and self-reliance, delegation of responsibility for quality and improvements to the point of action, rather than management seeking to blame employees for mistakes (Wilkinson et al., 1998). There is a reasonable expectation that Deming's approach would have provided a good framework upon which to establish both need for the change and what changes should be experienced, especially given his very structured approach in his 14 Points to Management for successful TQM.

There are 10 comments in this category of which only one is from 1997.

It would be reasonable to expect a degree of resonance between the nine comments from 1994 if there had been a shared understanding of what changes were needed. Unfortunately, there is not a great degree of commonality in the comments in terms of understanding what the changes are.

There was a rather strange comment from the Trades Union Representatives:

“Management will ride rough-shod over the workforce unless the union strengthens its hand. We don't really want to strengthen our hand but we need to if we want to establish a sense of harmony and equity. We've got to be respected”.

Such an off-stream comment seems to suggest that the trades unions had not been involved as a consultative body in the process. There was more support for breaking down the hierarchical set-up and breaking down the 'us and them' which was seen by one respondent as fundamental and more specifically by another to removing three levels of management. One senior manager believed that there was a need to

“give greater empowerment and break down traditional barriers, another thought to think globally and act locally which would need the introduction of matrix management”.

Again respondents from the instruments section spoke in more positive terms suggesting that there was a need to develop a

“culture in which teams are responsible for the development of a product which needs the initiation of more integrated, multi-disciplinary teams.”

This comment tends to suggest that there was a much better understanding of TQM in Instruments than elsewhere and a recognition that they had been able to

“generate much more ‘drive’ and get things going”.

Rather dismissively, when describing one of the projects led by the Commercial Director supported by the Marketing and Sales managers, the main change was that they had held monthly meetings with the team and

“the lower levels have become more involved in the project team.”

These comments demonstrate very little awareness of what TQM entailed and especially the Deming Approach. There are some rather clichéd comments about *giving greater empowerment* without an appreciation of what empowerment means. However, the most concerning comments related to de-skilling and there are three references to this:

“In fact we have been deliberately de-skilling the job.”

“Although this has meant that there has been de-skilling in the tendering work, the tender producers are getting more involved with the end users.”

“Another change in the way that the job is done is that the level of skill has gone down. We’re spending more on technically advanced equipment.”

These three comments referencing the changes that have been made as leading to de-skilling suggest that far from seeing work as more challenging and satisfying with opportunities for personal growth and greater sense of self control, the workers at TRC were experiencing something far removed from that. If anything, de-skilling and technological advancements in equipment may well have created a culture of fear and resentment as the TQ Programme made people feel less valued. There is within these narratives demonstration of non-adoption though the disagreements and disparities created by competing rationalities (Townley, 2002).

In 1997 there is only one comment addressing what were the changes that had occurred? Sadly the comment is made by the TQ Manager and hints that he is running out of ideas:

“The TQ programme now needs something else as an aiming point, perhaps try for a quality recognition award. However, if we don’t have commitment then we shouldn’t bother, we’d be wasting our time.”

ISO 9,000 had been something that TRC had addressed several years before this comment. This comment made by the TQ Manager suggests that he cannot see a way forward and that, if there is no commitment, it would be a waste of time trying. On the one hand the TQ Manager is still trying to think of something to refresh the stalling programme but on the other, he is seeking to blame others for frustrating any real chance of success.

The commentaries on the changes that have occurred provide another opportunity to question the storytelling capability of the TQ Manager. The 14 Point Approach of Deming is prescriptive and manageable in terms of a structured approach. The emphasis on training and awareness is an attractive approach to the TQ Manager with his background in Training and Development, and yet somehow, there is no coherent interpretation of TQM in practice. At this stage in proceedings, the TQ Programme seemed to be following the three elements of employee involvement associated with TQM as identified by Wilkinson (1993: 279-280). Firstly there is the educative process at company level, secondly participative structures and thirdly, the elimination of inspection and establishment of more team-working. Yet despite being able to demonstrate the basic tools and techniques there seems to be little emotional attachment to the process. Perhaps the most disconcerting aspect of this is that

even given responses in 1994, a full review of the programme in terms of return on investment and other strategic measureable outcomes seems not to have happened. The Programme seems to continue with no real sense of purpose. It is as if no-one knows what else to do.

In examining the linkages of analysis to this juncture we have attempted to consider the story being told from searching for evidence that the story of TQM had been understood and applied through examining achievements. We established that there is no substantial evidence of achievements associated with TQM by 1997 although there was more hope expressed three years earlier. We then looked to establish what frustrations might have led to a lack of understanding of the need for change and what changes had occurred (if any) and if these changes could be linked to TQM. In the examination of the comments regarding whether change was considered to be necessary, again the pattern is similar with more acceptance of the need for change in 1994, although commitment to TQM as the change approach is not as convincing. By 1997 the comments take on a much more disillusioned tenor with sense of resolve to things not having gone to plan. When considering the comments in relation to what changes have occurred, we have found that there is a mixture of responses in 1994 but with a worrying set of responses identifying de-skilling, but little commentary that extols the application of TQM into TRC. By 1997 there is only one comment from the TQ Manager himself and that provides a very mixed response, with a real impression that he has lost energy and purpose in the project.

Although the prima facie evidence is veering towards the lack of understanding of the TQM story and, by inference, the TQ Manager not having the ability to tell the story in an effective way, there are other features about what was happening that need to be brought into the web of action and interpretation. In the next level of analysis issues and consequences that emerge from the previous analyses are examined These are: *what was the story being told?* through an examination of Category D: What is TQM? An examination of Category H: Are communications effective? Will help to develop an interpretation of whether respondents believed that information was being passed to them so that they could begin to act upon that information. Finally, Category O: What I think of TQM? will enable the researcher to begin to get a sense of how people were responding to TQM.

Category D: What is TQM?

TQM in TRC was introduced following a recommendation from an external consultant in 1991. The approach and framework were that of Deming 1986 and as such, there exists a clear template of expectations regarding what the TQM experience should have been. These 14 points will inform the further analysis of both the re-storied story and the narratives.

There are 77 comments in total relating to 'What is TQM?', 34 made in 1994 and 43 made in 1997. This is the first category where there are more comments in 1997 which suggests that there is a sustaining of the TQM story, and as Dietz (2004) suggests, for change to be sustained the story must move from story to demonstration (the story in action) and then back to story about the action. As the comments from respondents are reviewed there are some that are split into smaller parts to help identify more specific detail. Within the context of this frame of reference there are 10 comments that can be seen as positive comments for TQM and 35 that can be seen as negative.

In reviewing what people thought of TQM through their experience of the TQ Programme, it is worth presenting a comment from the M.D. in 1994 which provides an interesting frame of reference for the analysis of what follows.

"There is a great debate about the meaning of TQ and what it means in practice. Responses vary from it means we're getting the products better to the final agreement about how things are done. We took long meetings to reach agreement and it was a highly emotive subject in our management meetings."

What we have here is a clear indication that ambiguity about the TQM programme and what it meant for TRC was being voiced at the very highest level. The TQ Manager was clear throughout all conversations that Deming's approach underpinned the approach for TRC and that this had been recommended by the consultant.

Exploring the 10 positive comments for TQM, one is somewhat ambivalent:

"(TQM) There's not many who are not interested, but there's not many who are very interested."

There are nine that can be said to identify with TQM and what it has achieved and what opportunities it provides:

“I think we are in the good position that we are in at the moment because of the TQ initiatives and the fortunate position the industry is in.”

“I think the workforce is the major contributor to the success of this company. They’re using TQ to improve the business, but we’re very successful anyway.”

“If you want to change things and make a difference then you can, the opportunity is there and in TQ there is definitely an opportunity.”

“People know that it is people that matter here.”

“I think the emphasis on teams is very good. I believe in team working and sharing and we have a strong sense of teams in my section, but I will only look after my own people.”

“There are problem solving groups but involvement is voluntary.”

“TQ is a good move to get people involved in the business. I think people like to know what’s going on, you know, new products, orders, how we’re doing”

“I think things have gone well given the attitudes before TQ. You know it was ‘oh no not another fad’ but they’ve done really well.”

“The way it was put across was not linked to ISO 9000 and I think that it is going to go on.”

This group of comments raises a number of issues for support for TQM, not least of which is the sense that there is not a full endorsement of the Programme, particularly the comments that identify the success of the company underpinning shoring up TQM. Some people are identifying with the participative approaches that link to the second elements of TQM identified by Denning when relating to team-working and the role of people. What is of some significance is the last comment which separates TQM from ISO 9,000 which is significantly outweighed by comments in the negative group.

In reviewing the negative comments in relation to TQM, eight comments focus directly on ISO 9,000 or BS5750 as being the major change initiative linked to quality

and the strength of support for ISO 9,000 is marked by comparison to the positive comments reviewed previously. Some of the comments demonstrate considerable thought suggesting careful review of what TQM means to these individuals:

“I think people do experience a certain degree of conflict between the bureaucracy of the ISO 9000 requirements and the ideas of TQ. To me they are synonymous, but there is a tendency to be too bureaucratic and the structure supports that. “

“Everyone in the area now has an individual training programme which has been co-ordinated with the Training Manager and this has been a part of the programme to attain ISO9000 which has also got us examining our operating procedures and the Personnel information services.”

“The workforce helped to achieve ISO 9000, people are aware of quality. The quality initiatives are working”

“There’s TQM, the perception is that it is standards based and that the certification is important, BS 5750, ISO 9000.”

“TQ has been used as the hanger on which to justify that sort of new approach, because it’s TQ it’s seen as being OK. But we can’t say that it has all been down to TQ because one of the major achievements has been the accreditation of ISO 9000.”

These comments demonstrate a very strong commitment to the standards based quality accreditations and suggest there is the viewpoint that attaining this standard is ‘job done’. There is little to support the more participative elements of TQM and interestingly another comment suggests that cell manufacturing should be introduced, which had been happening. A further comment suggests that the projects have been useful in changing culture but

“Yes, I think we are getting a culture of involvement. The quality initiative is almost superficial in this.”

The negative comments are beginning to develop a theme that suggests respondents are very much against recognising the validity of TQM and this is

reinforced by the four comments that are very dismissive of TQM believing it to offer nothing to what these respondents have been doing throughout their careers:

“Manufacturing is different, we’ve been doing projects for 30 years and everything is measured. TQ is nothing new to us, we’re steeped in it.”

“Me and my colleagues were very bemused by all these buzzwords that we’d known about anyway.”

“Most have a management services background and so were well schooled in ideas and applications of business improvement and quality”

“I was trained in management services and all of what is being talked about now I’ve been practicing for years. We’ve been applying these techniques all along.”

Not surprisingly these comments represent the production managers in Relays and they form a very influential group. What is important is the attention to their professional status and the dismissal of TQM as being ‘nothing new’ and essentially an irrelevance. What is emerging is an alternative and conflicting narrative. This alternative narrative is reinforced by two comments that suggest TQM sends the wrong message, including one from the M.D. and two that suggest the phrase *TQM* should be removed. Other contra-messages come from three comments that suggest TQM detracts from the main priority of the business

“there is a priority issue, we must reach our manufacturing targets before we get stuck into TQ”

and three comments that say the company is successful either despite or in spite of TQM

“I think that the company has achieved its position despite the TQ initiatives.”

and further dismissal of TQM by one manager regarding faddism

“I see TQ as a management fad, it might achieve something and highlight problems but I’m sceptical.”

There are two other comments that present important perspectives on what is happening in relation to the acceptance and application of TQM:

“I was told by the consultants that it would be 5 years before we saw an appreciative change but even now people look at TQ as being something outside of the business, it is not integrated into everyday activity.”

This comment was made by the TQ Manager and establishes a time frame for successful integration of TQM of 5 years. Although the interviews are only 3 years into the Programme and the TQ Manager is expressing concerns, at this point he is ‘ahead of schedule’ and has a timeframe that cushions any contra-indicators.

The other comment that needs consideration is again made by the M.D.:

“The TQ mentor mentioned BPR management techniques. I felt that the consultant was applying the techniques that he was used to in a company that was operating at level zero and was successful. What he proposed to us for our company was seen by those who were taking on the roles as being too simplistic. I believe that the ideas were wrong.”

The reference to the *roles being too simplistic* is the M.D. commenting on the quality and professionalism of the Production Managers and the inference is that he too believes that the recommendations from the external consultant – the TQ Mentor were not appropriate for TRC. This is also the first reference to BPR and the setting of an alternative narrative being presented to the M.D.

These negative comments reflecting respondents’ interpretations of their experiences of the TQ Programme, establishes a very difficult context in which the TQ Manager is trying to implement TQM and engage the workforce. The lack of conviction of the value, validity and credibility of TQM within Relays in particular, and both the extent and strength of alternative and competing narratives, places a very great need for highly skilled and highly persuasive storytelling (McCallum and O’Connell, 2009) of why TQM is right for TRC.

Overall, the narrative context of the change programme in 1994 looked precarious.

By 1997, three years of further activities led to more comments being made about TQM suggesting that the respondents had established a better awareness of TQM on which to reflect. In reviewing the comments we can find that of the 44 comments, only 9 can be said to provide positive reflections. What is important is to discover how many of the negative comments demonstrate a retrenched frame of reference

about TQM and therefore little movement towards TQM and its intentions for a new working experience.

However, we will start off with the positive comments and although there are only 9 comments they provide a strong sense of support for Kanban, Cell manufacturing and the idea of the internal customer. All three of these initiatives form part of Deming's third element of TQM. What is interesting is that the strength of support and enthusiasm which comes from two groups of production workers who are experiencing first-hand the developments:

“Bob: The new area is potentially a cell and we are encouraged to do things differently. Mick: We're a cell. Bob: We operate Kanban which is great. Jean: We are a cell and they are just getting things together. We've been a cell since last July. It's good isn't it Mick. Mick: Kanban and cells are part of TQ, we're getting better, especially stock-wise which means that we can give the customer better service.”

“One concept that we have taken on board is that of the internal customer and we have really got to grips with the idea of the internal supply chain. There has been a definite improvement in the dialogue between sections but I can't say whether it's because of TQ or because of my personality – probably both.”

“After all it's teamwork and TQ is supposed to be about team work.”

“Cell manufacturing has improved lead-times and this has had a big impact on the commercial side and customers.”

“People were suspicious of change but it has improved work experience where it has been implemented. We had a lot of wasted w-i-p before, we went on an exercise as if we had our own small shop floor to see how we could improve and the suggestions are being implemented. We've introduced Kanban it's good.”

“The reduction in lead-times has had an impact on the production people, but the biggest impact has come from cell-manufacturing.”

“We've gone onto direct ordering through Kanban. That seems to be spreading, that's been a bit of a revelation, once you actually do it, it is very

successful. Win: I wouldn't see it as part of TQ, that's more about cutting lead times. John: Well that was part of TQ it was one of the projects."

"I think that we may see other opportunities as other things take priority. There is a possible hiatus but also the opportunity to pick it up and change direction."

These comments, whilst not wholly endorsing TQM, do provide prima facie evidence that the shop-floor workers have recognised changes in the organisation of their work and have associated these with the TQ Programme. The training exercise that was mentioned also shows how those workers who were part of the TQ Projects were drawn into the process of ownership if the improvements and their level of engagement and work satisfaction seem to be good. There also seems to be a readiness for further change as new opportunities are identified. At this level, the changes seem to be providing a good experience.

Review of the negative comments demonstrates the dominance of IS 9000 and ISO 9001 and the priority the quality standard has over anything. There is certainly confusion with regards to TQM and ISO:

"Brian: It's good to have but it's only PR. Gary: ISO are only interested in paperwork and procedures. Dave: It's not just a case of working to procedure, but actually knowing what the procedure is. Gary: we're not serious about it. Brian: They can't be serious because they don't communicate."

"But I have been very confused between what's required for TQ and the audit for ISO 9001 Roger: I can imagine things would get confused because 9001 is so important."

and also some concern that if the TQ Project was to stop ISO 9000 would be lost. As such, there is a symbiotic relationship between TQM and ISO 9,000. There is also a linkage between ISO 9,000 and customer satisfaction with a belief that the 'kite-mark' accreditation is good enough to keep customers away from the factory. The main body of comments relate more to a lack of tolerance for TQM and what it has meant in terms of organisational achievement:

"I don't see any major benefits for my department from TQ. I've never been impressed. It just seems like a lot of paperwork most of which goes in the bin."

“Had we not done the TQ programme we may have created the opportunity to change earlier, but I’m not sure what makes people think that we can change people.”

“I always thought it was a grandiose scheme that they could wave about saying that they’d got this scheme to identify quality problems throughout the company. To a great extent that seems to be what’s happened. Early on people were involved, people were educated to get it right first time and people did begin to think about things, but now it’s tailed off.”

“I said to the Manufacturing Director that the very last place where we needed multi-cross-functional operations was in manufacturing. It’s only ISO 9000 done in a similar way.”

There is also the group of comments that relate to the TQM approach questioning how valid the emphasis on process driven projects was:

“All the projects have been process centred and not people centred.”

“I am a people person, but TQ here has been process driven.”

“The advice given from the consultants wasn’t good either, he should have warned us about being too project orientated.”

“This factory does not seem to view TQ as a ‘people’ thing. So much of the emphasis has been on the changing of the processes or specifications without considering the people”

“Originally TQ started with small projects to generate interest quickly. Unfortunately, with the successes the Senior Managers saw TQ as the vehicle to hit strategic issues, but without the support of the little projects. The big projects were kept away from the ‘little people’.”

This latter group of comments demonstrates how confusing the TQM Programme was, particularly in relation to expectations of experience. These comments link closely with the polarisation between ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ TQM (Wilkinson et al., 1992, 1994). Green (2012) suggests that successful implementation of TQM could depend on the prevailing culture of the organisation. The ‘hard’ approaches to TQM resonate

much more with the culture of TRC, to such an extent as people were trying to make sense of TQM in a way that fit their experiences:

“I have been reading more about TQ and I have found a model that fits my own vision of what I want to achieve.”

“The managers only take little bits of TQ and apply those.”

“People here have been allowed to interpret TQ against their own preferred frame of reference, and in the majority of cases this was Quality Assurance and they have drawn a veil over what they prefer to not understand.”

These comments draw close attention to the confusion of what the story is and again challenge the ability of the TQ Manager to encourage people to listen, understand and apply the story he was setting out. Other things that frustrated the appropriateness of the approach was the reward system in place (piecework) that frustrated the principles of soft TQM forcing a priority given to quantity not quality

“If there wasn’t piecework it would be a lot better. It’s harder to do TQ when you’re on piecework. David: It’s difficult to change things when you are governed by the parameters of piecework” and commenting on adherence to monitoring and inspection, *“unless people know how to inspect properly then you can’t do TQ.”*

Also undermining the story of TQM from a ‘soft’ perspective, the more people centred approach advocated by the TQ Manager, were the comments on BPR that are creeping in to the narratives:

“The trouble was that product creation cuts across all functions and the projects tended to be kept within Production. Product creation incorporates Business Process Re-engineering but, there were too many castles and barriers for the project to be effective”

“It’s been BPR really, not TQ.”

These comments are supported by the next group of respondents who have lost a sense of there being credibility in the TQM Programme and after six years of the project in action, are questioning its very purpose and credibility:

“We bought into it without knowing what we were buying. As a result we’ve taken out middle managers who were our most important group.”

“We were interested in lead time before TQ. Personally I think that there were lots of things that were good before TQ”

“We hadn’t identified what we were trying to do and so identify potential solutions. What we did was identify a solution and then identified the problem”

“The Business Plan – nothing has been communicated for quite a while, nothing has been brought up. Cells and the Integration project are all part of the Business Plan but there has been no linkage at all. The trouble is that people simply do not see TQ as part of the process.”

What may be emerging here is a question about the antenarrative (Boje, 1998) to the initial change that was not strong enough to support the change process or indeed the readiness for change. It would be reasonable to posit that the narratives from 1994 and 1997 present a context in which the susceptibility to TQM, and what was intended, was not established, and the prevailing culture was too strong to be open to a new story. As Thompson and Findlay (1999) suggest, despite consultants and change agents being proficient at leading culture change workshops where those present are encouraged to question their old beliefs against the experiences, opportunities and positive aspects of the culture being encouraged as *the way we will do things around here*, culture change cannot be guaranteed. In the case of TRC, it would appear fair to suggest that there were not enough supporters to build the sway towards TQM.

However, looking forwards there is a telling comment about the expectation of someone doing something different and the sense of someone stepping in, not just to take over from the TQ Manager, but to be doing something ‘unexpected’. The idea of the *independent thinker* suggests that people do think that the TQ Manager has nothing new to add, he has succumbed to the ‘norms’ of TRC and is no longer able to lead:

“We are bringing in this new guy to drive the next phase of TQ. He will be offered a short term project, a departmental purpose exercise for the Quality

and MIS Director. I think we can take advantage of his independent, alternative and non-biased views”.

Chong and Wolf (2010) identified very interesting observations relating to work experience and lack of follower willingness to be led as the leader’s credentials are questioned. Furthermore, is the example of non-categorical syllogistic inference suggesting that change drivers need to be independent, non-biased and alternative thinkers to be successful, and as the TQ Manager no longer demonstrates those characteristics, he can no longer lead.

Throughout several of the comments about the understanding of TQM, there are various references to the effectiveness of the communications process. The following analysis reviews the narratives made on the effectiveness of communications.

Category H: Are Communications Effective?

There are 45 comments in Category H, 14 pertaining to 1994 and 31 to 1997. Communications in TQM is seen as the stimulus to action and informed decision making and are therefore crucial in the sense-making process (Drummond, 1992). Abraham et al., (1999) suggest that effective communication is necessary for all phases of the change process but also suggest that active management support is key to successful implementation. As Mosadeghrad (2006) Rao (1996) and Claver et al., (2001, 2003) found, every element of TQM needs to be talked about throughout the organisation if it has any chance of successful acceptance.

In 1994, of the fourteen comments, there are only two positive expressions of support for the communications approach:

“The link between the senior and middle managers is very good and the TQ exercises have helped improve information and communication problems.”

“People know what’s going on because there are boards on the shop floor on which people can write problems and they stay there until they are solved. Management have become a lot closer and there’s a great sense of achievement when something gets solved”.

The second comment is interesting because it creates an impression that direct face-to-face communications is less of a priority. People make judgements about TQM depending on how quickly messages are removed off a notice board. However these two comments of support are set against perceptions that present a very different experience:

“The lack of communication between the top and the bottom creates an atmosphere of intimidation”

“Our communications could be better, we do inform but don’t necessarily communicate”

“We hear about big items but generally we are not kept very informed. We heard about the Queen’s Award and also a Quality Control certificate that was awarded by a Norwegian company. I can’t actually say what it was”

The comment about the poor communications from the top creating an environment of coercion is echoed in other comments:

“I would say it is friendly but there is also a lot of cynicism, like ‘well they’re doing this but why are they?’ Dave: There is a lack of trust, the place thrives on rumours. You always think that there is an ulterior motive behind everything. Management are not open enough, you sometimes feel like you are being indoctrinated”

“Foremen think that fault finding is just the workers being bloody minded, there’s a sense of not being here to help. The foremen were in the TQM meetings and knew all about right first time, but the guys just hadn’t been involved.”

Even the TQ Manager alludes to the feeling of intimidation in describing how he feels he needs to communicate and also expressing his own sense of not being able to communicate effectively:

“I find that I have to use a different type of assertiveness and persuasiveness and I am not always able to defend myself and my views. I suppose I have difficulty articulating my point.”

This self-disclosure of not being able to articulate what the TQ Manager feels he wants to say, would probably create a barrier to others being able to understand what meaning he wants them to construct. The lack of articulation creates a dysfunctional spiral as people fail to make sense of what they should expect, make sense of their experiences against flawed understanding, and then experience further cognitive dissonance. Failure to articulate clearly and with conviction creates an impression of a leader who is unsure, lacking belief in their own ideas and purpose and unable to generate trust for people to feel committed to follow (Seeger, et al., 2005).

Schneider et al., (1996) identify several characteristics of weak management and found that such management's dealings with lower level employees are often perceived as being less than completely honest and open, sometimes harsh, and typically disrespectful. Such a poor relationship generates a reciprocal response of unwillingness to endorse any initiative undertaken by management. They also found that where management has a history of initiating change efforts that do not come to fruition, employees do not know why changes are initiated and do not know towards what goals they should focus their energies. Without such focus, the change process appears ambiguous and chaotic. Where management were perceived to have avoided making tough decisions employees viewed management as lacking determination, courage, and strength. These perceptions of a weak management then create barriers to change particularly transformational changes such as TQM. All of these features were apparent at TRC.

In reviewing the comments from 1997 there are several groups that emerge that suggest a great sense of frustration with what people are experiencing. It is worth putting these comments into the context of the perception of what some are experiencing in relation to the culture at TRC:

“Although we lost nobody because of the integration, the problem was that the meetings which were held every month became less open. People were expressing their fears in the meetings but they were getting no feed-back. After six months the situation got so tense that the Strategic Projects Director had to go to the meetings to deal with their concerns.”

“Communications, the TQ Manager’s baby, that’s another joke. You can guarantee that those who will be involved will be those that won’t rock the boat”

“I agree with the principles of communicating with employees but I am concerned that in a fairly authoritative and chauvinistic culture we still have people who think of information as power and that they can’t cut across works time.”

What these comments suggest is that despite there being an emphasis on communications and the TQ Manager is still committed to improving them, there is an atmosphere of fear and cynicism. These comments and perceptions are reinforced by the number of comments that relate to the main communications approaches of TQ failing such as:

*“It was difficult to cascade down information and involvement. Support documents were introduced with a little success but the main method of TQ communication was Feedback (the Company Newsletter) and this was not used to provide the detail that was lacking. It was felt, by those in more senior positions, that the information was not ‘sexy’ enough, that it wasn’t what people wanted to know or needed to know” **

*“Jean: I haven’t seen a magazine for ages. Maybe they’re not distributed. *All agree. Mick: I was looking forward to reading about one of the projects, but we’ve just not seen anything for a good six months. Bob: They’re probably distributed to the shop floor but not given out. We don’t have the need to go to the shop office anymore. Perhaps they could deliver it with the pay packet. (All agree that they would read it if they could get it. They liked to know what was happening).”*

These comments suggest that the systems in place to share information are failing, either because they no longer are the appropriate system, or because people are deliberately stopping the process:

“My section leader is in a weekly meeting with his department head. They discuss everything. I ask about information and am told nothing important. I have to go to another section to find anything out.”

“Brian: I was on the committee to start off with. OK to start but then I got to feel that the hourly-rate people don’t matter. It will just come down to the Production Manager and then stop.”

“When we speak to the M.D. he says that communication must improve, but the middle managers block it”

The impression here is that there is a deliberate blocking of the communications processes either by not dispensing Feedback or simply not telling people what they need/want to know:

“The biggest thing is communication. They say let’s tell you everything, but they tell you everything about nothing you want to know. Can you find out about anything that’s important – No.”

“Yes with TQ communication has increased but it’s not the information you need.”

“Projects are going on in the background but we’re not informed. Maybe you know more if you’re directly involved.”

“They (senior managers) keep surveying the employees and asking about the effectiveness of the communications. They keep getting the same answer that we don’t think they are any good, but they do nothing about it.”

Whilst there is a sense of not communicating enough, there are comments that give a clear impression of a callous attempt to give information that will deliberately unsettle the workforce:

“One thing that they communicate really well indirectly is job insecurity. People are very pessimistic and are worried about their future. In some respects they can do what they like here because people are so worried.”

“There were stories about demotions, new working practices, different jobs that they would be required to do and the general comment was that they had not been given enough information. This has reflected adversely on TQ.”

Whilst TQM is not about only sharing ‘good’ information, these comments allude to an atmosphere of anxiety and concern about the future. Alkhafaji et al., (1998) state that TQM must share both good and bad news and especially the sharing and

attributing of successes to teams. Throughout this section on communication in 1997 there is a strong impression of a deliberate attempt to frustrate the communication process and to undermine the TQM story. This is further supported by the blanket statements such as this one from the Trades Union Representatives,

“Communications here are a shambles.”

and from the TQ Manager, which in many respects simply highlights how unaware he is of the general frustrations being expressed by the other respondents.

“But if only they would embrace the communications exercise they would gain so much more credibility. They have this feeling that they can’t step out of line and yet they would gain so much.”

If this last comment by the TQ Manager is an expression of hope, it needs to be considered in relation to the that relate to the Team Briefing system that was to be introduced. People were aware of something new, but again their hope is thwarted. There are five comments that provide expressions of considerable frustration and confusion:

“Mick: I’ve heard about Team Briefings but I’ve not had any. Bob; I’ve seen photographs on the board about who is going to be a communicator, but nothing has happened. People won’t read a notice board. Mick: Some boards around the smoking area are read. Bob: Our main notice board is right outside the foreman’s door, you feel awkward standing there. Mick: Some have nothing on them, others have loads of information, but there’s a lack of communication from the communicators.”

“I am a bit confused over the team briefings initiative that my boss has been told to initiate and for which he has had training. These are supposed to take place on a monthly basis and all information has to be passed down to the lower levels over the next two weeks, but we already have team briefings on a weekly basis and a monthly meeting with those lower down. I don’t know anything about this Team Briefing Communications project.”

I didn’t know about Team Briefings, but we need to have a way of being told more. The trouble is my charge hand won’t do it, he’ll just hand round a piece of paper. But they know that that’s all he’ll do so why do they let him do it?

“Team Briefing, the purpose has always been there and it’s always been the responsibility of the Functional Steering Group chairmen to effect that communication. They haven’t been doing it. In one sense it is a statement of failure, but we now have a managed system in place of ineffective leadership.”

“The Team Briefing initiative has been put on hold for a few weeks. Management want it to go from top to bottom including all supervisors who are going to have to present to the workforce. “

What these comments reflect is an impression of considerable ambiguity about what is happening. According to the TQ Manager Team Briefing had not started and yet other comments refer to it already happening and others thinking that they are experiencing it. The overall impression is of a new communications approach that the TQ Manager was very hopeful about, being unlikely to succeed. It also supports the impression of the TQ Manager being more and more remote from what is happening. Change agents can contribute to recipient counter-productive behaviours by breaking agreements both before and during change and by failing to restore the loss of trust (Ford et al., 2008, Andersson, 1996). The TQ Manager’s inability to engage with what the other respondents are portraying could itself lead to resistance as he both loses credibility and does not respond to their frustrations. Essentially he adds to the dysfunctional spiral in to which the TQ Programme seems to have descended (Schneider et al., 1996).

The analysis of this category shows that even in 1994 there was a sense of there being a problem with communications and that there were barriers to the story being told about TQM. The TQ Manager has already disclosed a difficulty in articulating the story in 1994 and it would appear that despite that awareness, he is still trying to get communications improved in 1997. Having recognised that the communications processes are not effective, the TQ Manager is trying to improve the communications but rather than address the failings of the existing systems, he is trying something new. Unfortunately, the introduction of Team Briefings is also being frustrated by both delays and lack of understanding about what is happening. The analysis is showing that the TQ Manager is becoming more remote from the main experiences of the people. Interestingly, the shop floor workers appear to be the

most supportive of what he is trying to do, but as we explore the comments from 1997, there seems to be more intolerance and less trust for TQM and the TQ Manager emerging.

From the last two categories there has been an exploration of the responses on *What was the story being told – What is TQM?* and how respondents were experiencing communications at work as a major activity in the implementation of TQM. It has been established that there was considerable ambiguity about what TQM was with a strong preference to linking it to Quality Standards Accreditation such as ISO 9,000 and the 'hard' interpretations of TQM in practice. It has also been established that by 1997 the communications systems in place were in disarray and expectations were being violated leading to cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1962) and frustration as the dissonance could not be resolved. There has also begun an initial examination of the impact of the TQ Manager's behaviours on the perceptions of the respondents and the possibility of him inadvertently, being the cause of his own demise.

To consider these ideas more we need to address the last category in this level of analysis, that of *What do I think of TQM?* – category O. This category is important because through analysing these responses we hope to be able to establish some connection with the degree of openness to TQM and susceptibility to the story being shared based upon the respondents' experience of TQM

Category O – What do I think of TQM?

This is a very large category and elicited 161 comments over the two interview sessions, 64 in 1994 and 97 in 1997. The comments have been further broken down and are represented in the following tables (5.1 and 5.2). The tables represent a quantitative analysis to demonstrate the changing pattern and intensity of comments. Prima facie evidence shows a promising position in that the largest group of comments is representing a good and positive experience of TQM. There is the second group that is giving mixed reviews but the comments of presenting TQM as a failure are only 4 at this time. However, whilst the bald figures look reasonably good in favour of the TQM experience, we need to analyse the comments in more detail.

Table 5.1: What I think of TQM, 1994

Comments Classification	Number
Good Reviews of TQM	20
Mixed Reviews of TQM	18
Needs more time	4
Experiencing Failure	4
Management Services Ideas are better	4
More Team-working	3
TQ is a front	2
We had outstanding quality anyway	2
TQ is very bureaucratic	1
TQ has given us the competitive edge	1
Better at Customer Service	1
It happened too quickly	1
Already had appropriate standards	1
The wrong people were involved	1
I need more experience to understand it	1

It would be reasonable to add to the positive comments the three comments that identify more team working which is an objective of TQM, and better customer service and the recognition of TQ giving TRC a competitive advantage, so there are 25 positive comments in total.

Within the group of positive comments we have statements like:

“I’m totally in agreement with TQ and I like the way that the boss has gone about it.”

“I think it’s given everyone a pride in their work and a satisfaction with what they are doing. It used to be fault finding and reprimand, now the system makes you record where the problems emerge.”

“I think TQ has on the whole been a good thing. It can only benefit the company in the long run and make it stronger. I think TQ teaches us how to solve problems.”

“One of our major achievements is the introduction of TQ and being able to sustain empowerment from the management team to first level management.”

“I’m not involved directly with a TQ project. But there is already an emphasis on ‘total’ in that everything we do we try to improve it. But the programme raises peoples’ awareness and tries to get you to own your own problems.”

These comments reflect a ‘feel good factor’ about the TQ experience and suggest there is quite an excitement about the project. These commentators are identifying and reflecting on the characteristics of TQM in practice with problem-solving, more responsibility, the educative aspect and less inspection and reprimand, and coupled with the team-working and customer service they demonstrate a real attempt to implement the ideas underpinning TQM (Wilkinson 1994). The last comment is especially important because it indicates that even those who don’t experience the TQ Projects directly feel that they are involved.

We must now examine the second largest group which are representing a less confident set of comments about TQM. To the 18 comments we can add the one where the interviewee is saying that s/he needs more experience understand it and the comment about TQM being too bureaucratic as this is not a comment that endorses the approach. We also need to add those comments that are suggesting the TQ Project needs more time to achieve its potential. Consequently, we have 24 comments in total expressing uncertainty about TQM of which the following are indicative.

“I believe that empowerment has happened in some sections but that we have a long way to go. I think that there are some difficulties because of contra-indicators in some areas where there is still a tendency for people to tell, not involve.”

“I think Total Quality needs a few more years to achieve its objectives. It has begun to structure things and has improved the way that people do things locally, but computerisation has improved things much more so than Total Quality”

“I wouldn’t describe TQ in terms of failure. We have a tremendous way to go to make it a part of everyday life.”

“I’ve always made a significant contribution to the company and can identify specific things in my other roles. With TQ it is much more difficult to identify, it is so intangible and so subjective, that’s part of my frustration.”

“Non-production projects are just full of bad politics. Politics can be a big issue in this place. I’m not convinced that everyone is committed to TQ. Roger: I disagree I think people are, I think there is some difference for those people who haven’t been involved in a TQ project.”

These comments are suggesting that there are some real tensions in workers’ experiences and the commentators are looking for more evidence to encourage greater support for TQM. Employee commitment to change is essential since it is employees who undertake the activities during the implementation (Hanson et al., 2003). Employees’ commitment to change can be affected for various reasons, including demoralised staff who may resist change due to, for example, fear of losing jobs (Hardwick and Winsor, 2002), negative experience of earlier problematic change projects (Bardoel and Sohal, 1999; Dale et al., 1997); unwillingness to change due to stressful work conditions or not understanding the process, or being unable to see the benefits of the implementation (Karlsson and Ljungberg, 1995; Shin et al., 1998); and upholding existing practices, stemming from insufficient knowledge of the new working methods (Bardoel and Sohal, 1999). Within the ‘mixed review’ comments, all of the above are identified or hinted at, suggesting that there is both a need for a stronger, more persuasive story and also that people actually experience what they are told they should experience. There should be very few, if any conflicting experience that violate expectations (Beer, 2003).

