

MSoc. Sc. in Organizational Innovation and Entrepreneurship

# **Leaders and Autobiographies**

- A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Genre's Impact on Leadership Discourse



**Tone Weggeberg**

Supervisor: Stefan Meisiek, Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy

Copenhagen Business School, September 2012

Number of STUs: 181 751

Number of pages: 78

Picture downloaded from article "*Leaders Who Are You?*" published by HR People Nov 11, 2009 by Rosendahl, L. Accessed Aug 8th, 2012 at <http://hrpeople.monster.com/news/articles/3121-leaders-who-are-you>.

## Preface

As a current master's student at Copenhagen Business School I have come upon several academic studies within the field of leadership discourse throughout the years, and attended several lectures and conferences of leadership, both in Europe and in Asia. However, few thoughts have been given to the popular use of *autobiographies* among business leaders and entrepreneurs. As a relatively neglected area of study for business students, reflections of the narratives' true contribution, or hidden messages and underlying goals from the leaders, spun into an interrogative process that led to continual new discoveries of interest. The result is a thought-provoking suggestion of leadership autobiographies and their role in leadership discourse.

First and foremost, I want to thank Stefan Meisiek for his guidance and help throughout the process of writing the thesis, and for his suggestion for the initial topic. Second, I want to thank my family for their valuable comments on the finished draft: Dad and Line for their critical eye on grammar and language, Hanne for her appreciated comments on academic writing, Mum for discussing the philosophical aspects of the topic with me, and Eirik. Finally I want to thank Goncalo for putting up with me all these months of writing the thesis.

Thank you!

Copenhagen, September 2012

Tone Weggeberg

## Abstract

In the aftermath of the 2008-2009 financial crisis numerous top-leaders have been attributed blame, as the crisis affected so many, so extensively. It can be argued that autobiographies have had a long history of acting as a medium for successful leaders to get the final word regarding controversies and allegations that affected them throughout their careers. But in a global business world where trust and authenticity appears to have diminished in value, what does the medium truly offer to the business leaders, or to the contribution of leadership discourse?

The main question of the thesis is: *How do the presumed authors of autobiographies attempt to influence the discourse on leadership?* The guiding theoretical frame is the romance of leaders and leadership that exists in society. To narrow down the scope of the thesis, a sub-question has been added: *What are the differences and similarities between leaders of established businesses and entrepreneurs?* This part focuses on factors of identity, audience and use of the genre of autobiography that has affected how the books are constructed. As the topics evolve both texts and contexts, a critical discourse analysis has been applied as research design. The empirical part of the study is based on a narrative analysis of six autobiographies written by famous, American leaders, from backgrounds as CEOs of large companies or as entrepreneurs.

Findings show tendencies of how ideological identities are developed based on a construction of coinciding stories to the wanted identities, in order to impress the audience and ultimately change reader's perception of them as people and leaders. A comparison between the two groups of leaders further reveal a tendency of the two groups varying in the underlying goals of changing reader perceptions. Entrepreneurs appear to want to improve their own image and reputation in order to improve *company* image. Former CEOs from well-established companies appear to want to change audience perception in order to improve own image and reputation. The findings suggest the medium exploits the romantic view on leaders as a strategy of impression management.

## Table of Contents

<b>PREFACE.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT.....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1, INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 LEADERS AND AUTOBIOGRAPHIES.....	3
1.2 PROBLEM AREA.....	5
1.3 PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTION .....	6
1.4 INTRODUCTION TO METHODOLOGY .....	7
1.5 STRUCTURE OF THESIS .....	7
<b>CHAPTER 2, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 INTERPRETATION OF LIFE NARRATIVES.....	9
2.1.1 Audience.....	10
2.1.2 Identity.....	10
2.1.3 The Genre of the Autobiography.....	13
2.2 THE ROMANCE OF LEADERSHIP.....	16
2.2.1 Bias in Attribution of Leaders.....	16
2.2.2 Impression Management.....	19
2.3 THE RELEVANCE OF THE THEORIES.....	21
<b>CHAPTER 3, METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>23</b>
3.1 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS.....	24
3.2 CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS.....	27
3.3 DATA.....	29
3.3.1 The Genre of Autobiography.....	29
3.3.2 Data Collection.....	30
3.4 ANALYSIS.....	31
<b>CHAPTER 4, FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>33</b>
4.1 LEADERSHIP AUTOBIOGRAPHIES.....	34
4.2 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS OF LEADERS .....	39
4.2.1 List of Comparison.....	39
4.2.2 Entrepreneurial Leaders.....	41
4.2.3 Leaders From Established Companies.....	52
<b>CHAPTER 5, DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>62</b>
5.1 LEADERSHIP AUTOBIOGRAPHIES - A ROMANTIC NOTION.....	63
5.2 CONTRIBUTION TO LEADERSHIP DISCOURSE .....	68
5.3 REFLECTIONS ON METHOD AND THEORY .....	68
<b>CHAPTER 6, CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>73</b>

<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>79</b>
APPENDIX 1 .....	79
APPENDIX 2 .....	83

## List of Tables

<b>Table 1</b> Overview of the autobiographies in the data collection.....	30
<b>Table 2</b> Summarized findings of similarities and differences between the two groups of authors.....	40

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1</b> Suggested identity development in leadership autobiographies.....	34
<b>Figure 2</b> Proposed underlying purpose and goal for entrepreneurial leaders to publish an autobiography.....	51
<b>Figure 3</b> Proposed underlying purpose and goal for business leaders from established companies to publish an autobiography.....	61

## Abbreviations

- CEO-** Chief Executive Officer
- CSR-** Corporate Social Responsibility
- RoL-** Romance of Leadership

# Chapter 1, Introduction

## 1.1 Leaders and Autobiographies

*“The hardest thing to fake is true trustworthiness; and to the extent information markets are free and transparent, it is trustworthiness that ends up driving reputation and influence”*

(Green, 2012:2).

In the aftermath of the financial crisis from 2008-2009, countless leaders have been attributed blame for the subsequent outcomes (Bligh, Kolhes and Pillai, 2011). With the crisis, there has been a tendency of a general skepticism arising towards leadership due to a perceived lack of ethics and authenticity in the conduct of business in American financial institutions, at Wall Street and in large business corporations. As continuant economic scandals of fraud and bankruptcies have surfaced, questions of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) responsibly have been raised. Seen through the lens of *Romance of Leadership* (RoL), the constant chase of the “bad guys” behind such a crises are desperate acts where people seek to diminish and interpret a highly complex situations, to more understandably, easily communicated terms; *leadership* is one of those terms (Bligh, Kolhes and Pillai, 2011).

In a world highly influenced by social media, and in a business world that can be said to have teamwork and “flat” organizations as trends as inspired by successful entrepreneurial firms such as Facebook and Google, attribution of fault and success to that of *one* single leader may seem old-fashioned and irrational for most people. Yet leaders still tend to be favored as the prime targets when media and society assign blame for economic downturns, or when companies do well for that matter. Facebook and WikiLeaks are examples of social media where it is the leader himself who is attributed as the main reason behind significant outcomes. This is a questionable tendency as stakeholders in general are aware of the responsibility of social media as collectively distributed, and not a result from an individual leader per se (Bligh, Kolhes and Pillai, 2011).

Theories of misattribution towards leaders have been heavily discussed in the discourse of RoL. But as part of the discussion, another theory has been brought up that challenges the fact that leaders are helpless to stakeholders' perception. It can be argued that people go far in their attempt to convince others of their rationality and competence (Staw, McKechnie and Puffer, 1983), and with impression management, leaders themselves can be capable of influencing the public perception of them, based on management of their own image and reputation (Meindl, 1995).

*“Given the rate of change (...) leaders should consistently manage their followers’ perceptions (...)” (Groves, 2005:273).*

When leaders find there to be a general misunderstanding among stakeholders in regards to the leader's previous decisions or actions, one possibility is to educate the audience in order for the public to understand the “truth” about the situation (Sutton and Callahan, 1987). To publish an autobiography is but one popular tool for leaders to be able to influence public perception, and as they are mostly written in a stage of retirement, the medium offers an opportunity to get the final word regarding controversies that follow after long careers in the spotlight.

According to Hurley (2012 cited in Green, 2012a:1), it is a trust-challenged world we live in, and today's leadership challenges previous leadership theories as it can be argued to be more important to be self-aware, and appear authentic and trustworthy as a leader. The faith in a company can be seen as based on the faith people have in leadership (Hambrick and Mason, 1984 cited in Sutton and Callahan, 1987:406). Following an economic crisis, leaders may struggle to maintain the image and status they have associated themselves with previously (Goffman, 1967 cited in Sutton and Callahan, 1987:406).

*“The behavior of almost everyone is driven by two opposing motivations. On the one hand, we want to benefit from cheating and get as much money and glory as possible; on the other hand, we want to view ourselves as honest, honorable people”*  
(Gebler, 2012 cited in Green, 2012b:1).



As scapegoats for economic downturns or heroes for company success, many leaders and entrepreneurs today must accept their careers as open for scrutiny from all stakeholders, not just nationally, but also internationally. With its broad distribution and popularity as a genre in a global mass market, autobiographies offer a genre of entertainment and personal stories, thus an attractive method for leaders to seek to influence the public perception of them. As leaders publish their autobiographies, they communicate to the world that they have told their story honestly and based on the pure motive to want to *inspire* others. However, the autobiography is a narrative genre, thus certain rules and frames are applied which leads us further to the problem area.

## 1.2 Problem Area

Autobiographies as part of a narrative genre demand certain plots and patterns to be in line with the reader's *expectancy*<sup>1</sup>, a specific tone of voice and narrative in order to be entertaining for a mass market, and life stories of success and down-falls that should shock and amaze. These rules of the narrative can be argued to subsequently influence how leaders write about themselves, in order to put forward their desired message and to convince the readers of their "true" identities.

Smith (2005) argues that the stories portrayed in the books follow socially constructed scripts to such an extent that it can merely be said to be a story of the entrepreneur's actual life. This ongoing negotiation between genre and the true goal to publish the life story presents a dilemma for the readers, and for leadership discourse in general. As a student of business, can one read an autobiography as guidance for business in practice, or as a theoretical framework of how to succeed in business or with start-ups? Or are the books fictional stories targeted towards mass markets, thus created to fit the expectancies from readers?

The scope of the current thesis is set to evolve around the study of leaders and their use of autobiographies as a medium to contribute to leadership discourse. A research question is formulated to narrow down the topic.

---

<sup>1</sup> Studies of reader expectancy and perception of autobiographies are beyond the scope of the current thesis. For more of the subject, see for instance Brockmeier and Carbaugh's "*Studies in Autobiography, Self and Culture*" in "Narrative and Identity" from 2001.

### 1.3 Purpose and Research Question

Although the discourse on RoL has been extensive the last decades, there is a gap in the literature: No previous attempts known to the author have been made to analyze business leaders' use of the autobiography as a means to manage their image and reputation, and to exploit the symbolic role in the light of the romantic perception leaders obtain in society. Smith (2005:17) touches upon the subject when he considers how a biography might be seen as a “*socially exploitable equity*” for entrepreneurs, leading to a higher willingness to fabricate stories. With the current thesis, the aim is to contribute to the discourse of leadership by presenting an insightful interpretation of the development of ideological identities in leadership autobiographies.

The main purpose of the current thesis is to provide the readers with a widened understanding of American leaders' use of the autobiography as a medium to contribute to leadership discourse, and how the medium might be used to affect audience perception of who they are as leaders. The current study extends RoL theories by suggesting how leadership autobiographies are used as part of impression management to develop these ideal identities. Hopefully, the thesis sheds light on the unexplored area of leaders and autobiographies as part of RoL, and sparks interest for further studies in the field. The following research question is formulated:

*How do the presumed authors of autobiographies attempt to influence the discourse on leadership?*

Further, due to the broad scope of leadership discourse and the complexity of the chosen research method, a sub-question is added to steer the study into a particularly narrow scope. The sub-question offers a chance to view the possible differences between the leaders from entrepreneurial backgrounds and those with backgrounds as CEOs, adding an additional contribution to leadership discourse with including the discussion of group differences in the process of identity development in autobiographies.

## *What are the differences and similarities between leaders of established businesses and entrepreneurs?*

For the fast reader, a short introduction to the methodology is presented next, followed by a short description of the overall structure of the thesis.

### **1.4 Introduction to Methodology**

Texts have both creative and repetitive elements where the outcome depends on the social conditions that surround the authors, of how they can draw on common practices of language, genres and discourses, and how they negotiate sociocultural contradictions of self-representation and definition of identity (Fairclough, 1995a). In order to answer the research question satisfactorily, *discourse analysis* is applied as methodology and method, with *critical discourse analysis* as research design. The design captures the important relationship of texts and context the current thesis seek to explore, in order to answer satisfactorily to the research questions. The approach will be fully elaborated on in chapter 3 of Methodology.

#### Empirical Data

The thesis draws upon the qualitative, inductive research method of critical discourse analysis where findings have been gathered as a means to interpret the data collected, and provide the reader and the field of leadership with new insight on the topic of leadership autobiographies. Six books have been analyzed as part of a narrative analysis based on a framework of strategies for how to interpret life narratives (Appendix 1), which later has been altered to fit the research question that involves leadership autobiographies in particular (Appendix 2).

### **1.5 Structure of Thesis**

As discourse analysis is not an institutionalized method, it requires a study to be lengthier than the typical academic paper as there is a need to explain the process thoroughly, and

include a large amount of data (Phillips and Hardy, 2002). To deal with this implication, the study is structured with the necessary information building on each other, thus ensuring the reader's comprehension of the topic before the analysis and discussion unfold.

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical frameworks applied in order to narrow the scope of the thesis, hence keep the analysis focused. The body of theory for the narrative analysis is presented, together with the theoretical frame for the further discussion.

Chapter 3 outlines the study's methodological approach. Here a special focus is made on introducing the reader to the applied method and research design, as its unstandardized use in research demands a thorough explanation, in order to ensure understanding from the reader. The data collection and the process of analysis are further explained to make the empirical process transparent and possible to replicate.

Chapter 4 presents the findings from the narrative analysis. The chapter is divided into two main parts: the first part presents findings on a discursive level where similarities of the data collection is presented in a model, and further elaborated on. The second part starts with a table of comparison of the two groups of authors, and presents findings from each group in regards to audience, identity and use of the genre of autobiography.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings from the narrative analysis in relation to the theoretical frame introduced in chapter 2, in order to reflect on the findings in context with relevant theories of leadership discourse, and the study's contribution to leadership discourse. The chapter ends with final reflections on the method and theory applied.

Chapter 6 concludes the thesis by going back to the research questions to ensure they are fully answered. Final reflections on the findings presented are discussed with final suggestions for further research as a last note.

## Chapter 2, Theoretical Framework

In this chapter the theoretical framework applied for analytical purposes is explained to provide the reader with the necessary background of information, as the theoretical outline guides the direction of the thesis. The chapter is divided into two main parts: the theory used to guide the narrative analysis, and the theory applied for further discussion on a contextual level. The relevance of the theories is elaborated on, in order to ensure reader comprehension of why the theory is applied for this specific purpose.