However, although there are twenty five positive experiences, the mixed review comments could present an equal and opposing set of experiences if the commentators cannot be persuaded of the value of the experience of TQM. Together

with the negative comments that we will review next, it could be that the experience of TQM in 1994 is not a strong enough bedrock on which to build a willingness to change.

There are four statements that perceive the TQ Project as a failure, but we need to add to these the comments that say that the alternative narrative of management services is better (four comments), quality was outstanding anyway, the appropriate standards were already in place, it happened too quickly and the wrong people were involved; making twelve negative responses in total. There are two type of negative comment, the first relates to those comments that reflect the experience of TQM, the second relates to those comments which suggest a closed mind to TQM, so an unwillingness to listen to the story, preferring a previous frame of reference. These also reflect the issues of cynicism and scepticism in relation to change (Stanley et al., 2005) where cynics are those people who do not believe management's objectives about the change being encouraged, and sceptics do not believe that change will bring about the intended benefits. There is also a question about management support for the change.

“Management Services applications have had a much greater impact on the way that things are done than Total Quality”

“The company suffered for 18 months because of the direction it took. The opportunity to speak was denied. People were operating hands-off management, they were abdicating their responsibility”

“The TQ stuff hasn't had much impact directly.”

“TQ has not really started, there is still a lot to do to get people to change their minds and alter the way they think and do things.”

When it comes to being adopted in Production I believe that the Production men are cynical to ultra-cynical (about TQ).”

“Within TRC, TQ has become recognisable as a way of doing things. Change is being frustrated by those who are universally recognised as being non-team players. But one thing that does stop TQ progressing a pace is that there is not enough in place to help people recognise that they can make

improvements. Although we are three years into TQ the greater number of people are not involved.”

The comments indicate that there is a problem with getting the TQM story heard or acted upon. After three years there are real issues with the number of people who perceive that they are involved in the TQM approach. This is important because it suggests that rather than developing a new culture based upon the principles and practice of TQM, there is a strong resistance to adoption of TQM. As Green (2012) and Huq (2005) suggest, successful implementation of TQM depends on the prevailing culture of the organisation and Snape et al., (1995) point to the importance of employee relations strategies that have a key role to play in the success of TQM initiatives and one of the barriers to the implementation was the problems cause by the employees still rewarded through piecework. At TRC there appear to be some powerful inhibitors to the story being heard and supported.

Table 5.2: What I think of TQM, 1997

Comments Classification	Number
TQ is a success	16
Mixed Reviews	25
TQ has failed	9
Concerns about the future	7
Shop floor not involved	6
Concentrated on the wrong things	3
Meetings have dwindled	2
Not as good as Management Services ideas	2
Training not right	2
Job security is being eroded	2
Communications are there but they aren't effective	2
Trades Unions are not involved	1

TQ is a burden	1
TQ might help	1
TQ Manager is used as a 'dish-cloth'	1
New guy taking over is not liked	1
Quality standard is appalling	1
Change would have happened anyway, didn't need TQM	1
No experience of TQM	1
The Functional Steering Groups were wrong	1
Claiming success when there haven't been successes	1
Things have gone past their 'sell by date'	1
It needs re-formatting	1
The TQ Manager has been a success	1
The TQ Manager needs replacing	1
TQ has been about keeping the TQ Manager in a job	1
The workforce have become more involved	1
Changes not because of TQ	1
We could have done it better	1
It has been very bureaucratic	1
I would have challenged the consultants more	1
Benefits the management not the workers	1

The comments from 1997 (quantified in Table 5.2 above) present a very wide range of reflections but the most concerning is that support for the TQ Programme has diminished. There are sixteen comments of support and to this we can add the view that the TQ Manager's change initiative has been a success and that the workforce

has become more involved. The following examples, whilst supportive of what has happened, do not give a strong endorsement of the TQ Programme and within all the comments there is none that say “the TQ Programme has been a success”, success is inferred.

“We still continue to have meetings every 5-8 weeks. There are two lots led by charge hands. We discuss problems and ways of improving. There’s a shop floor colleague who goes to the quality meetings with people from various departments.”

“I think TQ has helped the integration process, it has opened people up, there are less barriers and it is not so difficult to challenge why people do things in the way that they do and they find it more difficult to tell you to ‘go away’.”

“But reflecting on what has taken place we have had definite success in financial terms with the unit improving substantially its net margin returns. We have done so without vast increases in people, so there we have a measure of efficiency. The direct labour force is now more flexible and therefore multi-skilled, with it the average pay and sales per employee has improved, so that is a clear indication of increased added-value. And I think that we have improved our total quality.”

“Peoples’ experiences of TQ fall into 2 camps. My observations tell me that having been critical of how it was started, I was involved in the project on Personal Appraisals and it changed my view completely. I’ve now been involved in 10-12 TQ teams and although there has been varying success from total to hardly any – usually associate with poor objectives in the first place, I appreciate what has been done.”

“TQ has certainly made us more responsive to our customers and their requirements. We have had several training sessions on customer service. However, because I have been fairly picky about who I wanted in the group and because we have a well constructed group and lots of space the team does get on well.”

There is one comment from the Chief Development Engineer that gives an expression of considerable hope about the TQ Programme but it too talks about success to come:

“I am still very positive about TQ and think that most of what we are going to get from TQ is about to appear. There are still some people who say that they have got nothing from TQ, but I think people have raised their goals and expectations.”

These comments demonstrate quite a variation in the respondents' understandings of TQM which suggests that there has been difficulty in establishing a clear framework for sense-making. Meaning is fluid and contextual (Reissmann, 1993) and within the organisation there will be many interpretations of what has been experienced. However, successful change will tend to demonstrate enough of a shared interpretation of what has taken place, and is taking place, to enable people to share experiences and establish a shared meaning through convergence of sensemaking and sense-giving (Dunford and Jones, 2000). The narratives of success show that enough has happened for people to share a sense of TQM being successful, yet, based upon their measures of success they are describing, their frames of reference are subtly different.

One of the most telling comments in this group of support for TQM is the one that refers to the demise of one of the production managers:

“Over the past three months there has been a change in view. Since the previous production manager has gone there has been a real attempt to pull all the manufacturing team together to show a common front. It's enabled us to move TQ at a pace.”

This comment is especially significant as it both recognises the impact of the production manager as a key influencer and barrier to TQM. As a management services trained production manager he was very effective and widely recognised for his professionalism and commitment. Unfortunately his dismissal of TQM was a major barrier to the TQM story getting traction in the main production areas of the Relays plant. His antipathy was well known but there was reluctance to manage him and challenge his dismissal of TQM. There was also reluctance to undermine his constant comparison with the management services ethos and his power meant that

many were many who were willing to follow his lead. Essentially, whether it was intention or not, he sabotaged the TQ Programme. He was finally persuaded to take accelerated retirement. The story of the production manager highlights the power of the story teller to exercise influence and social control (Reissner, 2011; Boje et al., 1999; McConkie and Boss, 1986). Unfortunately, in his domain, the Production Manager's competing story was the one that held sway.

The 25 comments that reflect mixed reviews towards the programme can be joined by the comments on communications being there but not effective, the view that TQ might help, that TQ needs re-formatting, that the TQ Programme has been about keeping the TQ Manager in a job, that we could have done it better, that it has been very bureaucratic, that TQ benefits the management but not the workers and, that the statement by the HR Director that he would have challenged the consultants more. This last comment is especially interesting given the lack of involvement that the HR Director took throughout the change programme. However, what cannot be ignored is the comment that indicates some resentment towards the TQ Manager in putting forward the shared viewpoint that the only reason the TQ programme was kept going was to keep the TQ Manager in a job, which suggests that there has been some unfavourable discussions about the TQ Manager. This group of mixed reviews is now the most significant in terms of numbers of comments, amounting to 33 in total, reflected in part by the following comments:

“As far as TQ is concerned we shouldn't lose sight of the fact that there have been successes, but in terms of driving it down the organisation, someone is at fault. There has not been enough done to generate the agenda and not wait for people to tell you what it is. I tell the boss what I want to do and then I do it.”

“TQ has been a lot of little things, some have been successful some disappointing but it's moved that slowly I'm not sure. Win: It's been nothing more than an elaborate paper exercise. Bryan: I'm not very impressed. Ingrid: No, not impressed.”

“We've had good results and some good hard-work, but a lot of people have done hardly anything of any substance.”

“TQ has wandered on under the 'empowerment' banner.”

“Some people have been taken on TQ and have tried to improve the way they do their work. Others just don’t want to be involved and when you come upon against someone like that it affects motivation and it becomes difficult to change them.”

What these comments exemplify is a real sense of struggle between those that wanted to engage with the programme and make it work but coming up against those who chose not to engage. Possibly more frustrating to these people is that those who were not engaging were not passive resisters, they appear to be deliberate in their refusal. Johnson and Kleiner (2013) argue that employee resistance is one of the main barriers to the implementation of TQM but resistance is highly complex and has to be explored in greater depth. We can see from the above comments the key issue of people choosing not to engage seems to reflect an element of voluntarism challenging the unitarist expectation of shared commitment to TQM. If people were not engaging then they were being allowed not to engage which suggests that their managers were complicit in this refusal to get involved. This then begs further questions about the change process and the preparation for change and getting the management ‘on board’. Strong visionary leadership, a clear direction and constancy of purpose coupled with a shared vision and effective communications are requirements for adoption of and adaption to new ways of doing things (Mosadeghrad, 2014; Senge, 2006 and Longnecker and Scazerro, 2000) and without vision and direction front-line managers and supervisors become unwilling to take risks (Longnecker and Scazerro, 2000).

Given the reluctance to move away from the preferred frame of reference of management services, was resistance more about sustaining the ‘tried and tested’ rather than deliberate sabotage? Was there a legitimate challenge to the introduction of TQM because there had not been a clear case made for the reason why TQM was seen as a superior approach to the way of working? As Jermier posits, "the most prevalent way of analysing resistance is to see it as a reactive process where agents embedded in power relations actively oppose initiatives by other agents" (1994: 9). However, as Piderit (2000) and Ford et al., (2008) suggest, resistance does not have to be explained as a conflict with negative consequences, it may be that people are expressing ambivalence to the direction they are being pushed and need more information to help them define their views. The following comments demonstrate

how entrenched in the superiority of the management services ethos some commentators are:

“I have to say though, that I think some of the production projects would have happened without TQ.”

“It’s taken one of the core project managers 15 months to do what the old Production Engineering Manager could do in 12 weeks.”

The next group of comments reflects those who believe that that the TQ Programme has failed. There are 9 comments but we need to add to these the comments reflecting the view that the shop floor was not involved, that TQ had made job security less secure, that the Trades Unions were not involved – perhaps not surprising if the shop floor were not involved, the quality standard is appalling, that success had been claimed when there had been no success, things had ‘gone past their sell-by date’, and that TQ was a burden; making 17 comments in total. Example comments include:

“TQ is not something that most of the operatives know much about. Many think it is a burden and an irrelevance, others tend to just think of it as something that they heard about but are not involved. Most are not involved in it actually.”

“The initial concept of the customer-supplier chain has got lost. Unless you are in a project people just work on their daily procedures.”

“People read Feedback and bin it. Dave: The attitude is that it doesn’t concern them. Gary: People aren’t involved in TQ. : It’s still not in practice.”

I think that we have a big problem. First production cell tried to implement all the right things but piece work got in the way. It was a failed cell. They claimed it as a huge success but if you read up the stuff on TQ it wasn’t successful at all.

“The quality thing is just a publicity stunt to impress the customers. In fact most of the jobs are not challenging, you have to be neat, but the standard of quality is appalling.”

“Smaller ideas were implemented but something that would have made a major impact was shelved, just because it was going to cost money. We were never told when it would be implemented and people lost interest and then started to think of smaller projects. At the outset the people who were going to be involved were chosen by the charge hands and they concentrated on minor problems.”

“My project died a death in 1994 and I’ve heard nothing since, which was a relief because it took up too much time trying to find the documentation to finish it. Because we never really achieved anything, I’ve no involvement in anything since.”

“I wish that I could say that TQ has been a success and everyone is involved, but it simply isn’t true.”

Reading through the comments there is a sense of TQM having been experienced to a greater or lesser extent but it has not been sustainable. However, there is also a great sense of people simply losing interest and there is no drive to re-establish the programme and keep up the momentum. This lack of drive from people suggests that far from feeling that the employees were a key partner in the change process, it was a top down initiative and people were waiting to be invited to be involved. Significantly, from the very early discussions of TQM, it was recognised that employee involvement is essential. Wilkinson et al., (1991) note, TQM is different from other earlier quality initiatives such as quality circles in that it is compulsory rather than voluntary, representing part of the job rather than being a supplement to existing activity. At TRC this is not seen as the way things might be, as one manager observed

“Too many still see it as an add-on not integral to their everyday activity.”

Snape et al., (1995) also identify the importance of employee involvement in TQM initiatives and the supporting employee relations processes to enable involvement to happen.

Perhaps the most telling comment reflects this respondent’s view of the TQM ‘story’:

“I have noticed that people are not talking TQ anymore. People seem to have got sick of the TQ language - except the TQ Manager, but nonetheless, things are being done in a TQ way.”

Although the commentator recognises that TQ is being demonstrated, the collective narrative of TQM is missing and that people are ‘sick’ of the TQ language. Furthermore, the observation that the only person talking TQ is the TQ Manager tends to reinforce the view presented earlier that the TQ Manager is becoming more remote and removed from what is happening. There are also the various comments that suggest that after 6 years of TQM, there are people who are marginalised from the process such as:

“This whole exercise on quality has meant nothing to people on the shop floor in terms of rewards.”

“I think TQ made its mark at the beginning but over the last three years it’s faded into obscurity as far as I’m concerned. Jean: We’re not made aware of it, it’s not highlighted.”

These comments are suggesting that the story of TQM is being lost and that the audience is simply not listening to what the TQ Manager is trying to communicate, they are bored of the story interestingly identified by the HR Director in his comment:

“I think we have been suffering from a surfeit of TQM”.

There are other aspects of the views on the failure of the TQM initiative which need to be addressed. Firstly the thoughts that TQ Programme applied the wrong actions and used the wrong ideas, including the persistence after 6 years of management services being the best way for TRC. This persistence is interesting because the insistence that it was management services and production management and not even ‘hard’ TQM, which tended to reflect the approaches of the operations management paradigm, shows a major problem with closed thinking. Secondly, there are those comments which show concern about the future and several of these are concerned about the retirement of the TQ Manager and the future of the Programme and the integration of Instruments with Relays

"I am seriously concerned that with the retirement of the TQ Manager, the TQ initiative will end. I think that without someone to continually Kick Ass, then even the most seriously committed will give up in the end."

The Core Project Managers are now so stressed up because they don't know where they're going after this job.

Jean: We must be kept aware of it otherwise it'll die a death. Bob: You only need one person to resist and it all grinds to a halt.

"Possibly all the good TQ experiences that we've had in Instruments will be lost when we integrate. David: I think that might happen."

"It (TQM) certainly helped me gain the efficiencies I needed from my staff in Instruments. There is a problem in Relays though, because the culture isn't one which is appropriate to the changes I was able to instigate in Instruments."

"What will happen when the TQ Manager leaves? Win: What do you think? Nothing will happen."

"My fear is that if they do let TQ go, then they will have a great difficulty in bringing in any new initiative."

These comments demonstrate a sense of resignation about the future of the TQM Programme in relation to both the impact of losing the driver of the change initiative, the TQ Manager, and also the impact of integration between the two manufacturing centres with the loss of momentum for the Instruments people who have consistently supported the TQ Programme and recorded many successes. Oreg and Sverdlik (2011) identify the importance to the implementation of change of the orientation of the people exposed to change and the change agent. The reviews of the negative reaction to the TQ Programme suggest that the support for the TQ Manager is waning, there is greater intolerance of his change project and towards the story he is telling. In Instruments, the TQ Manager had been held in high esteem, but in Relays his credibility was always subject to challenge. By 1997 comments relating to him ranged from the very supportive statement of his personal success by the manager from Instruments, to comments that he needs replacing " *We either need to replace him, or get at least two directors to take TQ on and make it happen.*" that he has

been used as a 'dish-cloth' by senior management throughout the change activity and the TQ Programme was about keeping him in a job. The comment on replacement is both a statement of his failure and also recognition that perhaps TQM was not led by the right people, that to make it happen two very senior managers were needed and as the TQ Manager was not of that status, failure was inevitable.

This loss of personal standing, frustration with his grasp on what was happening and intolerance towards the TQ Manager is exemplified in the following comment:

"I had a meeting with the TQ Manager and I said to him – You preach about TQ but we're going backwards. It doesn't matter what the job looks like as long as it works and the customer is happy. He was horrified. But, a few days later the production managers told us that we had to cut back on quality to reduce costs. Crazy or what?"

Category O has highlighted a definite loss of support for the TQM story over the three years from the first interviews. In 1994, there was a sense of hope and enthusiasm for the Programme. Although there were tensions and the threat of the powerful competing narrative was there, there was enough of a body of support to encourage greater uptake of the TQM initiatives and demonstrate it could be successful. However, over the next three years support seems to have dwindled and the dominant commentaries relate to either mixed reviews or strong feelings of change failure. Furthermore, we can see that support for the TQ Manager has fallen and in part he is seen as being remote and unaware of the 'reality' of the situation. It would seem reasonable to interpret the commentaries as suggesting that the story of TQM had very little relevance in 1997 and people were beginning to wonder what was going to happen. We know that BPR had already been a part of the MD's narrative, if not necessarily in public, certainly in his interviews. However, as this comment from the Manufacturing Director in 1997 suggests, if the person that was nominated to take over from the TQ Manager was expected to lead the next story of change triumphantly, he may find that the story he was telling might not be to the taste of his audience:

"I don't think the man that they thought could take over has enough personal credibility. Although he has no inhibitions in speaking his mind many people think he's 'balmy'. He's seen a raper of other peoples' ideas."

The three categories that have been reviewed have explored a cause and effect level of analysis. This was necessary to establish what might have influenced the findings of the previous reviews, which explored achievements, whether change was perceived as necessary? and what changes had been experienced, to establish whether the story had been enacted successfully. This current level of analysis suggests that the understanding of TQM was poor and that far from reinforcing the Deming TQM paradigm, there was considerable ambiguity about what TQM was. We established that by 1997 the communications processes were in disarray and that people were feeling excluded and ill-informed. The TQ Manager was trying to introduce a new approach but this was being frustrated. Several other issues were emerging, firstly the inability of the TQ Manager to influence those around him and drive the TQM initiative, but also whether there were deliberate actions being taken to frustrate him. The last section looking at what people thought about the TQ Programme shows that in 1994, there was not a wholehearted endorsement of, or for, the TQ Programme, but that by 1997, support for both the programme and the TQ Manager had dissipated and people had accepted its failure. Sadly, whilst it appears that the majority of people were disinclined towards the TQ Programme, the TQ Manager was still trying to get the programme back on track and to see it continue. Unfortunately, his enthusiasm was seen as misplaced and futile and added to the impression of him being out-of-touch.

Whilst the evidence appears to build towards a reasonable interpretation that it was the inability of the TQ Manager to persuade and sell the benefits of TQM to the workforce of TRC that was the reason for failure, it would be unfair to simply leave the analysis there. Frontman and Kunkel (1994) encourage the exploration of narratives using various levels of analysis and there are several features of the narratives and the meaning units that may cast light on why the TQ Manager, who was a learning and development professional and a skilled trainer, should be unable to get his message heard.

The next level of analysis explores attributional relationships that impact upon knowledge-based information about the story how it was shared. Specifically, we will examine Were the Senior Management Team committed to the change, for this we will draw on the research of Hollings (2013), Category S: What I think of the TQ Manager and Category N: Who led the change?

Was the Senior Management Team Committed to the Change?

Senior management commitment to the implementation of TQM is seen as a necessity for providing leadership to the process and a responsibility for quality (Beer et al., 1993; Kotter, 1996; Nadler and Nadler, 1998; Graetz, 2000). The analysis of the empirical data suggests that the senior management team of TRC was not committed to the introduction of TQM (Hollings, 2013). In 1994 comments made about their commitment to the TQ Programme elicited rather vague responses. Only the Managing Director presented a positive commentary in support of the initiative, but even this was wrapped up in a diatribe about his commitment to the company. He makes an interesting link to personal objectives:

“When in 1991 we held our first TQ meeting we went round the table and identified a personal objective for each of the management team. We have never revisited those objectives in open forum since.”

This suggests that there was little value placed upon those personal objectives and a tendency to ignore what was happening. It is reasonable to infer from this disregard of attention to, and follow-up of, these objectives that the TQ Programme was someone else's responsibility and not important to the senior management team.

The general impression given in 1994 was of ambivalence from the senior management team with regards to TQM, there was no sense of enthusiasm and active engagement in the TQ Programme. However, by 1997 the impression was clearly one of the senior management team not being committed and that they had not supported the TQ Manager who had undertaken the TQ Programme alone and without the perceived authority to act:

“The TQ Manager did most of it on his own. Certainly during those first few times it was him who kept everything going. It was decided that we'd get involved in a couple of projects that we could take care of, when we'd finished the managers said that they wanted to get other people involved but there were no volunteers and so they nominated people. The projects lost energy and enthusiasm, also the projects were chosen for you and weren't what you'd wanted.”

“There simply is not enough direction or visible commitment from the senior managers.”

“I was never allowed to push things through without having to ask permission first, it was hopeless. My boss never gave any visible commitment.”

These comments are indicative of the views that the respondents had of the senior management and the consequences of their indifference and neglect.

“They’ll raise the flag but not run with it. It’s motivation isn’t it? You can’t always sustain motivation and enthusiasm if you see indifference from above.”

“They’ve never really appreciated the value of performance measures. Take the delivery performance figures, I haven’t updated them for three months and none of the SMT have noticed.”

The research also points to the dysfunctionality of the senior management team during change as they were not a team. Despite the introduction being a strategic decision and the resource allocation had been considerable in terms of finance, people and time, the research indicated that the senior management team was disengaged and not cohesive. As such, the ability to respond as a team was not possible and therefore top management commitment was compromised. The consequences of this lack of commitment based upon lack of cohesive team behaviour had considerable impact upon the TQ Manager, not least of which is that related to the isolation he experienced from his closest senior management contacts, his direct line manager, the Quality and QIS Director and the HR Director. The former was overtly hostile to the preferred approach to TQM as chosen by the consultant and the senior managers in 1991, the latter had deliberately chosen not to champion TQM despite the HR focus. In effect, The TQ Manager was abandoned with no-one to turn to for support and with authority to act. By 1997 his decision to take early retirement was laid firmly at the fault of the senior managers:

“If I had got more personal satisfaction out of the job then I wouldn’t be going. The politics have got to me. The Management Team and the departmental heads have made this a nightmare. It’s all been about self-protectionism.”

S: What I think of the TQ Manager?

Review and analysis of these comments will help establish the degree of regard and respect that the interviewees had for the TQ Manager. As the main promoter of the change programme and the person given the role of change agent, his ability to tell the TQM story is crucial to the success or otherwise of the programme. The respondents' views to the TQ Manager may then give the basis upon which to interpret their openness to the TQM story. There are forty four comments in total, eleven from 1994 and thirty three from 1997. The comments include self-evaluation from the TQ Manager about his involvement in the change process and how he feels about what has occurred and his experiences.

In 1994, of the eleven comments only four are from other commentators. One is very supportive of him describing him as one of the biggest influencers in getting things done. One, on reflection of the process from the start, praises the TQ Manager and the consultant for setting up a good structure for change. Most significant are the two very critical comments made by the Production Manager, firstly bemoaning the fact that he has been waiting for the TQ Manager to undertake TQ Awareness training so that he can involve more people, and he has been waiting "for months"; and secondly that he doesn't think that whole thing has happened because the TQ Manager can't convince hundreds of people about TQ. Whilst both of these comments might appear quite benign on face value, they are actually utterly undermining of the TQ Manager. Production Manager A is the biggest critic of the whole change process. Whilst this highly influential manager is saying that he will only get other people involved when the TQ Manager has given people training, which may seem reasonable and in keeping with the training and awareness emphasis expressed by Wilkinson et al., (1994) but, in this case, the programme has been in progress for three years. This is an abdication of his responsibility to get his people trained. Within the spirit of TQM, it would be reasonable to expect his proaction not simply waiting for action and apportioning blame for inaction (Jones and Seraphim, 2008). Rahman and Masud (2011) identify the consequences and problems caused by managers who actively seek out others to blame for failings with TQM. Such blame displacement is seen as a way of deflecting attention away from their inactivity. The second comment also seems on the one hand to suggest

sympathy for 'impossible task' that the TQ Manager has been given, but taken in context, is a damaging sleight on the capability of the TQ Manager to do his job.

The TQ Manager's self-evaluations provide a very interesting frame of reference upon which to interpret his level of confidence in what he is doing. Twice he makes reference to the fact that he has no direct authority, describing this as his 'biggest frustration'. He counters this lack of positional authority, a key aspect of the ability of the change agent to secure followership by focusing on personal characteristic and personal power. Harrison (2011) recognises the importance of positional authority and also how, without it, change-agents slip into the hero-martyr role. This playing both the hero and martyr is something that we can see with the TQ Manager who makes two references to him needing to use attributes of personal power: his persuasive abilities, assertiveness and that he perceives he commands respect from people at all levels.

In reviewing the other comments from the TQ Manager in 1994, we can see that he is veering from being confident about what he is doing and what he has achieved, describing himself as having made a major contribution, taking action based upon his own volition - no-one has really influenced him, and having to co-ordinate everything; to only being able to *nibble at the apple*, and facing a dilemma because he is already stretched and TQ is stretching him too far(a comment that might give credibility to the Production Manager's criticism).

The most concerning comment at this stage is:

"I find that I have to disguise my down periods. I have to admit that I have been through some difficult patches with lots of frustration and lack of job satisfaction. I do find it difficult to see my own achievements."

Deconstruction of this comment suggests that the task he is undertaking is leaving him demoralised and with a concoction of lack of a sense of achievement, lacking job satisfaction and facing difficulties (not challenges), his motivation has been undermined and he describes his mental health as being affected. What the TQ Manager is describing would be recognised as him being highly stressed (Gilboa et al., 2008). Whilst action would be taken to help the TQ Manager in a contemporary setting, at that time, recognition of mental ill-health and well-being was not

something that would have been treated sensitively, particularly in the macho-culture of TRC.

By 1997 things have moved on but the tenor of the narrative is much more inclined towards a resignation of the failure of the TQ Programme and the retirement of the TQ Manager is seen as a good way to draw a line under the preceding events. These comments from the M.D. indicate the psychological context in which he is now judging the work of the TQ Manager:

“The retirement of the TQ Manager at the end of the month hasn’t been deliberately designed to coincide with the new approach to TQ. It’s just that this was a timely coming to the end of this particular phase of TQ.”

“Other than that there have been many positive aspects. He has been a very good co-ordinator. Perhaps he accepted too much responsibility from everyone for training, perhaps because he likes doing it.”

“Secondly, the TQ Manager was not assertive enough with the senior managers. He was not critical enough of them not demanding enough of them that they do things. He did not take up that challenge. He also reported to the Quality and MIS Director and one could argue that he should have reported to me and possibly taken up a role on the senior management team in order that he could have shared more in the business information and presented a strategic case.”

“But the person whose name has been suggested for this role will not be invited to apply. There is this other role that we have in mind for him but it is not yet finalised. We have a temporary solution as I outlined earlier. I was keen to force the situation away from a TQ person and responsibility although he might have been better at certain aspects of the TQ Manager’s job than the TQ Manager himself”

What a mixture of faint praise and dismissal! The comment about the new phase of TQ is nonsense as the decision to move to BPR had already been discussed. To talk about *“this particular phase of TQ “* is facile in real terms, this particular phase had been six years in progression and the TQ Manager’s retirement would not be happening had he experienced success and a sense of achievement and value. The

observation of the TQ Manager accepting the responsibility for training perhaps because he likes doing it, is off-hand and lacks any appreciation of how the TQ Manager was feeling.

The faint praise with which he acknowledges the TQ Manager's achievements is condescending and the reference to the argument that he should have reported to the MD and been on the senior management team lacks any sensitivity to the complexity and significance and size of the project the TQ Manager was undertaking. Transformational change, of which TQM is an example, is large-scale and does not lend itself to quick fix solutions (Dawson, 1994). The TQ Manager had identified his lack of authority 3 years earlier and he too recognises that he should have had direct access to the MD. To recognise this important failing in the role and support of the top manager calls into question the agenda behind what the MD was doing. His description of the TQ Manager shows how inadequate he sees the TQ Manager has been and how he should have come to the rescue him from his inadequacy, but he chose not to.

The last comment from the MD certainly questions what he was planning and the timing of his decision. The comment itself is confusing as though he is trying to hide his real meaning. Either he was unaware or had forgotten that the researcher had attended various meetings in which the role of the new person had been openly discussed, but clearly in his mind, he had *moved on* from the TQ Manager. It is reasonable to presume from these comments he already sees the new person as being 'better' than the TQ Manager and that he is hopeful that he will take the company forward. Furthermore and very telling, is his insistence that he doesn't want the new person to be associated with TQM, he wants a new narrative and a clear break from what has been happening.

This sense of (feigned) remorse can also be seen in the comments from the HR Director, which are equally damning of the TQ Manager and his efforts to implement TQM:

"I'd have spent more time at the front, we didn't do enough asking and we shouldn't have got rid of all of those middle bits. I certainly wouldn't have done 5 projects and I would have probably not have taken it outside of the middle management structure."

“We did do quite a lot of selling into TQ, but on reflection we should have done more, and if we were doing it now we would.”

The first comment suggests that the HR Director has thought carefully about what took place and that he has learned from the evaluation. However, the HR Director chose not to engage with the process and his criticism lacks authenticity. It is simply a statement that he would not have done it the way that it was done, but he never participated in the process and shared his viewpoints in the decision-making process, other than to agree the consultant's recommendations. Again, there is this sense of the remorseful hero that had he stepped in and been more at the front things would have gone better. This is also echoed in the comment about selling TQM. There is no 'we' as he was not involved. He is in the easy but destructive position of sharing his professional opinion whilst at the same time criticising the work of another manager in a less powerful position.

He compounds his dismissal of the TQ Manager in the following comment:

“Another problem was that what the TQ Manager was trying to do was to introduce soft style practices into a largely chauvinistic company – it didn't work. He tended to embrace TQ wholeheartedly but naively.”

Once again the HR Director is asserting his superiority and authority by suggesting that the programme was doomed from the start. It could be argued that the culture was never one that would be susceptible to the TQ Story being told. In effect what had been taking place was a self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton, 1957) of exactly this known phenomenon within TRC. Right from the start there had been a consistent challenge to the TQM approach being promoted from the operations managers; the organization was chauvinistic and misogynistic, and there are various comments made against women being given positions of status. However, the chauvinism was well supported in the management services driven areas of manufacturing, particularly in Relays, where the ethos lent itself to 'hard' TQM. The TQ Manager, who often described himself as a 'people person,' was wedded to the principles and ideas that underpinned 'soft' TQM, the inevitable conflict between different values systems was foreseeable (Green, 2012). Questions need to be asked therefore about the decisions to both accept an approach to TQM that focused on the need to engage people in the change process and also to ask the TQ Manager, with his

commitment to people-focused approaches to change, to lead the process. The TQ Manager believed that it was because he was a people person that he was put into the role, but then to give him no senior management support and no authority to make things happen defies convention on strategic thinking. Certainly the Manufacturing Director was aware of the precarious position the TQ Manager was in when commenting:

“It killed the TQ Manager’s pig to find that having escaped the HR Director he ended up under the Quality and MIS Director, and he’s made hardly any difference to the organisation “

Furthermore the Manufacturing Director also recognised that the lack of authority was a major stumbling block:

“No matter how enthusiastic he was he (the TQ Manager) was in a ‘no win’ situation. We missed a huge opportunity”

It appears at this point in the change process, we have three members of the board of directors (at least) who are aware that the TQ Manager is struggling in his job to bring about transformational change, but have offered no real help. In fact the HR Director has chosen to deliberately not get involved.

In 1994 there were signs that the TQ Manager was experiencing stress, by 1997 that had not been addressed and his mental health was at low ebb. He recognised his own problems and put his depression down to the TQ Programme:

“When I hear facilitators say that when I go TQ will die, I feel awful. I want to experience personal satisfaction, I’m creative and a doer, some of the youngsters have done some great work but then it’s not implemented. I am getting quite depressed by the whole thing.”

Early retirement was probably the only way forward for the TQ Manager if he was to be able to gain any sense of purpose and well-being. For someone who had been so enthusiastic and engaged in the implementation of TQM, to witness his demise was very sad. His withdrawal from the process was resolute and far from being someone who prided himself on his high visibility in the change process. By 1997 respondents were saying that they didn’t know that he was retiring and he was becoming less visible and more isolated as the following comment attests:

“I didn’t know that the TQ Manager is leaving. Gary: You’d be hard pressed to find more than 1 in 10 who knew who the guy is.”

Whilst the TQ Manager was expressing significant disappointment about the whole change process there were mixed views, mainly polarised between Instruments and the service departments and Relays, about what people had experienced and the future of the TQM at TRC. The positive comments come from Instruments and services, and the negative comments from Relays.

The TQ Manager has been a real champion with all the problems and not much support.

“Win: I don’t think he should be replaced. I don’t see anything at all. Ingrid: I don’t know what he does. I think he does lots of work at home. John: I don’t think he’s pushed TQ enough. We will probably need a co-ordinator. Win: We don’t know what he does. Saw him early on in the programme but not for ages John: Perhaps that’s his role, to talk to managers who then have to implement their ideas. But we can’t stand aside and not let it happen.”

The very last comment from John suggests that there is recognition that the operatives have some responsibility to keep the TQM going but without support from management this would be difficult.

There is one comment, which comes from Production Manager B (who replaced the Production Manager A, the bastion of management services and who was persuaded to take accelerated retirement) which demonstrates a realisation that TQM has to be embraced by everyone and that each individual has to take responsibility for the change to address quality (Mann and Kehoe, 1995, Wilkinson et al., 1998):

“With the TQ Manager retiring it is now up to us to drive the process.”

What is significant about this comment is that this new manager has embraced the concept of TQM and recognises that it is not the responsibility of one person to drive the initiative, unlike the following comments that push all the responsibility for driving the change onto the TQ Manager (or his replacement):

“The TQ Manager has been very important in helping set up teams and training and without him TQ would have slid into the trough”

“I hope that we get someone with the same enthusiasm and creativity as the TQ Manager to replace him because if we don’t I think some of the exercises might stall.”

“We don’t know if the TQ Manager is going to be replaced but you definitely need a driving force. I think if he isn’t replaced then TQ will stall, you need someone to keep prodding.”

“I am seriously concerned that with the retirement of the TQ Manager, the TQ initiative will end. I think that without someone to continually Kick Ass, then even the most seriously committed will give up in the end.”

These comments whilst clearly expressing a need for a change driver, also express some hope that the TQM Programme will continue and respondents recognise the contribution of the TQ Manager. However, at the same time they hint at the only reason why TQM has had any traction is because of the TQ Manager’s constant badgering, something that has left him disillusioned and demoralised, as the following comment reveals:

“I don’t want to appear too negative, in part it’s the nature of the job because you are always dealing with improving things and trying to address negative things, but it has been very disillusioning.”

The following two comments reinforce the operatives’ views about whether TQM should continue with recognition of two of the key objectives of Deming’s approach, continuous improvement and customer orientation, but there is also the perceptive observation that the job cannot stay the same as the same frustrations will continue:

“Alan: Will there be TQ after he’s left? Carol: Got to be. Roger: It’s a customer process, there’s always room for improvement. You’ve always got to keep it going, it needs to be reiterated.”

“It would only be useful to have another TQ Manager if the job was changed. If it was a straight replacement then there would just tend to be the same

frustrations. There are lots of issues that are not communicated. I wouldn't take on the job. I enjoy what I'm doing. Alan: I wouldn't."

The last comment demonstrates an acknowledgement of the problems and issues facing the TQ Manager and the assumption that the job is not an enjoyable one.