Despite discussions regarding the applicability of the theoretical framework in a discourse analysis (Burman and Parker, 1993 and Parker, 2000 cited in Phillips and Hardy, 2002:64-65), it is regarded as beneficial to use specific theoretical traditions to steer the research question towards an already existing field of study (Hardy and Phillips, 2002). The theory of RoL offers a helpful theoretical framework as it narrows down the field of leadership discourse, thus ensure a productive discussion.

A theoretical framework for how to interpret life narratives offers the theoretical lens for the narrative analysis, and will be explained next. Audience, identities, and the genre of autobiography have been selected as most relevant, as they are assessed as valuable indicators of how the books are written and with what purpose, based on the narratives being written by business leaders and entrepreneurs.

### 2.1 Interpretation of Life Narratives

*“It might be said that each of us constructs and lives a “narrative,” and that this narrative is us, our identities”* (Sacks, 1993 cited in Eakin, 2004:121).

Robert Smith questions in his article “The Fabrication of Entrepreneurial Fable: A Biographical Analysis” what he calls the “*storybook entrepreneur*”, as he differentiate between empirical evidence of entrepreneurship to that of biographical books that are simply

“*carefully crafted spellbinding narratives*” (2005:8). Biographical stories of entrepreneurs are predetermined and alternated to fit the circumstance of which they are part (Smith, 2005), a reality that can be expected to apply for autobiographies as well. Who the leaders seek to reach with their stories are of great interest, and will be elaborated on next.

### **2.1.1 Audience**

Addressees can be viewed as indicators of the underlying goal to release an autobiography (Smith and Watson, 2010), and are aligned with the overall research question, as it links the data collection with contextual factors of the author’s intended contribution to leadership discourse. What reader the author expects you to be can be said to reflect the time and purpose of publishing the book, and the culture in which the author is part of, thus there is the assumption that target audience affects how the authors write and present themselves in the narratives (Smith and Watson, 2010).

A special attention has been made to what audience the authors explicitly address, and what other addressees appear throughout the stories. To reach their target audience the authors have, with help of co-writers and other contributors, applied the genre’s characteristics to reach their goal. The actual audience perception, or detection of the buyers and readers of the narratives is assessed as beyond the scope of the current thesis, thus not included.

### **2.1.2 Identity**

*“One way or another, all autobiography is about self, yet it is a measure of the difficulty of defining human consciousness that the place of self in autobiographical discourse remains comparatively unexamined”* (Eakin, 2004:125).

People have several identities that change with time and that often work against one another, and which subsequently can create conflicts of identities: a leader’s identity as leader of a large corporation might conflict with the identity of a father, husband or a friend (Smith and

Watson, 2010). From the early days of childhood people are trained to attach special importance to one kind of self, to such an extent that we in the end regard it as the signature of our identity (Eakin, 2004). This is for instance strongly reflected in individualistic cultures such as United States, which can be described as “saturated in identity issues” (Eakin, 1992:74).

Autobiographical narrative usually starts with a presumption of ones own identity, but ends up in a fictional narrative as the author strives towards a false symmetry, a self that is unified which consequentially is bound to lead to fiction (Benstock, 1988 cited in Anderson, 2001:66). When authors write books about their lives some are aware of their conflicts of identity, yet others appear to be oblivious to the divergence, which in turn makes it relevant to explore as an act of resistance towards certain identities, and as a representation of desired identities (Smith and Watson, 2010).

*“People are prone to build a statue of the kind of person that it pleases them to be. And few people want to be forced to ask themselves, ‘What if there is no me like my statue?’”*  
(Hurston, 1984 cited in Anderson, 2001:107).

There is a tendency of the stories told being constantly updated and changed based on who the authors believe they are and have been, and who they plan to be in the future (Damasio, 1999 cited in Eakin, 2004:127). Character flaws that do not coincide with the story told might be hidden (Smith, 2005), and characteristics that go well with the storyline and image projected amplified. Such underlying factors can influence how the author writes, and is detectable as to what stories are included (Smith and Watson, 2010).

Autobiographies can be said to be discourses on identity, as it structures the life of the narrator by the creation of a specific identity and personality which helps maintain stability (Eakin, 2004). An image that reflects a personalized trademark helps to produce a unique public persona, which differentiates the leaders from other people (Smith, 2005).

The term “I” is a reflexive term, as it operates as a textual reference to the person writing, the historical and the narrating “I” (Eakin, 2004). There is a tendency where authors include and exclude parts of their identities based on the cultural identities appropriate at the time, hence contextual factors are significant to include in an analysis of the projection of identities (Smith and Watson, 2010). How the leaders present themselves to the readers is argued to be heavily influenced by the culture and history that surround them, thus what is culturally available for authors to declare themselves as may be used to create specific identities in order to “win over” the audience (Smith and Watson, 2010). This can be detected in for instance individualism’s strong cultural position in the American society (Eakin, 2004). Smith (2005:12) refers to it as “*Espousing Cherished Values*”, as the authors adhere to accepted social values in their emphasis on how they are loving fathers, self-made or from poor origins.

Smith and Watson (2010) divide the different, and sometimes contradicting identities of the authors as the historical “I”, the public persona previously known to the reader. Wolf (1967 cited in Anderson, 2001:96) notes how the historical self is a construct, a mere fiction as it is quite difficult to distinguish lives from narratives, and identities from how they are represented.

*“We get the satisfaction of seeming to see ourselves (...) That is the psychological gratification of autobiography’s reflexiveness, of its illusive teller-effect”* (Eakin, 2004:129).

The narrating “I “ is available to the reader as the storyteller. Eakin (2004) questions the term of the narrating “I” as although the experience of the self creates a feeling of being narrated, a detached teller figure does not exist; it is simply an illusion of the narrator. He further mentions the self as “(...) *not an entity but a state of feeling, an integral part of the process of consciousness unfolding over time*” (Eakin, 2004:129).

The *narrated* “I” is the subject in which the narrating “I” writes about, for instance when the narrating “I” writes stories of his or her younger self. Eakin (2004) questions the narrated identities as he quotes William Maxwell: “*in talking about the past, we lie with every breath*



*we draw*” (1980:27). In the process to adhere to a certain ideological self, character flaws might be covered in the process (Smith, 2005).

The *ideological* “I” reflects who the author wants to be or wants to be thought of, as a product of the culture the author takes part in. It can be argued that it is common to find autobiographical authors actively trying to change their stories in order to fit one of the ideological “I”s available to draw from (Smith and Watson, 2010). The identities of great leaders and entrepreneurs can be useful masks the leaders can “hide” behind in order to protect their private lives (Smith, 2005). What purpose the author has in his or her choice of one particular identity, and how he or she tries to influence and contribute to leadership discourse by doing so, is of great importance in a narrative analysis.

A special focus is put on how stories are excluded and included in order to conform to an ideological self, and what tools are used to project a certain persona. The ongoing development of an ideal identity is connected to the audience the leaders seek to target, and how they use the genre of autobiography.

### **2.1.3 The Genre of the Autobiography**

*“It is more from carelessness about truth than from intentional lying, that there is so much falsehood in the world”* (Boswell, 1970 cited in Anderson, 2001:38).

Smith argues how people are predetermined to like a heroic story of an entrepreneur, as we grow up with stories that follow stereotypes of villains and heroes: when combined with an adventurous narrative plot that goes along with such powerful figures, readers of biographies might focus more on the character portrayed than the actual stories told (Smith, 2005).

*“(…) we tolerate a huge amount of fiction these days in works we accept nonetheless as somehow factual accounts of their authors’ lives; we don’t bat an eye”* (Eakin, 2004: 125).

Certain kinds of fiction have unfolded in the genre of autobiography, as memory and imagination work together to create truths of the narrator's past (Eakin, 2004), which is difficult not to follow as certain expectations of the narrative plots exist among readers (Smith, 2005).

Narrative plots and patterns follow the storyline of the books, to ensure coherence from start to end, and in some cases to lead the stories towards a final closure (Smith and Watson, 2010). As the mid part of the narratives is saved for heroic plots, the beginning is often of disadvantages and humble origins, with an end that contains a "*happy-ever-after*" or a "*payback*" (Smith, 2005:9). These fairytale-like elements connect well with the mystique and power surrounding entrepreneurs. A particular storyline favored by entrepreneurs is "*Dodging the Black Ball*" where they as underdogs win over the establishment, while the co-authors ensure stories of "*The Chameleon Complex*" where they balance the leader's identity with characteristics that contradicts (Smith, 2005:13).

Connections are drawn between the narrative plot and the identities projected, particularly in relation to the ideological "I", as the plots are narrative tools to influence the reader's perception (Smith and Watson, 2010) with clichés, myths and metaphors favored by readers being applied (Smith, 2005). Stories that reveal talents outside of leadership can act as transfer of legitimacy from the leaders' own area towards other areas, and are seen as techniques of accentuation of differences in order to gain legitimacy from readers as an "outsider" (Smith, 2005).

To amplify the leader's status in business is argued to help maintain an illusion of competence and control, as the level of prestige that the leader can relate to his or her identity acts as an indicator of the leader's competence, credibility and trustworthiness (D'Aveni, 1990). Authors might also use generic models of identity, so-called relational narrative, to link their own identity to that of others whom they want to be connected to (Smith and Watson, 2010).

As the analysis of the autobiographies are parts of a discourse analysis, the tone and voice set throughout the book are important to consider as tools applied by the leaders to reach the underlying goal of publishing the books (Smith and Watson, 2010). However, it should be noted that the language and vocabulary in autobiographies are written by the co-authors, thus

the voice of the leader can be argued to be filtered through the medium of autobiography as opposed to the true voice of the reader (Smith, 2005).

Evidence included in the narratives to support the stories told are involved the paradox of telling the truth of ones life, yet having to do so inside of the frames of the genre and in line with reader expectations (Smith and Watson, 2010).

*“(...) the allegiance to truth that is the central, defining characteristic of memoir is less an allegiance to a factual record that biographers and historians could check than an allegiance to remembered consciousness and its unending succession of identity states, an allegiance to the history of one’s self” (Eakin, 2004:125).*

How and what the authors write to provide evidence or validation of their stories as the truth, is looked at in the light of how they actively try to persuade the reader, and with what strategies (Smith and Watson, 2010).

*“The real challenge is finding out given who you are, what form of leadership can you manifest. We do not need to all become Winston Churchill! Trust fits into this notion of leader-follower relationship and authenticity” (Hurley, 2012 cited in Green, 2012a:1).*

As the leaders take part in their own narrative, they can create their own legend based on carefully selected stories of success on one hand, and by adding or staging stories where a dialogue with the media can be brought up in order to answer to criticism on the other (Smith, 2005). Once the books are published, the stories may become established truths, thus afforded the status of legitimacy if not challenged by the public (Smith, 2005). If readers accept the stories told, they further legitimize the identity projected to the rest of society, thus play an important role in how the final outcome turns out.

*“(...) I did not give adequate weight to the force of culture in the playing out of the autobiographical act, perhaps because I was drawn to the illusion of autonomy that looms so large in the genre’s history (...)” (Eakin, 1992:71).*

Based on the audience they seek to reach, how is the identity they want to project developed, what tools are applied and with what purpose or goal? RoL is chosen as the leadership theory of greatest interest and applicability to dive into these topics, and with its two theories of leader attribution on one side, and leaders management of impression on the other, it offers a dynamic theoretical lens that is suitable to further discuss the contribution the publishing of leadership autobiographies might result in.

## **2.2 The Romance of Leadership**

The discourse on RoL in the last decades can roughly be divided into three main topics: bias in attribution of leaders, follower-centric theories, and social constructions of leadership (Bligh, Kolhes and Pillai, 2011)<sup>2</sup>. As mentioned above, the current thesis focuses on attributions towards leaders and the theory of impression management, the latter an important component in follower-centric theories.

According to Meindl and Ehrlich (1987) the symbolic act of impression management offers a paradox to the romanticized view of leaders as focus lies on the symbolic role of management in actively persuading people of the company and leadership value, as opposed to leaders being (miss-) attributed fame or blame. As complementary, yet opposing theories they are useful to create a fruitful discussion of RoL.

### **2.2.1 Bias in Attribution of Leaders**

The discourse of RoL started as a discussion of bias of leadership attribution related to organizational success, exploitation of power, unethical behaviors and mechanisms that lead

---

<sup>2</sup> For an overview of the discourse the last decades, see Bligh, Kolhes and Pillai, 2011:1061.

to misattributions of leaders (Bligh, Kolhes and Pillai, 2011). The focus of the current thesis lies in the assumption that people have a romanticized and heroic view of leaders in terms of what they do, their abilities and the overall effect they have on people's lives (Meindl, Ehrlich and Dukerich, 1985). A romanticized view towards leaders is argued to be the result of a sense-making process, and is a normal process where people try to make sense of organizational events (Meindl, Ehrlich and Dukerich, 1985).

When it comes to how leaders themselves attribute failure and success to themselves and their organization, Staw, McKechnie and Puffer (1983:595) found self-serving attributions as not simply due to different environments that face organizations, but due to a "*biased explanation of events that had occurred during the year*". Organizations tend to legitimize their actions to the public as they seek to make their actions seem logic and defensible, in order to satisfy societal demands for rational or competent behavior (Meyer and Rowan, 1977 cited in Staw, McKechnie and Puffer, 1983:583).

Attributions can be due to informational factors (Bettman and Weitz, 1983) as leaders report events that directly affect performance, or as self presentational biases when "*managements lacking real control, to remain viable, need to foster beliefs that they know what they are doing and can fulfill the organization's promises* (Salancik and Meindl, 1984:242), as an act to illustrate control.

It can be said that leaders plan for success, not failure, thus explanations to why the companies failed are favorably attributed to the environment (Salancik and Meindl, 1984). The types of attribution can be seen to result from "*intentional strategic attempts to create a sense of management's effectiveness and control over the welfare of the corporation*" (Salancik and Meindl, 1984:252). When bad news must be communicated, the leadership may blame it on external causes such as the industry or environment, which subsequently suggests the existence of self-serving attributions in organizational communications (Staw, McKechnie and Puffer, 1983).

On a more personal level, leaders self-serving biases of attribution can be based on the need to rationalize prior behavior, in other words a "*retrospective rationality*" where the leaders seek to defend his or her ego (Staw, 1980 cited in Bettman and Weitz, 1983:165-166). Leaders might accredit themselves for positive outcomes, and lay blame on external factors

for negative outcomes, in order to protect their own self-esteem (Salancik and Meindl, 1984).

One of the more central contributions in the discourse of RoL is Meindl, Ehrlich and Dukerich's study from 1985, "The Romance of Leadership". The purpose of the study was to explain the collective commitment people have to leadership with the assumption that observers overestimate the impact of leadership, in line with the need to make sense and understand significant events (Anderson, 1983 cited in Meindl, Ehrlich and Dukerich, 1985:80). The results reveal a tendency of people being prone to believe in leadership even when there is lack of scientific proof of their effectiveness (Bligh, Kolhes and Pillai, 2011).