Analysis of this category demonstrates the demise of the standing of the TQ Manager, his slippage into mental ill-health and the distance that has developed between him and the senior management and his withdrawal from the TQ Programme. Whilst in 1994 there were hints of his dissatisfaction with the lack of authority, the TQ Manager was still showing enthusiasm and belief in his personal power to persuade people to change. As Owen (2009) and Yukl (2010) recognise, influencing skills are key when managers are attempting to make things happen when a manager has no formal authority. What is important to the TQM Programme in TRC is that these influencing skills and how they are enacted are essential in storytelling (McCallum and O'Connell, 2009). By 1997, he is remote and although there is evidence that people are hopeful that TQ will continue, the TQ Manager has distanced himself emotionally and psychologically, and his imminent retirement means that his physical removal completes his total withdrawal. The commentaries also indicate that by 1997 people are accepting that his influence has diminished and his leadership of the change initiative has been compromised. The TQ Manager's story is all but gone, even he is disillusioned.

N: Who led the change?

This is the last category in this level of analysis. It is established that the TQ Manager was given the job of leading the change and implementing TQM into TRC, however, it is important to ascertain the perception of those exposed to the change about who led the change within TRC. This is necessary to enable some understanding of where people aligned their support and to whom they were referring for information on which to build meaning and sense. There are sixteen responses in total addressing the perceptions of *who led the change?* Interestingly, there are twelve responses from 1994 and only four from 1997.

In 1994 there are a range of people accredited with leading the change, of which only one comment is attributed to the TQ Manager. Three comments identify the Production Managers, three the Senior Management Team, two acknowledge the

middle managers, one to the Managing Director, one to the Manufacturing Director and somewhat altruistically, one to the Shop Floor. This range of people who are deemed to be leading the initiative provides a very confusing and confused arena for establishing meaning. Branson (2008) provides a clear argument for the importance of establishing values alignment for any successful change strategy, but with so many people being recognised as leading the change we need to explore their personal alignment with the change story. Although we have established a lack of commitment by the Senior Management Team to the change process there are some reasonable assumptions that can be made about their alliances with each other and the adoption of what TQM story they were promoting.

Wilkinson et al., (1998) express the importance of the implicit unitarism that underpins the acceptance of TQM into an organisation, where shared values and common interests meld into a strong culture. If we consider the actors that are involved in the perceptual kaleidoscope that appertains to the viewpoints on who led the change in 1994, we can start to draw on some reasonable assumptions. Of the twelve comments we have the Manufacturing Director and the Production Managers that are likely to share an understanding of TQM based upon their shared frame of reference. We have three comments identifying the Senior Management Team, but we know that the team did not exist as a team and there was little collective awareness of the underpinning philosophy of the TRC approach. Managing Director 1 is identified. As he appointed the TQ Manager to the role (and the TQ Manager believed that he was appointed for his people skills and being a people person) we can assume that the Managing Director had some sensitivity to the 'soft' approach that informed the TQ Manager's pursuit of empowerment and social factors that are integral to his view of TQM. The Department Heads leading the projects were identified but as they were project driven and success was recognised based upon measurable aspects such as cost reduction and improved operations performance, they were likely to be much more attuned to the 'hard' approach to TQM. The comments identifying the middle managers as making the greatest contribution are made by the HR Director and he is very keen to exhort their professionalism, stability and desire to be proactive and make their views heard. His determination to not recognise the contribution of the TQ Manager as leader is further evidence of his disinterest in what his former subordinate was trying to achieve. The comment about

the shop floor workers being much more attuned to TQM than their line managers comes from the production workers, and whilst not necessarily indicating leadership of the change, the comment demonstrates disregard for their line managers and, in 1994, a willingness to embrace the ideas of TQM.

What we can draw from this review of the perceived leader of change is that there are four from the Production domain to which we can add the Department Heads and the middle managers who, by virtue of their stability and length of service, reflect the dominant culture at that time. It seems that apart from the production workers who are expressing a willingness to engage in the TQ Programme, although they exist within the production arena, the only supporter for the TQ Manager's 'soft' approach is possibly the M.D. The over-whelming story being told and enacted is that of TQM steeped in statistical control of the manufacturing process where the original research in operations management had been established through research and practically through application (Oakland, 1993, Dale, 1994).

After three years of TQM, the operations management paradigm persisted. Sadly, though, whilst the dominant paradigm persisted, so too did the TQ Manager's attempt to bring in his new story. The clash of underpinning values presented too great a gulf between the two stories of TQM and the TQ Manager found himself becoming more marginalised. The message promoted by the high-power resourced and influential production managers set against the low-power resourced but personable TQ Manager, was too much of an imbalance:

“The job is very lonely. I have no power and no authority. I am entirely dependent upon the commitment of the departmental managers and I still feel that I am having to do most of the leading. I still think that people are getting involved for the ‘bottom-line’, even though it’s about Theory Y, people are not responding to personal growth.”

However, there is a question that needs to be asked about the TQ Manager's persistence and that is 'why, given all the negative experiences, did he continue with the same story?' Especially given that at the time there was the emergence of a 'third way' of a mixed approach (Hill and Wilkinson, 1995) which might have given the TQ Manager the opportunity to achieve both compromise and personal credibility in breaking the impasse.

By 1997 there are only five comments, of which one, made by the new production manager, recognises the success the TQ Manager has had with the higher level projects. However, he firmly believes that it is the production managers who must drive TQM. The other four comments firmly identify with the production managers and the production engineering professional base. The overwhelming strength of belief is that the change, under the name of TQM, is being driven by the Production Managers, most of whom are not sympathetic to TQM. The Manufacturing Director appears to be very proud of the achievements of his managers:

“The whole of the activity has been driven from and by Production and not across the Company, under the leadership of Production Engineers.”

But interestingly, the other three comments come from the new production manager, who is demonstrating great enthusiasm for TQM, as long as it is driven by the Production personnel:

“I’ve made a commitment to the boss and his designate that my managers and I are the ones to drive this forward.”

“We must now drive the organisation and the Personal Appraisal Project is an opportunity for us to review the line managers and put in the TQ project.”

“I have found that Production identifies an agenda and the HR and Manufacturing Directors then attempt to support it.”

The last of these comments is the most telling in terms of what of what has been happening and all the more so because it is made by someone who is a new observer of happenings at TRC. Once again, the support for the TQ Manager, who appears to have been sidelined in the decision-making, is not apparent and he is deliberately ignored by the HR Director. Such non-involvement in the vital decision-making process, severely hinders the ability of the change agent to influence change (Dunphy et al., 2007) and essentially leaves the TQ Manager exposed to the power of non-decision-making (Bacharach and Baratz, 1962) as he is unable to set the agenda of discussion and unable to influence who will be part of the discussion (Senior and Swailes, 2010) The TQ Manager was espousing involvement of employees in his story of TQM which placed a big emphasis on accepting accountability for quality improvements and the move towards self-managed teams

as a means to achieving quality improvements. As Hill (1991) and Wilkinson et al., (1998) note, this requires a meaningful involvement of the HR function in supporting such people-focused initiatives.

Through this level of analysis in which we considered relational attributions as a means to establish an opportunity to interpret the viewpoints on the contribution of particular groups to the change leadership process, we can identify several influential features. Firstly that senior management was not committed to the change and TQM and senior management support is seen as a key factor in transformational change. Furthermore, we have reasonably established that support for the change programme and the TQ Manager was highly questionable by the HR Director. The TQ Manager identified his lack of authority and lack of support as an issue for him being able to do his job. Secondly, we have established that whilst there was support for the TQ Manager in 1994, by 1997 that support had dwindled and he was becoming more remote from the process and withdrawn. There are also signs that the TQ Manager was suffering from stress, and perhaps depression, and that his confidence had been severely compromised. As such it seems that he was struggling to tell his TQM story and was struggling in getting it heard. He was also facing a competitive story being told by a group of managers who had far greater power and influence, and who, in the context of TRC, had a story that seemed to have greater relevance to and synchronicity with a large part of the audience.

This previous level of analysis has identified a number of issues that need to be considered. This is a further level of cause and effect aspects and related to perceived barriers to the change to TQM, Category G; the problems/involvement of HRM, Category C; and the lack of HRD, Category E. These have been chosen because they can give the researcher some indication of the context in which the change process was being implemented with emphasis given to key components of introducing TQM, especially 'soft' TQM expressed in the 'people aspects such as education training, commitment, loyalty, leadership, teamwork and empowerment (Rahman, 2004; Rahman and Bullock, 2005).

Category G: Barriers to TQM

Category G constitutes fifty six responses of which twenty five emanate from 1994. What is important before examining these responses is to recognise that there are

already explanations of why TQM is not being implemented successfully. This means that people already have a perception of failure. In breaking down these responses into sub-groups we get a further refinement of what people were seeking to identify to explain the lack of success of the change initiative. Within the twenty five responses there are twenty nine points of contention about the implementation of TQM:

Table 5.3: Points of Contention

Comments on Barriers to the Implementation of TQM: 1994	Number
Successful company and change not necessary	8
The design of TQM	5
The Production Managers	4
Junior Manager, Supervisors and Chargehands	3
Rewards	3
Cross-functional support	2
Miscellaneous: Culture of us and them, Structure is too traditional, Pockets of resistance and Constraints	4

As can be seen, the biggest barrier to the introduction of the new working methods was the question around why was the change necessary when we are so successful? There was a clear tension regarding established organisation success and there being no need for the change and therefore no motivation to adopt TQM. This contradictory assessment of need, results in a lack of effort to implement the change, and raises two important questions: Why was the need for change not communicated well enough so that the contradictory assessment was stymied? and, if people were not attempting to change, why was this not addressed? The story of the why the change was necessary was clearly the domain of the TQ Manager, and at that time, supported by the Consultant. Consequently, it would seem reasonable to suggest that not enough attention had been given to establishing the readiness for

change (Weiner, 2009; Armenakis et al., 1993) which would have included the rationale for change. This would also have required considerable attention being given to re-storying success and perceptions of the continuity of success (Boje and Smith, 2010; Collins and Rainwater, 2005).

The second question about the management of lack of action, can also be found with a consideration of the comments appertaining to the managers, especially those at junior levels with shop floor management responsibility. There are three comments relating to the junior levels of management:

“I get the impression that some charge hands like to withhold information, it gives them security. Stupid really, it’s not in the spirit of TQ.”

“It was the supervision who don’t want to share. The shop floor are more forward thinking than the supervision.”

“There is a problem at junior management level and I think that it is a problem caused by business management courses. Almost without exception they are encouraged to see management as a personal challenge, that they should aspire to be god. They talk ‘I’ instead of ‘us’ and ‘we’, it’s a great restraint.”

What can be seen here is a deliberate attempt to deny information being shared with the shop floor, which goes against the ethos of ‘soft’ TQM, as well as the lack of willingness by the junior managers to engage with the shop-floor in a participative and team-based manner. Both of these actions by the shop-floor leadership would have de-valued both the initiative and the role of the general shop-floor workers in the change process. This could also explain why action was not taken against those choosing not to get involved. If the junior levels of management were not engaged in, nor convinced of the TQM initiative, then choosing to not get involved would not be seen as misconduct and not requiring managing. This non-action by the line management would have reinforced the views that TQM was not important. This lack of importance by the shop floor line management is perhaps not surprising when the Manufacturing Director viewed TQM as both a fad and an extension of work-study;

“Total Quality could easily turn out to be a management fad, after all it is really only an extension of work-study and its philosophy of improving things on a team basis.”

And from the staff employees who recognised the importance of gaining workforce commitment if it was not going to be another management fad:

“It could just as easily become a management fad without the commitment from the workforce.”

The lack of readiness for change and the sense of complacency reinforced by the high level of comfort people were experiencing with a number of people referring to being in a *‘fur-lined rut’*, also created a barrier to the enthusiasm for change. This was not helped by the design of the TQ change programme which was criticised and seen as a key factor in failure (Mosadeghrad, 2014). There are comments about the amount of bureaucracy, the slowness of the change and structure and discipline associated with operating TQM. People were feeling that TQM did not make their job easier or more enjoyable, but this too can be a result of it not being introduced properly. The slowness of the introduction would have also served to not provide any experience of what was intended compounding frustrations with what people were expecting to be happening:

“However, I do believe that the speed at which TQ has been introduced has been too slow. The Shop-floor has never got to see or experience TQ and it was well over a year before it filtered down to the lower levels of management.”

This is three years into the change programme.

The next group of statements identify the Production Managers as creating obstructions to the implementation of TQM, despite them believing that they were leaders of change and most knowledgeable about quality.

“When it comes to being adopted in Production I believe that the Production men are cynical to ultra-cynical (about TQ).”

This comment is very significant because this was made by the Manufacturing Director and demonstrates how duplicitous some influential members of the Senior Management were in relation to the introduction of TQM. Had the Manufacturing Director been supportive of the initiative then he would have expected the Production Managers to act accordingly. Instead he is seemingly frustrating the change covertly.

He was even aware that the initiative was not being told to the workforce effectively, but chose not to do anything about it:

“Total Quality was not sold well enough at the start.”

It would be easy to blame the TQ Manager for being ineffective if this comment was taken in isolation, but given the Manufacturing Director's stance, the comment could be a recognition of the lack of enthusiasm and engagement, in effect, the sabotage that his managers were enacting. His complicity in their inaction may have been a reflection of his sympathy for them and their professional frame of reference:

“They also found some of the original philosophy and ideas insulting and condescending.”

One of his senior Production Managers was very open about his disregard for TQM and was well known for his views:

“TQ to me is a niggle. My standards are already high and I have enough confidence in my own ability that I can succeed without the prompting of TQ.”

People around the factory were also aware of the lack of support coming from the Relays Production Managers as the comment from the employees in Instruments indicates:

“Some of the older managers (in Relays) are a lot less committed. You get this factory manager type response from them”

The lack of support for the TQM initiative by the production managers, which was not addressed by their functional lead, had a significant impact upon the ability of the TQ Manager to get his story heard, believed and acted upon. This lack of enthusiasm for the TQ Programme also impacted upon cross-functional support where their antipathy for TQM meant that they were not engaging with other departments, and negatively impacting upon their experience of TQM:

“There are one or two strong characters who should have been dealt with more effectively, they may be highly creative, but they are arrogant and don't allow others to demonstrate initiative, they don't help TQ.”

“Sometimes you feel as though you are ‘banging your head against a brick wall’ especially when it comes to cross functional activity where there are barrier problems.”

This lack of cross-functional activity is highlighted in the comment regarding the training programmes which lacked discussion and sharing opportunities:

“I have noticed in training that it is very difficult to get a two-way discussion going because of the divide and this is frustrating TQ.”

The reward system was also highlighted as creating a barrier to the effective implementation, especially the piecework system which was identified by the TQ Manager and the Trades Unions:

“We have problems with the piecework scheme and the suggestion scheme as neither lend themselves to the idea of TQ.”

“There’s the conflict between piecework and TQM”

This conflict between TQM and piecework was identified by Simmons et al., (1995) and Zabada et al., (1998) and Buchanan (1998) who describes the problem emerging from a piecework reward system that is designed to encourage the production of defects as employees seek to maximise productivity.

By 1997 the number of responses to barriers had risen to thirty one and review demonstrates that several from 1994 had not been rectified.

Table 5.4: Barriers to the Implementation of TQM - 1997

Barriers	Number
Managing Director and SMT	6
Ineffective Communications	5
Departmental and Middle managers	5
The TQ Manager	4
The ‘old’ Production Manager	4
The company was successful and there was no need for change	3

Poor training	3
Wrong Projects and the Functional Steering Groups	2
Fear about Job losses	2
Piecework	1
Implementation too slow	1
Shop floor managers	1
Inappropriate culture	1

By 1997 the Senior Management Team had been identified as obstructing the implementation of TQM.

“A lot of people have not had the guidance and I blame the MD. He’s taken it on as a set of management techniques which he wants reports back on.”

“The current Managing Director doesn’t help. He’s obsessed with time, doesn’t allow things to develop if it goes beyond his time limit”

“The Manufacturing Director was a major problem,”

“I think that he (production manager) wanted to prove that cells would fail. I blame senior management for not dealing with him sooner.”

“Trouble is I can’t measure its effectiveness. He has attempted to be the champion of communications, but that links back to the inadequacies of the Company Steering Group and myself, we should have been doing that and the TQ Manager should have been pushing us, not doing it himself.”

“In this place there is not enough cross-functional work going on and there is no pressure on the executives to bring this about”

The first two comments blaming the M.D. are made by the Manufacturing Director and demonstrate the hostility and lack of respect he feels towards him. The Third comment is made by the TQ Manager and shows his frustration with the Manufacturing Director who has now become a *villain* as opposed to *organisational hero* that he was so often described as. Again the change in feelings toward the

Manufacturing Director is suggestive of the anger and frustration that the TQ Manager is experiencing and the need to apportion blame. The fourth comment is made by the production supervisors and is therefore, a most telling and perceptive comment. Here we have a recognition that people knew what the Production Manager was doing and have attributed motive to his behaviour, but the important thing is that they recognise that he was acting against the change and that he should have been managed. The fifth comment is made by the Managing Director and whilst he recognises the Company Steering Group and himself as being at fault for not championing communications, he blames the TQ Manager for not making them do it. Given the TQ Manager's lack of authority and his loss of confidence, it is perhaps not surprising that he tried to continue to do things himself. Clearly the M.D. was unaware of the stress and mental ill-health that he was suffering. The last comment is made by the Manufacturing Director and raises some important issues regarding his commitment to the company let alone the TQM Programme. In the comment he recognises the ineffectiveness of both cross-functional working – over which he some authority, and also bemoaning the lack of pressure on the executives (SMT) of which he was an important member. There seems to be a real lack of a willingness by several different groups and people to take the initiative, responsibility for and ownership of problems, which are key objectives of TQM (Colurcio, 2009; Goldman, 2005).

It is useful at this point to address the comments on the choice of the wrong projects and the functional steering group projects:

“We didn't take the advice of the consultants, they told us to take on projects that were winners, but we took on one that was quite difficult and of course messed up”.

This comment was made by the HR Director and raises several issues with his conduct throughout the change programme. First, is his flippancy with the '*and of course messed up*'. As a senior member of the organisation it would not be expected for him to countenance tackling activities that had a high risk of failure, especially when 'wins' and success are essential to the adoption of transformational changes (Kotter, 1996), Second, why was the advice of the consultants ignored? The admission alludes to a level of arrogance demonstrated by the senior managers and

also the lack of commitment to the process of introducing TQM. There does not appear to be any contrition for the 'messaging up' or any evidence of proper review and evaluation of the projects as they progressed. Chin and Pun (2002) recommend the completion of improvement projects to help the TQM implementation process and to encourage employees to experience success to help adoption. At TRC, the experience of failed projects or the lack of meaningful success, would not have helped employees believe in the value of TQM.

As the TQ Manager commented in anger:

"The whole operation of the Functional Steering Groups was a total and utter disgrace."

The next group of comments relates to ineffective communications and we have already seen that M.D. has identified himself, other senior managers and the TQ Manager for this. Poor communications play a significant role in TQM adoption failure (Mosadeghrad, 2014) and the comments highlight considerable frustration with the lack of information and engagement:

"Brian: Even if you report a problem it's brushed off. You don't get any feedback."

"We still haven't learned that 'yes' we have good ideas but we still don't pursue them in a cross-functional manner. They think that discussing things delays the decision."

"A lot of people have not had the guidance"

"Projects are going on in the background but we're not informed. Maybe you know more if you're directly involved."

And the very telling comment that suggests that the junior managers are not communicating quality because:

"Dave: Very few shop floor managers are interested in quality."

Further:

"but if people are not prepared to listen then I am not prepared to get on their back."

The last comment is made by the TQ Manager and alludes to his intolerance of people who are not listening to him. The question that has to be asked is 'why people are not listening to him after 6 years of the TQM Programme being in operations?' As Denning (2006) points out, even the best crafted story will be ineffective if not told convincingly and Pedersen and Johansen (2012) highlight the need for strategic structured narratives presented convincingly by local spokespersons to bring about innovative practices. It appears that the TQ Manager has turned his back on those with whom he can no longer develop a dialogue and he is not prepared to try to convince them of the value to them of his story.

It is interesting that in 1997 another group of managers were identified as being obstructive and unsupportive of the change. Whereas in 1994 criticism had been aimed at the junior ranks of management and senior managers, in 1997 the blame was removed from the lower levels to now include the middle and senior managers. However, there is possible cause for the negativity enacted by the middle managers. As part of the change programme, the decision was made to not include the middle managers in the process which proved to be a divisive action.

"Missing out the middle-managers created a huge pocket of resistance instead of a group of active supporters"

The middle-managers created a resistance movement, and I can see that now

"We got over the huge 'anti' faction at middle-management level who had all been left out and were very insecure. I think the new structure with its three pronged attack will force people to take on more responsibility and be more accountable"

There are a number of issues that these comments raise. The first relates to the review and evaluation process which appears to have been neglected otherwise their actions would have been identified and action taken. The second relates to why the middle managers were not included, Wilkinson et al., (1991) identify the importance of keeping middle management involved as their support is essential. Dale and Cooper (1994) point out that middle management resistance is more likely than at operatives levels because of the link between successful TQM and operative autonomy and middle management reduction, leaving middle managers feeling insecure, which is exactly what happened at TRC. Roth (1998) observed that many

middle managers were anxious that TQM will eliminate their jobs as the number of management levels is reduced to improve communications. Marchington et al., (1994) propose that middle managers are sceptical about TQM fearing loss of authority and increased workload. They perceive a loss of control over their specialist knowledge and expertise as well as perceiving the need to work harder for no greater returns (Wilkinson, 1993). Whereas Psychogios et al., (2009) found that in fact middle managers found greater autonomy in their jobs and that TQM had a positive impact on their work experience but in this research the perceptions were based upon experience whereas the other researchers relate much more to anticipated outcomes and impact of TQM.

The departmental managers (middle management) were also identified as being obstructive:

“If I had had the chance I would have forced the situation with regard to some individuals sooner. The lesser involvement of the greater number of people in the process was due to the evasive procrastinating attitudes of one or two people. I should have split the 33 heads of department roughly across the three core groups to ensure cross functionality and to ensure that each departmental head was aligning himself with the specific objectives of the unit.”

“I would have eliminated the functional steering groups much sooner (led by the middle managers). They have, with hindsight, been supporting the three core projects in an inadequate and light-hearted manner.”

Both of these comments were made by the Managing Director and they indicate how disengaged he had been during the change process. As M.D he could have intervened at any point had he felt it necessary. These reflections and ‘wishes’ are pointless criticism, the biggest issue is that he did not intervene.

The middle managers clearly created a major source of resistance. As Soltani and Wilkinson (2010) argue, senior managers’ reliance on detection, reactive strategies and hard aspects of TQM, as opposed to prevention, proactive strategies and soft people-based issues, may result in middle managers’ compliance with short-term tactical orientations rather than long-term commitment; increased control over the workforce rather than the work-related processes; the tendency to agree about TQM

objectives in a way to prioritise and fulfil their own self-interests rather than the organisational interests achieved through TQM; and the inability of middle managers to run TQM effectively. These characteristics were observed at TRC and may have resulted from the resistance to the 'soft' TQM techniques espoused by the TQ Manager and the preference for the 'hard' techniques espoused by the Production Team.

It is interesting to see that the TQ Manager was identified as creating barriers to the successful implementation of TQM:

“No matter how enthusiastic he was he (the TQ Manager) was in a ‘no win’ situation. We missed a huge opportunity (no authority given to the TQ Manager)”

This comment was made by the Manufacturing Director and reflects the impact of the lack of authority given to the TQ Manager and how in effect, that meant that he could not drive his approach to TQM. This comment needs to be taken in conjunction with the comments on poor training and/or approach which left people poorly prepared or antipathetic towards the approach. The important issue here is that the TQ Manager designed and led the training or the training of the trainers:

“Helen: They had some people who just refused to get involved. It started by forcing you to do things that we didn’t want to do, like giving a presentation to the senior management team, that was very intimidating and it put a lot of people off.”

“TQ is missing out because you haven’t got the right people teaching the right jobs. There are some that aren’t good trainers.”

These two comments taken alongside the earlier comments on the time taken to get the training undertaken and cascaded suggest that there was a problem with the design of the TQM awareness and training programmes. Whilst assessment of the effectiveness of communications was subject to a review, the training was not evaluated. As Mann and Kehoe (1995) assert, after the implementation of an education and training programme, it is important that involvement is encouraged and expedited quickly, otherwise employees may become disillusioned. At TRC

many people were not involved in TQM, as they saw it, and many waited several years for training.

The following comments are made by the Managing Director and suggest that he has lost faith in the TQ Manager and is happy to both describe him as being inadequate and the architect of change programme failure:

“Because there has not been enough rebuffing and taking of responsibility TQ has not progressed fast enough. The TQ Manager’s frustrations are his own inadequacies and therefore his own doing.”

“Trouble is I can’t measure its effectiveness. He has attempted to be the champion of communications, but that links back to the inadequacies of the Company Steering Group and myself, we should have been doing that and the TQ Manager should have been pushing us, not doing it himself.”

“As far as TQ is concerned there have been successes and failures. I don’t think that we have empowered employees as adequately as we could have done or needed to, partly because some (managers) just didn’t know how.”

There are comments that suggest that the preparation for change and the introduction of TQM was poorly undertaken and there was a lack of understanding of the prevailing context:

The behaviour and culture is not conducive to the development of breadth of vision, which is what TQ needs

The observation of a non-conducive culture to TQM is interesting in its identification of employees and managers being unable to demonstrate breadth of vision. The commentator is the Managing Director which again raises questions about his decision to introduce TQM and to not undertake an adequate set of audits and reviews to establish the best context, physical, social and emotional to help the introduction. Dobosz-Bourne and Jankowicz (2006) noted the importance of enabling and encouraging the development of new work attitudes, as opposed to constraining the old ones as part of the preparation process.

Reinforcing the non-conducive culture are the persistent observations about the lack of need for change. Six years after the introduction of the TQM Programme people are still questioning why change was needed:

“One of the biggest disadvantages to TQ is the fact that TRC is still the most successful company within the Group. People still ask why they need to change and they still need guidance and direction.”

“Our biggest problem has been that it is much easier to modify peoples’ behaviour when times are difficult, we tried to change things when we were successful. We are nowhere near empowerment.”

“Our problem was one of being told to resolve a problem that we couldn’t find.”

These comments suggest that the lack of understanding as to why change was needed has not been properly embedded and the inevitable resistance to the change based on the contradictory assessment of *we are successful, what we are doing is right, so why change?* These contradictory assessments were identified in 1994 and yet persist three years on. Either nothing was done in between to change these perceptions, or what was undertaken to change the viewpoints was not successful. Unfortunately for the TQ Manager, the responsibility for changing perceptions and viewpoints about the need for change was his. He failed in his responsibility for getting his audience change ready (Jones et al., 2005)

Another problem with the story of TQM at TRC is the contradictions between promised improved work experience and the fear of job losses:

“One of the problems is going to be reconciling TQ with almost certain job losses. We’ve been told that we must improve the revenue per person. The only way we can do this is to reduce people. The problem is that through the TQ process people are becoming more efficient and this can lead to job loss.”

“I don’t believe that various managers at certain levels have felt it necessary, partly because of complacency and partly because of fear of the unknown, you know, the if I’m not boss then what happens to me syndrome”

The first comment recognises one of the inconsistencies about TQM identified by critical writers of TQM adopted in the early stages under the auspices of operations management (Parker and Slaughter, 1993; McCabe and Wilkinson, 1998; Becker, 1993; Knights and McCabe, 1998). Sadly, redundancies were announced in TRC and the fragile adoption of TQM faced a serious blow.

The second comment recognises the perception of vulnerability of middle managers to loss of status or even job losses, a position recognised by the literature (Klagge, 1998). The problem at TRC was both a lack of response to dispel concerns and anxieties made worse by the exclusion of this group from the introduction process (Heyden et al., 2016)

Another persisting issue is the perception of the reward system which was identified in 1994 and unresolved by 1997. It had been recognised by various writers (see earlier) that piecework and TQM are not compatible and yet nothing was done by the HRM department to reconcile this problem. The New Production Manager highlighted this and in fact, explained that this was a much older problem:

“The first experiment with cellular manufacturing was years ago and a promise was made to the unions then that if payment was a problem, which it was, then they’d look at the piece-work system. They never did. The general weight of opinion was that if they took out piecework then this would have a disastrous effect on profitability.”

This is an extraordinary observation that a problem was recognised, a promise made and subsequently ignored and that a priority was given to productivity supported by piecework. This refusal to review the rewards system to introduce one that provides congruency with TQM principles, is an act of sabotage, both in terms of violated expectations and inaction to take a holistic view of all aspects needed to bring about transformational change. Senior management and particularly the HR Director (as the lead for HRM) were complicit in ensuring that the incompatible reward system would frustrate the integration of TQM into TRC (Allen and Kilmann, 2001).

The last set of comments to review is those relating to the Production Managers. By 1997 one of the Production Managers had been persuaded to take accelerated retirement. The review of the 1994 comments highlighted how entrenched the Production Managers were in their management services ethos and how reluctant

they were to embrace TQM and especially 'soft' TQM. The comments in 1997 identify how problematic the individual who left the organisation in 1996, had been:

"The Production Manager who took accelerated early retirement had got away with things for too long."

"I think that he (production manager) wanted to prove that cells would fail. I blame senior management for not dealing with him sooner."

"The Manufacturing Director was a major problem, the production area never did operate as one, and he just let his production managers do what they wanted. The one production manager who took early retirement should have been sacked much sooner for how he sabotaged the TQ initiatives and was allowed to get away with it."

"Certainly in Production we have not been proactive enough. Actually, Production didn't get involved, the guy before me didn't want it, he wasn't a supporter of TQ and so took a very hands-off approach. His lack of activity was not exposed and he got away with it because everyone else was doing it for us."

All of the comments suggest that the Production Manager had been allowed to get away with not engaging with TQM and deliberately obstructing the introduction of TQM. This suggests that his senior manager, the Manufacturing Director, knew of his misbehaviour and chose not to act. The first comment is made by the HR Director, so is reasonable to presume the activities of the Production Manager were known to senior management. The HR Director spoke of trying to persuade the Manufacturing Director to 'get rid of him' but was unsuccessful in his attempt to influence the Manufacturing Director who refused to take responsibility of terminating his employment. This suggests that the Manufacturing Director was absolutely determined to keep the Production Manager despite knowing that he was not sympathetic towards TQM. Given the patronage of a very influential senior manager, the Production Manager must have felt that he could act in any way he chose without rebuke. Voronov and Vince (2012) exploring emotional and cognitive investment and institutional creation or disruption, present an opportunity for an interesting interpretation of the behaviour of the Production Manager and his refusal to engage with TQM and disrupt its progression. Essentially their argument would

suggest that when both emotional and cognitive disinvestment in the institutional order are low and the actor has considerable capital, in the form of power, then they are likely to create new institutional order, or in this case, challenge the new order to their accommodate their preferred order.

The second comment was made by one of the production supervisors and shows the power of the Production Manager in keeping everyone on his 'wave length' and the anger that was felt towards the senior management for not dealing with him sooner. This suggests that there was sympathy with what the TQ Manager was trying to implement but they were not strong enough to go against the Production Manager.

The third comment was made by the TQ Manager and his anger and resentment of the Production Manager and the refusal of the Manufacturing Director to deal with him is palpable. What is emerging is the recognition that although the Production Manager was the voice of the alternative story, he had been so influential in obstructing the adoption of TQM because the Manufacturing Director had been his protector. The Manufacturing Director had turned from organisational hero to organisational villain. But this re-casting of one of the actors (in the case of TRC the Manufacturing Director) as so often happens in organisational change (Dawson, 1997) was too late for the acceptance and dissemination of the TQ Manager's story, too much damage had been done.

The fourth comment is made by the Production Manager's replacement and demonstrates the extent of the control that his predecessor had exercised over the production workers and the process of obstruction. Whether his observation of non-exposure was fair and the view that everyone was doing it for them, so covering up the Production Manager's sabotage, was correct, is a moot point, but what is important is his recognition of the damage his predecessor had done and the inability for others to stop him.

The review of the perceptions of barriers that people were giving to explain the lack of progress of TQM, changed relatively little over the intervening three years from 1994. This is extraordinary given that many of the reasons given were well known and well subject to discussion. However, with regards to the TQ Manager's attempt to get his story heard, the refusal by the Manufacturing Director to insist his managers conformed to the organisation's objective to introduce TQM was totally

damaging. The inappropriate rewards system was not helpful and would have made adoption problematic, but the actions of the Production Managers and other middle managers in Relays ensured that even if people were listening to the TQ Manager, there was no opportunity given to enable TQM to be implemented. Heyden et al., (2016)) found that, change initiated by middle managers encourages above-average level of employee support especially if senior managers take responsibility for the change execution. In the case of TRC, both of these necessary drivers were missing and it would be reasonable to assume that employee support would be minimal. Without any evidence to support the assertions of the TQ Manager being allowed to materialise, it is not surprising that the TQ Manager's story seemingly fell on 'deaf ears'. The success that he had experienced in Instruments was not enough for people to push for the change in Relays, the power of the Production Managers was too strong to move away from 'this is the way we do things here' (Schein, 1992) and challenge the prevailing culture (Green, 2012).

What is also problematic is the inability or refusal of other senior managers to challenge the Manufacturing Director's obstinacy and damaging stance. The HR Director owns up to being unable to persuade the Manufacturing Director to deal with the Production Manager who was the main antagonist, but there is also the lack of action of the Managing Director who seems to have been unaware of the sabotage taking place. The Managing Director seems to hold the inadequacy of the TQ Manager as the main reason for the failure to implement TQM. There is no attempt to 'dig deeper'. Nystrom and Starbuck (2004) identify the problems caused by top managers who fail to perceive crises that are happening, who perceive warnings as erroneous as organisational systems offer only superficial symptoms of the real problems and then seek to apportion blame on others for inadequate response. Although the Manufacturing Director had little respect for his line manager, he probably would have acted had he been instructed to do so. Furthermore, he had little tolerance of his senior management colleagues:

"He's not got the general experience to be an M.D. He's not as clever as he makes out, he's got a phenomenal memory but intellectually he's not agile"

“I have told the MD. that his Senior Management Team needs weeding out. They are not good enough for the job ahead and to steer the business through”

It was easy for the Managing Director to blame the TQ Manager, but as this review of the barriers demonstrates, the evidence tends to suggest that the TQ Manager was a victim not the villain.

The involvement of employees is seen as an essential component of TQM (Hill, 1991 and Wilkinson et al., 1998) and Hill and Wilkinson (1995) suggest that there is no distinction between TQM and HRM because HRM is subordinate to, and derived from, TQM. Consequently, we need to consider the role, involvement and contribution of the HR function, mostly represented by the HR Director to assess the impact of HRM in the introduction of TQM at TRC. Category C: The Role of HRM provides 47 comments in total, of which 14 were made in 1994.

Of the comments made in 1994 there are no comments that talk about the HR Function in positive terms. The Manufacturing Director describes the function as a ‘nuisance’ and believes it ‘should be disbanded in the form that it is’. It is recognised that the HR function has not been involved in the change and that line managers have had to take on more HR responsibilities to compensate for the lack of involvement by the HR team. There is some recognition that the HR team was over-worked and unable to cope with the changes taking place, with the merger with the French company taking priority. However, the decision to prioritise the merger reinforces the lack of importance given to the internal changes. There is little trust in the HR function with the production employees suggesting that the information received from HR is partial and by implication, not much value. Sadly, the HR Director does not provide much inspiration for his team as he has little regard for his HR colleagues:

“We still don’t have a good HR Professional function in TRC. We need to improve the quality and status of HR in the business. Others are coming round to my point of view and I am getting more support. I don’t see myself in TRC in 5 years time”

The view the HR Director holds about people coming round to his point of view about the quality and status of HRM in TRC might have been misjudged as the comments

about him provide a very disparaging image of him. He is described in almost reptilian terms by one commentator who sees him 'sliding round the corridors' and the production workers talk about him as some mysterious being:

"I don't know about the HR Director though, there's quite a mythology that surrounds him, he has quite a reputation. Carol: Yes, I don't think he's very approachable and I think approachability is important as well as professional ability and I understand he is quite a smart man."

It would appear that the HR Director's interest in the general employees within TRC seems to be minimal. He does talk with the Unions' representatives but he is generally seen as having little time for TRC, with descriptions of him 'having too many concerns' and 'always somewhere else'. The trades unions' representatives describe him as not believing the level of disharmony, the tension of 'us and them' and the hourly-rate people being treated like pariahs with managers using 'surgical gloves' to pat hourly-paid workers on the back. The effectiveness of people management at TRC is not highly regarded. There is nothing that suggests a service with welfare and employee satisfaction at the heart of its ethos. This may have been because the HR Director established his connection with people management in British Leyland in the troubled times of the 1970s and he was in Industrial Relations. His personal commitment to Personnel Management would have been very low and his Industrial Relations paradigm preference is reflected in this comment from the Manufacturing Director :

"At the moment, IR. overwhelms Personnel and all sorts of 'pirate services' have been set up as a result of the lack of policy."

Moving on three years and there is considerable anger about the HR Director and, by association, the HR contribution to the change programme. The TQ Manager, whose background was in training, felt let down by the fact that HR was not involved. There was no support for HR leading the initiative, and the production workers thought that if the HR Director was in charge he would be 'hopeless'. Certainly it was considered that HR should have taken on a higher profile role. The way that the HR Director had managed the function led to it being described as a 'waste of space'. It appears to be agreed that he was very busy dealing with things outside of TRC and many felt that he had too many 'other concerns'. When he was seen it tended to be

with issues associated with the unions, where he could be seen to resolve issues and since the TQ initiative had become 'a problem' it was noted that he had been more involved.

With regards to his general approach to people management issues, it seems from the catalogue of complaints that he was disinterested and 'out of touch'. One commentator suggested that he gave the impression that 'people are simply not important'. He showed no interest in communications, training, refused to address the piecework problem saying is simply needed 'modifying and testing out', he would not recognise people who took on extra responsibility after achieving a licence to inspect, and despite the production managers making the case to the MD and the HR Director, the HR Director made some meaningless comment and nothing was done. Another manager talked about not being communicated with about new staffing needs and having his recruitment done for him. Another remarked that there was no consultation with and advice from the HR department.

The Manufacturing Director made reference to a number of examples of lack of response from the HR Director to proposals that he' made back in 1994 and that weren't actions till 1996/7. He complained about losing talented high-fliers because there was no career development programme, even after 'having a go at the HR Director about the issue three years earlier There were several comments about the new member of the H.R department, a young woman who had been recruited from the Electricity Board. The managers were furious because they needed someone who was there all the time and who could talk to the men on the shop floor. They needed someone who could make decisions and the Manufacturing Director was adamant that she would not be able to make any decisions and the she would become another one of the HR Director's 'Patsys' and was angry with the MD for letting the HR Director 'get away with it'.

It was noted that when the MD couldn't go to Germany to negotiate the German merger, the HR Director was quick to be his replacement and leave TRC to get on with the changes. There were comments about his external commitments to Industrial Tribunals, being J.P. and advising other companies and whilst Marchington et al., (2016) suggest that senior HR Professional who are taking on more public roles and duties and sharing their experience and expertise are demonstrating Best

Practice HRM, the actions of the HR Director at TRC are more typical of a senior manager who is abdicating his responsibilities.

As the Chief development Engineer observed:

“The HR department should be providing a service to the projects and helping get more people involved, instead they’ve not been involved. For example, the wage system should have been reviewed right at the start, but it wasn’t and the HR Director would not get involved. It has become a significant issue, and now he wants to get involved because it’s the stickiest issue that has had to be handled yet. It’s become a part of establishing the importance of one individual, not about creating a better environment for the majority.”

The expectation of service is a sentiment shared by the Manufacturing Director:

“The HR department ought to be a servant of the executives who get the job done, that is the technical people and the production people; but HR doesn’t do anything for us at all. They rarely get down to talking to their customers.”

The impression of the HR Department is one of remoteness and isolation with a leader who is disinterested in his role as a Unit Director preferring to raise his profile outside of the factory. He does not seem to provide guidance to his HR colleagues and has not delegated a HR role to another member of his staff for the TQ Programme. This suggests that he has very little interest in the changes and does not care about the outcome.

The Chief Development Engineer found this unexpected, especially given the attention to empowering people and the ‘soft’ TQM techniques the TQ Manager was trying to encourage:

“The involvement from the HR department is very strange. There doesn’t seem to be any involvement from the Director who has an incredibly low profile across the factory. I think he has developed this profile deliberately. It is very odd.”

The Manufacturing Director was most angry about the lack of support and went further in his admonishment of the HR Director:

“Three years ago in my appraisal I told him that the HR Director wasn’t here enough to do the job, he’s got lots of other things that he’s involved in like being on Industrial Tribunals and being a JP. and advising other companies - you get a lot of words and little action. I told him that we must have someone who is here 5 days of the week who can make decisions.”

This comment is especially revealing as it shows that the Managing Director had been told that there was dissent in the main production area about the lack of support from the HR Director and his team back in 1994, but chose to do nothing. It would suggest that the HR Director had considerable power in relation to the M.D. What is also illuminating is the impression that the HR Director has of his relationship with his senior colleagues, which is completely misjudged:

“My relationship with my colleagues has changed. I have greater influence on the other UK units and I spend less time on problems here, possibly to the detriment of things here. I think people understand this and are tolerant of my actions.”

This comment was made in 1994 and whilst he recognised that he was away from TRC a lot, but he failed to perceive that far from being tolerant of his behaviour, his colleagues were frustrated by his lack of support and over the intervening three years, their anger built. This abdication from involvement by the HR Department left the TQ Manager as the lone voice of TQM. Whereas he could have reasonably expected support from the HR Department for what he was trying to introduce, he was left to do this alone. His own line manager was not sympathetic to his ideals and the person who could have (and realistically, should have) supported him was disengaged and disinterested. What is perhaps even more difficult to understand is the extent of his indifference. If the HR Director had been in the slightest way interested, he would have intervened and even recommended abandonment of the change programme that was clearly not working. Research undertaken by Murphy and Davey (2002) reveals that where there is a perceived discrepancy between the espoused values by the company and their experience in action, especially in the reflected attitudes and behaviour of senior management, then the ambivalence of this group towards such values is reflected in the indifference of staff, for which the values have little meaning. The ambivalence of the HR Director towards the TQ

Programme as observed by his behaviour, created a significant vacuum in the sense-making arena for TQM and what it was intended to mean in action.

The final category that needs to be reviewed in relation to the adoption of TQM is the impact of Training and Development. The training programme was the most important vehicle for communicating the TQM as it was intended to be practiced at TRC. There are 17 comments in total of which fourteen are from 1994.

Many of the comments made about training and development are about general training and do not refer to the cascade training undertaken by the TQ Manager. Interestingly, there is disagreement about how committed TRC was to the general development of its staff. The HR Director suggested that there was a major investment in training and development:

“We invest heavily in retaining employee skill with a significant proportion of our wages bill going into training. We take graduates from invited Universities and also invest in HE training and development for our internal employees. We jealously guard our scarce human resources.”

This assertion is not supported by the Manufacturing Director who in 1997 states the opposite:

“I had a go at the HR Director about a Management Development Programme but he’s done nothing over the past three years. What I’m concerned about is that we’re actually losing the guys with the potential very early on in their careers because we have no career development programme. I haven’t spotted any high-fliers for a long time.”

The TQ Manager reflected that:

“Training is not accepted as a fundamental need so people are reluctant to get involved. I get frustrated that the line managers don’t accept this as part of their responsibility.”

This comment is important because the TQ Manager used to be the training manager and infers that as the training manager he was not very influential. The Manufacturing Director expresses a very keen interest in developing his people and

in 1997 bemoans the fact that he used to do Management Development but it was given to the HR Director in 1994 and since then nothing has happened.

There are three comments made in 1994 that relate directly to the quality initiative although the HR Director does not reflect on the TQM training but the need for the quality initiative to highlight training needs:

“We need to convince people to think about training, the quality initiative has to take up these issues.”

However, the Chief Development Engineer is much more optimistic about the impact of the training:

“The training courses have helped and there are definite signs that following training people are beginning to think about the way they do their work differently.”

The MD held the opposite impression:

“Yes we’ve had the awareness programme but because of all the constraints, they have only treated TQ superficially.”

A perceptive comment from one of the staff employees was that rather than the general workers attending the courses, it should have been the management:

“A general comment about the training modules is that it shouldn’t be us that are here, it should be the management team. They were very motivating. They were excellent.”

What we can draw from this comment, which was supported by other staff members in the interview, is that the general impression of the managers is of a lack of interest in the TQM initiative. It appears reasonable to assume that the TQ Manager had designed and delivered a high quality awareness session but lack of interest and indifference from managers left the participants with no follow-up experiences to help embed the ideas. This was reinforced by the New Production Manager in 1997 who on reflecting on the training sessions suggested that:

“I am still critical of the training sessions for all the workforce. I told the previous manager that they were a pointless exercise if the workers were not going to get involved, but he just dismissed the point.”

This is an important observation as his previous manager was the Production Manager who took accelerated retirement. We have already established that his predecessor was antagonistic towards the TQ initiative, but the lack of opportunity for people to put their learning into action will inevitably lead to non-adoption of the new ways of doing things. As Beer (2003) observes, TQM transformations will succeed only if top management wants and institutionalizes an honest organizational-wide conversation, of which the awareness training was an attempt. However, the ideas about TQM presented in the awareness programme were not allowed to embed, for the majority of employees, denying the institutionalisation of TQM within TRC.

This completes the review of the various categories of interview comments through which we are attempting to establish the storytelling competency of the TQ Manager as change agent. Several levels of analysis have been reviewed in an attempt to look beyond the prima facie interpretation of the failure of the story to become embedded that inevitably led to the failure of the change programme. The analyses have uncovered a range of features of change at TRC that impacted upon the TQ Manager's attempts to tell his story, which ultimately led to his inability to get his story heard and enacted. These analyses have also explored the development of the categories over the three years between 1994 and 1997 which have also added to the opportunity to draw inference and interpretation of what was happening.

Combining discussions of the findings of both the previous presentations of the 1994 interviews and the 1997 interviews will be undertaken and inserted into the case-study commensurate with the time at which the interviews were undertaken. This is important because the context in which the interviews were conducted provides a significant textural backcloth in which the narratives sit and help make-sense of the dynamics of the process of change. There is important data in that contextual fabric that provide frames of reference for perceptual interpretations and meanings. It is posited that simply to present the analyses of 1994 and 1997 as a compare and contrast of two points in time, arguably an appropriate research stance, would create a sterile and disjointed response to what was actually happening. It is the integration of the two research methodologies that enable a rich story to emerge and a more representative perspective of the change that will lead to an assessment of the change agent as storyteller. These narrative analyses will now be incorporated into

the chronological story to provide a wealthier story of experience upon which to interpret the demise of the change programme at TRC.

The findings of the analyses will be integrated into the re-storying of the BME case and will provide a deeper commentary of what people were experiencing at the two points in time. These will add to the richness of the case and another level of analysis giving a stronger platform from which to review the research questions. It is believed that simply comparing and contrasting the narratives from 1994 with those of 1997 provide an important, but impoverished, perspective. The re-storying of the BME case provides a dynamic context and the additional data creates another lens for sense-making.

Analysis Part 2: 1991-1994

5.3 Re-storying the case-study

In 1991, the British unit of TRC, a successful global organization, embarked upon its third attempt to introduce TQM. The previous two attempts to bring about change had failed but the Managing Director was convinced that TQM would transform TRC and address economic and financial success and stability. The previous attempts had been led by middle managers and change initiative failures were attributed to this strategy. As such the antenarrative (Boje, 2008) was not constructive and there was a negative interpretation of TQM by many who had been part of the failed attempts. Despite this lack of enthusiasm, the Managing Director was totally committed and determined to justify his decision. The new approach was supported by survey research conducted by a consultancy which involved 40% of the workforce and a number of customers identifying the following issues that TQM would address:

Employee comments drew attention to the perceptions that:

- standards were inconsistent and that there was an emphasis on quantity rather than quality,
- there were too many systems and products,
- there were frequent component shortages,
- the organisation was fragmented with too many departments 'doing their own thing',
- there was no sense of direction from 'the hierarchy' and that 'they' were too remote,
- there were too many barriers to getting things done, and
- there was very little awareness of what was going on for most of the time.

Customer comments highlighted problems with:

- lead-times, with products taking too long to make and deliver meaning that delivery dates were often meaningless,
- liaison, which was often variable and feedback which was often slow, and
- persistent and minor problems with, otherwise, good quality products, but providing enough irritation for customers to seek alternative suppliers.

A Company statement suggested that:

"The Total Quality Programme was considered to be the new stimulus which would assist us towards expanding our continuous improvement goal".

In October 1991 a TQ-Coordinator was appointed, this was a part-time role for a member of the senior management team and was given to the Chief Accountant, who, at that time, was fully supportive of the Managing Director's initiative and the ideas which underpinned TQM. A full-time TQ Manager was appointed whose role was to co-ordinate, monitor and progress all TQ related activity on behalf of the Company, key elements of which were training and communication. The role was clearly one of leading the change and the responsibility for this was given to the re-assigned Training Manager.

At the same time the Company Steering Group (CSG) and Functional Steering Groups (FSG) were formed. The CSG comprised the Senior Management Team (SMT) and the TQ Manager with the Managing Director in the chair. The impression that was created was that the TQ Manager role was an important one and that the by being associated with the SMT, the appointment represented a promotion. The FSGs comprised the departmental heads of that function, plus a part-time facilitator with the functional head in the chair. The part-time TQ facilitators were to perform a role similar to that of the TQ Manager but with a functional focus and in support of their chairperson. There were five functional steering groups established. All the signs at this time were that the structures and personnel were in place to demonstrate that, despite previous failures, there was the capacity and willingness of senior management to translate the philosophy and purpose of TQM into operational practice (Webb, 1995; Hill, 1991).

Commensurate with his promotion, the TQ Manager was re-located to an office at the front of the building on a corridor that was occupied by only the Senior Management Team. This again provided a clear impression that the TQ Manager was a significant person and following enthymematic process, *if only senior managers had offices on the front corridor, and the TQ Manager was on the front corridor, then he too must be a senior manager*. The TQ Manager was at no time under the illusion that he had been elevated to a high ranking position, but he enjoyed the impression and the status symbols associated with his new location, one of which was the opportunity to not have to wear a white coat throughout the day.

During November and December 1991 a series of workshops were conducted designed to provide Total Quality awareness and to communicate the survey results.

The audience was all middle management to supervisory level. The workshops were led by the TQ Manager with a representative from the consultancy in a facilitator role. The TQ Manager was confident in the role of workshop lead having developed presentation and training skills in his previous role. The workshops covered an agenda which was essentially informative, with topics including, 'What is TQM?', 'How to gain commitment', and 'Gaining improvements'. During these workshops participants were asked to consider possible projects for improvement, and as the TQ Manager explained:

“There was no strategy to this - we simply pulled little ideas out of a hat.”

These workshops, led by the TQ Manager, were classic training events designed to share information. The information that had been agreed had to be the same in all workshops and essentially the workshops were carefully scripted. The scripted story conveyed a managerialist sense of order of what should be (Bryant and Cox, 2004). These workshops reflected the traditional positivist view of learning assuming that filling learning gaps is a rational process (Harrison, 2009). They followed what Poell (2005) suggests is only an aspect of workplace learning, whereby other actors than the designated learners have created a programme which the learners follow. There was considerable resonance with the notion of a consciousness-raising development programme aimed at getting the message across to a large number of people (Pedler et al., 1991) and the need to control the message was paramount. However, Poell's distinction between workplace learning and corporate training is pertinent, because in establishing the focus of the activity of learning as only something the employees can undertake, he immediately divorces the action of the trainer from the action of learning. For Poell, the trainer can only influence the environment in which learning takes place, it is the choice of the learner as to the level of engagement to which they wish to commit.

The role and influence of the external consultant was very important. Deliberately designed not to be intrusive, he was 'at hand' throughout the workshops to provide advice and support to the TQ Manager. He was also contracted on a 'retainer' to provide a mentoring role to the TQ Manager on, what turned out to be, fortnightly discussion and review sessions. What the TQ Manager lacked in terms of TQM knowledge was provided at a decreasing rate by the consultant as the TQ Manager

learned the story of TQM on-the-job. The basic philosophy underpinning the Consultancy's approach to TQM was that of Deming (1986) reflecting the 14 Points for Management. Furthermore, the consultancy encouraged emphasising efficiency measures as the test of improvement, a direction wholly embraced by the senior management team.

In January 1992 a vision statement was formulated and initial improvement projects were selected. The vision statement was presented under the auspices of Total Quality and proposed the following:

Total Quality Statement

We believe that our future growth and prosperity lie in providing products and services which please our customers and outperform our competitors.

Simply, we aim to be the best.

We shall achieve this by working closely together and using the undoubted skill of everyone here to challenge and improve everything we do.

By January 1992, five Company-wide projects had been identified, which were designed to promote multi-disciplinary team-working and short-term success. There were also several functional projects which were to achieve short-term success within specific location areas and gain greater employee response to, and awareness of, what could be achieved. The decision about choice of projects rested with the senior management, and employee involvement at that time was negligible.

On the recommendation of the consultants, projects which could be statistically measured were proposed. This was, in part, a reflection of the consultancy's own practice paradigm, which was essentially operational and therefore efficiency dominated; and in part, consistent with TRC's known base of expertise and therefore unlikely to present any complications in terms of analysis and interpretation. Daft and Marcic (2011:41) identified four key elements that marked TQM as the dominant management approach of the 1980s and 1990s. These were: employee involvement, focus on the customer, benchmarking and continuous improvement. These underpinned the new set of beliefs that were to be embedded in the new way of working at TRC and these were communicated throughout the organization.

Team leaders were selected by the CSG and the relevant FSGs as appropriate and teams of 6-8 multi-disciplined groups of people were chosen by the team-leader in consultation with interested parties. Training by the TQ Manager was given to all project teams on needs that the team identified, but covered such aspects as:

The Key Principles of Total Quality which were:

- To give the customers what they want when they want it.
- To work as suppliers and customers to each other to improve our service.
- To explore and try out better ways of doing things.
- To strive to do things right first time, every time.
- To measure how we are doing and agree improvement targets.
- To take advantage of training.
- To foster effective communication.
-

TQ Tools and Techniques which included:-

- Team-working
- Running Effective Meetings
- Uses of Delegation
- The Problem-solving Process
- Action/Work Planning
- Report Writing
- Telephone Techniques
- Making Presentations.

Essentially, these key principles and tools and techniques, coupled with 'the vision' were 'the story' of TQM for TRC. These presented the constituents of what TQM was to be for the Company, orchestrated into a series of concepts and practices that could be played out by those exposed to the training and awareness a process recognised by Ybema et al., (2016) and Alvesson and Sveningsson, (2015). The TQ Manager distilled the constituents into a schematic knowledge structure to be learned by the workers as constituents in the meta-knowledge structure of TRC (Gioia and Poole, 1984).

The training was managed and led by the TQ Manager. It was an activity he enjoyed and had earned a considerable reputation as a very effective learning facilitator. He was intent on using his own skills and sphere of influence to demonstrate the TQ principles in practice. Consequently, he spent a considerable amount of time on ensuring that the material and learning programme reflected best practice. His drive and energy throughout this programme were well received and people responded

positively to him. At this stage of the change process, the story of change takes on the style of epic tale with the TQ Manager cast in the role of hero (Collins and Rainwater, 2005)

The training was under the general title of the 'Business Improvement Programme'. The emphasis was on employees communicating more effectively, becoming more involved, showing a greater willingness to suggest and accept change, identifying and solving problems, and through thinking of ways to reduce waste. For the TQ Manager the main message was one of 'empowerment' a principle and concept to which he was deeply committed. In the publicity, Total Quality was presented as the 'cornerstone' of customer satisfaction, team spirit, job security and job satisfaction. These sessions were later incorporated into the induction training programme for all employees.

The Total Quality activity covered four other general elements which were activated over the next 12 months:-

- Process Reviews
- Personal Change
- Communication
- Improvement Monitoring.

The process reviews were considered to be more of a medium to long-term exercise to be conducted by the senior management team. The reviews involved establishing better customer/supplier relationships and customer satisfaction measures. The customer/supplier network brought the concept of the internal customer into the arena with emphasis being given to the notion of work colleagues as suppliers or receivers of 'products'.

Personal Change was the vehicle used to reintroduce a redesigned personal appraisal scheme. The initial intention was to cover 250 employees from the Managing Director downwards, which essentially covered the management. In introducing the new scheme, care was taken to ensure that appropriate training was received by all involved as either an appraiser or appraisee.

Improved organisational communications were regarded as being a critical feature of the Total Quality Programme and a variety of communication methods were adopted or revamped to reflect the ideas of greater involvement.

Interactive TQ Awareness sessions were conducted with 700 personnel in small groups of 15-20 people. These were led by the TQ manager and covered 40% of the workforce. The majority not attending were shop-floor employees. The sessions were also used to generate information about 'real' problems at all levels of the organisation and these were used to focus projects in specific areas and functions. The purpose of these projects was to ensure a greater sense of ownership with the improvements taking place, more personal involvement because these projects would have direct relevance to the group, and this, it was hoped, would encourage the employees to demonstrate the 'will' to help colleagues in solving problems that were seen to be of a shared concern.

Specific TQ Information Bulletins were produced for Company-wide circulation and posted on special Bulletin Boards. These gave updated information on the progress of the projects with the Company-wide projects receiving general circulation and more specific projects promoted as appropriate.

In November 1992 a purpose designed in-house publication entitled Feedback was initiated. This was a free publication for all employees and provided information of a general nature about TQM, details about project progress and indication of what might happen in the future. This was edited by the TQ manager and all employees were encouraged to contribute. Feedback was published bi-monthly. In the first edition it contained the TQ Statement which was signed by all members of the Senior Management Team. However, by this time the original promoter of TQM, the Managing Director, had been promoted to a Group Board position and his position was being held by a 'caretaker' Managing Director, who was not interested in taking on the job on a permanent basis.

Also in this edition, was an explanation of the TQ motif that the Company was adopting. The triangular style was said to symbolize the overall concept of the programme because 'Total' meant that it involved everyone and everything that TRC did, 'Quality' covered both products and service to colleagues and customers, and that it was a 'Programme' that it would demand a lot of effort over many years, that

change did not come about easily and that success would only be achieved through helping each other to make 'Continuous Improvements'.

The Facilitator Group met every month with the TQ manager to communicate progress, share experiences, discuss problems and formulate new initiatives. The TQ Manager enjoyed considerable influence and was very much the focal point of the change programme and played the role of change agent as explained by Burns (2009) being that individual who has to take responsibility for the implementation and progression of a change initiative.

In January 1993 the new Managing Director was appointed. It was an internal promotion with the incumbent coming from the existing senior management team. He had formerly been the Sales Director and was the next to the longest serving member of the senior management team. The Managing Director was a 'home-grown' employee having started in the factory as an apprentice and progressing from the shop-floor through Contracts and Sales to the top job. He had no formal management education. He was the youngest person ever to achieve the status of senior manager and considered himself to be an innovator, changer and questioner of convention. From the time of his appointment, all TQ statements were signed by him giving the impression of his personal assurance and endorsement of the programme.

Throughout 1993 considerable energy and financial support was given to ensuring that the programme had the necessary momentum to achieve its objectives. The communications exercise was highly visible with the Bulletins being professionally generated and presented on boards throughout the Company. The awareness sessions were on-going on a cascade approach and the TQ Manager continued to see the Consultant as mentor on a regular basis. The TQ Manager was also given considerable support by the Chief Accountant, who was the main protagonist for the programme at Board level. At that time the programme raised lots of expectations and the Board was, by and large, supportive of its intentions.

By the end of 1993, two years after it had been introduced the TQ programme had achieved:

- A reduction in production lead-times, although more slowly than was hoped.

- The modification and repair service had achieved the target level set, but a new level of target was needed to achieve customer satisfaction.
- Product rationalisation had exceeded target with minimal customer reaction and maintenance of order intake.
- The production supplier base had been reduced by 55%, and
- A major review of sales and order processing routines had been instigated in an attempt to assist the reduction in lead-times through the simplification of paper-work.

Although the Company was aware that the success of the initiative was dependent upon peoples' willingness to change, direct involvement of all employees had not been achieved. The general feeling expressed by those who were involved, was that:

- enthusiasm and commitment were improving,
- people were becoming more involved and more open minded,
- team spirit was improving as helped by project activity,
- awareness sessions were becoming more interactive as people sought answers to the queries they had,
- long-standing problems that had been 'taboo' were being tackled, and
- there was a greater recognition of what was trying to be achieved for the good of everyone.

There was no formal assessment of these impressions, but by those who expressed them, they were considered to be a fair and factual evaluation. The opinions of those not involved in projects were not sought.

Whilst there was a sense of success and achievement, closer evaluation of the projects and objectives demonstrated contra-indicators and success was re-appraised. Areas that were highlighted for improvement and consideration were:

- delivery performance which had not improved but rationalised because of an order intake that was higher than budget,
- projects had taken too long to implement because of resourcing and priority conflicts, suggesting that there needed to be a review of project prioritisation,
- cost ramifications had caused some delays to certain projects.
- all the five elements of the TQ Programme had not been fully developed and there were some misconceptions about its value in certain areas of the Company,
- awareness training had progressed more slowly than had been anticipated and, as a result, direct TQ activity had only encompassed 400 of the 1700 personnel on the site,
- TQ training had only been extended to project teams,

- lack of formal feedback had meant that too many assumptions had been made about what people knew and what they wanted to know.

This was the first time that challenge to the TQM programme had been given credibility and of the 7 areas for improvement, 4 were directly related to the TQ Manager and his responsibility.

In response, it was decided that the employees were taking too long to adopt the concepts into their day to day operations, that the value of the performance measures were not fully realised and that communications at all levels needed to be simplified and customised. It was considered essential that once awareness training had been introduced to the shop-floor it must be followed very quickly by some form of action to reinforce the message.

It was recognised that there was a large training requirement and that this needed to be planned, prioritized and implemented more quickly and effectively. There was a feeling that there was a tendency to short-term vision and that there needed to be a focus on what was needed to be achieved in the medium term and to use all five elements of the TQ Programme as tools to achieve the goals. To support the developments there needed to be a review of best practices around the Company with a view to adopting these as appropriate. If there had been a questioning of the performance of the TQ Manager, the shift of blame to the general shop-floor employees meant that the TQ Manager was again seen as central to the future success of not just the change programme but the organization itself. This classic paternalistic response in that whilst it was not the fault of the shop floor employees because they had not been trained in the new ways, but clearly it was their fault, preserved the reputation of the TQ Manager. Given that the underlying philosophy for the TQM approach was Deming (1986), the blame attributed to the shop-floor demonstrates an interesting lack of understanding of one of Deming's key aspects of TQM, that is for management to delegate responsibility for quality and improvement to all employees rather than seeking to blame workers for mistakes. TRC was in direct contravention of that convention.

Further blame displacement was demonstrated in response to other rationalisations as to why the employees were at fault. It was applauded by the senior managers that Total Quality tools and techniques were being used as an integral part of business

planning and it was reconciled that the benefits would probably take several years before they emerged. The message to all employees was that everyone must remain focussed on the Vision Statement, which had by then been sent as part of an information pack to everyone. Consequently, although the majority of employees had not been on an awareness session, they had all received a substantial communication package which sought to explain what had been happening, what had been achieved and future activities. That a considerable proportion of the general workforce had not been on a TQ Awareness session was not seen as an excuse for poor uptake and practices. Clearly the fault was not with lack of training, but lack of willingness by the workers to read the information, interpret it correctly and apply the ideas to their work. This apportioning of blame to the weakest group of workers demonstrates both the manipulation of organizational defence mechanisms (Argyris, 1990) and the desire to protect the reputation of an anointed manager.

Following the review of 1993, the objectives for the following two years were published. These were to:

Improve Company performance through streamlining and improving the product range, simplifying key business processes, establishing effective performance measures for all stages of every main process, applying new production techniques to give higher product quality standards.

Developing supplier relationships and implementing joint performance monitoring, reducing costs and adding value, and improving interdepartmental service. And

Improve customer satisfaction, which was the prime target, to be achieved through reducing lead times, improving delivery reliability, improving modifications and repair response times and turnaround times, reducing development lead-times, and improving the customer complaint response times. It was also part of the communication exercise to improve communication and consultation with the market place through every means possible.

The 'People' objectives covered training and communications with statements made about ensuring that people had the right tools and the right training for a given job,

that the Company was committed to investing in the large training requirement, that needs were being identified and prioritized to business requirements and, that all employees were to be exposed to the TQ awareness sessions in 1994.

After two years of running the programme, less than 25% of the employees had been given any formal opportunity to learn about, and discuss the Total Quality Programme, although bulletins and the magazine had kept people informed of what was happening. A new chief executive was in post. Claims of success were being made about several of the projects and the objectives for the next two years were essentially more of the same.

An important recognition was that despite the claims of projects successes, and there were 83 projects which had been undertaken, the project teams had tended to divorce the Total Quality approach from the day-to-day activities of people. Essentially the project groups had taken people from their functional base to do a 'special' task. The TQ Manager realised that if TQ was to succeed, then it was a fundamental requirement that it was incorporated into the general activities which everyone undertook.

However, from those who were involved in the Programme there was unquestioned enthusiasm and energy with very high expectations of what could be achieved. The TQ manager was confident that the infrastructure was in place and, albeit slowly, the message was permeating throughout the Company. He was also anxious to progress the awareness sessions so that everyone had been given the same information and that everyone was fully informed about what was expected of them. In his mind, the change programme was a success, time would prove the benefits of TQM and provide the justification for the approach taken. Unfortunately, whilst time within the historical context of this case portrayed what Dawson (2014) and Langley et al., (2013) recognise as a weakness in the interpretation of temporal linearity of the dominant understandings of change, atemporal and tenseless notions of time suggest that time was not something the TQ Manager could simply manage.

5.4 Insertion of discussion and findings from Part 1(1994) into the re-storying of the case

At the beginning of 1994 interviews were carried out with representatives of all sections of the workforce including the Managing Director, The HR Director, the Manufacturing Director, other middle managers, the TQ Manager, supervisors, shop-floor workers, trades unions and staff employees. There were representatives from Relays and Instruments (where adoption of TQM had been received more favourably). What follows is a summary of the analyses previously recorded.

Whilst in Instruments there was a much more positive response to the experience of TQM and people were engaging with the changes, instruments was a much smaller concern. The main production area was Relays and there was less support here. However, people spoke in positive terms about the communications being improved, better linkages with management. There were positive comments about the TQ initiatives but there were also some contra-indicators of de-skilling, a sense of feeling 'second-class' and a recognition that mutual sharing of information could not be guaranteed across functions. Overall, whilst hope and optimism was expressed about the achievements, there was some disgruntlement and the TQ Manager found it hard to identify achievements. After three years of the TQ Programme being in place there was an expectation of the interviewees being able to articulate confidently, achievements, successes, failures or otherwise. The lack of confidence and contra-indicators showed that TQM, as a new way of working, had not been embedded. But, was it because people were not accepting it or was it because they did not understand it?

From exploring the narratives from another level, the question was asked about the context and whether the respondents thought change was necessary. In general, it was felt that there was a need to change but there was less confidence about the adoption of TQM as the way forward. There was some confusion with regards to the relationship with ISO 9,000 and the standards accreditation with which people felt more empathy, and also the role of the external consultants and their role in identifying the solution. There was also a need to establish people's perceptions of what changes had occurred in an attempt to explore peoples' expectations and the establishment of a shared understanding of changes they should expect.

Unfortunately there was not a great deal of commonality of shared understandings especially related to TQM, although in Instruments, a stronger recognition of the importance of team-working was discussed. People talked about empowerment, participative structures and the elimination of inspection, all that would relate in some way to Deming's approach, but there was also comment of a culture of fear and again de-skilling. At this point in the analysis, there is not much that infers support of the TQ Manager's ability to engage people and win their commitment.

In exploring another level of analysis to try to establish some idea of the story being told and its acceptability to the audience, we looked at the interpretations of TQM and what it might have meant to the workforce in total as represented by the interviewees. The respondents were asked to talk about what they understood by TQM, how effective they thought the communications systems were, and their individual views on TQM. The understanding of what TQM presented an important set of comments. There was some support for TQM and mention of examples of successes, but the main issues came from the strong adherence to the accredited standards of ISO 9,000 and 9,001 and BS 5750, reflecting the strong ethos of measurement that underpinned the Production Department. There were very strongly held views from those associated with Production about the Management Services ethos and the competing narratives between the TQ Manager's 'soft' TQM and the Manufacturing 'hard' TQM were firmly established in the interviews. There was also scepticism expressed about the TQ initiative from these sections of the factory. The TQ Manager was aware of an alternative narrative being espoused but he was convinced of his ability to win support especially given the 'life-line' from the external consultancy that it would be 5 years before an appreciable recognition of the adoption of TM would be experienced.

In enquiring about the effectiveness of communications, there is little to suggest that the communications systems were effective. People commented on not being aware of things and an atmosphere of intimidation, lack of trust and cynicism. Some recognition of the narrowing of the gap between management and workers and more involvement in decision-making was identified, but the general sense is one of communications not being effective, that there was a lot of information but not communication. The TQ Manager also indicated that he was perhaps losing confidence or did not fully understand what he was communicating as he expressed

his inability to articulate his points and defend his position. Certainly the responses to the communications processes were not indicative of a successful communications strategy.

The question about their own experiences of the TQ initiative also led to mixed responses. Many who had experience of being involved expressed a 'feel good factor' about those experiences and optimism about the future. However, there were a significant number of people who had no experience of TQ at TRC on which to be able to comment and others wanted more experience before making a judgement. Clearly the idea of a company-wide initiative was not happening in practice. It was also very apparent from the comment that the alternative narrative being presented by the Production Department managers was gaining more traction and the TQ Manager's story of TQM was having difficulty in being heard. However, was this because people were not being exposed to it deliberately, or because they were choosing not to listen?

If the exposure to the TQ Programme was being deliberately opposed then there needed to be an examination of the role of senior management in the change process, an examination of whether there was a negative impression issue of the TQ Manager that was getting in the way of adoption, and a review of perceptions of who people thought was leading the change. Previous research showed that despite prima facie evidence of top management commitment to the change process in the form of financial and time resources, as well as the appointment of the TQ Manager, an emotional commitment was not apparent. In 1994 the general impression was one of ambivalence and more of a sense that it was the TQ Manager's responsibility. There was a sense that if he needed support then he could ask, but for the TQ Manager, he was less confident of the support and commitment of the senior management team. He still had his point of contact, the Chief Accountant, but his influence on his colleagues on the SMT was having less impact than when the programme started.

When examining the comments on the TQ Manager there are a series of comments made by the TQ Manager himself that start to present a disturbing view of his mental health. Whilst there are very few comments from 1994 expressing other peoples' views on the TQ Manager, two of which are very supportive and complimentary, two,

from his biggest critic which are undermining, the TQ Manager is showing signs of frustration and finding the job stressful. He talks about not having any authority to enable him to get things done, having to rely on persuasion and assertiveness. He feels over-stretched, lacking job-satisfaction and unable to recognise his own achievements. He talks about 'down-periods' and it is apparent from his comments that he feels alone in his task. At this point it would seem reasonable to suggest that he is struggling to get his message across.

If the TQ Manager was struggling in his task then it was important to establish an idea of who people thought were leading the change. At this time there were a lot of different people/groups identified, and only one response attributes the leadership of the change to the TQ Manager. As story-teller of the change this poses a significant problem. Where there is some sharing of perceptions of who is leading the change, it is the predominance of the prevailing culture steeped in statistical control underpinned by the operations management paradigm that is persisting, led by the Production Managers. Whilst the Managing Director demonstrates sympathy towards the 'soft' approach being championed by the TQ Manager, the lack of direct support left the TQ Manager isolated.