Based on a social constructivist view<sup>3</sup>, Schyns, Felfe and Blank support Meindl's (1990 cited in Schyns, Felfe and Blank, 2007:505) idea of transformational leadership as hyper-romanticism as they claim, "*the perception of leadership comprises more than merely the actual behavior the leader exhibits*". Another study suggests how people blame top management more easily than lower-level management (Gibson and Schroeder, 2003). It can be argued that leaders receive credit and blame for positive and negative outcomes of the company they are in charge of due to people's faith in leadership, which again is a result of how people value the legitimacy of organizations in general. Consequentially, the value attributed to a company is further transferred to the leaders in charge of the organization. Faith in leadership can be argued to move beyond reality, as leaders are accounted for factors out of their control. This is an indicator of the significance the romantic and heroic view of leadership has when organizations are assessed, especially when performance is either very good or very bad (Meindl, Ehrlich and Dukerich, 1985).

Meindl and Ehrlich found complementary results when they investigated the effects of attributions given to leaders on evaluations of organizational performance. The results indicate how outcomes attributed to leadership are evaluated as better than if the outcome is due to non-leadership factors, which again can be said to reflect the value and significance leadership obtains.

---

<sup>3</sup> A social constructivist view focuses on the social nature of science with its methodological assumption that sociological studies of science is empirically, and epistemologically relevant to include in scientific knowledge. Related empirical studies of scientific practices suggests how social arrangements between scientists and scientific practices affects the practices, thus making scientific knowledge and facts a result of social constructions (Detel, 2001).

The high values attached to leadership may result from desirable characteristics people consider part of leadership: certainty, potency, evaluation and reliability (Meindl and Ehrlich, 1987). People assume leadership has a reliable and powerful effect on factors linked to performance (Meindl and Ehrlich, 1987), thus the theory of RoL results in a psychologically attractive yet biased interpretation of success and failure among people, as one of many ways to make sense of organizations' complexities (Meindl, 1990 cited in Bligh, Kolhes and Pillai, 2011:1059).

Bligh, Kohles and Pillai (2005:345) found there is a "halo" effect where leaders that are perceived as charismatic are expected to deliver better, and therefore attributed as main reason behind good company performance:

*"As followers, particularly in a crisis situation, we seem to crave both charismatic leaders as well as effective CEOs: that is, leaders who can both 'save the day' and 'get the job done'".*

Leadership can be said to be a form of art as it involves inventions, and an irony more than it is a truth as it builds on constructed identities of leaders, rather than reflective ones (Grint, 2002 cited in Jackson, 2005:1318). The overall principle of the symbolic perspective of leadership is how "(...) *management not only directs organizational activities, but also fosters beliefs among constituencies that it does and will continue to do so*" (Salancik and Meindl, 1984:238). The key topics of impression management are elaborated on next.

### **2.2.2 Impression Management**

Impression management has played a significant part in the last decades of discourse of RoL in relation to topics of follower-centric approaches (Bligh, Kolhes and Pillai 2011), and attribution to leaders. It offers a different perspective to the discourse as it evolves how leaders can *actively* manage their reputations.

The behavior of followers can be argued to be out of control for leaders as it is based on a social construction, thus the area in which leaders themselves can influence is in regards to their reputations as it is the *image* of the leader that has an impact on people, as opposed to

the personality per se. Further, *reputation* is discussed as of greatest importance for a leader, not his or her specific actions respectively. Subsequently, to create and maintain interpretative dominance of leadership should be assessed as important for leaders to keep in mind (Meindl, 1995).

de Vries and Gelder (2005) add how the level of leaderships' influence on followers is based on how the followers themselves allow it to happen, based on their perception of the need to have a leader. Groves (2005:273) further points out:

*“(...) leaders with greater social control skills, including self-presentation and social role-playing abilities, were more likely to be perceived as charismatic by their followers”.*

In a study of leaders and their support of long-term incentives in their companies, results suggested how CEOs encouraged the adoption of the incentives, yet simultaneously limited or discouraged the practice. This was evaluated as a result due to the fact that the leaders gain legitimacy by accepting the practice, while on the other hand manage to signalize that shareholder and executive leadership are of value, in line with the work of Meindl, Ehrlich, and Dukerich from 1985 (Westphal and Zajac, 1994:384). Impression management implies significant management of information, so that any positive events are credited to internal sources, and negative events are blamed on external factors (Staw, McKechnie and Puffer, 1983:595).

*“(...) because of strong societal demands for rationality, organizations seek out and label events as problems, threats, and opportunities, characterizing their actions as logical responses to these needs. (...) what looks like rational behavior may consist of actions that are justified to the organization's employees and leaders themselves”* (Starbuck, 1983 cited in Staw, McKechnie and Puffer, 1983:583).

To accept blame has been argued to be a deliberate strategy, where top management communicates how they can only be regarded as secondary blame for situations such as bankruptcies (Sutton and Callahan, 1987). When leaders accept blame for negative outcomes, they communicate how they understand the unforeseen events, thus have a certain control over it. If leaders blame too much of the company's troubles on external circumstances it



implies that the management lacks control of the outcomes. In contrast, if leaders take responsibility for negative outcomes every now and then, it suggests the difficulties of the past are currently under control (Salancik and Meindl, 1984).

According to D'Aveni (1990), leaders store status capital by their memberships in elite educational circles, political elites and board networks, as it can provide a certain degree of flexibility with creditors during economic downturns:

*“(...) top CEOs make a difference to the firm’s survival because their prestige influences the perceptions of individuals who are important organizational stakeholders. Management’s impact is felt because of who they are (their prestige), not because of what they do. This is a purely symbolic role” (D’Aveni, 1990:136).*

A leader can also be viewed as a role model as *“(...) the leader provides an ideal, a point of reference and focus for followers’ emulation and vicarious learning” (Shamir, House and Arthur, 1993:587-588)*, a topic of specific interest in relation to how leaders choose to publish their success story in order to “inspire”. The importance of impression management and attribution of leaders in current leadership discourse is elaborated on next.

### **2.3 The Relevance of the Theories**

*“When we write autobiography and when we read it, we repeat in our imaginations the rhythms of identity experience that autobiographical narratives describe. I believe that the identity narrative impulse that autobiographies express is the same that we respond to every day in talking about ourselves (...) (Eakin, 2004:130).*

While authors such as Eakin have discussed topics of culture (1992) and neurological factors that affect narrators of autobiographies (2004), little discussion has been dedicated to leaders’ use of autobiographies, and especially business leaders. Autobiographies are commercial ventures, thus it can be argued that leaders asked to use the medium are asked based on what publishers believe will sell (Smith, 2005).

Impression management can be seen as the art of presenting good and bad news, where leaders take credit for positive events and eschew blame for negative events. It involves methods of self-presentation where positive news might be emphasized over the negative, in order to put the organization in the best possible light (Staw, McKechnie and Puffer, 1983).

Autobiographies can be viewed as a common medium for retired leaders to tell their life story, as to end their careers on a positive note and gain a sense of “closure”. However, in the process of gaining an understanding of the autobiography’s role, one must dive into the characteristics of the genre, and the specific features of how leaders use the medium. Who the leaders seek to reach, and with what identity, are important factors to apprehend the authors’ true goal for publishing an autobiography. Further, the specific choice of the genre’s narrative characteristics might help reveal what tools are used in order to reach the objectives, thus offer a chance to gain a better insight into what lies behind the choice of this particular medium to begin with.

The discourse on RoL continues to be relevant today as there are still indications of people being fascinated by leaders’ actions and accomplishments, in line with a heroic, romantic view of leadership. It can be argued that leaders still play a significant role in people’s lives, as they continue to be favored as the key explanation to organizational outcomes due to increased complexities modern organizations must face (Bligh, Kolhes and Pillai, 2011). In addition, a high interest for leadership studies might add to the embracement of a heroic view of leadership (Bligh, Kolhes and Pillai, 2011), which contributes to the theory being even more relevant and important to include as part of leadership studies.

In the consumer market today there exist a variety of best-selling books that contains everything from tips and personal “success stories” and autobiographies, to “how-to” books of leadership, subsequently may adding to the possible conviction people have of leaders and their statues as heroes and role models. In the light of the financial crisis of 2008 the theory’s relevance is further amplified, as many of the political and financial industry’s leaders at the time were heavily critiqued and blamed for events (Bligh, Kolhes and Pillai, 2011).

*“As a result, the RoL highlights that sooner or later discussions of successes and failures, rights and wrongs, and past, present, and future outcomes will inevitably focus on leaders: their strengths and their shortcomings, what they did or did not do, should or should not have done, who they are, and perhaps most importantly, who we need them to be” (Bligh, Kolhes and Pillai, 2011:1059).*

With the current thesis, over-attribution of success towards leaders based on the heroic view of what leaders can accomplish, together with the knowledge of how reputation and image can help influence public perception, are discussed as leadership theories that leaders can act upon when they write and publish an autobiography. The aim of the current thesis is to engage in the discussion of RoL by directing a focus on successful American business leaders, and their use of leadership autobiographies as a medium to contribute to leadership discourse. Thus it helps to shed light on the discourse on RoL, by adding a perspective that until now has lacked from the current area of study. It is expected to be certain differences between entrepreneurs and leaders from established companies in terms of goals for publishing their stories, while I assume there to be a link between the use of the genre, identity development, and audience.

In order for the reader to gain a proper understanding of the method and process behind the analysis, a thorough introduction to the applied method and research design are presented first, before the findings are presented in the subsequent chapter.

### **Chapter 3, Methodology**

In this chapter the methodology and method are elaborated on thoroughly, as to give the reader a useful insight into a relatively new and unstandardized research method (Phillips and Hardy, 2002). The research design is explained, with an additional explanation of the narrative analysis where the empirical data has been gathered. The data collection is described, followed by a short introduction to the genre of the autobiography. Finally a

description is provided of the rationale behind the process of analysis. Implications around the use of discourse analysis as method and methodology are discussed in chapter 6.

### **3.1 Discourse Analysis**

Discourse analysis offers a constructivist approach within the humanities and social sciences as it assumes that individuals, as part of historical and cultural contexts, construct via language what are normal assumptions of life, the self and the world in which they take part (Pedersen, 2009). It represents both a methodology and a method (Gergen, 1999 cited in Phillips and Hardy, 2002:5) as it provides an epistemology and a set of methods that are useful for empirical explorations of social constructions (Phillips and Hardy, 2002).

The aim of discourse analysis is to reveal the ontological and epistemological principles embedded in language, which allows a statement to be understood as rational or interpreted as meaningful (Pedersen, 2009). The methodology works well in studies of social phenomena as it aims to explore relationships between discourse and reality: through interpretive analysis of texts, the goal is to gain an understanding of the role discourses have in the creation of social reality (Phillips and Hardy 2002).

Other more traditional methodologies often seek to categorize and generalize in order to establish “truths”, while discourse analysis on the other hand analyzes the social constructions that produce and maintain these categories. The same is applied to the textual part of the analysis, where the aim is to identify *meanings* assigned to texts and not categorize (Phillips and Hardy 2002). Discourse analysis offers a method that can be argued to be particularly applicable to use in a master’s thesis, as the possibility to read and interpret texts in multiple ways opens up for an opportunity of researchers outside the field of linguistics and language to provide their interpretation of texts (Neuendorf, 2002).

A poststructuralist view<sup>4</sup> of language as constructor of reality offers a helpful approach to uncover bias in authors' narratives, and considers the processes and implications of inclusion and exclusion of stories in order to conform to a certain identity. The task of discourse analysis is to identify how authors actively construct and use categories when they write. Identities appear out of discourse; we do not choose our identity, truth, and reality due to our experiences being written by the various discourses we participate in. Without discourse there is no social reality, therefore in order to understand the authors' reality, experiences and identities, it is highly relevant to explore the discourse they are part of (Phillips and Hardy, 2002).

Social reality is social constructions held in place by ongoing processes of discursive production. Although some versions are more legitimate and held in place by more powerful processes, they are all equal products of human interaction and subject to the same dynamics (Phillips and Hardy, 2002). The current study's area of contribution touches upon what Phillips and Hardy (2002:17) discuss as "*identity production*"<sup>5</sup> within organizations, as the notion fits well with the current thesis's purpose to gain a better understanding of how leaders might use the medium as a discursive strategy and resource in order to establish a definition of their identity, in line with specific interests and goals. However, as the word "production" is assessed to imply a process where a final "product" is the goal, the term contradicts how leaders constantly seek to develop and change their reputation and image, thus the study argue that there is no final "end" product to constructing an identity: it is rather a constant development of the self, hence the term *identity development* is further used in the thesis as area of contribution.

The three-dimensional approach by Fairclough (1995b), and supported by Phillips and Hardy

---

<sup>4</sup> A philosophical movement from the 1960s that has influenced various fields of studies, such as sociology and literature (Williams, 2005). Social and historic determinism of structuralism is discarded as focus lies on the inter-connections between micro- and macro- levels of power in different domains, with a further interest in how this affects the understanding of subjects in general, and people's awareness of themselves as subjects (Petersen et al, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> For further readings of the discourse on identity production, see Gay (1996), Phillips and Hardy (1997), Watson and Bargiela-Chiappina (1998), Salzer-Mörling (1998) and Holmer-Nadeson (1996) cited in Phillips and Hardy, 2002:17.

(2002) is useful to the current study as it connects texts to discourses, and thus connecting historical and social contexts. However, the empirical nature of the current research (Phillips and Hardy, 2002), together with the structural limitations of a master's thesis demands a further specification in research design.

The complexities of the method, and the lack of standardized procedures, leave researchers free to individually assess the appropriate design for the unique research question (Phillips and Hardy, 2002). Pedersen (2009) mentions discourse analysis, discourse theory and critical discourse analysis. Phillips and Hardy (2002) separate between text and context on one hand, and constructivist and critical approaches on the other; the former aims to explore how society has been constructed, while the latter focus on discourse in relation to power, knowledge, and ideology.

As a researcher, I am part of the constructive effects of discourse as I use language, produce a text and draw on current discourses that surround me (Phillips and Hardy, 2002), which is an important part of the overall purpose of the current thesis. With the study, I wish to participate in leadership discourse by presenting and discussing my own findings drawn from my individual analysis of the chosen data collection. I do not seek to systemize or quantify my findings in order to reach objectivity in the field of study (Neuendorf, 2002), but rather present a valuable insight to participate in the studies towards a better understanding of the topic. These goals are in line with the aim of discourse analysis, as the research aims to challenge taken-for-granted understandings of topics, by the use of a qualitative method that is open for multiple interpretations (Phillips and Hardy, 2002).

The research design follows a critical approach, as it aims to gain insight into how autobiographies are constructed and their contribution to leadership discourse.

## 3.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

The research design of critical discourse analysis focuses on genres of texts with an aim to explore the dynamics of power that surrounds them (Phillips and Hardy, 2002). The three-dimensional method of critical discourse analysis has three main parts:

1. The text
2. The discursive practice of production of text and interpretation
3. Sociocultural practices

The critical approach seeks to locate and criticize connections between text and social processes and relations, in regards to ideologies, power relations and struggles in hegemony (Fairclough, 1995b). Applied to the current thesis, the method is structured in the following manner: The narrative analysis takes on to critically examine the first and second part, while the discussion of findings in relation to leadership discourse involves the third part, as discursive and socio-cultural factors are included.

### Narrative Analysis

According to DeVault (1994), narrative studies are relevant in interdisciplinary studies of sociology, and are important grounds for people to express their opinions and create an identity, thus offering a useful starting point for a study. Social and cultural aspects affect genres, making texts relevant indicators of sociocultural developments, interactions and change (Fairclough 1995a). The narrative analysis aims to establish any regularities in the narrative of how the authors frame their identity, the relationship they are trying to establish between themselves and the reader, and the expected outcome of the authors goal to influence readers (Pedersen, 2009).