We needed to establish a further level of analysis to explore other factors that could influence the story being told. The first of this level of analysis were the perceptions of barriers to the change towards TQM. There are a range of perceived barriers including the continued question regarding the necessity of change when TRC was such a successful company. This inability to reconcile success today with the changing environment suggests that the time taken to prepare people for change had not been given adequate attention and this could be a failing on the part of the TQ Manager. However, there were other influential factors that also meant his story would have difficulty being experienced. Some comments suggest that the design of the TQ programme was wrong, leading to conflicting expectations, some said that people were too complacent again linking with a lack of urgency but also reinforced by the slowness of the awareness training to include all employees. The biggest problem of obstruction was identified as the Production Managers and their refusal to engage with TQM and effectively sabotaging the TQ Manager's TQ Programme adoption. There was also the issue of the piecework system that in effect, countered the collective aspirations of team working and joint problem-solving by promoting an

individualistic and quantity driven rewards process. As such, there were a number of barriers that impacted upon the story, they were contradictory and created a context in which the 'soft' approach to TQM would struggle to gain credibility.

A number of these required a sensitive and assertive approach by the HR Department to support the TQ initiative. Exploration of this aspect of the change experience showed that the HR Department led by the HR Director was not engaged with the TQ Programme. Comments about the HR Director are generally disparaging remarks but it is a shared observation that he chooses to spend more time away from TRC. Clearly the TQ Programme was not something that he rated highly and not high enough to warrant his attention. He is also very critical of the capability of his own colleagues in Personnel and has not nominated an HR lead to liaise with the TQ Manager. There is little doubt from the comments that the HR Director and the HR Team are neither wanted or regarded highly enough to be able to make a contribution. Given that the "soft' approach was being promoted which is people focused, the lack of involvement by the HR Director and his team was an abdication of people management responsibility and had isolated the TQ Manager even more.

The final piece of narrative analysis explores the reactions to the training undertaken by the TQ Manager which was intended to cascade through the company. The comments made about training and development elicited some odd responses suggesting that there was not a strong link between the training being undertaken and the TQ Initiative. There were two comments that spoke of the training as having been useful but they were largely comments about the general state of training within TRC. Mostly the senior managers felt that training was very important and the company invested considerably, but this was not a shared view, especially in relation to the TQ Programme. It would appear to be reasonable to assume that most people did not associate the Awareness Programme with the TQ initiative or that many employees had not been exposed to the Awareness Training.

The analyses of the various questions over the different levels expose a situation with the change programme that needs urgent attention. The TQ Manager is obviously failing in his attempt to secure support for his preferred story of TQM. However, it is not enough to say that he is failing because he is not an effective story-teller. What is more apparent is that he is unable to be effective. Consequently,

the contextual factors in which he is operating are conspiring to immobilise him by denying him a platform from which to share his ideas. Where he has gained an audience who are willing to listen (Instruments) he has been successful and it is the experiences of Instruments that have sustained his hope of being able to achieve further success. Clearly the contextual factors are within the domain of management and leadership to change and influence these. At this stage of the change process, however, the chances of and opportunities for successful implementation of TQM are precariously balanced.

End of Analysis of 1994 interviews

Analysis Part 3:

5.5 Re-storying the case 1994-1997

During 1994 the role of Quality Co-ordinator was given to another member of the Board as a new position was created, that of Quality and Management Information Systems Director. The position was given to the General Manager of the Instruments Division within TRC, a stalwart supporter of TQ principles and someone who had achieved considerable success with several projects in the Instruments division.

On a personal level, the TQ Manager was to lose direct contact with the Chief Accountant, someone who had given both great personal support and given tremendous support to the activities he had initiated. The new TQ Co-ordinator, whilst competent and pleasant, did not offer the TQ Manager the inspiration that he had previously enjoyed. As the 'new-boy' on the senior management team, the Quality and MIS Director was also a junior member with a portfolio that was yet to be determined (Westphal and Zajac, 1995). The TQ Manager was well aware that despite having a seemingly dedicated Quality position at the Board level, the junior status of the incumbent presented a related diminishment of his position and personal standing to the general community of the workforce. To most of the employees, the new Director of Quality and MIS was unknown. Furthermore, to the TQ Manager, although the Director expressed support for TQM and had experienced successes in his previous role as General Manager of the Instruments Division, there had been little contact between the two men. Most of the TQ Manager's discussions had been with the Instruments' Division's project leads.

Other changes were made to the senior management team during the year. There were now nine members of the Senior management team covering: HRM, Manufacturing, Marketing, Sales, Finance, Engineering, Quality and MIS, and Business Development. All were men and all, but the Human Resources Director, had spent the majority of their careers with TRC.

Throughout 1994 the Company continued to pursue the objectives identified in the projects, whilst at the same time attempted to communicate the principles, tools and techniques of TQ to all of the employees. Whilst the projects themselves were achieving success, as measured against the performance indicators, there was considerable variation between different groups of workers as to the reality and understanding of TQM. This was not simply a case of lack of information at the lower levels of the organisation.

There was clear evidence that some middle managers in key positions of influence were expressing their scepticism. This was no more so than in the main production section. Traditionally, the production area had been dominated by work-study specialists and the values and techniques were hard to dispel, particularly when both work-study and TQM preach an ideology of continuous improvement. The message which tended to dominate was one of 'no change, change was seen as being unnecessary. This was compounded by the fact that the Company was seen as being successful and this was breeding complacency. There was clearly a battle of stories and the scepticism of the production managers was very entrenched. By promoting scepticism through not tackling the production managers, the company was beginning to inhibit the very thing that was being required (Beer et al., 1993). This simply was not cynicism about whether the TQ Manager would succeed, although there was some of that, the production managers did not accept the need to change at all. Furthermore, politically the production managers were a very powerful group.

During the year it was decided to re-structure certain production sections and introduce 'cellular manufacturing' as part of the business processes project. It was felt the 'cell' would encourage greater team-working and participation by those in the cells. The 'cells' were to be introduced on an incremental basis meaning that some sections were operating as a 'cell' whilst others were still operating along the

traditional functional/divisional lines. The decision to choose one section over another reflected both appropriateness of the tasks being undertaken and the responsiveness of the individuals involved to adopt the new working practices. Cellular manufacturing was a new approach that was championed by research and practitioners from an operations management paradigm (Singh, 1993; Irani, 1999) and as such, presented yet another twist to the already ambiguous understanding of TQM within the company

For the TQ Manager, cellular manufacturing (CF) offered a route to empowerment, for the Production Director, CF provided a vehicle through which participants would have to discuss problems and issues together; for the shop-stewards, there was not enough mutual trust and respect between management and the shop-floor for the majority of people to want to become involved. At supervisory level, the response was of ambivalence, based on an assumption that because the employees are conscientious, they would always work to the best of their ability.

Although the operatives agreed with the description of conscientious, they showed far more enthusiasm for 'cells' than at any other level. 'Cells' were seen as providing scope for job variety and seeing the whole operation, as well as providing opportunities for participation in decisions which affected production. It was recognised that there was an element of de-skilling, but variety made up for that. The jobs were much more interesting, they were no longer just 'nuts and bolts' and they could take a pride in the finished product. This lack of awareness of what the shop-floor actually felt about cell manufacturing demonstrates an interesting paradox in what was taking place. Although in behavioural terms everyone was apparently happy with the introduction of cells, the reason why satisfaction was secured was not understood at all. The management, and especially the TQ Manager, was completely delusional. Although the outcome seemed to reinforce his preferred interpretation, the lack of dialogue between him and the shop floor meant his rationalisation of behaviour cause and effect was misjudged. In terms of spreading the story, employee silence created a barrier to effective change (Morrison and Milliken, 2000).

There was also a high degree of 'self-importance' expressed by the operatives. The general feeling was that it was the workforce which had the foresight to make things

happen and that it was the commitment of the workforce to each other that ensured the success of the initiatives. Commentary within the operatives' groups suggested that senior management was too remote to have any impact on the way that the day to day operations were conducted.

Enchantment was not, however, universal. Some employees expressed complete disenchantment, but their negative response was not attributable to the new initiatives, more of a general dissatisfaction with the Company as a whole. For this group of employees, CF and TQ were considered unlikely to dispel their attitudes. It was also clear that these operatives would not have voiced their opinion in the public arena, all agreed that outright opposition would be the route to 'choosing your way out of a job'! Again choosing to remain silent about their dissatisfaction was indicative of a lack of trust and regard for the process being undertaken and a degree of a lack of comfort in being able to share their views for fear of reprisal (Milliken et al, 2003)

Throughout the first six months of 1994, the TQ Manager maintained a very high profile and was able to energise and encourage people to become involved in the new ideas. He adopted a strategy of persuasion and inspiration, partly because that strategy reflected both his beliefs and value system of what he was trying to achieve, and mainly because he had absolutely no authority to tell people what to do. As the year progressed, the lack of authority began to wear heavily on him. Unable to generate the energy for change at Board level, he felt that many of his initiatives were being frustrated. Unable to 'force' his ideas through in those areas where resistance was endangering the potential achievements, he began to feel that his personal credibility was being put at risk. Knowing that the TQ Manager was unable to insist that the new working methods be adopted, several middle managers used that knowledge as a ploy to reinforce their own preferred operating methods.

These preferred operating methods reflected very much the traditional works-study paradigm. Most of the manufacturing managers had developed their specialist knowledge through this particular career route. The knowledge and skills of the management scientist had been highly valued by the Company. For some, the language of 'quality' was difficult to differentiate between that which reflected the 'Quality Control/Assurance' perspective and that which embraced the philosophy of

'Total Quality Management'. The result was that the messages were becoming blurred and bastardised. Whilst it would be too dramatic to suggest deliberate sabotage, there was a clear pattern beginning to emerge in which several managers were reinterpreting the TQ messages in terms of their own frame of reference.

At the time of inception, TQM was being treated from two perspectives. The first, exemplified by writers such as Oakland (1989,1993) Dale (1990,1994) and Dale and Plunket (1990) reflected the maturing of the operations management perspective on quality. These writers had considerable recognition for their work both intellectually from an empirical research perspective and practically through application. . These writers also tended to focus on the 'hard' side of TQM, emphasising a range of tools and techniques that addressed measurable, tangible results such as costs and production performance. These tools and techniques were presented as being necessary if continuous improvement was to be achieved (Dale,1994) and most had been developed by the Japanese to collect and analyse non-qualitative and verbal data.

However, as these production/operations-orientated approaches to TQM matured there came an increasing acceptance of the importance of addressing social factors involved in TQM. Hill (1991) Wilkinson (1992) Marchington et al., (1993) and Wilkinson et al., (1993) identify the inadequate attention given to human resource considerations. Hill (ibid) comments on the anomaly between the fully specified solutions to technical issues compared with the gap in the literature on the treatment of the social features of TQM. Wilkinson clearly establishes the need for people to be included in the implementation of a strategy, however ingenious in its design (Wilkinson,1994). Although noting that human resource issues are not wholly ignored, they were addressed in only a limited way that denied a true examination of their impact. What emerged was an argument that emphasised the need to consider the 'soft' side of TQM that addressed employee involvement and commitment. It is clear that the debate was raging in TRC, with the TQ Manager representing the soft side of TQM and the Production Managers stalwarts of the hard approach.

One highly influential middle manager from the manufacturing section, in particular, declared himself to be the best example of a Total Quality practitioner. Despite his confidence and fervent belief in his ability, in reality, he did more than most to

undermine the permeation of the TQ programme throughout the section. As a long-serving employee and a competent manager who achieved good results, but a man who was extremely authoritarian and dogmatic, others found it difficult to challenge his beliefs. He was also completely adamant that as he was already the best example of TQM in practice, then there was no need to change the way that he, and his staff, were doing things. Whilst professing to be a key supporter of quality the manager was encouraging pernicious resistance. Jarrett (2003) identifies four causes of resistance as part of the second of seven myths of change management – namely that resistance can be overcome. What the production manager was demonstrating has high resonance with these causes and the contagion of his actions and dialogue was significant. Jarrett (2003:24) suggests the following four causes

Personal defences: Individuals set up personal ego and psychological defences to deny the reality of change and the production manager was intent on establishing his superior position in relation to both what TQM was and why he was already the exemplar of it in practice.

Group conflicts: The nature and dysfunctional dynamics of leadership groups, inter-group conflict and differences also prevent change. Such was the personal and professional power of the production manager, those managed by him felt unable to challenge his opinions and would not have sought to apply any new practices to their workplace routines.

Organisational and political: The management of different interests maintain the status quo and inertia. The production of relays was considered to be the most successful area of TRC and the despite espoused support for TQM, there was a reluctance by senior management to challenge the status quo and the weakness of the TQ Manager in terms of being able to win over the production managers and this one in particular meant that TQM stumbled and the existing practices prevailed.

Institutional dynamics: Networks of customers and markets make it difficult to do things differently and these can be traced back to history, context and environment. The success of TRC in the market was another highly problematic

counter story to the need for change. However, whilst some people recognised the need to change because of the rise of digital technologies, the complexity of this new technology and the implications meant that this story of change had very little traction and the TQ Manager was not capable of telling it in a compelling and credible way. His new sponsor on the board could have easily created a narrative about this, but chose not to.

Unfortunately, the closeness of the rhetoric of Quality Assurance and the rhetoric of Total Quality Management merely served to frustrate the change process and create tension between people in positions of influence. Despite the tendency to describe everyone as pulling in the same direction, it was clear that this was not the case and no-one was more aware of this than the TQ Manager.

By now the TQ Manager was emerging as both 'hero' and 'villain'. To the operatives, the Trades Union officials, and those at junior levels of management, the TQ Programme was the TQ Manager. To others less well disposed to what the programme was seeking to achieve, the TQ Manager was 'an interference' to the primary requirement of getting the job done. Several 'dammed him with faint praise', he was well-meaning and good intentioned, but he lacked the understanding of what the Company was in business for - of course he had his job to do, but it was secondary to the primary activity.

Seo and Creed (2002) offer an opportunity to explore the consequences of these different interpretations of the TQ Manager in their dialectical perspective of institutional change which was an extension of the work of Benson (1997). They develop Benson's original basic principles to a dialectic perspective of social construction, totality, contradiction and praxis which taken together inform the overall perspective of the elemental character of social life. However, Seo and Creed offer four sources of contradiction in institutional life with praxis providing a mediating role between institutional contradictions and institutional change. These contradictions are:

- (1) legitimacy that undermines functional inefficiency,
- (2) adaptation that undermines adaptability,
- (3) intra-institutional conformity that creates inter-institutional incompatibilities, and

(4) isomorphism that conflicts with divergent interests. (Seo and Creed, 2002:226)

The embryo of institutional change grows out of the core sources of institutional contradictions, whereby actors inhabiting the institutional arrangements perceive a misalignment between what is presented and experienced and what they need and their interests. This creates a potential energy for the emergence of institutional challengers from the population of actors whose interests and ideas are inadequately served by the prevailing order. Therefore, the contradictions, perceptions and strength of dissatisfaction will be related to the probable emergence of praxis by affecting who will arise as champions of change. In the case of TRC and the TQ Manager as change agent, the compelling contradictory story was too great to enable the story of TQM to take hold and become dominant. As such, it is proposed that institutional change is rooted in the aptitude of institutional actors and opportunity for praxis, whereas in TRC, praxis was frustrated.

At senior management levels, the achievements that had been made were described largely in terms of themselves and their ability to manage. Whilst on the one hand they acknowledged the TQ Programme, on the other, they were reluctant to acknowledge its impact. Furthermore, interpretations of why projects had been successful lacked consensus - particularly with regard to each others' contributions. Several 'camps' appeared to emerge with the Manufacturing Director and the Managing Director being seen as leaders, key players and significant influencers of policy, but not necessarily in a joint capacity; and the HRM Director as pursuing his own direction. Whilst the lack of cohesion at the senior management level was considered normal and the team was ignored on an everyday basis, the Manufacturing Director was consistently upheld as organisational hero.

As the Programme cascaded throughout the Company and the TQ Manager took on more and more work in response to the demands that were being made, it became clear that he was unable to cope alone. In June 1994 he was duly provided with an assistant. The post was not advertised. The assistant was a long-serving employee, who had worked previously with the TQ Manager in Training. Significantly, the post was given to a female member of staff. The post was entitled Customer Service Officer. One of the main tasks was to be the promotion of Performance Measurement, with a customer focus at all levels. Other responsibilities included the

development and support of the various communication and training initiatives under the *Continuous Improvement* umbrella.

For a woman at TRC the job was considered to be 'high profile', there being a minimal number of women in any managerial position, or in a position of influence. For the Company, the immediate need for another body had been resolved. For the Programme, the solution was to present conflicting interpretations, with few people seeing the appointment as an indication of how the Programme was growing. Most saw the appointment as an ironic comment on the depth to which senior management was prepared to invest in Total Quality Management.

A further twist in the image management of the Programme was to take place during the last quarter of the year, which coincided with the appointment of the Customer Service Officer. From the on-set of the initiative, the TQ Manager had occupied a high-profile office on the 'executive' corridor. He overlooked the senior management and visitors' car-park, he was able to walk around in his shirt sleeves and tie.

After he was given an assistant, it was decided that he should move to a more central position in the factory. He and his assistant were given accommodation in the centre of the production area but not integral to any particular section. There was no outlook, lighting was artificial and they were required to wear a white overall. The justification for the move was made on the grounds of them becoming more accessible and more closely involved with the key activities of the TQ Programme. The impact was to make the TQ Manager more remote from senior management, and to link him and her with the general populous of the organisation, a move that was a real demoraliser to the TQ Manager who saw this as a loss of face and status.

Whilst he had not sought to deceive people in terms of the impressions that had been formed of him and his status within the company and the associated status of the programme, the move was detrimental. Bolino et al., (2016) discuss the importance of managing impressions when the success of a goal is high and the impression is integral to goal achievement. Dahling et al., (2009) incorporating a Machiavellian Personality Style, recognise the significance of status in managing impressions where status is seen as a statement of success and in the case of the TQ Manager was the perceived reduction in status a statement of failure? Rioux and Penner (2001) suggest that proactive organisational citizen behaviours impacting

upon impressions may reflect organisational concerns with the actor creating the impression to demonstrate how much they care for the company. All of these would reasonably reflect the TQ Manager's motives to sustain the impression of his own importance which made the move to the central location and the uniform of the white coat so impactful on his self-presentation (Bolino et al., 2008). But perhaps at this stage it might also be worth reflecting on the motives of whoever it was who decided that the move should be made. Clearly the TQ Manager felt unable to argue his case and maintain his location.

The credibility of the Programme was to experience a serious blow when the Company announced the need to make 150 employees redundant. The reason given was a fall in actual orders against expected sales. The management considered that they were 'lucky' and had demonstrated foresight in ensuring that there were temporary staff who would be laid-off and that the substantive workforce would not be affected except by those who would choose to go. This proved to be 'cold comfort' to the employees who saw the action as just the 'tip of the iceberg'.

The Programme was now interpreted in different ways. It had been sold to the employees as the vehicle through which TRC would establish market dominance, implying that it was to secure employment. Yet, within the first year of operation at all levels it had proved necessary to lose employees, albeit only those with the most tenuous of contractual arrangements or those who wished to take redundancy. The shop-floor accepted the situation, with a degree of resignation, as long as there were no enforced redundancies then things were seen as being all right.

To counteract the impact of the redundancies and in an attempt to raise morale, the Company talked up the potential orders for the following year, including some huge contracts with the Middle East. Further bolstering of the Programme was provided, fortuitously, by the announcement that the Company was to be awarded the Queen's Award for Export, news that was received by all employees with a great deal of pride; and by the visit of a main Board Director who pronounced TRC as being one of the 'flag-ships' of the Group.

The response of the TQ Manager was to drive the message of TQ even harder, picking up on the faltering morale and the drop in general complacency as employees had realised that their jobs were not secure and the Company was not

'invincible'. More people began to accept that there was a need to ensure that customers were given quality products and quality service and as part of that response, the TQ Manager was convinced that there was a greater team ethos emerging with people actively co-operating with each other. In some respects, the negative experiences that the TQ Manager had been through were now acting as a challenge and he became more energised. As Armenakis et al., (1993) note in their study of change readiness, the workforce now appeared to be far more susceptible to the need for change and demonstrated readiness for change as distinguished from resistance to change. Readiness is described in terms of the organizational members' beliefs, attitudes, and intentions and there appeared to be a move away from the complacency encouraged by the relative perception of organisational success at the beginning of the TQ initiative. The researchers also describe change agent influence strategies as well as the importance of change agent credibility and their interpersonal and social dynamics in the readiness creation process. In TRC, the TQ Manager certainly 'upped his game' and applied a re-energized set of change-promoting behaviours to encourage engagement with the programme (Adil, 2014). As Rosenbaum et al., (2018) posit in their review of change management literature, change readiness is a fundamental requirement if change is to be enacted and addressed.

In January 1995 the senior management held their annual Business Review. This was held over two days with the TQ Manager being present on the first.

The first day was devoted to reviewing the progress towards the core objectives and started with a general reappraisal of TQ and its application in TRC. It was apparent very early on into this session that there was considerable difference between what the individual senior managers thought was the underlying philosophical approach to the Programme which TRC had adopted. The TRC approach had originally reflected the Deming Principles. When given the chance to select a set of underlying principles which each thought underpinned the TRC approach, only three of the senior managers identified Deming as the guru behind their own approach, the others varied between Juran, Feigenbaum and Crosby.

The three to correctly identify Deming were the Managing Director, Manufacturing Director and the MIS and Quality Director, the three most involved in the original

initiative, either at Board level or in its application. The HRM Director dismissed the exercise as being inconsequential because 'the scheme was so bastardised, there could be no pure root form'. This sort of authoritative, but unhelpful comment, was to become his leitmotif and a source of comment and concern by members of TRC at all levels.

The other senior managers appeared to be somewhat embarrassed by not having identified correctly the underlying philosophy of the TRC approach, but then relieved by the HRM Director's disregard for what was being attempted. It then became difficult for the group to explore how different perceptions and expectations might provide a series of barriers to the effective implementation of the approach. The lack of shared vision and understanding created a major barrier to the development of any subsequent discussion on culture, leadership and empowerment and it became questionable as to whether change was an objective being pursued. As Armenakis and Bedeian (1999) suggest, one of the first steps to implementing change is the crafting of a compelling vision, then it would seem that the failure to engage in meaning discussion would be a clear indication of great difficulty in gathering support for change.

Different managers gave feedback sessions on the progress of projects towards the major company objectives. The Managing Director was obsessive about timings and, despite the development of some critical and analytical discussion, they were not allowed to proceed beyond the allotted time period. This meant that there were some important issues which did not receive proper attention. However, what was most interesting was the role taken by the HRM Director in these proceedings. Despite the significant implications for HRM for all the projects, and the communications project specifically, the involvement of the HRM Director was minimal. He chose not to participate co-operatively in the presentations and allowed the MIS and Quality Director to dominate the feedback on the progress of the Internal Communications project.

The Quality and MIS Director reported that the awareness exercise had now been presented to 1250 of the 1600 employees, and that the 350 remaining employees would be dealt with over the next 10 weeks. A survey that had been conducted by one of the project teams reported 70% effectiveness on the employees knowing

about TQ issues. No-one questioned what this actually meant and what the other 30% represented. Various statistics were shared about the number of TQ noticeboards that had been erected (44 by then) and about the various mechanisms that were in place to encourage feedback and participation. The Quality and MIS Director then went on to introduce the new strategic project group that was to assess *the motivational values of sharing power*.

The members of the strategic group were to be himself, the HRM Director, the TQ Manager - who was to act as co-ordinator, and the Chief Accountant. The group was to use the work and assistance of the Industrial Society, particularly in the area of Team Briefing, and was to survey the whole workforce, to which the HRM Director responded:

“We know what we know, there is a need for certain members of the departments to have communication training. Business communications are by and large restricted to criticising or demanding greater effort from our employees. The supervisors are kept ‘in the dark’ regarding the Company’s and Department’s success and the leaders act like overlords. The leaders fail to understand the complexity of their demeanour. Information is provided on a need to know basis leaving the elite with control of information. There is inter-departmental rivalry and secrecy and the organisation structure doesn’t allow answers to be given, and we don’t give a damn because we don’t give answers. The perception is that there is not a lot going on, except on a local basis. Notice boards are the least effective way of giving information, people are not interested in what is going on elsewhere.”

For the first time in the proceedings the HRM Director had made a significant contribution and he knew its impact had not been lost. His very authoritative negativity challenged anyone to contradict him, which they did not, and he had ‘the floor’. He continued then with his view on the Training programme:

“the Training objective was a bit ‘iffy’ anyway. We had identified the training plans off the back of appraisal, but to be brutally honest, the procedures which have been demanded by, for example ISO 9000, have overtaken TQ. Complying with ISO 9000 requires a large negative stick really, rather than the TRC TQ approach. We need some revised objectives and I have initiated a

pilot programme of competency based training and development plans. I have started with the Instruments Department and they have stuck with us. There was a difference of expectation between HR and Instruments but now they have a better application of HR techniques, for example the use of job descriptions including a list of competencies. We have also identified a new appraisal process based on comparison between what the job needs and what the job holder has which will allow an individual career plan to emerge. This approach should allow us to meet the requirements of ISO 9000. I chose Instruments because they were people who wanted to cooperate. I anticipate that the SHRD Plan will be in budget by July and that the pilot will be completed in March and the main programme in place by July.”

The impact on the Senior Management group was profound. The Manufacturing Director raised points for debate, others got defensive and, in some cases, abusive, but the HRM Director was self-assured and uncompromising. The impact on the TQ Manager was appalling. By seemingly criticising the Senior Management the HR Director had ‘poured scorn’ on much of the Programme, by linking it to ISO 9000, the implication was that those in charge did not know what they were doing. He returned to his seat like ‘a cat that had been at the cream’, his authority and expertise intact, and his domain untouched. The TQ Manager stood to give an account of what he had been doing and did so without enthusiasm and seemingly sapped of all energy. His presentation was lacklustre and comprised of a series of statistics, estimable in themselves but now without impact.

Whether the HR Director intended his commentary as a deliberate act of sabotage would be impossible to ascertain, but the impact was shocking. His lack of engagement and disinterest had been noted throughout but this was the first overt interference with the programme. Lines (2005) points out that employees who possess a strong, negative attitude toward change, are more likely to resist, oppose, scorn, undermine and attempt to sabotage the change initiative, but to have a senior, powerful member of the executive to act in this way was quite unexpected. Successful organizational change depends on managers generating employee support and enthusiasm for the proposed change initiative (Elias, 2009; Piderit, 2000). If the senior manager with functional responsibility for people was openly demonstrating disdain for the programme then the person with responsibility for

bringing about change - the TQ Manager, needs to be hugely effective in over-turning such negativity.

In the early part of 1995 the TQ Manager was to lose his main supporter at Board Level. The resignation of the Chief Accountant was to serve yet another blow to the increasingly frustrated TQ Manager. As one of the oldest serving members of the senior management team, and a leading protagonist of Total Quality from its earliest inception at TRC, the Chief Accountant had played an invaluable part in the successes of the Programme and in supporting the TQ Manager. His had been a sympathetic and powerful voice at Board level, and his influence was to be sadly missed. Unlike the previous Managing Director, who had become the Group Managing Director, and therefore still an influencing presence, the Chief Accountant left the Company completely.

His contribution to the Programme had also been recognised and acknowledged at other levels, particularly with the operatives and supervisory levels. He was unusual amongst his senior management colleagues in as much as he was known to the shop-floor. The only other senior manager to gain personal recognition was the Manufacturing Director who achieved almost mythical status - an image he was careful not to disabuse and a personal strategy he was keen pursue.

The isolation of the TQ Manager was to be completed by the resignation of the consultant who had maintained constructive communication sessions with him. Before leaving TRC he gave an account of his views on how the Company had progressed. He had been involved since 1991 and reviewed the success around the three objectives of customer focus, challenging over-wasteful working and developing a working environment where everyone feels able to challenge what they do and in so doing all contribute to the company's success.

He believed that the TQ banner had contributed at least in part to the improvement in the company's performance. In particular, he identified the annual objective setting and review process; the fact that the company had become increasingly more measured; the introduction of a new management structure to control improvement activities; project teams which had been set up to tackle large and small issues; the initiation of the review of the management of key processes; and the attempt to improve communications.

His praise was not, however, fulsome. He commented on how the business success had been counter-productive to Total Quality. He noted how some people still questioned why there was a need to change when the Company was successful. He had observed how many people still regarded the TQ programme as a project-based programme and that they did not see TQ as being integral to their everyday activities. Most serious of all was his observation that the philosophy of Total Quality was not yet ingrained into the organisational culture and that too many employees were still to see an impact of TQ on their working environment.

Whilst his comments were an attempt to stimulate interest, they did little to help counter the over-used sense of criticism to which the HRM Director had alluded. He presented his belief that the principles of TQ could not be compromised and that if the Company was to be successful then it needed to embrace positively changes relating to improving customer service, changes in the way work was undertaken with a quicker move towards cell working, and changes to the way that people are managed, particularly the way they are developed and encouraged to participate. In essence, more of what had been introduced right at the beginning of the programme.

To those who understood TQ and what it attempted to achieve, the message was one of hope and encouragement, that the process was ongoing and evolving. To those who had yet to discover the programme and experience its impact, the message was damning, had nothing been achieved? Had they been doing it wrong all along? There were now all sorts of conflicting messages being circulated and the TQ Manager found himself experiencing more barriers to the easy passage of the introduction of a programme to which he was passionately committed.

In April 1995, the TQ Manager published the results of the first of two communication surveys he was to conduct. This was to establish the viability of the TQ Magazine - 'Feedback'- which was sent to all employees. 328 employees returned their questionnaires which had asked 4 questions. 15% of respondents said that they rarely or never read the magazine and 34% said that they sometimes read it. Significantly, half the respondents said that they always read the magazine. It would also appear to be in a very acceptable format, with the majority of respondents commenting favourably about how well it informed them about TQ activities, about conveying what TQ is and its content and style.

However, as the magazine was provided for all employees, a 20% response may not give an adequate sample on which to draw satisfactory conclusions. Given the aims and objectives of Total Quality it was suggested that an inability to generate only a 20% response was a contra-indicator of the success of the programme. As the communication process and organisational change implementation are inextricably linked processes (Lewis, 2000) the results were indicating another barrier to success. At TRC the organisational change was about TQM and incorporated how to change the individual tasks and behaviours of individual employees. Such change requires communication about the change, and information to these employees is vital. Communication with these employees should be an important, and integrative part of the change efforts and strategies (Elving, 2005) and yet in 1995, four years after the start of the programme, there were clear contra-indicators about the effectiveness of those communication strategies.

Suggestions and comments made by several people included that the magazine should not be issued to every employee but posted on notice-boards; that it be scrapped altogether; that it be merged with the general paper 'InSite'; that it give details of all current projects; and that it re-state periodically the basic principles of Total Quality. It was also suggested that 'failures' should also be reported. Whilst, successes were always good to read but, as employees were aware of failures it seemed as though the TQ Manager was not - or that he had something to hide.

In view of the responses, it was decided that the basic principles of TQ would be restated from time to time, with an emphasis being given to its benefits, advantages and costs. Given the original objectives of 'Feedback', it would not be appropriate to merge the magazine with 'Insite' for a while, largely because the point of 'Feedback' was to communicate on TQ activities and that by retaining it as a separate publication, would be the most effective means of communicating in depth the activities devolving from the Four Year Plan and the Core Objectives. The request for re-stating the basic principles of TQM would suggest that the story of TQM had been at best diluted and at worst lost. Many theorists agree that corporate storytelling is a valuable approach for enabling culture permeation into an organisation and the TQ Programme of change was clearly related to culture change (Gill, 2011, Denning, 2005, 2006; Dowling, 2006; Kaye, 1995; Boje, 1991, 2008;

Prusak, 2001) but without engagement with the story, action seems likely to be compromised.

After review, it was considered that the communication systems were not developed well enough to stop the distribution of the magazine to all employees, that until such time that the TQ Manager was certain that people were actively seeking out information, it would be better to push information at them. However, the establishment of a local newsletter was to be encouraged and that it should be written, published and circulated by shop floor employees. It was thought that the local newsletter would create more interest in, and ownership of, what was going on locally.

It was agreed that the Company should report failures - providing that the information was also available on what had been done to put them right. This was, in practice, a much more difficult decision than was first thought. The problem stemmed from what actually constituted a 'failure' and then how accountability was publicised. Whilst in principle there was no objection to the reporting of projects that had not been successful, the implications of the epithet 'failure' on both the project and the team needed very careful consideration. Furthermore, there were the issues surrounding the ethos of Total Quality which entailed that the honest appraisal of lack of success was, in itself, a success; and the ensuing problem of whether the approach or the standards were at fault. Once standards were challenged, it was felt that the credibility of those setting the standards could be queried.

Clearly the request for *Total Quality sack-cloth and ashes* was not one that could be treated lightly. If there was difficulty in developing a meaningful story within the key group responsible for communications, including the TQ Manager, then there were going to be major obstacles lower down the organization. Junior managers and direct supervisors are looked to as the primary sources of information for employees (Bosley et al., 2007; van Vuuren et al., 2007). Ambiguous information and abstract communication are problematic at this level, as this is the place where strategies are subject to group and individual sensemaking and have to be turned into actions (van Vuuren and Elving, 2008).

When asked what he considered to be the successes of the TQ Programme the TQ Manager identified the following as being all, or in part, attributable to Total Quality:

- the product range had been reduced from 183 to 102 basic types, with negligible customer reaction;
- the after-sales service had become more efficient with average assessment time being reduced from six to four weeks. However, there was still a long way to go with this project as customers wanted 5 - 10 days;
- the profitability of the service had changed from a deficit of £180K in 1991 to £40K in 1994;
- defect costs had been reduced over the previous 12 months by £112K in one section and £28K in the other;
- some lead-times had been reduced and maintained and there had been a contribution of £300K worth of additional business from one product range because of this reduction; and
- several functional projects had resulted in the cost savings of a further £58K and other projects had been successful but their success was hard to quantify.

When asked to comment on what he had learned from the experience, he identified the following as being important considerations for the evaluation of why things had not been as successful as he had hoped:

- peaks and troughs in order in-take together with an unpredicted product mix .had meant that they had not been successful in sustaining the lead-time reductions and improving delivery performance;
- from a Company point of view, they were taking too long to complete activities, implement recommendations and measure the benefits. His personal view was that this was because of limited commitment, conflicting priorities, inadequate resourcing and a general lack of progress being made;
- TQ was still being seen as separate from the day to day operations;
- that despite a commitment to customer and supplier liaison (internally and externally) some projects had failed simply because the people concerned had not involved those to whom the product was going or who supplied the materials. As such interdepartmental conflict or mistrust had emerged when this should have been eradicated;
- Other failures had occurred when there had been a lack of understanding and a general unwillingness to listen and try out new ideas. It had also been unrealistic to simply expect people to take on responsibility for things when they had never been required to do so before;
- performance measures were a cause for concern in as much as there had been difficulty in establishing ways of quantifying improvements with everything that was being done; and

- many people had still not accepted the need for change, and saw Total Quality in terms of projects rather than seeing it in terms of every aspect of work.

Despite such a catalogue of underachievement the TQ Manager remained optimistic that there was a slow but sure awareness of the scope and potential benefits of Total Quality. Were the signs apparent that the TQ Manager was becoming delusional and that the story as presented as a unitary, authentic narrative was illusionary, as suggested by Buchanan (2003:7)?

It was clear from the Managing Director however, that Total Quality had to be applied to the three key issues in the business plan and that the TQ Programme would focus on the reduction in development lead-times so that they could offer a complete range of numerical products when required by the customers. He insisted that they must reduce the product lead-times so that they could secure market share and increase and achieve overall sales growth. He informed the employees through 'Feedback' that TQ would provide the means to achieve the essential reduction in material and service costs to enable the Company to offer competitive prices. There appeared to be a difference in expectations where, on the one hand the TQ Manager was aware of how slowly the approach was being adopted; and on the other, the Managing Director was insisting that it be implemented, that its application was the way to achieve organisational success. Once again it seemed that the TQ Manager was unable or unwilling to challenge the MD's expectations.

During the year further concerns were raised regarding communications not being as effective as they could be. Several project managers drew the TQ Manager's attention to the lack of information passing upwards through the system. There was a general feeling that people were not willing to discuss and share their ideas and that a different mechanism was needed to encourage people to participate. There was also a view that unless people were actually a part of a project team, they were not aware of what projects were ongoing let alone how they were going on.

A small survey confirmed the view that despite the wealth of information available to employees through the various communication routes, particularly 'Feedback', there was not much being generated by the employees themselves and passed upwards through the structure. There was also confirmation of the concern that everyone was

not aware of what was going on even in their own sections. What was also becoming apparent was that much of the information being passed through the organisation was stemming from the TQ Manager as he attempted to keep people informed through the formal TQ documentation. Improving internal communications became a significant project for which the TQ Manager found himself as co-ordinator of a Quality Improvement Team.

Throughout the rest of the year individual Quality Improvement Teams continued to address issues on a project basis, and their achievements were reported through local bulletins and Feedback to the workforce in general. The tendency was still to report success with the emphasis on 'what' was done rather than 'how' it was achievable. Although each report had copious references to how well the team had worked together, and how important this had been, there were no reflections on how the team had been established and maintained, so there was nothing about the actual lived experiences of team members of change in action (Buchanan and Badham, 1999).

In the Spring of 1996, the TQ Manager reported by a special information sheet to the whole workforce, the outcomes of a review entitled 'Protecting Our Future' which involved all the Senior Management Team and the three core project managers. The review took place over a day and was co-ordinated by the TQ Manager and the Customer Services Officer. The event sought to establish three key points, where the Company was, where it wanted to be in the future and, how to get there.

It achieved this through an evaluation of the three core projects to establish their current position, and then to consider the three core projects in terms of the four-year business plan and overall parent company directives and objectives. This evaluation was presented as the objective for the year 2000. It was refined into overall TRC short-term objectives, which were then considered in terms of co-ordinated Functional Steering Group objectives, support requirements and recommended ways of achieving success.

The review of the current position established that with regard to the three core projects, progress had been made, but the statements of improvement were so generalised or technically specific, that they were not very informative to many employees who were not directly involved in any of the projects. This was a source

of irritation to the TQ Manager who had continually 'preached' the message of everyone being involved and this was reflected in his opinions about what were the 'current problems'.

If the statements describing achievements were unclear, there was considerably more specificity with regard to the underlying problems of: lack of conviction of the need to change or the need to do better; the tendency to use the same people in the various projects and the need to involve a wider range of employees throughout the company; and the need for everyone to accept their role in reducing costs and finding better ways of doing things.

In establishing where TRC wanted to be in the year 2000, there was a general commitment to the intention to grow and this would be achieved through the successful achievement of the three core projects. This was accompanied by a restatement of the Managing Director's statement of 'musts' which had appeared twelve months earlier.

The third part of the communiqué addressed what was needed by the end of 1996 and gave more specific, on-going, details about how development lead-times were to be reduced. Part of the process was to continue the re-structuring of the organisation to incorporate more 'cells' in the manufacturing process and to introduce matrix management to "progress developments through every function in the most effective and efficient manner". The matrix was to create a lattice of Functional Directors and Project Directors with respective managers reporting to the Directors and responsible for resident functional personnel and full-time project personnel - seconded to a project for its duration from the functions.

However, in explaining how the objectives were to be achieved, the TQ Manager gave details of the Functional Steering Group Chairmen, who were all members of the Senior Management Team, all of whom had control of all resources in their respective functions, and each being required to steer, plan and co-ordinate the work of the projects as they progressed. He explained that:

"they will need to meet regularly to ensure everyone understands and can be committed to the changes required; prioritise support activities in consultation with the project managers; and formulate co-ordinated plans to address product support and cost reductions."

To have both structures explained in the same communiqué was confusing and gave an indication as to how disassociated the TQ Manager was becoming with both the Senior Management Team and the process itself.

The communiqué finished with an emphatic statement about moving into “a more radical change mode” requiring the need for everyone to change. There was a need for “sustained team-working” which was now becoming “imperative” and more and more people needed to become more directly involved. The final statement threw out the challenge of team-working and, in an attempt to jolt people into action declared:

“Our future is at stake”

Despite the attempt to be informative and give the impression of the programme sustaining its momentum and creativity, there was little that dispelled the impression that it was ‘more of the same’ and that the TQ Manager was becoming both more ‘desperate’ in his attempts to get things happening and more remote from the Senior Management Team. It was clear from his discussions that he was now experiencing both disenchantment with what he was doing, but elation with what he was managing to achieve, in spite of the lack of support from his superiors. That the TQ Manager was becoming more dogmatic and obdurate in his messages suggests further concerns with his capability to lead the change effectively. Howell and Higgins (1990) found that change champions use transformational leadership behaviours, exhibiting higher levels of risk taking, innovativeness and use a variety of influence tactics, which were not apparent in his communication.

Later in the Spring of 1996 the TQ Manager informed the workforce of the ‘Quality in Daily Work’ programme which was styled to replace the dependency on Quality Improvement Teams and overcome the difficulties in co-ordinating changes due to functional boundaries. Multi-functional teams were proving to be useful and more needed to be set up. There was also the recognition that there had been only limited involvement of the workforce, people had been ‘left out’ and the communication channels which had emerged to keep people informed did just, and only that.

Quality in Daily Life was designed to address the need to have everyone committed to tackling improvements in their own job or section. The Steering Groups structure was to be replaced with Departmental Heads taking on the responsibility for direction and guidance of improvement projects. Similar training provision was made available

to support the activities and included new modules of 'telephone skills', 'communication', work/action planning' and, 'performance measurement'.

The purpose of the new approach was to gain everyone's commitment and involvement in setting performance objectives, measuring and communicating performance levels and challenging the way that work was being done. The expectation was that more personal involvement, taking up personal responsibility for work and having a sense of ownership in the jobs being performed, would create greater self-motivation and an increased sense of pride in what people did.

For the TQ Manager, the key to gaining greater commitment lay with improving the still ineffective communications approaches. It was clear that people did not talk enough to each other, that effective investigative dialogue was missing, that there was a lack of sharing of ideas and concerns which led to a lack of understanding. Although there were sectional meetings in some areas, notably in Instruments, it was time to implement an organisation-wide communication programme.

The TQ Manager decided that it was the appropriate time to invite the Industrial Society into the Company. There had been agreement in January 1995 to introducing Team Briefing when his investigations, both internally and having read their research on best communication practices in organisations, had convinced him that Team Briefing would complement the TQ Programme. In April 1996 the Industrial Society was invited to facilitate a training programme that would provide the Senior Management Team and Departmental Heads with the skills with which to undertake Team Briefing. The TQ Manager was particularly pleased having attempted to get Team Briefing into the Company for several years. The involvement of the Industrial Society also served to boost his morale. There was also a clear indication that the involvement of an external change-agent would provide credibility for what was being introduced and, through the process of association, give his own position a boost.

As with the TQ Programme, Team Briefing was to be introduced on an incremental basis with one department in each section to host a Briefing Pilot for three months. Everyone was informed that the pilot was going to take place and that if it proved to be successful, then Team Briefing would be cascaded throughout the organisation.

During the pilot study the Departmental Heads would conduct the Briefings with the Charge-hands in attendance. However, once the system was running properly, then the Charge-hands would take on responsibility for conducting the Briefing to the shop-floor workers. The Briefings were to be generated at Senior Management meetings with the intention that this information should reach all employees. The critical point was the interface between the shop-floor and the management cadre, and the role of the Charge-hands was to become crucial. The Briefings were to be cascaded down the organisation, but would become more localised with the addition of pertinent information. The basic principle was one of core and general information which was augmented with specific local details.

Whilst the TQ Manager was elated by the introduction of Team Briefings, this was simply another approach to replace a failing approach. The problem was that there were now multiple management responses to the issues of ineffective communications. Competing strategies create countervailing fluctuations of power and politics and encourage rivalry between groups and individuals (Thornton 2004). Despite the TQ Manager's beliefs in the application of Team Briefings there was no guarantee of take-up and commitment to the new approach and it is not clear how the existence of multiple and competing strategies help establish stability for actors and the work they accomplish in their day-to-day activities (Reay and Hinings 2009).

The TQ Manager was aware of two very distinct cultures having emerged within TRC, one which reflected employee involvement and co-operation which existed in the Instruments section; and the expert/tell culture which was typified in Relays, essentially reflecting the difference in ideologies underpinning 'soft' and 'hard' approaches to TQM. The TQ Manager felt that if Team Briefing was to achieve any general acceptance, then it must have the best opportunity to demonstrate its benefits and advantages. He was also very aware that, as with TQM, it needed senior management support and commitment and he was heartened when the senior management team had requested training in Team Briefing.

Reflecting on Employee Involvement (E.I) approaches in the 1990s, Ackers et al., (1992:272) suggest that there were four important aspects of the new approaches to EI. The associated techniques could be found either alone or in various combinations. First, they explained representative forums, like joint consultation.

Second, and more at the time, novel, are the various types of direct communications, like team briefing, employee financial reports, videos, papers, news-sheets, which mainly transmit information downwards to the individual employee. Third, are problem-solving groups reflecting the Japanese approaches to EI, which ranged from 'add-on' techniques, like quality circles, to more endemic programmes of 'cultural change', like total quality management (TQM) and forms of structural EI which often involved a shift to team working and major job redesign. Finally, there are forms of financial participation, such as share, profit and bonus schemes.

TRC operated three of these although joint representation was marginal, but the communications approaches and the cultural change driven by TQM was at the heart of what was being presented. As Ackers et al., (2004) identify, this new approach to participation was management driven and directed at individual employees and directed at impact on the bottom-line. However, because of the emphasis on communications that was being given to TQM at TRC, the rhetoric was essentially 'soft' and people driven. It would seem that the TQ Manager was 'on trend' but unable to implement the chosen communication techniques effectively. However, as Marchington et al., (1994) point out, EI is as much affected by the prevailing organizational culture and environment as it is a source of change and perhaps this is where the barriers to successful implementation were generated.

Following the training done by the Industrial Society for the senior management groups, the TQ Manager and a colleague from Training took on the responsibility for training the Supervisors. The training programme itself was one-day programme. The Charge-hands were to be trained during the pilot study so that they were both experiencing Team Briefings and developing the skills at the same time. It was decided that the group size was to be fifteen and the meetings were to be called *Information Exchange Meetings*. The intention was not simply to inform those lower down the hierarchy about what was happening, but to encourage people to both share their opinions and views about what they were experiencing and to encourage questions which would need more senior managers to respond to the demands of the shop-floor. The pilot was to be introduced in January 1997, two years after the initial agreement to introduce Team Briefing, two years throughout which internal communications were a constant source of concern and nine months after initial training had been conducted.

In September 1996, the TQ Manager announced his intention to take early retirement in six months time. In a frank disclosure he expressed both his disillusionment and despondency. In his opinion, TRC was “still not doing it right”. He believed that had the Company encompassed TQM properly, then there would be no need for his role. He talked of the ‘real need’ for people to listen and of the frustration he felt with a workforce which, despite warnings from the Senior Management that orders were being lost and a general feeling that things were taking a turn for the worse, was still complacent.

He advocated ‘radical change’ with a concentration on changing the structure. He wanted to see the financial management structure broken down and the establishment of Business Improvement Departments which cut across functions and which had authority at that level, and the establishment of SBUs. He did not believe that the matrix structure was working, and that it had generated some dissent with people questioning the need to do it and expressing confusion with regard to who would appraise their work and contribution.

In considering what was working well, he considered that ‘Cell’ manufacturing was proving to be advantageous with workers becoming more flexible and aware of what they were doing and why, and the integration of Instruments into Relays was helping to flatten the structure - although the senior management were still perceived as being remote. One major improvement had been achieved after the ‘accelerated early-retirement’ of one of the most influential and disruptive of the production managers, a man who was totally committed to Quality but whose views on TQM were in no way congruent with those of the TQ Manager, or, in fact, with anyone else’s within TRC.

The TQ Manager’s most emphatic comments of frustration were reserved for members of the Senior Management Team, and received full support from the Customer Services Officer. He described the inconsistency of the Managing Director who expressed support for the TQ Manager’s initiatives and then declared there were higher priorities. He described the Managing Director as an autocrat and of having a ‘negative mythology from over-running his present actions’, the HR Director was ‘out on a limb’, and his own Director as ‘causing others to switch off when he

spoke', of not being forceful enough in areas where improvements were needed and of not having a 'high standing in the management team.

The description of the Senior Management Team as a 'team' was considered by both the TQ Manager and the Customer Services Officer as a 'joke'. The power lay with the Managing Director and his acolytes from the Sales and Marketing Functions, and a new member in the new post of Strategic Projects Manager. There was no evidence of 'team-working' at this level and the opinion was that this was perceived throughout TRC.

At this time, the TQ Manager was at a very 'low ebb'. He talked of the TQ Programme in very negative terms believing that the initial introduction was done wrongly with people not receiving enough training in the basics of what was being introduced. He felt that 'they' had not been thorough in terms of getting the message across about what they were trying to achieve and that everyone was aware of this fundamental error. His perception was that TQ was still perceived as being down to him and that if anything went wrong it was the fault of the TQ principles. He spoke of the tendency of people at all levels to say 'well we tried it and it doesn't work' and to him this merely confirmed that there was a lack of fundamental commitment and ownership. It was for this reason that he had decided to take early retirement.

Despite his sense of failure, he did not blame himself for what had not been achieved. He reserved blame for the Senior Management Team, in particular the HR Director, whose lack of involvement was no longer excused by the 'enormous workload' which he was said to have to undertake. Bovey and Hede (2001) offer a useful exploration of irrational ideas that impact on the decision to resist acceptance of responsibility for change, such as blaming others, needing approval, fearing failure, feeling miserable and depressed, not feeling in control of one's destiny, a preoccupation with anxiety, avoiding life's difficulties, being influenced by personal history, not accepting reality, and passive and inert existence; any combination of which they suggest likely to lead to change resistance. What the TQ Manager is demonstrating more often as the story develops is an inability to accept his role in the lack of success of the TQ Programme and resisting his need to change.

Furthermore, his own sense of frustration had turned to resentment and games-playing. He was certainly not prepared to sabotage any of the work that had been

achieved, but he did want the Senior Management to be made aware of just how they were perceived by the workforce in general and the damage that had been done through their lack of involvement. To this end he commissioned an Employee Attitude Survey to be developed with the intention that it be reported at the next annual review to be held in November. Rabin (1993) explains this need to 'get back' at the Senior Management through his exploration of fairness in game theory and how individuals will rationalise bad behaviour through mutuality whereby, bad behaviour is considered fair when someone has been mean towards the individual. In the situation with the TQ Manager, his anger towards the senior management team stemmed from their lack of support for his attempts to implement TQM but also the lack of regard for his loyalty.

The survey was submitted to him in early October after several discussions with both him and his assistant. His strategy was to talk to his own Director and gain his support, which he did not believe would pose any problems, and to then get the Quality and MIS Director to gain the support of the rest of the Board. His advice to the Director was for them to have a good discussion about the Survey prior to involving the rest of the Board. It was advice that the Quality and MIS Director chose to ignore. The original plan had been for the report to be given at the end of November, but by the beginning of the month there had been no communication from the TQ Manager with the designer of the survey. When contact was established, the reason for the delay had been due to the lack of any meeting having taken place between the TQ Manager and his Director.

When a meeting was finally convened it did not go according to the TQ Manager's expectations and intentions. The Quality and MIS Director had chosen to present the proposed survey to the Board without any discussions with the TQ Manager. It had not been received with enthusiasm and the decision was taken to not allow the TQ Manager to implement the survey. He interpreted this decision in terms of the Senior Management Team being fearful of what the survey would reveal and arrogant for thinking it unnecessary. The reason given for the decision not to implement the survey was that over the next six months some very 'difficult decisions' were going to have to be made and that the time was 'not appropriate'. This had no credibility with the TQ Manager, with some justification, after the real reason emerged during a discussion with the MIS and Quality Director.

A meeting had been arranged ostensibly to discuss the attitude survey and how it might be resurrected. The MIS and Quality Director had an alternative agenda. The TQ Manager was not present at the meeting. The discussion commenced with the Director giving a brief over-view of what had been achieved and what was needed. Cell-manufacturing was identified as a partial success in relation to the more modern products on which there had been a significant impact on lead times. The process had now started to spread to other products.

With regard to the product development lead-times, these had been re-defined and people were going to have to change to the new process if the targets were to be achieved. In relation to the core project on material and service costs, he described the process of cost reductions as having, "pared cost like peeling an onion" and there was now the need for people to review what they should not be doing and change accordingly. However, the costs were based on the cost of labour and at TRC the cost figures were skewed in favour of the old products which were comparatively labour intensive. There was a greater need for the Company to review its policy on obsolescence and to re-organise its range.

This seemed very much like a restatement of everything that was known already, but then the purpose of this descriptive discourse became clear. The Director began to introduce the need to re-examine the whole process through which the core projects were being managed and that there was a need for someone to work alongside departmental managers to facilitate change. He saw this role as being subtly different from the one being undertaken by the TQ Manager. It was obvious that the decision about replacing the TQ Manager had been taken and that the role had been re-defined. Furthermore, whether or not the TQ Manager had been involved in the decision process, he was not aware of the outcome.

The person who was going to oversee the TQ Programme was to be a former employee who had enjoyed a fairly successful career with TRC before selling everything and donating both his time and money to environmental charities. He had recently been engaged on a part-time consultancy basis by the Group Managing Director on Group Integration. He had made a positive impression at that level. He had made it known that he would like to take on more part-time work within the Company. He was described by the Director as:

“A free thinker, very creative, who understands the business, is keenly interested in people and wants to see them develop”.

By implication the TQ Manager was viewed as being not strong in these areas. By not inviting the TQ Manager to the meeting the Quality and MIS Director had essentially made it clear that the TQ Manager had no locus in the leadership of the TQ Programme anymore. The TQ Co-ordinator Designate was *the new face* of the Programme was considered to be the ideal replacement for the retiring TQ Manager and discussions had been underway about what he thought should be the direction for the Company and TQ for some time. The MIS and Quality Director was clearly impressed with the proposals and had invited the TQ ‘Co-ordinator’ Designate to attend the Management Review meeting the following afternoon. Interestingly, and significantly, the TQ Manager and the three core project leaders were to make their presentations to the Meeting in the morning and the TQ Manager was not aware of his replacement’s involvement in the Management Review.

It was apparent that the TQ Manager was being ‘eased out’ and that his sphere of influence severely curtailed. The Attitude Survey would have kept him very much ‘in the frame’ with a significant data-base with which to make judgements and recommendations. The new Co-ordinator, in his part-time capacity - *which he may choose to extend hours-wise should he be interested* - was to be given a ‘clean sheet’ and had already persuaded the MIS and Quality Director of how he believed the Programme should develop.

The Director then explained how the TQ Manager had been in two minds about whether or not he should be replaced, finally proposing that there should be someone to continue his work on a full-time basis. He shared his view that the TQ Manager had approached the job from two points; firstly from expressing empowerment, but in reality had wanted authority, and secondly, to agree process change but demanded structure change. This was the first clear indication that the Director had lost regard for his TQ Manager and had formed an alliance with someone with whom he felt a greater empathy. He took care to point out that if the ‘new’ proposals were introduced then there would be cross-functional support with Departmental Heads controlling the processes and the Management Team acting as

mentors. The Functional Steering Groups would be replaced with Process Steering Groups.

The Quality and MIS Director then went on to outline how involved with the re-designed programme the TQ Co-ordinator Designate had already become. He explained that the TQ Co-ordinator Designate had looked at the Product Lead Time project and had recommended that there was a need to move from a functional emphasis to one focusing on process. He had observed that there was a need to have everyone 'on board' and operating differently. He had been given the opportunity to talk to all the managers on the Senior Management Team and introduce his ideas. Although there had been a less than positive reaction from the Technical Director and the Strategic Projects Manager, no other Director expressed any objections and the HR Director said that for him there was no issue in what was being proposed.

He believed that the TQ Manager's frustration stemmed from him being unable to get people to take ownership of the projects that they had recommended. His view was that people were interested in identifying the project but did not want to be involved in the project itself. He had observed that the projects were being 'hi-jacked' by people not taking on the overall process, but only taking on those aspects that they liked and disregarding the rest.

The Director had spoken to the core project managers and they were expressing their own frustrations. The Leader of the Product Lead-time project was 'burnt-out' and wanted a change. Both he and the leader of the Development Lead-Time project wanted to return to functional roles having found it very difficult to operate outside of the functional structure. Unfortunately, there was now a problem in terms of career development within the flatter structure and there was no functional role to which they could be assigned which would reflect the contribution that they had made.

He was aware that the TQ Manager's frustration with the job had grown over the previous two years. He attributed the reason to unfulfilled expectations to the TQ Manager's inability to persuade those both above and below to act differently, and his almost militaristic expectation that if you initiate something then it will happen. He believed that the TQ Manager got most of his job satisfaction from the training aspects of his role. He explained that:

“The TQ Manager has a passion for an idea, but, when it comes to talking to the senior management team his passion goes and his demeanour changes. His feeling of responsibility is great, but then he represses his feelings. I’m not saying that he was wrong for the job, at the time he was right, but when the Consultancy withdrew the TQ Manager lost his confidence. He was unable to get people to want to get on board. He felt that he should have the authority to insist that things are done in a particular way. The TQ Manager is a perfectionist and he has become frustrated with especially those people above him in the structure”.

This provided the clear indication that the retirement of the TQ Manager would not be a cause for concern. On the contrary, the implication was that the TQ Manager had failed himself.

The TQ Co-ordinator Designate then joined the meeting, was introduced in the context of the proposals he had made, and was invited to share his ideas and observations. Interestingly, he chose to start by discussing the role of the HR Director and the contribution that he had made to developing the approach to TQM. He identified immediately one of the preferred strategies of the HR Director, that of giving clear statements about why things did not work but also being reticent about providing anything positive in its place.

The TQ Co-ordinator Designate proceeded to identify some critical issues such as: the fact that the Company was going to be employing a lot less people in the future and that there was no HR Plan for this; one of the core projects had identified a need to evaluate the payment system, whilst the HR Director responded to the projects team, he missed the Company Steering Group meeting which had the item on the agenda. When the CSG identified pay as needing a special review the HR Director, on his return, responded in a very vocal manner but still did not provide any resources to the project.

The HR Director was seen as being reactive and not pre-emptive. Despite all projects having a significant HR element, which the HR Director recognised, he would not apply resources to meet those needs. He was perceived as being protected by the image of having a large number of responsibilities, many of which require him to be away from the Company. However, the TQ Co-ordinator Designate

did point out that there was an imminent appointment of a deputy to the HR Director who would be on site and able to respond to enquiry and demands.

To emphasise the HR Director's reluctance to get involved the TQ Co-ordinator Designate described how in another of the core projects, the HR Director had been approached by the project leader and asked if there were any initiatives he would wish to instigate with regard to the anomalous piece-work system. He declined and was prepared to push the problem aside. However, as cell-manufacturing has become more significant the issues surrounding the piece-work system have become more pronounced. Two things have happened, firstly the line managers have been asked to develop possible strategies and not leave the lead to HR; and secondly, because the unions have become interested and have payment systems on their agenda, the HR Director has become much more animated and responsive. The HR Director was once again able to engage with the trades unions on a clear agenda of industrial relations rather than the contestable notions of autonomy, discretion and self and social control as exemplified by the rhetoric of soft TQM (Edwards et al., 2002; Edwards, 1986; Gallie et al., 1998, Grint, 1997) something with which the HR Director had demonstrated little sympathy.

The TQ Co-ordinator Designate then described his observations regarding the distinct cultures that had evolved within the Company relating to Instruments and Relays, where the former had practised employee involvement and the latter reflected an expert culture. Whilst in the latter there was some evidence that things were changing and involvement was being encouraged, there was still the tendency to have the line-managers running the assemblies, whereas the objective was to push the responsibility to the charge-hands.

One of the problems was that in the Relay areas there was still scepticism from the shop-floor workers about the manager's statements about the need to change. The viewpoint was that change was merely a tactical ploy to get the workers to do more. This perception was enhanced by the lack of visibility by the senior managers on the shop-floor, they were still not walking the areas and were perceived as being remote, not accessible, unaware of what was going on with the changes they had suggested, and without an adequate review system at the front line.

In responding to the observation that senior managers walking the areas had been an issue throughout the TQ Programme, with only one exception, the TQ Co-ordinator Designate pointed out that it appeared that the senior managers were unable to take the initiative, that they appeared to need someone to construct a mechanism through which 'walking about' could be instigated. The senior managers appeared to have a problem with the simple act of facing the workforce without a formal purpose, they preferred to hide behind their paper-work and that isolation was difficult to deal with.

The MIS and Quality Director agreed pointing out that they could not walk about 'aimlessly' that such an activity would need to be 'structured'. In their defence he suggested that the opportunity to talk to people was 'very satisfying' but the discussions always seemed to be 'problem-centred and, therefore, negative'. The response to this point of view was that whilst the senior managers could rationalise their own behaviour, the charge hands and foremen did not have the confidence in their own competence to deliver what was being demanded of them and that information was being held by managers at all levels and still not being shared properly.

The MIS and Quality Director chose not to respond, a tactic which he applied on many occasions when controversial and contrary observations or strategies were introduced. The TQ Co-ordinator Designate attempted to goad him into a reaction by sharing his worry that the integration of Instruments into Relays would affect to the detriment all the work that had been done in Instruments to generate involvement. He felt that the credibility of what had been achieved and the confidence that those involved had developed would begin to diminish because of the countervailing culture of Relays. The MIS and Quality Director stated his disagreement, with no elaboration. The subject was closed.

It was also clear that the subject of the Attitude Survey was equally 'closed'. At no point in the meeting did the Director attempt to raise the subject of the Survey, offer any explanation as to the Company's intentions or opinion. When asked what was to happen with the survey, it was dismissed as something which was no longer relevant, the TQ Manager was going and some-else with different ideas was going to take over. The TQ Co-ordinator Designate was then invited to share his vision as to

how the TQ Programme should be continued, which was to be the point of his presentation to the Board the following afternoon.

The proposals that were to be the centre of the TQ Co-ordinator Designate's presentation, and which had the unconditional support of the MIS and Quality Director, suggested a core-project structure that reflected 'Design', 'Income' and 'Infrastructure'. His proposal was to have one group of projects which would focus on Business Development and Product Creation, one group on Order Winning and Completion and, a third group focusing on Services. Integral to the three core-project areas would be the four messages of Price, Quality, Delivery and Relationships with a critical examination of the processes that underpinned the way that things were being done and redesigning those processes in the pursuit of efficiency and corporate advantage. Rather than TQM, he was advocating Business Process Re-engineering, the latest approach to steal the attention of contemporary organizations at that time (Zairi and Sinclair, 1995).

His main criticism of the previous approach was that it had focused on Production and that it had never provided the infrastructure to have a fully cross-functional strategy. It was apparent that the TQ Manager was unaware of these proposals and had not been party to any discussions with regard to their development, although the existing core-project managers had shared ideas with the TQ Co-ordinator Designate. Such was the detail and depth of the analysis that the TQ Co-ordinator Designate presented, there could be no other explanation than him having considerable access to key people within the management levels and that this had occurred over a number of weeks. The TQ Manager was completely unaware of this development and this suggests that the involvement of his replacement was subject to secrecy.

What is interesting about the actions of the Quality and MIS Director is the political strategy that was used to marginalise the TQ Manager. Buchanan and Badham (2008) give considerable impetus to the need to engage with power and politics in organizational change recognizing that politics especially, had been skirted around, particularly in the managerialist led literature. They posited that political behaviour is far more significant than was generally admitted, that political behaviour and activity could bring positive outcomes and not just negative ones as was generally

considered and that political behaviour should be actively incorporated into management and leadership development. They went further to discuss the political behaviour of change agents at work suggesting five specific areas of political behaviour. Firstly, that political behaviour of change agents is a pervasive dimension of the role. Secondly change agents present both a considered and creative approach to their role. Thirdly, some aspects of the work of change agents can be seen as objectionable but such behaviour is rationalised in the context in which they are operating. Fourthly, political behaviour is a consequence of the combination of organizational circumstances. Fifthly, change agents pursue and defend organizational goals as well as personal and career goals through political actions. In the situation of the TQ Manager, and in the mind of the Quality and MIS Director, the TQ Manager had effectively been fired, but the Director and the TQ Co-ordinator Designate had established a working relationship, the aim of which was to ensconce the TQ Co-ordinator Designate in position. The best way to do this was through assassination and the analyses of the TQ Programme and the TQ Manager somewhat effectively assassinated his character both professionally and personally.

Following the presentation the next day by the TQ Manager and the three core-project managers, the TQ Manager was ecstatic. He was delighted to have presented their proposals to the Board based on the need to have the Functional Steering Group structure broken up into multi-functional process teams and to have had this proposal accepted 'in full'.

Furthermore, he was particularly pleased with the way the presentation had demonstrated how the four people had worked as a team and the recognition by the Senior Management Team that they too needed to be more of a team. The main message of the presentation was that as the core-projects were due for completion in March 1997, then if continuous improvement was to be maintained there was a need to do things differently and for the new approach to be seen to be management driven. The problems that were typical of the existing approach was that there was no visible commitment from the senior managers to what was being undertaken, that the strategic goals were not understood by the majority of people in the organisation and that because of these factors, people were going off at tangents and doing their own things.

Coinciding with the Senior Management Review, *Feedback* featured a report from the Managing Director about the need to change. The article commenced with a picture of the Managing Director sitting at his desk on which was a pristine sheet of paper on an equally unblemished blotting pad. He was smiling broadly at the camera whilst supposedly answering the 'phone. The impression was unfortunate serving to reinforce the remoteness of the senior managers per se and to fuel the perception that it was the workers who were doing the hard work.

The article concentrated on the directive from the President and Chief Executive of the whole organisation to 'Change Now' and the Management Team's meeting to review why change was needed, what was being done to change and how the process could be accelerated. The reasons given for why change was necessary were:

- the shareholders believe that the Company could do better
- competitors are becoming more effective in securing orders
- the current range of products needs updating
- customers are seeking shorter delivery times, and
- market prices have fallen for some products, some by up to 30%.

In describing what was being done the Managing Director reiterated the three core-projects with the additional projects of restructuring the Sales Team and the review of manufacturing into cells, direct-to-line component supply and the improved information systems that were being designed. There was nothing to provide information about how these projects had progressed and about the contribution of the workforce in those projects. The article established a rationale for change presenting both a demand from shareholders and a more competitive environment supported by a need for urgency making the situation at TC less comfortable than previously. What was interesting was the lack of recognition of what had been achieved by the TQ Manager and his team and how TQM impacted on the expectations of change.

In presenting the proposals about how change could be accelerated, the Managing Director wanted each department to review how it could contribute to the core projects, and to do so in discussion with the core-project managers. Once agreed the Departmental Head would then co-ordinate the implementation of the proposals. The

issue surrounding the extensive range of products was presented as answers to be addressed which needed everyone to contribute to the solution. The final point addressed what each individual could do to help the change process and suggested that everyone asked why they did things in the way that they did, and to review whether they could be done more efficiently and effectively so that customers could be satisfied in every way. He suggested that if anyone had any views on how change could happen and how to “protect our future” then they should contact their supervisor. What was not mentioned was the new communications system which was to be piloted in the following January which would assist the dialogue process.

By January 1997 the TQ Manager was attending work for only 3 days each week as part of the ‘preparation for retirement’ scheme. In recognition of 35 years of service a big retirement party was being organised. Many groups representing various parts of the factory with whom the TQ Manger had enjoyed a close contact were preparing parting ‘sketches’, just as he was preparing his own bag of cryptic parting gifts to various members of the management and staff. His mood swung from feelings of personal satisfaction over his achievements, to depression and anger about how others had frustrated the achievement of something which could have been so good for TRC.

Although there had been the period just before Christmas when he felt that the senior Management Team had taken on board his, and the Core Project Managers’ proposals with regard to the furtherance of TQM at TRC, new priorities generated a post-Christmas uncertainty which fed his feelings of disappointment. A directive from the overall Divisional Managing Director, one of the French Senior Executives, insisted that everyone was to be communicated to with regard to the take-over of the German company. This was to be done by mid-January. The Team Briefing pilots were postponed.

All companies across France and the UK had been issued with a presentation which contained core information to be verbally presented to everyone, with an opportunity to tailor the message to specific functional requirements. Anyone raising any questions must have their questions answered either at the meeting or within a specified time period. Despite the process mirroring the exact mechanism to what was being proposed for Team Briefing, and even though training in Team Briefing

had been undertaken by most of the Line Manager and upwards, there was no apparent appreciation of the similarity. To the managers of TRC this directive, however important to the Divisional Managing Director was a nuisance. Furthermore, because it described financial information in terms of ECUs then, in their opinion, it meant nothing to the majority of workers at TRC. Clearly the support for TQM was waning rapidly and the retirement of the TQ Manager seemingly gave other managers the opportunity to ignore plans and proposals that had been agreed and passed only a few months before. The TQ Manager was being marginalised more blatantly, but importantly, no-one was asking about TQM.

In talking to the Customer Services Officer about the future of TQ at TRC, she shared her views and concerns. She was aware that she was not to be offered the role vacated by the TQ Manager. Her feelings were ambivalent. On the one hand she would have enjoyed taking the process further and building up on the achievements which they had secured. On the other hand, she was aware that the TQ Manager was “desperate to go” and she did not want to find herself being forced to carry on with the same job in the same way that the TQ Manager had done. She believed that the decision to not replace the TQ Manager was, on reflection, the best decision. She was not, however, clear of what her new role would be.

She was aware that things were going to change significantly, although in what way, she was not sure. They had received a memorandum only that day to say the ‘Feedback’ was to be published quarterly instead of bi-monthly from the next edition. She was also party to many comments from people in the factory generally about what the future might bring, and was saddened to have to report that the majority shared the view of one of the project facilitators who believed that once the TQ Manager had left then TQ would ‘die’. She was less pessimistic, believing that so many things had changed that maybe there was enough of a basis on which to keep TQ going, providing the managers were committed to it. The Customer Services Officer had been a great support to the TQ Manager and her faltering review of the TQ project was most telling in that the ambiguity she expressed of both the project and her future reinforced the sense that TQM was no longer on the agenda at TRC. Her expression of reliance upon management commitment to the project in order to keep it going suggested ‘false hope’. There was a sense of hopelessness and powerlessness in her summary of the future of TQM at TRC.

In their consideration of power, Pieterse et al., (2012) and Karreman and Alvesson (2009) suggest that power can be understood from three different perspectives. First, power can be defined as a restraining force, where one actor makes people do things that they otherwise would not have done. The second perspective explains how ideologies and cultural socialisation enable compliance with the existing order and is based upon social power. Within this perspective certain discourse becomes the naturally accepted one, creating the sense of identity, acceptance of values and performance of social practices (Grant and Marshak, 2011; Mumby, 2001; Hardy and Phillips, 2004) and highlights the manipulative side of power. Employees are influenced by others who apply discursive techniques to achieve compliance and acceptance of the dominant story. Resistance is unlikely because the dominant discourse is seen as the legitimate order of play. The third perspective conceptualises power as a productive force and an integral element of all human interacting (Stacey et al., 2000). For people to collaborate, they have to interact and arrive at a certain degree of shared understanding (Weick, 1995). Characteristic of this interaction is a struggle for meaning (Gergen, 2000) resulting in a “negotiated reality” (Eden and Ackermann, 1998). The hopelessness and powerlessness expressed by the Customer Services Officer reflect all three perspectives of power being experienced at TRC. Both she and the TQ Manager were unable to achieve a negotiated reality, compliance or, indeed, force others to accept TQM in practice.

The TQ Manager was adamant that the major stumbling block throughout had been the senior managers. From the very start there had been a fundamental lack of commitment from the Senior Management Team as a whole. The Functional Steering Groups had been a failure in the main because there had been no drive from the individual management team members and some of the departmental heads.

He had been gratified by his experiences of some of the younger members of the organisation who, after training in the principles and practices of TQ were showing evidence of wanting and being able to apply the appropriate techniques. The Customer Services Officer had been a tremendous boost to him, but he was very disappointed not to have been able to secure her anything more substantive after his retirement. However, he too believed that if he was not there, and there was no-one else there to do the job, then if TQ was to continue in TRC, the Management team

would have to do it themselves. - which, as he reflected, was how it should have been anyway.

Even the elation he had felt about getting the Management Team to accept the proposals about the future structure had been re-assessed against the acceptance that the suggestion had already been downgraded as being the most likely of three suggestions to gain management support, even the proposal for multi-functional groups would still need commitment and co-ordination if they were to work.

The TQ Manager was clearly in a negative frame of mind. He pondered on his own lack of personal satisfaction stating that if he had experienced support more then he would not have been retiring. He declared that it was the 'politics which had got to him', especially those between the Management Team and the Departmental Heads. There was so much 'self-protectionism' going on, the place was inauthentic.