The three-dimensional approach comprises both a linguistic and an inter-textual aspect in the narrative analysis, thus offering a tool for researchers outside of language studies to explore how genres and discourses are combined, and used in texts (Fairclough, 1995a). It eyes sociocultural processes in the time they occur, detect complexities, contradictions and

shortcomings (Fairclough, 1995a) and reveal use of linguistic systems in an extended sense, for instance via vocabulary or structure of text (Fairclough, 1995c).

The inter-textual part of the analysis seeks to explore how the books draw upon the discourse they are part of (Fairclough 1995c). To include the inter-textual aspect helps mediate the relationship between the texts and language on one side, and society and culture on the other (Fairclough, 1995a).

There are theoretical and methodological reasons to include the narrative analysis in a discourse analysis, as changes of social structures, relations and identities changes with texts, and sources of evidence are needed to claim any relations. Texts can reveal social changes of re-construction of identities, ideologies and knowledge, thus having a historical reason as well. Finally, there is a political reason as text acts as a medium to control and dominate society on one hand, and negotiate and resist control on the other (Fairclough, 1995c).

As the current study is not within the field of linguistics, and as part of a discourse analysis, focus is directed towards an interpretation of meanings projected in the book such as identities projected, underlying goals and the choice of narrative plots and patterns. Aspects such as memory<sup>6</sup> are left out as it can be understood to be no unified stories of a person's life, as there is no unified and stable self that is capable of remembering correctly and detailed about the past (Smith and Watson, 2010). Thus to seek to analyze such psychological factors will only lead to speculative assessments, and further derail the thesis from its main focus.

Strategies for how to read and analyze autobiographies are applied as an initial framework to follow during the narrative analysis. Three questions are particularly relevant for the purpose of the thesis:

1. What audience do the leaders seek to target?
2. What identity do they project in order to reach them?
3. How do they use the genre to reach their goals?

---

<sup>6</sup> For discussions of memory in autobiographies, see Eakin (2004) and Anderson (2001)



The same framework is applied for both categories of entrepreneurial leaders, and leaders from well-established companies, yet grouped separately as to structure the analysis for simultaneously comparing the two categories. The data is explained further.

### **3.3 Data**

A description of the genre of autobiography is presented in order to give the reader the necessary knowledge to fully engage in the narrative analysis, followed by a description and reason behind the data collection.

#### **3.3.1 The Genre of Autobiography**

*“Nothing is more disagreeable than for a man to find himself unstable and changeful (...)”*  
(Boswell, 1951 cited in Anderson, 2001:37).

Autobiography in Latin translates as *self-life writing*; the story of ones own personality. Arriving in the Western world in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it is a concept that developed around self-interest. It is an evaluation of the meaning of public achievement as it is an inter-subjective exchange between author and reader, where the goal is to obtain a shared understanding of the narrator’s life (Smith and Watson, 2010).

It can be seen as a practice of self-representation, a practice in dialogue with personal processes and memories where the author engages the past in order to form a current identity. The process of representation of subjectivity provides a medium for readers to reflect on the personal stories told from a remembered past, as part of a continuant dialogue with cultural formations. For instance, the focus on individualism among American authors can be viewed as a result of the American attraction to self-made individuals, thus offers an example of how authors can be influenced by the powers of ideology in their culture (Smith and Watson, 2010).

It is the combination of leaders and their use of autobiographies as a medium to present an identity, while not being able to escape the influence of the culture and period of which they are part, that makes autobiographies such an interesting genre to perform a narrative analysis on, as part of a critical discourse analysis. Which books are chosen for the analysis is presented next.

### 3.3.2 Data Collection

The data collection of leadership autobiographies is divided in groups of two: leaders from entrepreneurial backgrounds and leaders from backgrounds as CEOs for well-established companies. The grouping is made to easily detect differences and similarities between the two groups, in line with answering to part of the research questions.

Table 1 *Overview of the autobiographies in the data collection*

<b>Entrepreneurs</b>	<b>Leaders from well-established companies</b>
“Grinding It Out- The Making of McDonalds” by Ray Kroc with Robert Anderson (1977) (Afterword: Anderson, 1987)	“Casey’ s Law- If Something Can Go Right, It Should” by Al Casey with Dick Seaver (1997)
“Pour Your Heart Into It – How Starbucks Built a Company One Cup at a Time” by Howard Schultz and Dori Jones Yang (1997)	“Father, Son & Co.- My Life at IBM and Beyond” by Thomas J. Watson Jr. and Peter Petre (1990)
“Estée- A Success Story” by Estée Lauder (1985)	“Jack- Straight From the Gut” by Jack Welch with John A. Byrne (2001)

The data collection consists of six “best-selling” autobiographies written by well-known, successful American business leaders. Six autobiographies are judged as sufficient in order to conduct a narrative analysis as part of a critical discourse analysis, and in order to find valuable tendencies of similarities and differences between the two groups of leaders.

To narrow down the collection to autobiographies written by American leaders only, was a choice made due to the socio-cultural aspects of leadership discourse: it lies outside the scope of the current thesis to compare the use of the genre between different countries and cultures. American leaders are considered as powerful representatives for the genre based on their history of using the autobiography as a medium, and due to their widespread distribution of the books, both nationally and internationally. The latter increases the availability of the books for the purpose of the study, and adds importance to the current study's research question as the books have been read and interpreted by many (Phillips and Hardy, 2002). Also, to limit the data collection to books written by American leaders only ensures the narrative analysis to be conducted on material based on its original language, which is beneficial as use of translated data is not recommended to use in a textual analysis (Fairclough, 1995c).

Other data have been collected to complement the study's own data collection, and is a collection of relevant secondary sources from various sources such as books, peer-reviewed articles, scientific journals and webpage sources.

The subsequent steps of the analysis are further explained to ensure transparency to the process of the analysis, and thus being easy to replicate.

### **3.4 Analysis**

The analysis is divided in two main parts as part of a critical discourse analysis: first a narrative analysis is conducted, where each book is read and analyzed separately while simultaneously compared to each other. In the second part, the theory of RoL is brought in as a means to analyze the findings from the narrative analysis with contextual factors.

The data collection for the narrative analysis has been bought and shipped from the US via *Amazon.com* in the period from February 2012 to May 2012, where each book in the data collection has been chosen based on best availability and price, from a list of leadership

autobiographies that were of personal interest. The books have been read and analyzed based on the date they arrived, thus no pre-determined sequence has been followed.

An initial framework for the narrative analysis has been followed (Appendix 1), where each chapter is scrutinized based on these topics. The selected themes to look for were a choice based on a discussion of the particular relevant aspects of a leadership autobiography in relation to how the books are written, and to what purpose the leader had to publish the book. An emphasis on the different identities, voices, narrative plots and patterns, audience and addressees was made early on, as they were expected to provide valuable findings due to previous reading on the literary genre, and in relation to expected underlying goals of the authors. Topics of interest, but which appeared too “obvious” in relation to the genre’s characteristics, is added under “Additional Notes” and assessed in the end of the analysis of each book, as to check for any deviances from what is viewed as “standard” for the genre of the autobiographies.

Each chapter of the books have been read based on the points from Appendix 1, where the notes reflect my own judgment of what is relevant to include: a quote of special character, the tone of voice “felt” in the narrative, specific stories told, underlying voices, contradictions or plots apparent throughout the books. Findings have been accepted as valuable if they appeared to be of great interest in relation to the research question, and if they contributed to significantly shape how I perceived the book as a reader.