"People would agree things in small groups and then back down in the larger group forum."

To the TQ Manager, the culture was not appropriate or conducive to TQM, people were frightened to 'step out of line' and be different and challenge the prevailing doctrines and behaviours.

The four-year business plan had not been a plan at all, just a statement of aims. As such nothing had been communicated on the plan for quite a while. Although things had been happening which were part of the overall improvement process, such as cell-manufacturing, nothing was shared as part of the overall achievements leaving people not feeling part of the process. He felt particularly angry with the HR Director who had not picked up and led either the communications or training programmes.

Over the five years there had been 85 TQ projects undertaken, saving £4million, and yet the TQ Manager was convinced that the atmosphere had not changed, there was still a feeling of complacency and that people did not want to do things differently. People, he felt, did not see the need to do things differently, but there was not enough honesty from the top to generate the sense of a need to change. Although the Management Team were talking of the need to become even more efficient, especially with regard to the new take-overs, the information to the workforce was mainly in terms of project success. He wondered how could people be expected to

respond if they did not know what was going on? He believed that to get people to change then they needed a 'real jolt' but he questioned the Management's ability to provide one.

He believed that the Management was frightened of being asked questions they could not answer. He was certain that if they would only embrace the spirit of open and honest communications from top to bottom then they would gain so much credibility with the workforce in general. If there was one thing that he could have changed it would have been the Management Team's commitment to Total Quality. Without the sincerity and determination to drive things through he was convinced that senior managers were paying only 'lip service' to improving communications and customer service. As far as training was concerned, although they could claim some success, the right people, with the right spheres of influence, had not been in attendance.

As a result of these failures in the system, he was of the opinion that neither the Management Team nor the Departmental Heads understood what TQ was about. It was not surprising therefore, to hear him express his opinion that following his departure, TQ would cease to exist in TRC. He did not see this as being a failure on his own part, because he believed firmly that he had done "everything in his power to persuade others to take on board the ideas and apply them". He was much more resigned to the view that, if people choose not to listen, he was not prepared to get on their back. He also believed that there was too much 'us and them' and not enough trust, and that people were not "contracting into the relationship".

He was also of the opinion that he should have reported directly to the Managing Director, which would then have given him a position that would have carried authority. One of his biggest frustrations was in not being able to push things through without having to seek permission from the Management Team.

He considered that his own Director had never shown any visible commitment to the programme and never took any ownership of projects that were within his jurisdiction, always describing them as the TQ Manager and the Customer Services Officer's projects. Once that was stated, he was convinced that people then read the 'hidden agenda' - that it was yet another of the TQ Manager's 'bandwagons'. Just to prove the lack of support to himself, he had not updated the 'Delivery Performance'

figures on the notice boards for three months, not one of the Management Team had commented.

He reserved some anger for the Manufacturing Director, who despite being an organisational hero, and seemingly a supporter of the TQ Manager and his work, was, in the TQ Manager's opinion, "a major stumbling block". He believed that he had never tried to operate a Functional Steering Group and had allowed people to do what they thought was right and not to provide leadership and direction. He had been particularly weak with the manager who had taken an 'accelerated' early retirement, whose behaviour had been a disgrace and who, in the opinion of the TQ Manager, should have been sacked several years ago.

The problem as he saw it, was that too many of the managers had been allowed to interpret Total Quality against their own frame of reference, which in the case of TRC was one of Quality Assurance. They were 'process' and not 'people' orientated. He was 'people' orientated and people did not share the value system that he was trying to get them to embrace. This was frustrated further by the refusal of the HR Director to get fully involved because it reinforced the impression that people did not matter.

This catalogue of failures attributed to many others and especially his own lack of authority and power reflect the ideas of Gill (2003) and Kubr (1996) and their consideration of resistance to change. They present resistance from several points of unawareness. Firstly, a cognitive and behavioural reason is lack of know-how. Secondly, a lack of conviction that change is needed, questioning the meaning and value of the change for individuals. The lack of conviction leads to a lack of motivation to change. However, they propose the most powerful forces of resistance to change are emotional ranging from dislike of imposed change, dislike of surprises lack of self-confidence and confidence in others, fear of the unknown and of inadequacy and failure, and the adverse consequences leading to blame; reluctance of management to deal with difficult issues especially by managers approaching retirement; disturbed practices, habits and relationships; moving people from the familiar, secure, comfortable and controllable to the unfamiliar, insecure, uncertain and uncontrollable; self-interest and shifts in power and influence such as loss or change of role in the organisation, through to lack of respect and trust in the person or people promoting change and scepticism as a result of the failure of previous

change initiatives. The observations of Gill and Kubr present a template for change failure at TRC

The TQ Manager's sense of disappointment had been heightened by an exercise that he and the Customer Services Officer had undertaken after attending a course presented by TQM International. The course explained the self-assessment programme to evaluate an organisation's position in the '1997 Business Excellence Model', a criterion-rated model which assesses perceptions against nine criteria and rates an organisation out of a total score of 1000. TRC scored 358. The Company attained particularly low scores in the areas of 'Leadership', 'People Management' and 'People Satisfaction'. The TQ Manager reflected on the scores as both a testament to his disenchantment with the senior management team and a vindication of his own efforts. He was also convinced that even if he was to share the findings with his 'superiors', they would re-interpret the results against comparator organisations, which would probably reduce the significance of the result.

5.6 Insertion of findings and discussion from Part 1 (1997) into the re-storying of the case

The interviews in 1997 were undertaken before the next major meeting of the Company Steering Group. The interviews encouraged the respondents to reflect on what had happened but also the future. What follows is a summary of the interviews in 1997 presented in the meaning units for analyses.

The first level of review is the meaning unit that explores perceptions of achievements with the assumption that, if the story has been told well by the change agent, then there should be achievements commensurate with the expectations of the TQ Programme. There was still a significant difference between the perceptions of success in Instruments than in Relays. However, there was also a strong sense of concern that the integration of the two units would inevitably impact negatively on the experiences of the workers from Instruments. The most problematic perception as recognised by the TQ Manager, was that in Relays, TQM was seen as a burden. Rather than creating a better work experience, TQ had made things harder. There

was recognition by the Managing Director that there had been some successes but he was far from generous in his appraisal.

One of the problems from 1994 had been the difficulty people had experienced in reconciling the success of the company with the need for change. By 1997 there was still the viewpoint that the company was too successful to need to change. Over the intervening three years there had been no accomplishment in changing that major contextual barrier. This was despite the communications from the Managing Director which said that change was necessary, as far as many of the workforce were concerned, the profits spoke for themselves. TRC was successful and therefore a safe organisation for the workers, they were obviously doing what was needed. Despite the TQ Programme having been in process for 6 years, the perception of there being no need to change had persisted. Because of this entrenched idea of success, there was no motivation to change for many of the people in TRC, especially those in Production. Establishing the need for change had been a critical part of the story that had been overlooked and then ignored. The story had been promulgated following the decision by the Senior Management Team on the recommendation of the external consultants to introduce TQM. The main process of informing people of the approach was the Awareness Training.

The next meaning unit to help understand what had been happening explored the perceptions of what changes had occurred. Clearly over 6 years some changes had happened but it was important to see get an insight into how people were viewing the changes and to what they attributed the cause of change. In 1997 there was only 1 comment made and that was by the TQ Manager who identified that the TQ Programme needed something new to aim for, possibly a quality recognition award. There are a number of issues that emerge from the lack of responses to the attempt to find out peoples' perceptions of what had the changes been. Firstly there is the worryingly dearth of information. Clearly people had mentioned changes in the general but specifics were not recognised. Secondly, this was a significant change over the three years since the previous interviews suggesting that TQM was running out of energy and was not relevant to the workforce. Thirdly, that the TQ Manager was still thinking of how to rejuvenate the Programme and looking for an external reference point to provide legitimacy. This all creates an impression that the story that was being told was lost on the main audience, that by 1997 there were only very

few people who were listening to the TQ Manager, but he was still, hopeful of further investment – even after his retirement.

This level of analysis suggests that in 1997, apart from in Instruments, people were not attributing successes to anything associated with the introduction of TQM. There was no connection between what the TQ Manager was espousing and trying to introduce and peoples' experiences of the TQ Programme. What needs to be considered though, is whether this was simply related to real time perceptions in 1997, or whether these were reflections of the Programme in total or even the previous three years

Consequently with the next level of meaning units, we explored what TQM meant to the respondents, their perceptions of the effectiveness of communications within TRC, and what were their views on TQM. This level of analysis was seeking to explore what people were experiencing which would lead to their conclusive meaning as expressed in the previous perceptions and statements.

When asking about their understanding of the story of TQM – what is TQM? the analysis provided a range of responses that suggested a cohesive story had not been established. The most interesting aspect of the commentaries that might show positive experiences come from the shop-floor who identify cell-manufacturing, Kanban, team-working, better experiences for the shop-floor workers and more challenging jobs. However, the main reflections still had a significant number of people relating the initiative to ISO 9,000, a strong feeling that the projects had been process driven and not people driven and that there was no benefit from the TQ initiative. What was being reinforced was the story of 'hard' TQM and no greater uptake of the 'soft' story that the TQ Manager had tried to introduce. There were individual interpretations of TQM emerging as people tried to make it fit to their preconceptions of what they thought it should be. There was also more of the narrative of BPR being openly discussed either in terms of a future narrative or even suggesting that the process driven projects had been more BPR than TQM – suggesting the storyteller had not delivered the right story. Also, there was a sense of frustration filtering through the commentaries that the TQ Manager had nothing new to say. What is reasonable to assume is that given the tendency to hold on to

the preconception of 'hard' TQM and that the TQ Manager had nothing new to add, the story was not evolving.

With regards to the effectiveness of communications there is a worrying tendency toward the feelings being expressed of communicating in an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, which would impact on how people are able to receive and interpret the information they are getting. Fear and intimidation would act as blockages to any alternative story being introduced that challenged the dominant story in action. There is also a view that the information being shared is not what they need to hear which again suggests that there is mistrust and overall, the impression that can be drawn is of failing communication systems. There is a sense of the TQ Manager becoming more desperate and the hope that he is pinning on the Team Briefings to rejuvenate their experiences of TQM but, even the attempt to introduce the new system designed to address the way that information is shared and cascaded is met with confusion. The responses suggest that people think that it is already happening whereas in fact, Team Briefings had not been introduced. What is reasonable to interpret from the narratives is that the communications systems designed to support the TQ Programme were not working and there are suggestions that they were being deliberately blocked. The negativity expressed about the effectiveness of communications suggests that the TQ Manager's credibility is being challenged. Given the situation in 1994, the evidence presented suggests that even if things had improved for a time over the intervening years, by 1997 the communications systems in place were not working and people were disinterested and disengaged.

The third meaning unit at this level of analysis enables interpretations to be drawn about what the respondents thought of TQM. The overwhelming views that emerge are that support for TQM is diminishing rapidly. There are some expressions of success but these are in the minority. Part of the problems is associated with the lack of a clear shared meaning of TQM as it is intended at TRC. There are significant comments made about the demise of the Production Manager who took accelerated retirement the previous year, and recognition of the damage he inflicted upon the adoption of TQM, but there are also disparaging remarks being made about the TQ Manager. This suggests that the personal standing of the TQ Manager, who was reliant upon his personal power to persuade people towards the changes, is diminishing.

It is worrying to see those comments where respondents are suggesting that even where there were pockets of people who wanted to engage, the opportunity to engage was being blocked, not only by those who were choosing not to engage making participation difficult, but by others who were deliberately stopping engagement. The TQ Manager had failed to win over the hardened supporters of the operations management paradigm and was having difficulty in going beyond those who did not want to change. People were losing interest and the sense of the TQ initiative having failed was a stronger narrative. People felt that TQM was not sustainable and the willingness to try was not strong. It was observed that the TQ ideas remained as a separate aspect of work and had not been integrated into everyday work. In general day to day conversations, very few were talking TQ so it was no longer a commonplace parlance. The general awareness of the TQ Manager was that he had become remote and that whilst they were not sure about what would happen when he was gone, there was an acceptance that he was going and that was not necessarily a bad thing.

On balance it seems that at this point in the analysis of the meaning units so far, the TQ Manager as change agent and story-teller appears to have failed and lacked the skills to be able to secure adoption and successful implementation. However, this is not necessarily a fair appraisal given that he was a skilled trainer and there were pockets of successful adoption where people were very supportive of the TQ initiatives, especially in Instruments.

Another level of analysis could lead to a better appreciation of what was happening and why people perceived the events in the way that they did. This level of attributional analysis looks at the impact of senior management commitment on the adoption of TQM, the views that were being held of the TQ Manager as the leader of the initiative, and then the perceptions of who led the change to ascertain to whom people were referring in order to help make meaning of the changes.

The previous research undertaken into the introduction of TQM into TRC concluded that the Senior Management were not committed to TQM and that they could never have been committed because as a team they were dysfunctional and ineffective. Regardless of individual senior manager statements of being committed, the perception was that they were not committed and that without their commitment the

TQM initiative was unlikely to succeed. Comments related the lack of commitment from the SMT to the lack of authority given to the TQ Manager and the consequences of leaving him exposed. The comments allude to neglect and indifference and at best, a belated sense of they could have done more. Senior management commitment to transformational change and adoption of TQM is seen as an essential requirement and at TRC, the SMT provided woeful support to both the TQ Programme and the TQ Manager. This lack of support was recognised in 1994 and the refusal to engage more over the next three years must have reinforced the perception that TQM was not of strategic importance to the SMT. There would have been inevitable consequences of this perception by those expected to change their behaviours in support of a low-value change initiative. Essentially, if top management were not bothered about supporting the TQ Programme, why should they? It would appear reasonable to summarise that by 1997, the TQ Manager was talking and enacting a story that had little meaning or value to most people at TRC.

It is important to review the responses to how people were viewing the TQ Manager. Whilst in 1994 there were comments from his chief antagonist that undermined the TQ Manager, there were many supportive comments of his activities and commitment. By 1997 support had dissipated. Importantly the Managing Director had lost all support for the TQ Manager. He lays the blame for failure of the change programme firmly at the feet of the TQ Manager and is very dismissive of him. There is some recognition of the TQ Manager's attempts but people are largely aware that if the TQ Programme is to continue, it cannot go on as it has done, it needs a re-vamp. There is a significant expectation that the TQ Programme will not continue following the TQ Manager's retirement. The TQ Manager had distanced himself both emotionally and psychologically from the company and he was, in some ways, desperate to go. He veers from still hoping that something can be done to being disillusioned over what has happened to him and his attempt to implement TQM.

Being the leader of a change programme is a critical role and it is the person to whom others look for support, guidance and vision. As the change agent, the TQ Manager had been given the role of leader and it was important to ascertain if he was perceived as the leader or whether others were attributed with being the leader(s). In 1994, the TQ Manager was not seen by the majority of people as the leader and this would have had an impact on his ability to influence change and

secure followership. The Production Managers were a powerful contender for the nominated role and if the TQ Manager was to be able to achieve what he intended, he would have to change the perception of who was leading the change. By 1997 the overwhelming view is that it is the Production Team who have driven the changes and will be best placed to lead future activities. It is perhaps not surprising that as the TQ Manager began to withdraw and his confidence was falling, that fewer people saw him in a leadership role. Such was his exclusion he was unable to determine and influence who should be involved in discussions that impacted upon the TQ initiative.

This level of analysis provides more damning interpretations of what the TQ Manager was doing. He has lost the support of most people and is seen as withdrawn and out-of-touch. At this stage it would be reasonable to see his demises from hero to charlatan as a fair interpretation. But the analyses do not explain why someone who had the support of the external consultants, the financial resource backing of the SMT, the personal support of some senior managers, an enthusiasm and commitment to succeed, recognised skills as a training professional, as well as personal support from many employees; failed to achieve his objectives and slide to such a low personal standing.

The next level of analysis examines perceived awareness of barriers to the change process in an attempt to establish the context in which the TQ Manager was operating, the involvement of the HRM department in supporting what was a people focussed story and the impact of Human Resources Development in the change process.

Analysis of the barriers to change produced a very complex and hostile environment in which the TQ Manager was attempting to secure adoption of the 'soft' techniques of TQM. In 1994 there were a variety of barriers that were identified. The biggest barriers were associated with the fundamental viewpoint that change was unnecessary because the company was successful and the perceived sabotage being waged by the Production Managers. Other problems were the lack of attention given to change readiness and the slowness of the awareness programme. By 1997 apportionment of blame was being given to a range of different groups and other factors. Many of the sources of obstacle were identified by the TQ Manager, but

others recognised the uncompromising stance of the Production Manager who was forced out in 1996. The damage this highly influential individual inflicted was irretrievable. However, he could not have been so disruptive without support from his manager and the Manufacturing Director has to accept responsibility for not managing him sooner. Despite an attempt by the HR Director to persuade him to deal with Production Manager's highly damaging stance on the TQ Manager's attempts to bring in a culture of empowerment and team-working, the Manufacturing Director refused. Senior managers provided an obstacle to effective implementations because of their lack of support and the HR Director is identified for his refusal to become engaged throughout the process. Other barriers were the middle managers, who having been excluded from the change decisions and the subsequent awareness-training, became a resistance group. The chauvinistic, male-dominated culture was also not conducive to the softer ideas of empowerment, team-working and open communications. In 1997 there were also the unresolved issues of the counter-productive piecework system and the closed minds to the need for change. What is of greatest significance however, is the lack of authority to act upon these and the TQ Manager's dependence upon people who did not want to put things right. If anything, the picture that is forming is of the TQ Manager as victim not villain.

There were aspects of the barriers that were very much within the responsibility of the HR Director's domain of influence. In 1994 it had been established that the HR Director had chosen to spend more time off site preferring to advise other units in the group rather than commit to the change programme taking place at TRC. By 1997 he had earned the anger of his colleagues on the SMT for his indifference towards the TQ Programme and his seemingly dismissal of his responsibilities for people management. The TQ Manager feels let down by the HR Director whereas the Manufacturing Director cannot hide his disrespect and poor feelings towards his fellow director. Within the comments there is a suggestion that the HR Director holds considerable power in relation to the Managing Director who chooses not to deal with the complaints raised about the HR Director. However, by 1997, the HRM Department is taking no part in the TQ Programme and the TQ Manager remains the only voice of a people focused approach. This lack of support is very damaging to the story he is trying to relay.

The same is true of the training and development that was undertaken. In 1997, comments that had been made about Management Development three years earlier had still not been addressed and the perceptive and supportive new Production Manager expressed his frustration regarding the lack of opportunity to practice the ideas of TQM after people had been on the training sessions. The old Production Manager had merely dismissed his concerns. Essentially, for those in the production areas in Relays in particular, TQM was never institutionalised.

End of the Analysis of the 1997 interviews

Following the Company Steering Group Meeting in January, the decision not to replace the TQ Manger was formalised. The Managing Director announced his new structure which was to focus on three 'process groups'. The three groups were to be called 'Time to Market', 'Customer Service' and 'Infrastructure'. The first group would concentrate on product development and availability, the second on sales support and the third on servicing and resourcing the other two. The three process groups were based on the proposals of the TQ Co-ordinator Designate.

Three members of the Management Team would be allocated to each group so that the first would have the Strategic Projects Manager, the Technical Director and the Business Development Director; the second group would consist of the Sales Director, the Finance Director and the Manufacturing Director; in the third group would be the Human Resources Director, the Finance Director (for another aspect of his role) and the Quality and MIS Director. The Strategic Projects Manager, Manufacturing Director and Quality and MIS Director were designated as 'drivers' for their respective groups. The aim was to ensure that with the ending of the core projects in March 1997, the Management Team would take on a more involved role in pursuing business improvement. Co-ordination of the process was to be given to the TQ Co-ordinator Designate who would have a new title that reflected his proposals of re-engineering the business. His title would not contain any reference to TQM.

The TQ Manager and the Core Projects Managers were in attendance at this meeting. On leaving, the Core Projects Managers expressed their dissatisfaction to the TQ Manager. He, in turn, shared his anger and exasperation with the Customer Services Officer. None disclosed their dissatisfaction with the Management Team.

The point of their anger and disappointment was not what was being proposed, for which there was some considerable justification, but the way in which the decision had been made and the lack of regard to the future of those who had been managing the core projects. The TQ Manager was angry and hurt and realised that over the previous few months, new conversations had been taking place to which he was not party. Essentially, he had been 'written off' and had no validity in the new order of things to be. As soon as he retired his fear was that TQM was history.

The retirements of the TQ Manager and the Manufacturing Director, the indifference of the HR Director and the expectations of the Managing Director that his colleagues will lead something had created a lacuna. It was an opportunity for the Quality and Management Information Systems Director to take up the challenge, and what he had in mind was not TQM and, he had found his own champion. Whilst commitment to TQM had waned, commitment to change was constant and the waxing change story was BPR.

Analysis Part 4:

5.7 New Stories, Reflection and Conclusion

Stories and storytelling provide a way of reflecting the complex social webs that exist in organisation and the relationship between storytellers, the narratives of story and the listeners to and enactors of the interactions and interconnections within organisational experiences (Tsoukas, 1994)

The re-storying of the case allows several opportunities to consider the case from different perspectives using poetic tropes to create poetic mode frameworks for sense-making (Collins and Rainwater, 2005). Each perspective allows the researcher to construct an interpretation that could satisfy the researcher's attempt to respond to the research question. This fluidity and nebulous nature of stories provides something that is an exciting and yet frustrating aspect of researching stories. This, in part, supports the researcher's concern with the attempts of some writers on storytelling to compartmentalize stories and reduce them to bounded rationality. Yet, in organisations, dominant stories emerge and persist, sometimes

for many years. The following poetic modes provide the reader with possibilities to help follow the flow of the discussion and help explain which poetic mode the researcher chose to use in making sense of what took place at TRC. They are not the only examples and the discussion in the following chapter will unearth others.

The first relates very much to the start of the story and suggests an epic tale involving:

- A Protagonist: Managing Director No 1
- A Corporate Objective: To transform TRC and implement TQM
- Assistants: The TQ Manager, the External Consultant, the Senior Accountant
- A tale of leadership quest which deals with:
- Agency: The Managing Director leads, inspires, tells and chooses actions
- Motive: Securing corporate success, personal advantage
- Causal Connections: credit given to Managing Director No 1 with associated credit to supporters.
- Fixed Qualities: Positional Power, commitment, paternalism, control

Which produces:

key emotions: pride, gratitude, admiration, success

Essentially, the personal strategy of Managing Director No 1 succeeded when he was promoted and left the story. Consequently, it is necessary to reconsider the poetic tropes and identify other poetic modes. Once Managing Director No 1 left, his control over the change process and influence over the organisational dynamics enabled other 'players' to take prominence and by taking two different perspectives at the case, the TQ Manager as change agent is cast in to diametrically opposed roles. This is especially important as soon as the competing narrative of 'hard' TQM becomes overt, having been kept hidden during the reign of Managing Director No 1

Epic story 2:

- A protagonist: The TQ Manager
- Assistants: The external Consultant, The Senior Accountant
- An antagonistic group: The professional Production Managers
- A tale of noble quest designed to continue the work of the previous Managing Director and introduce a new way of working based upon soft TQM and secure corporate success. Employing the following tropes:
- Fixed qualities: A hero, a villainous group and a loyal workforce
- Responsibility: To secure blame attributed to the professional production managers and credit for the TQ Manager

- Motive: to win and succeed
- Causal connections: to move from 'hard' quality control and quality assurance based approaches to 'soft' commitment-based TQM.
- Unity: the Production Managers
- Agency: The TQ Manager, leads, persuades, inspires, encourages and fights for the cause.
- Providential significance: lack of support from senior management

Which produces:

Key emotions: achievement, victory, loyalty, pride, satisfaction, success

However, if the epic story is re-viewed from the perspective of the Production Managers – which is reasonable given their unrestricted actions, a very different description of tropes can be identified which could legitimate the actions of the Production Managers

Epic Story 3

- The Protagonists: The ignored and disrespected Production Managers
- An antagonist: The ignorant and misguided TQ Manager
- A fight for the cause which deals with:
- A predicament: Unrecognized stress and injury to the professional managers and employs the following tropes:
- Unity: The Production managers as heroes and the TQ Manager as villain
- Motive: Preservation and re-establishment of the professional standards of the production managers
- Fixed Qualities: Professional Managers supported by Professional Standards
- Causal Connections: To ensure that 'soft' TQM is not introduced and to maintain the status quo
- Responsibility: to ensure the TQ Manager is discredited and his ideas are ignored
- Providential significance: The Manufacturing Director

Which produces:

Key emotions: Victory, pride, anger, betrayal, success, justice

As the case develops, the Senior Accountant and the external consultant leave the story and other influential characters come to the fore and impact heavily on the TQ Manager. It is now possible to review the poetic tropes in such a way that a tragic story emerges.

- A protagonist: The TQ Manager

- Antagonists: The Production Managers,
- Assisted by: The Manufacturing Director, the HR Director,
- A tragic tale that deals with quest sabotage and the undermining of the well-meaning, loyal and brave TQ Manager fighting for a cause of corporate transformation and security, that employs the following tropes:
- Fixed qualities: A hero and several villains, including the Production Managers, the HR Director, The Manufacturing Director and the QIS Director
- Responsibility: To achieve the successful introduction of 'soft' TQM and secure a new way of working and to ensure that blame is levelled at the villains for disrupting the change process
- Motive: to win and succeed against the odds
- Causal connections: to ensure the workforce is exposed to the value of 'soft' TQM and can practice it and enjoy its properties.
- Unity: the professional Production Managers vicariously supported by the Manufacturing Director, the HR Director and the QIS Director
- Agency: The TQ Manager inspires, leads, persuades and encourages; the Production managers, challenge, dismiss, control and deny opportunity.
- Providential Significance: Insouciance of Managing Director No 2, lack of support and indirect opposition of the HR Director and the Manufacturing Director, the undermining of TQM and preference for BPR by the QIS Director.

Which leads to:

Key emotions: fight, anger, betrayal, rejection, despondency, failure, defeat.

This chapter has explored the data from two distinct perspectives. The first approach to analysis was informed by Burnard's (1994) method of focusing on 'meaning units' to inform the development of the inductive category system. The interpretive paradigm provided richer access to explore the meanings of the participants' experiences and combination of the hermeneutic approach and the use of secondary analysis of revisited data provided the opportunity for the establishment of new layers of interpretation and re-interpretation of the data. The second approach provided a rich context in which the narratives from 1994 and 1997 could be placed and subsequently re-worked to give a richer source of data from which to explore the role of change agent as storyteller. Essentially the approaches have enabled a re-storying of the data to be able to focus on the TQ Manager as change agent, rather than reviewing a simple tale of organisational change.

The use of multiple methods and sources of data collection help achieve richer reflexivity, greater transparency and opportunity for greater rigor to the research. The

application of multiple constructions of events and experiences has helped achieve greater authenticity, especially given the historical nature of the data. The introduction of different possible interpretations of the story provides a basis on which to appreciate the complexity of the material and the justification for multiple interpretations and sense-making.

The following chapter discusses the case and the findings and adds to the different potential stories outlined above. These different stories provide an opportunity to consider the role of the Change Agent as story-teller from different lens perspectives and offer a basis for a better understanding of how Change Agents might employ storytelling more effectively and challenge the dominance of linear approaches to change and change leadership. The key dynamics influencing the co-construction of storytelling in organisational practice are the credibility of the storyteller and the experiences, aspirations and expectations that the audience brings to the storytelling event that will filter and influence their perceptions (Reissner and Pagan, 2013). It is appreciated that what follows is the researcher as storyteller's interpretation of what took place, but that legitimately, as others read what is presented, they may interpret events that lead them to make a different sense of the TQ Manager as change agent and storyteller.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion

6.1 Discussion

This research was undertaken to explore the role of change agents as storytellers in the process of organisational change. The change that was being introduced into a heavy engineering plant was Total Quality Management (TQM). The approach being followed was essentially informed by Deming (1986). The programme was started in 1991 and changed focus in 1997 as Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) became the new direction. The research organisation was very successful and the researcher had access to a variety of people and groups from all levels and sections of the organisation and undertook extensive interviews over two periods in 1994 and 1997. The introduction of TQM was a failed programme; there is no question of that. However, rather than seeking to explain the failure of the implementation of TQM per se, the researcher was especially interested in the features of the change that impacted upon the telling of the story of change.

During the period of the research process, TQM was one of the most popular discourses aimed at trying to change organisational practices. However, TQM was not wholly dominant and an alternative discourse became fashionable, that of BPR, and both enjoyed significant popularity in the practitioner orientated literature. However, as previously discussed, failure to achieve expected levels of promised successes led to the emergence of more sceptical reviews in the academic oriented literature with concerns raised about definitions, paradoxical consequences of implementation, especially with regards to work intensification and control (Kerfoot and Knights, 1995; Sewell and Wilkinson, 1992; Knights and McCabe, 1999). TQM in particular presented a very seductive story in relation to employees' autonomy, job satisfaction, engagement and involvement, but the pessimism surrounding the 'panoptic gaze' (Sewell and Wilkinson, 1992, Boje and Winsor, 1993; Brown, 1997) tended to disregard the acceptance of many employees of particularly the 'soft' TQM approach with little resistance and high expectations (Psychogios, 2005).

The research essentially presents a story of change as constructed by the researcher as storyteller, but also tells a story of another storyteller, the TQ Manager, as change agent. Within the main stories of change and change agency,

there are other stories that emerge, thus presenting a multi-lensed opportunity to explore the research focus. The research adopts a storytelling approach, drawing on a variety of ideas from the storytelling literature.

To address the research questions, several themes will be explored. Consideration will be given to the context of change in which the story(ies) were being performed, which will provide the opportunity to reflect on whether TQM was the appropriate approach to adopt. A further discussion will explore competing narratives that were prevalent and the consequences of factions that were formed. The lack of support and commitment of the senior managers provides another consideration of the TQ Manager as storyteller, especially from the power and political tensions their behaviour created and their abdication of strategic responsibility. This complex context will then be considered in relation to the approach to sharing the story of TQM to the employees of TRC and will consider choice of story type, leadership capabilities of the change agent and resultant followership choices, and the importance of personal image creation and reputation. Finally, there will be a reflection on the change in the behaviour and well-being of the storyteller and the possible impact of these on his storytelling. These themes will enable a construction of the response to the primary and secondary research questions:

Does the use of storytelling by change agents lead to acceptance of organizational change?
and

Does an understanding of different story types matter to the acceptance of organizational change?

To address the research questions necessitated a re-storying of an existing case-study so that the key character, the TQ Manager, took centre-stage in the accounting of the change process.

There is an increasing impact of storytelling within organisational literature, especially relating to stories of change and it offers a more widely accepted approach within the change portfolio of techniques (Reissner, 2011; Rhodes and Brown, 2005; Brown and Humphries, 2001) A benefit to using stories as a communication strategy during organisational change is that management may use narrative and discourse that is relatable to the comprehension of its staff (Fairhurst,

1993, Zachry, 1992) without compromising the objective of what is being communicated (Harrison, 2008). Shared meaning between management and employees on the reason of change may be enhanced through storytelling, creating shared perspective and understanding thereby helping to bring members onboard with desired changes (Butcher and Atkinson, 2001; Barrett et al., 1995; Rhodes, 1996; Mohan et al., 2008).

The stories take place over a time period of 6 years. The meta-story is a story of strategic change, the ideological context is one of managerialism. Boje (2008) suggests that sometimes story control is necessary as a way of bringing people together, but that it is done in a way that denies local ideas by converging everything into one narrative identity. In denying multiple points of view, monovocal managerialism denies the emergence of polyphonic organisation. Whilst in the case of TRC, TQM was intended to be the way of working for the whole workforce and was transformational, the research demonstrates the naivety of the monovocal and monosemic underpinning of the strategic stance. The adoption of TQM was not optional, the language, practices and emotions associated with TQM were expected to be demonstrated by everyone, and the TQ Manager was appointed to co-ordinate, inform, instruct, monitor and review progress.

The subsequent research question addresses the need for the change agent to recognise different story types with the assumption that competence would enable the choice of the appropriate story type. The story told in this research begins as an epic story but ends as a tragic story (Gabriel, 1991, 2000). Epic stories generate pride, commitment and purpose and the introduction of TQM was intended to capture the hearts and minds of the workforce and lead them to experience collective success. Epic stories have heroes and villains and the initial Managing Director possibly saw himself in hero role, but certainly for the first two to three years, the TQ Manager enjoyed a sense of hero recognition. There were villains, but to start with, they were fairly well hidden. However, as the story dynamics changed and their power grew, their subterfuge became more pernicious. As their power and influence waxed, the TQ Manager became less able to influence and control the change process and his reputation diminished to the point where he was irrelevant. Tragedy is characterised by the attribution of responsibility for failure to a malevolent person or scapegoat. In the story of TRC there are a number of scapegoats, villains

and victims and the TQ Manager manages to become, at different stages, all three. Essentially, the tragic story is one which actors experience grief and pity and is a story of 'good and evil' as those dealing with decency and the common good are faced with opposition and game playing in order to destroy what is right (Collins and Rainwater, 2005).

Consideration was given to the role of change agents as leaders of change and leaders as storytellers, thereby linking change agents as storytellers. The key debates that were developed to make this linkage are essentially the following arguments. Change leaders are important people in the transmission of change ideas. It is to them that organisational members look to garner ideas about what is happening and what is expected (Higgs and Rowland, 2000). However, an important question to resolve is the perceptual issue of 'Who are leaders of change?' Whilst the quality gurus place senior management firmly at the core of providing leadership their commitment is considered absolutely essential for TQM to succeed. Even though previous research suggested that the assumption of a senior management team acting as an effective collective was naïve, then also the assumption that senior management commitment is a given was equally flawed (Hollings, 2013).

If senior management commitment cannot be guaranteed, then other factors must be at work to help encourage adoption of changes and the researcher looked to the role change agent as both leader of change and as storyteller in helping to secure acceptance and implementation of changes. The literature offered some support for this assumption (Boddy and Buchanan, 1992; Kanter, 1989) as they demonstrate capability in orchestrating events, creating and socialising within networks of organisational members; as well as developing and managing the communication processes (Paton and McCalman, 2008). Given the need within the change arena to question the past and challenge old assumptions, work within the strategic picture and inform strategic direction, think creatively and be adaptable, and manipulate and exploit triggers for change (Kanter, 1989) the competencies and expectations of change agents match what would be expected of transformational leaders, particularly in relation to helping the management of meaning (Piccolo and Colquitt, 2006). The TQ Manager was, nominally, the change agent.

The research context provided a fascinating forum to explore the impact and consequences of the change agent as storyteller. Whilst it might have been easy to say that the lack of commitment from the senior management inevitably meant that the storytelling could not succeed, this cause and effect relationship was considered too obvious. Despite their lack of commitment to the TQM programme, the senior managers continued to support the change initiatives for over six years and committed considerable resources to the changes – despite the obvious failings. It would be superficial therefore, to ignore potential other factors that impacted upon the storyteller's delivery of the changes that were expected. Given that the senior management team is likely to be held responsible for any success or failure (Cameron and Green, 2019) rather than trying to distance themselves from the introduction of TQM and lay blame elsewhere for its demise, might they have shown more interest had the changes been successful? However, what is important to this research is the actions of each of the senior managers and the impact of their individual behaviour that adds richness to the research story and its focus of on change agents and storytelling. The lack of collective top management support for the TQ initiative was one level of problem but the individual actions of top managers were far more damaging.

The approach to TQM as expressed by Deming (1986) was chosen as the framework to be used. The philosophy of TQM centred on the dynamic competitive process toward achieving the best customer service and the best quality product as identified by Dawson (1994). Led by the then Managing Director, with other senior management support, the TQ Manager was appointed, a promotion from his previous role as Training Manager, which gave him an important skill set for the task ahead. The changes were to involve every member in TRC, and the on-going education and training of all the employees was a prerequisite for constant improvement (Gabor,1990). It was an exciting time and the TQ Manager was very positive about his new role and driving the initiative forward. Consequently, at the start of the implementation of TQM, everything that the company did would reflect good practice as recognised by Deming (1986).

However, there were already warning signs that there were counterproductive conditions. There had already been two failed attempts at bringing in quality-driven initiatives, leaving the workforce potentially resistant to another attempt, cynical

about any likely success and certainly in need of a good story to persuade them to engage. Also, middle managers were excluded from the project implementation meaning a very influential group in the process of change was marginalised. According to Mann and Kehoe (1995) middle management positive attitudes towards the introduction of TQM need to be assured thereby influencing employees perceptions of the need for change.

The change programme reflected the Planned Approach to change which requires a narrative about moving from one unsatisfactory state to a new, more desirable state, and tends to be top down and has a set of pre-planned self-contained events (By, 2005). As TRC was perceived as being a very successful company, there was very little support for change at the lower levels, particularly in Relays. Essentially, the workforce was in a satisfactory state and employee perceptions of the need to change were not confirmed.

What started as a promising initiative, on review begins to look far less secure. There was a lack of conviction about the need to change, there was the exclusion of a very influential group, the change initiative followed two failed attempts that had a similar narrative and even used some TQM techniques leaving employees questioning the credibility of the approach, and finally, the drive for change at the top was an assumed shared agreement. All of these point to the need for a very strong story about both the need for change and why TQM was the best approach to take. Although the TQ Manager had initiated a major information programme to middle and junior managers followed up by training sessions designed to help people involved in projects understand the principles of TQM and TQ tools and techniques, there is no evidence of a strong story emerging about why change and why TQM.

It is proposed that what was missing were forward-looking antenarratives (Boje, 2001, 2008). These are the important narratives before the event that are able to set changes and transformations in motion. Whilst Boje suggests that these are informal and rarely told more than once, they can trigger the future direction. Unfortunately, the antenarratives in TRC concerned the previous change initiative failures and pointless purpose of change given that the organisation was so successful. Another way of looking at this lack of attention to priming the workforce of the need for change and the intended change initiative is to question whether change readiness

had been addressed (Armenakis et al., 1993, Rosenbaum et al., 2018) or indeed, because of previous failures, whether the workforce was change weary and cynical towards any initiatives (Connell and Waring, 2002)

In the absence of a story about the need for change and the preferred change approach, organizational members will continue to make sense of their experiences and adopt a story that fulfils the need for sense-making (Sole and Wilson, 2003). Whilst some people had been exposed to learning and information sharing events led by the TQ Manager, much of this took on the classic training format of a scripted story (O'Neill, 2002) that reflects a linearity of a storyteller expressing something to the audience for them to process and then act upon accordingly (Smith, 2012; Reissner and Pagan, 2013). Whilst the hope was that the participants would share their new knowledge with others, there is no evidence to say that this occurred and more interview comments to say that many people felt excluded as only people involved in projects were included in the information sharing. As O'Neill (2002) suggests, whilst the script story has a high need fulfilment in terms of the message which was important, it has low colour or is bland in terms of its highly structural elements, stilted lyricism and mechanistic plot content. Story colour influences memorability and endurance and the script story is susceptible to being quickly forgotten, a consequence the interview narratives tend to support.

There are a number of emerging issues relating to concerns about the competence of the change agent that need to be explored in the following discussion. Firstly, that TQM was exclusive and not inclusive, many employees were not involved, a clear failing in terms of what TQM intends. Secondly that there was nothing to suggest that there was any attention being given to storytelling as a co-construction of story as storyteller and audience participate as partners (Boje, 2008, Czarniawska, 2008.) Thirdly, the attempt to promote the desired conclusions of the future state, whereby the traditional and control-dominated paradigms of management are repositioned, as in the narrative of TQM, was assumed (Parker, 2002; Simmons, 2006). Fourthly, even if there was an attempt to spread the corporate story, both the credibility of the storyteller and also the past experiences of the audience will mediate against co-construction in a particular direction and filter perceptions (Reissner, 2011). Furthermore, stories are organic and grow and develop as they are told and re-told,

they develop with the context and require the involvement and enthusiasm of the audience to spread the message.

All of these concerns gave way to the co-construction of alternative stories and the dissonance created by the emergence of competing narratives. To add to the complexity of the context there is another problem that had impact. The lack of penetration and the extended time taken to tell the story, meant that TRC demonstrated the Tamara type story (Boje, 1995, 2008). People make sense of their experienced living, if they are not aware of something that others are experiencing, they do not feel any sense of disadvantage, they simply continue to make sense of what is their perceived reality. These different experiences take place in the same real time and because of the lack of spread of the TQM intentions, Tamara story-sensemaking allowed for different and contradictory stories to be enacted across different parts of TRC, especially in Instruments and in Relays. Consequently, different groups were perceiving very different realities and making judgments and choices accordingly.

By the end of 1993, after two years of the TQ Manager's training initiatives, only 25% of the workforce had been exposed to an opportunity to learn about and discuss the TQ Programme. Whilst the TQ Manager saw himself as being very busy, and others commented on his activity and commitment to the TQ Programme, it seems reasonable to question what exactly was he doing? He had not met his target of training the workforce. Given the scripted approach to the story of TQM, with a manageable participant group of 17, it would have needed 100 training events to cover everyone which over one year would not be unreasonable. In terms of story spread, the lack of penetration would have created a significant inhibitor to story acceptance. Scripts, as in set-piece training sessions are static, they tell the same story over and over again, there is little scope for alteration because the objective is that everyone must get the same message (Murtagh et al., 2009). The time that had been spent telling this story kept the narrative in the past, for many it was passé and irrelevant.

The BME story provides a view of the TQ Manager during the first two years of the programme as a confident, well-respected, hard-working. His appointment was a senior management decision and he was given the full-time role to lead the initiative.

He was seen as the driving force behind TQM in TRC although interestingly, the narrative analysis identifies that he was not perceived as the leader. This suggests that he was considered a key influencer, an important role in the change process (Kanter, 2007; Tang, 2019) but not the person in the leader role. This mixed perception of his role credibility would have had an impact on followership and audience reaction (Huy et al., 2014; Klonek et al., 2014). If the TQ Manager was not perceived as the leader, then others would not choose to follow. There would be no active followership in relation to the TQ Manager's message of 'soft' TQM. (Kellerman, 2007; Baker, 2006).

Mumby et al., (2017) suggest that many key influencers act in an informal way, acting behind the scenes in a more covert way and are *invisible*. Whilst this was not the modus operandi of the TQ Manager, he tried to be very visible, the expectation that he would lead the change was not translated into practice. This misperception of the role of the TQ Manager seemingly created confusion in relation to whom the audience should be listening. The TQ Manager was considered as key in delivering detail and information about 'what' TQM was and 'how' it should be practised but there was no leader explaining 'why' TQM was necessary, and the TQ Manager did not engage with this story. In adopting the script story (O'Neill, 2002) exemplified through his training sessions, the TQ Manager may have created a barrier to employees perceiving him in his new role, especially as so many had no direct interaction with him.

There can be little doubt that the objective of inclusivity and total immersion in the TQM message was at risk of failing, creating a knowledge void for the largest part of the workforce. Ensuring enhanced communications during change is essential (Graetz and Smith, 2005) and this was partial at best. Paton and McCalman (2008) identify five guidelines to assist organisations when communicating change. Unfortunately, the TQ Manager was unable to meet these guidelines. He failed to customise the message to include full awareness of the audience. The scripted approach meant that he was unable to set an appropriate tone so as not to offend the audience, in Relays, his audience was insulted by his message. The lack of spread to include all members of TRC meant that he lost control of the process because he only engaged with a minority of the workforce. Building in feedback and recognising that communication is a two-way process and seeking feedback and

maintaining an effective dialogue are essential to maintaining control. His response to the feedback he received from the Production Managers in Relays was to interpret their obdurate stance as one of resistance to change that needed to be overcome rather than an opportunity to listen and adapt. Choosing conflict was the wrong path (Strebel, 1994).

He also failed as a change leader to the majority of the workforce by being unable to set the example of what is needed by behaving accordingly and acting out effective communications. Lastly, he failed to ensure the communications were capable of achieving the required penetration within the stated time horizons. Unfortunately, the lack of penetration meant that the guidelines could not be met. Furthermore, the rationalisation of the subsequent written communication for providing adequate penetration and enough information upon which the workforce could make adequate interpretations of how they needed to respond, was an abdication of responsibility and a distortion of realistic expectation. The written company newsletter was an inappropriate method of communication to encourage and inform behaviour change (Welch, 2012). In effect, the poor and misjudged communications meant that the establishment of effective leader-follower relations were obstructed.

Despite the contra-indicators of the acceptance of TQM, in 1994 the TQ Manager was enjoying a sense of success and his confidence was high, the inattention given to spreading the story of the change had a more significant impact. Whilst in Instruments the story of soft TQM was gaining traction, in Relays the dominant discourse and competing narrative of hard TQM was deeply entrenched in the Production Control and Management Services ethos. The TQ Manager was unable to challenge the reputation and authority of the Production Managers, especially given the importance of Relays to the success of TRC. As a change agent and leader, he had no impact and his story was dismissed as irrelevant. The Production Managers were led by a charismatic and domineering individual and followership of him and his chosen doctrine was assured. 'Soft' TQM was dismissed as being unnecessary, the narrative in Production in Relays was based upon success, professional competence and personal standing.

The attack on the credibility of the TQ Manager's approach to TQM was, by association, an attack on the personal credibility and reputation of the TQ Manager

and was extremely damaging. The success attributed to soft TQM that the TQ Manager had enjoyed in Instruments meant nothing to the Production Managers in Relays and the TQ Manager was virtually helpless in being able to get his message heard. What is interesting with the scenario in Relays is the paradoxical positioning of the Production Manager and the TQ Manager. Within the microcosm of the Production area, the Production Manager is hero and the TQ Manager is either fool or villain. Beyond the confines of the production area, and especially in Instruments, it was the other way round. This reflects the importance given to how different people interpret the same conditions but produce very different sense-making (Reissner et al., 2011). This demonstration of both the polyphonic and polysemic practice of the change in action, completely undermined the leadership role of the TQ Manager. In terms of story types (Gabriel, 2000; Collins and Rainwater, 2005) it is conceivable to identify the epic story associated with Instruments that is still played out by the TQ Manager in Relays as he toils on his quest. However, in Relays, the introduction of TQM is just as plausibly seen as a comedy, with the TQ Manager on a fool's errand in defiance of the superiority of the Production Managers' knowledge, skills and professionalism

The battle between the competing narratives in Relays exposes a range of other barriers to successful implementation of TQM and the undermining of the personal standing of the TQ Manager as storyteller and change agent. The lead Production Manager was acting in direct opposition to what had been agreed by the top management team in 1991. Under *normal* conditions, such flouting of a strategic directive would lead to some sort of reprimand. The extent and brashness of the resistance would have generated a serious sanction and yet he was not dissuaded from his onslaught on 'soft' TQM. Without any remonstrations to his behaviour, the Production Manager continued to preach his viewpoint and without sanction, his personal credibility rose. It would be reasonable to assume that his manager was complicit in his behaviour. His manager was the Manufacturing Director, someone who had hero status in the organisation; he was highly respected and liked. If the Production Manager was not admonished by the Manufacturing Director, then it would be reasonable to assume approval of his behaviour.

Politicking and power plays at the senior level created a very difficult forum for the TQ Manager. Despite the Manufacturing Director expressing support for the TQ

initiative, his behaviour 'told' a different story (Oswick et al., 1997). Such was the impact of the Production Manager's behaviour that the HR Director, who had very little time for the TQM initiative, asked the Manufacturing Director to deal with the Production Manager, a request that was initially ignored. Furthermore, the Managing Director, who was extremely loyal to his top management team, made no attempt to interfere. Lack of support for the TQ Manager led to the rhetoric of 'hard' TQM promoted by the Production Managers 'winning the turf war' (Buchanan and Badham, 2008). By the time the Manufacturing Director took action and persuaded the lead Production Manager to take Accelerated Retirement, there was nothing the TQ Manager could do to revive the TQM story.

With regards to positional and personal power sources, both the HR Director and the Manufacturing Director were extremely powerful. The former preferred to spend time away from TRC whilst the Manufacturing Director liked to be seen and was highly praised for being the most visible of the senior managers. The Manufacturing Director was highly contemptuous of the HR Director and the HR Director made little attempt to hide his lack of regard for his job, the SMT and TRC. The Manufacturing Director played the duplicitous game of pretence, whilst the HR Director was more direct in his dismissal of TQM, he wanted no part of it and did not want the HRM team involved either. As the TQ Manager's former line manager, the behaviour of the HR Director was an act of betrayal. It left the TQ Manager struggling to gain composure and confidence. It would seem the TQ Manager was, by comparison to his senior managers, very unskilled in political play, something considered an essential aspect of the change agent's arsenal (Buchanan and Boddy, 1992).

The Quality and Information Systems Director, who took over the brief for the TQM Programme was also very hands-off in his support for the TQ Manager and towards the end actively undermined the TQ Manager by entering into discussions with another external agent to move towards BPR. As the most junior member of the Board, the TQ Programme offered him very little to help develop his personal standing in the senior management team. Quality was a big part of his brief but rather than support the TQ Manager in getting TQM implemented, he took the chance to try another story. For him to have been able to pursue that route, he must have had the second Managing Director's support. What was happening was an insidious destabilization of the change agent's role and responsibilities (Battilana et

al., 2012; Tearle, 2007; Buchanan and Badham, 1999; Buchanan and Storey, 1997) rendering him incapable of pursuing his goal.

The game-playing by the individual senior managers, made possible by the lack of cohesion of the senior management, created a platform from which the TQ Programme was sabotaged. Individually, their behaviour, often covert, was Machiavellian (Buchanan and Badham, 2008). At no time did the Manufacturing Director and HR Director shed light on their motives for their obstruction and destruction, but their behaviour was extraordinary. The Manufacturing Director, who was about to retire, talked about how angry he was with his fellow senior managers, especially the MD, the Q and MIS Director and the HR Director, but that does not lead to any explanation of his undermining of the TQ Manager. His style had become anachronistic as others seem to have moved on doing things differently to how he had always managed things. He talked about how proud he was of the achievements of the Production Managers which might suggest a reason as to why he did not take action, but that does not explain why publicly he supported the TQ initiative. The HR Director talked about his ambitions and his expectation of not being at TRC very long, but he was there for the duration of the TQ initiative. His professional and personal credibility had been established in the heavily unionised period of the 1970s at British Leyland and 'soft' TQM with empowerment and involvement was a polar opposite to his way of dealing with employee relations. His antipathy may have been an attempt to preserve his professional standing and reputation, but the Trade Union Representatives were not impressed by him. Whilst this introduces another aspect of competing narratives, inference and conjecture do not offer an opportunity to try to understand why he did not stop the TQ Programme earlier when it was clearly failing.

Establishing credibility, reputation and the right impression are key to the effectiveness of change agents (Buchanan and Boddy, 1992). The removal of the TQ Manager from an office on the elite corridor to an office in the centre of the factory, which required him to wear a white coat at all times, had a detrimental impact upon his personal image. In terms of leadership and the semiotics of power and influence implied by location and clothing (Jackson and Carter, 2007) the impression was one of demotion and was strongly felt by the TQ Manager who was very resentful of this change. The inadequate explanation of why the move was

made allowed people to interpret actions against their own preferred frames of reference and enabled conflicting sense-making (Palmer and Dunford, 1996). Both rumour and the TQ Manager's explanation for his removal from his position on the elite corridor, suggested it was the appointment of the Customer Services Officer and the chauvinistic stance of the senior managers. There were no middle or senior female managers and sexism was overt throughout the organisation.

From 1994 onwards the mental health of the TQ Manager deteriorated and detrimentally impacted his ability to be effective. He talked of his low spirits and frustrations with the process including his inability to voice his ideas and be heard. His personal standing and reputation were under attack and there were clear signs that he was beginning to lose confidence and was experiencing stress. As he continued to struggle with his task over the next two years, the behaviour of the Production Managers and in particular their leader, the lack of support from senior managers who had a duty of care towards him, and his failing self-belief meant that the TQM initiative slipped further behind schedule. He showed more signs of mental ill-health, he became demoralised, demotivated, withdrawn and delusional, all signs of stress. He announced his decision to retire in 1997 and from that point the general understanding was that the TQM initiative had failed. The implications of workplace bullying were being recognised as a significant aspect of workplace failures (Rayner and Cooper, 1997) and especially the strategic myopia caused by bullying on change agents that impacts upon organisational success (Harvey et al., 2006). The treatment of the TQ Manager, especially by the senior managers, would clearly be recognised as bullying. Over time the number of people listening to the TQ Manager became negligible, he was marginalised and the story melded from Epic quest into Tragedy and personal ruin. The TQ Manager had been hero, fool, villain and victim and, despite his laudable intentions, his demise was, by 1996, inevitable.

Analysis of the interviews in 1994, was already highlighting contra-indicators to success, although demonstrating more support for the programme than the interviews in 1997. This suggests that the story of TQM had established some momentum and traction before sliding into disrepute. This idea of a wave of story acceptance and decline has similarity with wave analysis relating to the adoption of employee involvement (EI) (Marchington et al., 1993). They suggest that a single all-embracing explanation of change is not appropriate. Conflicts between different

functions and levels in the organisational hierarchy create an unstable internal political environment. The conditions described by Marchington et al., (1993) are very similar to those operating in TRC especially given that the key aspect of the 'soft' TQM being championed by the TQ Manager is a feature of employee involvement (Wilkinson et al., 2013). Story sustainability, as depicted as wave-length, is governed by the time period the story retained value and credibility. As neither the management, the majority of workers, nor the Trades Unions demonstrated any vested interest in pursuing 'soft' TQM and its partnership agenda, the initiative slipped into a very long decline (Marchington et al., 2001; Ackers et al., 2004; Marchington and Kynighou, 2012). The story that was being played out was of the rise and fall of TQM (McCabe and Wilkinson, 1998).

The question arises however, about why, despite after three years, and the evidence suggesting that the TQM initiative and the TQ Manager were becoming an irrelevance, was TRC still going through the motions of introducing TQM with no real reason or purpose? The change programme was a costly process, financially, performance-wise, operationally and emotionally, but it was not stopped. A possible explanation of why that decision to not call a halt to the failing initiative could lie with an insubstantial existence of Boje's (1991) notion of antenarrative failing to gain a foothold and the lucky happenstance of serendipity (Gabriel et al., 2014). Kornberger et al., (2005) have demonstrated how polyphony favours serendipity by opening the organization's strategic mix to a set of new voices. Within TRC, there had been mutterings about BPR but the off-chance meeting between the ex-employee and the Q and MIS Director provided the opportunity for a new story to take hold (Pina e Cunha et al., 2010).

It could also be reasonably argued that nothing was done because the senior management had nothing to put in place of TQM. TQM had not been sustainable, it had been effectively sabotaged through a variety of onslaughts on its credibility and the credibility of the TQ Manager as messenger, but it had not slipped into obscurity. In the absence of nothing else, people kept on doing what they were doing with little or no effect. Whereas prior to that off-chance meeting between the ex-employee and the Q and MIS Director, within TRC there was no story that could usurp the demise of TQM and the TQ Manager. The alternative rhetoric of BPR presented at the off-chance meeting provided the 'escape route'. Whilst BPR had been mentioned in

1994, it took another person to explain the process and its benefits to a senior manager keen to find a platform for personal success. The conditions were there for another story to emerge and take over.

There were other agendas that impacted upon the difficulty of implementing 'soft' TQM into TRC and collectively they disrupted the theatre of change (Morgan, 1997). The first of these is an important contextual factor and addresses the conflict that was experienced between the existing culture and the desired culture as expressed by the TQ Manager. The assumption that dominated was that an effective culture can be planned and implemented rationally (Langfield-Smith, 1995) and that the organisational culture could be manipulated by interventions that were designed to encourage people to adopt a new set of behaviours and practices. The prevailing culture was authoritarian and driven by productivity and administrative controls. Opportunities for individual initiative and involvement were few. Although cell manufacturing was introduced and did receive positive feedback from operatives, there was still a tendency for managers to instruct and maintain control and people did not interpret cell-manufacturing as part of the TQM initiative.

Culture, power, politics and change readiness play an important part of delivering change, but culture is not, as the managerialist literature would assume, something that an organization 'has', it is something that an organisation 'is' (Meyerson and Martin, 1987). The organisation culture is a symbiotic feature of organisation sensemaking (Weick, 1995) and resultant behaviour. The stronger the culture, the more shared meaning is experienced throughout the workforce and the stronger the control (Langfield-Smith, 1995). Theorists agree that corporate storytelling is a valuable approach for enabling culture permeation (Gill, 2011; Denning, 2005, 2006; Dowling, 2006; Kaye, 1995; Boje, 1991, 2008; Prusak, 2001) but without engagement with the story, action seems likely to be compromised. The culture of empowerment, as championed by the TQ Manager was a story that was anathema to most of the workforce, their experiences of being at work in TRC did not relate to what the TQ Manager was trying to instil. The emergence of the alternative story was blocked because the story was not strong enough to take hold (Connell et al., 2004). Given the prevailing culture of TRC, it is questionable as to whether 'soft' TQM was the appropriate management approach for TRC? As such, was it the wrong story that did not fit the existing conditions within TRC (Beer, 2003)?

Within organizations, the persuasive dominant narratives are those which are most plausible, credible, coherent, and attractive, offering opportunities for better lived experiences at work. They need to be told by those seen as having legitimacy and power, are perceived to be useful and legitimate solutions to known problems, and have greater value over competing accounts, attributes that the TQ Manager lacked. Storytelling is not just a tool through which influence is exerted, it is far more complex sophisticated and multi-faceted (Reissner and Pagan, 2013). The direction of future operational practices can be foreseen in terms of who is telling 'good' stories about what and how to change, what will be the experiences of changing, and why changing is better than not changing or adopting an alternative direction (Buchanan and Dawson, 2007). Consequently, another problem that impinged upon the credibility of the TQM initiative was the announcement of redundancies that contradicted the benefits that TQM was supposed to achieve. Even where there had been lived experiences of TQM providing greater job satisfaction, as in Instruments, the re-structuring through amalgamation of Relays and Instruments diluted the experiences and the redundancies challenged expectations and challenged the credibility of TQM (McCabe and Wilkinson, 1998).

Drawing upon Boje's (1991) fundamental five storytelling qualifications related to the story teller, an interpretation can be made about the TQ manager as change agent and storyteller: Firstly Boje recognises that attempts will be made to negotiate different interpretations into a story with one plot. It is therefore incumbent upon the storyteller to keep the audience within the plot line so they are not encouraged to re-story into something not recognisable. It would appear that within TRC the TQ Manager was not able to do this. Secondly, the details of a story are dependent on the audience if they already know the story. Within TRC the details that were dominant especially in Relays, were those persisted in Production, and the TQ Manager was not able to dissuade them to ditch these. Thirdly, storytelling rights will vary, that is, some storytellers will have certain rights depending on experience, persuasive abilities and status and the TQ Manager failed to establish his credentials as the leader of a legitimate change. Fourthly, storytellers will have different storytelling capacities, some being good at performing a story with passion and affection, others being less competent. Whilst the TQ Manager had a reputation as a trainer, the static nature of the script story that he was presenting failed to gain

enough traction and support. He also failed to address the 'why' of change and TQM, leaving people confused and unable to commit to the need for change. Fifthly, some stories can seem legitimate to tell if they are related to already accepted discourses. Whilst 'hard' TQM had resonance with the dominant discourses in Production in Relays, the TQ Manager's 'soft' TQM did not resonate. With hindsight, the TQ Manager did not demonstrate any of the qualifications for effective storytelling. Perhaps the biggest failing of all was the lack of preparation in creating the theatre of change (Morgan, 1997) that would have impacted upon his power to influence change and counter the power of his adversaries.

6.2 Conclusions

Following the above discussion of the research and its findings, and despite the research story addressing the research questions from the perspective of a negative experience, it is possible to draw a response to the research questions.

The evidence presented offers two perspectives of the change agent in action. The primary focus is of the TQ Manager as change agent and storyteller, experiencing great difficulty in being heard in Relays, where his message of 'soft' TQM is rejected. Despite this clear failure, it is not enough to conclude that he was not an effective storyteller. The evidence of the second experience of change shows the TQ Manager in a much more positive position, where the employees and managers in Instruments were wholly supportive of what he was trying to achieve and were keen to engage in the change process. Clearly, within the context of Instruments, he was able to demonstrate that he was an effective storyteller. However, he was not able to transfer that success into positive change behaviour in Relays. The complex context of Relays with the powerful adversaries, challenging rhetoric, and sabotage and subterfuge, left him completely ineffective and inadequate for the task of achieving the introduction of TQM.

These two different responses to the TQ Manager's story of soft TQM provide an interesting interpretation of the impact of the role and entanglement of the researcher in the original research and story. Although the researcher spent time discussing TQM with the TQ Manager and also listened to his exasperations with key participants in the research, thereby becoming both a non-participant observer and

participant in the research, the different outcomes in Relays and Instruments suggest that the impact of the researcher on the responses to the TQ Manager was marginal. Both personal factors associated with the TQ Manager and contextual factors were far more relevant. However, the meetings with senior managers outside of the formal research interviews generated important data which have significant impact upon the discussion and following conclusions. It is argued that with these extra conversations, the story of the change programme has been much richer and informed. Involvement in the Board Meeting, the meeting with the QIS Director and other ad hoc meetings enabled the researcher to develop a stronger appreciation of the feelings, aspirations and frustrations of these key influencers. Without the data gathering opportunities provided by these meetings, the subsequent story of change would have been more speculative and may have led to an interpretation that the failure of the change programme was simply the fault of the TQ Manager.

Before addressing the first research question of the extent to which a change agent needs to be a competent storyteller, it is necessary to respond to the subsequent question:

Does an understanding of different story types matter to the acceptance of organizational change?

The research demonstrates the TQ Manager made two fundamental errors in his choice regarding his approach, especially in Relays. The first is the rejection of his story of 'soft' TQM. Despite the agreement that the philosophical underpinning of TQM was Deming (1986) the TQ Manager insisted that he pursue the 'soft' (Human Relations informed) TQM agenda. This choice put him in direct conflict with the Production Managers in Relays and he was unable to convince them of the superiority of his story. The problem this poses is the question of whether he chose the right story and the Production Managers were wrong, or whether he chose the wrong story. Essentially, if he chose the right story, then his storytelling skills were inadequate; but if he chose the wrong story, then this was an error of judgement and again, presents an inadequacy of skill. The evidence also suggests that he never took the opportunity to try to mitigate his failure in Relays by adapting his story and approach. Buoyed on by his apparent success in Instruments he maintained his commitment to 'soft' TQM. Consequently, what we can say is that the story he chose

was unacceptable to the audience in Relays and he was rendered ineffective. What is also apparent is an appreciation that having a story to tell is not enough. Storytelling in organisations is far more complex than simply telling a story.

Second, the intentional nature of strategic choice suggests an understanding of story types and what constituents support story construction is essential to having some opportunity to respond to story ebb, flux and flow. As such, it is equally important to comment on story types and the impact that the choice of story type had on the TQ Manager's ability to have his story adopted and lived. The TQ Manager adopted the Script story as his main communication approach. Whilst the Script story ensured a monovocal message, the lack of penetration gave opportunity for plurivocal stories to dominate that had greater colour and value to the audience and these actively discouraged engagement with his script. The strategic change was an Epic story but in choosing the Script story he lost momentum and buy-in, certainly in Relays. In Instruments it suggests that he was able to follow-up on the Script and embed his ideas through adoption and adaption as the story grew organically, but this was not the case in Relays.

Consequently, in answer to the research question as to why it is important to recognise the appropriate story type, the research has shown that an understanding of the complex, multi-dimensional and multi-faceted nature of stories, requires great sensitivity of the storyteller to the different types of story to achieve purposive storytelling. Lack of awareness of different story types and their place in the dynamic of organisational change will leave a change agent unable to adapt and lead an audience through the change agenda. To be able to manipulate the complexity of what the types entail requires skill, knowledge and competency.

It is now possible to respond to the first research question:

Does the use of storytelling by change agents lead to acceptance of organizational change?

The literature on organisational storytelling is compelling, but essentially from an analytical, retrospective perspective when making sense of something that has

already happened. The conundrum posed is that organisational change is future oriented and links a managerial control narrative with more uncontrolled, interweaving emergent and responsive stories. The main challenge to the change agent, as storyteller, is how to maintain story trajectory in line with strategic intent without stifling the contributions of those subject to the story and whose active involvement in story enactment is necessary. The storytelling in change has to achieve the legitimisation of transformative intent. Storytelling is a dynamic process, particularly in relation to organisational change, and demands a deep level of understanding of, sensitivity to, and awareness of what stories and storytelling involve, as well as the morphology of organisational change stories. At the heart of the dynamic process is recognition of the shift in the balance of power between the leader of change and the followers of change. Storytelling change is not a linear process, as the managerialist literature tends to present, it is multi dimensional, prospective and abstractive in both time and space. In attempting to lead this change, the TQ Manager as storyteller was unable to influence his counterparts in Relays. He lacked personal power, positional power and had no powerful sponsor to give support through association. A leader unable to court followers is unable to practise leadership. The storyteller has to convince others to follow.

The evidence from this research suggests that without being skilled in storytelling, the change agent will falter in pursuit of organisational change. Purposive storytelling that seeks to achieve a corporate objective requires an arsenal of skills and acumen far beyond simply passing on a message of intent. The change agent as storyteller, needs to have great understanding of the complexities of change contexts, change agendas, sense-making, leadership, followership, power and political awareness, conflict management and strategic intent in order to be able to identify the right story, the right story types and then to construct a story that resonates with the audience to achieve follower acceptance and adoption of new ways of behaving. The research shows that the change agent who lacks competency as a storyteller, potentially causes great damage to the organisation and to what storytelling in organisational change can achieve.

6.3 Contributions of this research

This research has presented a range of discussions that culminate in a reasoned support for the need for change agents, as change leaders, to be effective storytellers, (Boje, 1991; Langer and Thorup, 2006; Parkin, 2006; Boal and Schultz, 2007), and there are useful commentaries on the competencies and personal qualities of the change agent (Buchanan and Boddy, 1992; Kanter, 1989, Margulies and Raia, 1978) but that storytelling needs more than personal qualities. There needs to be a considerable amount of preparation to ensure that the theatre of change is conducive to change. To create the theatre of change requires sophisticated understanding of complex intricacies of different organisational realities and an acceptance of the legitimacy of differences. It requires attention given to change readiness (Rafferty et al., 2013; Vakola, 2013) at micro, meso and macro levels within the organisation and an appreciation of the dynamics between all aspects impacting upon the theatre of change.

The importance of this research to theory on change and change stories is in recognising that the change agent is exposed to many different pressures and that inadequate preparation of the theatre of change risks the change agent, as leader of change, being unable to affect change through the buy-in to a well-constructed, sensitive and seductive change story. Once this fails to happen, the organisation becomes unable to move on, effectively generating counter-productive and dysfunctional organisational behaviours. It would be reasonable to assume that had the change agent spent time considering the contexts in which he was operating he would have been better prepared and able to diffuse many of the contra-indicators of goal achievement. His inattention to the multi-faceted, multi-dimensional and complex context in which his single script story was presented, created an overwhelming antipathy to his intention, however well-meaning and honourable.

However, it is also recognised that the circumstances at the beginning of the change process were more conducive to the change agent being listened to by the audience and that it was the loss of powerful patrons that left him exposed. Consequently, an important aspect of the change theatre analysis is a consideration of the power and political relations of key influencers and contingencies to take account of changes and shifts in the political arena. It is equally important to ensure that the change

agent has the personal skills and attributes to lead change and secure active followership behaviours of those exposed to the story being told and, when necessary, to be capable of adaptability and fluidity when things evolve in a direction not foreseen.

The research has brought into discussion the notion of stories as waves that wax and wane to be replaced by other stories that take on greater acceptability to the audiences and live for as long as they have relevance. Stories, however good they might appear to the storyteller, only have substance if others are prepared to listen and place value upon them. It is the audience that sustains a story. The storyteller and audience take on the same dynamic as leader and follower and leaders can only lead if others choose to follow. If 'big' stories such as those associated with organisational change, cannot gain traction, then the audience as followers will not enact the changes. If the story is rejected, then space is created for a new 'big' story to emerge and rise, and until it does, the space is filled with 'little' stories with people operating in factions, smaller collectives and as individuals. The story as a unifying process in change is at the heart of this research.

This research has also highlighted the impact on mental well-being of people appointed to important tasks exposed to organisational bad behaviour, especially by senior managers. Whilst this research was undertaken 25 years ago and mental well-being is a contemporary topic in the HRM arena for organisational responsibility, it would be naïve to assume that simply highlighting the topic makes bullying and harassment any less prevalent. The research approaches unearthed the link between the change agent's declining mental health and the deliberate actions/inactions taken by those he should have been able to rely upon for support. As the researcher, it was distressing to see how his interpretation of his failure impacted upon his moods and resilience to be able to bounce back. The research has shown that he was not personally incapable, although he took some decisions that impacted upon his ability to lead, his failure to implement the change was due to deliberate sabotage. His personal capability was compromised by his loss of confidence and self esteem. As such, whether this change agent was effective as a story-teller, the research remains inconclusive, but it has shown that there are many contradictory pressures acting upon an individual's ability to tell a good story and be heard.

The research contributes to the literature in the area of qualitative research methodology. The empirical data were generated and owned by the researcher and this enabled the researcher to engage in secondary analysis of that data. The re-examination of the data supports the views held by Heaton (1998) Andrews, (2008) Bishop, (2016) and Corti and Bishop (2005) who suggest that revisiting and re-examining original narrative transcripts offers the opportunity to ask new questions and re-interpret the original data. Given that the data was designed to address an original research question exploring *TQM what's in it for the workers?* and has already supported previous research addressing *Top Management's role in Managing Change*, this third research focus demonstrates the richness of the original data and their validity in supporting a new interpretation of a contemporary issue.

The data have also supported the value of secondary analysis within both storytelling and hermeneutic phenomenology. The story adopted in this research was about the TQ Manager as change agent and presents a life history research narrative approach (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013). In developing the story there was a strong attempt to link personal and social worlds as the story of change failure progressed. However, it was the opportunity to explore the empirical data that enabled a much more quizzical story to emerge that went beyond personal inadequacy of the focus of attention and to unearth the impact of other dysfunctional organisational actions and stories to enable a different interpretation of failure and failings. It was through the exploration of stories and various discourses that provided the opportunities for interpretations and re-interpretations to enable interpretative space and new narratives to emerge. With regards to hermeneutic phenomenology the researcher was able to interpret the behaviour of the TQ Manager and other actors through the lens of the researcher's own experiences and background. The researcher had revisited the story of TRC many times since the original research had been undertaken and had sought to find different interpretations of what had happened, in particular what had happened to the TQ Manager. The notion of the story of change took over from the management and leadership of change and provided a much richer basis from which to explore the dynamics of what had taken place. The re-questioning and reinterpretations represented a steady convergence of insight by the researcher and the narratives that enabled a far more meaningful interpretation of

what had previously emerged. Hermeneutic phenomenology provided the methodology to explore and analyse the empirical data that had been created for another research question and demonstrates its useful application to the qualitative researcher of organisational behaviour.

6.4 Further research opportunities

The research offers various strands for further research. The political arena created by the dysfunctional senior management and the impact on other important actors within the organisation during change would be a fruitful area to explore, especially in relation to well-being, resilience and happiness in the workplace. Whilst the story is unique to TRC, the behaviours are unlikely to be unique and it would be valuable to explore the generalizability of the research to other organisations and situations, especially the notion of theatres of change. There is also the continuing need to explore the contribution of secondary analysis in qualitative research. This research was conducted 25 years ago and yet the data have not dated in relation to the analysis. Whilst the topic of the change – Total Quality Management, dates the research to the 1990s, TQM is still being discussed in the research literature, and TQM provided the vehicle to address other more contemporary points of interest: change agents as storytellers, followership, mental well-being and the perennial issue of power and politics in organisations. The research has also identified two areas for more research, those of theatres of change and the importance of establishing the appropriate conditions for change; and the notion of stories as waves that flow and ebb, that may emerge and re-emerge in similar guises at later dates in time.

6.5 Postscript

In 2002, a major development group took over the site from which TRC was trading. The new site owners rented the site back to the holding group for TRC. The site was ear-marked for housing development. By 2003, the overall group of which TRC was a member, was facing potential financial ruin; share prices had dropped by 90% over two years, poor sales and mounting high debt liabilities had pushed the Company into a serious financial position. Parts of the company were sold off. All the Directors

of TRC resigned, the last two to leave were the Managing Director and the HR Director who both left TRC in July 2003. Some parts of TRC continued to operate until 2013 when it ceased to trade.

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