During the narrative analyses, emphasis is simultaneously put on similarities and differences between the two groups of leaders in order to answer to part of the research questions. The books have been compared to each other in the sequence they were analyzed, thus findings of interest have evolved as each book has been read. The comparison bases itself on the topics already looked for, which are mentioned above. Findings of differences and similarities were accepted as viable as long as at least two out of three books in a group shared the characteristics.

After the analysis of the data collection, a new framework was made (Appendix 2). Similar topics from the first framework are grouped in order to categorize the topics, thus making the presentation of the findings clearer. The rationalization behind the choice of identity, audience and use of genre of the autobiography as the main topics is based on how the three factors

appeared to affect each other most profoundly, while they offered meaningful and interesting findings of similarities and differences.

Secondary sources have been gathered prior to, during, and after the critical discourse analysis as a means to gain knowledge, stay updated on relevant methods and theories, and constantly revise the study to ensure it maintains its purpose and relevance. The theory of RoL was added as the final theoretical lens to apply to the current thesis, after two-thirds of the data collection was read. As the books were scrutinized, it became clear that RoL offered a leadership theory of a pronounced applicability and relevance to produce a fruitful discussion of the findings. Bias in attribution of leaders and impression management has been considered to be the two most relevant theories within the discourse of RoL, as they touch upon concepts that are especially noteworthy to interpret in relation to leadership autobiographies and their contribution to leadership discourse.

Autobiographies can act as a medium for leaders to set the record straight regarding rumors and misconceptions that have followed them throughout their careers, both in media, in the industry and in the public eye. When the entrepreneurs address different audience they can be said to write back to cultural stories that have scripted them as certain kinds of people (Smith and Watson, 2010). Findings from the narrative analysis are presented next.

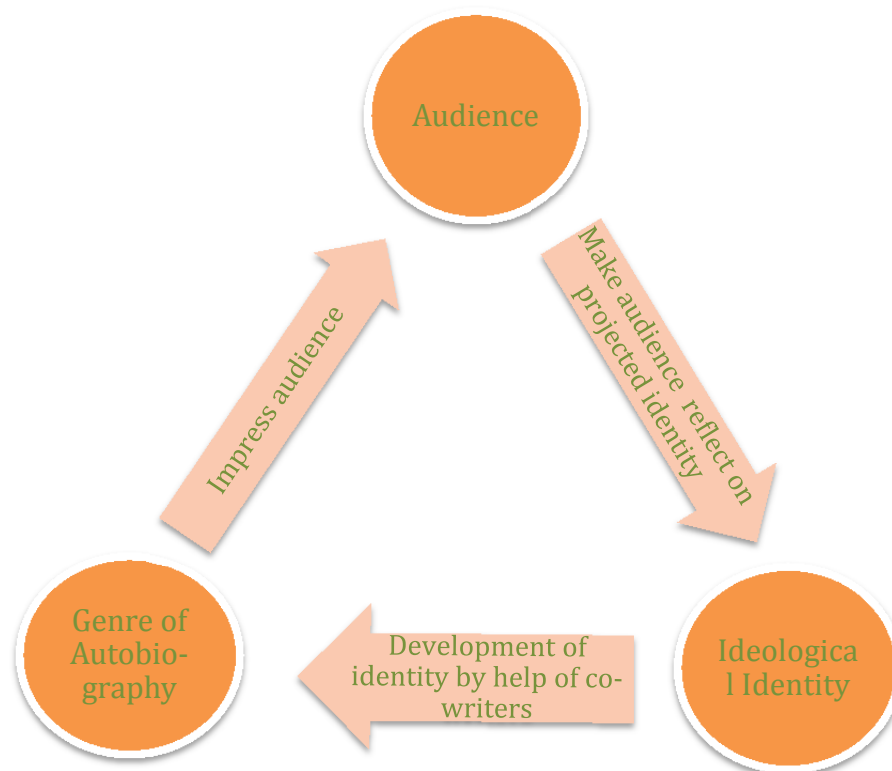
## **Chapter 4, Findings**

The findings are structured in two main parts: the first part presents findings of similarities between the two groups, thus are assessed as interesting representatives for tendencies of the genre of leadership autobiographies on a discursive level. The second part illustrates how the similar process of identity development can look different, as it reveals indications of important differences between the two. The differences are structured according to each group's findings of identity, audience and the use of the autobiographical genre.

## 4.1 Leadership Autobiographies

The findings suggest there is a similar relationship between audience, ideological identities and the use of genre among all leaders, thus representing a possible tendency of leadership autobiographies as a genre.

Figure 1 *Suggested identity development in leadership autobiographies*



The identity that leaders project in their stories appears to be based on ideals and perceptions in society of what constitutes a talented and decent leader. As illustrated in Figure 1, who the target audience is can be seen to affect how the leaders construct their identities in the narrative. As all authors aim to reach the general public, it can imply that the target audience has affected their choice of the popular medium to begin with.

The suggested process suggests a development of identity where co-authors or ghostwriters help the leaders express their desired identities through narrative tools available from the genre of autobiography. With small variances, all authors portray models of identities that

project American values; they appear to follow the cultural traditions for what constitutes an admirable person and leader, and someone to look up to – the “Persistent Visionary”, the “Talented Entrepreneur” with an eye for details and quality, or the “Believer” who inspires.

Stories emphasize “Rags-to-Riches”, the “Apprentice”, the “Ethnic” leader that achieves “The American Dream”, the “Hard-Working American” or the “Underdog” who wins, against all odds. All identities support the values of a “Self-Made” entrepreneur or leader.

With various degrees of humbleness, the authors keep a clear focus of own superiority in visionary and innovative capabilities, confidence and belief in own ideas, and how they are “different” than other players in the industry, due to their focus on quality, values and integrity. All authors emphasize how their mothers were strong women that played important roles in their lives, a strategy which adds personal qualities of family-orientation via gratitude and love towards the closest family, seen from a reader’s perspective. Their families’ origin is proudly amplified; with this strategy the leaders may hope to reach many, as readers are of different cultural backgrounds, both among American readers and among readers from other countries.

The younger versions of the selves are less sophisticated, which appear to be done as an attempt to balance the identities. However, entrepreneurial or leader characteristics appear to be added early as to demonstrate how they are “born this way”. In order to conform to the perceived ideal identity in society, there seems to be a tendency of the authors balancing their identities with stories of strength and weaknesses, superiority and humbleness, confidence and apprehensiveness. It appears that the plots and patterns aim to support the identity they want to project; yet contradictions arise when the voice does not coincide with the stated goal of the book or towards the identity projected.

Shifts in narrative happen as the personal voices and underlying goal of the leaders, “takes over” the writing. These shifts in focus tend to decrease the credibility of the author, as it appears to the reader that the leaders spin themselves off and “get lost” in narratives of their own self-importance, long for recognition, bitterness and the need to clear their own name.

All authors use relational identities as they connect themselves to other prominent people, and there appears to be a tendency where transfer of legitimacy are demonstrated by stories that make sure to mention their talents in other areas, such as politics, sports or at the social arena.

All authors heavily critique people in the industry, some authors by name and company, which reflects somewhat negatively on their image as leader as it presents a question of ethics: knowing it will affect the people and their families mentioned, and knowing that the stories told are only but *one* side to the story, it goes against the admirable persona the leaders appear to project.

It is argued that the authors' voice are filtered through the genre as they co-write the autobiographies with professional writers, or leave the sole task of what to include and what to reject in the hands of the co-writer, whose perception of the entrepreneurial construct may already be well developed or already skewed (Smith, 2005). Collaborative aspects are included in the analysis as the use of ghostwriters and collaborative narratives are well known as part of the genre, yet causes an implication for the reader of how to distinguish between stories and identities that are truthful, and those that are constructed as part of the narrative of the genre.

Stories can be argued to be told based on social scripts available to the entrepreneur and the co-author, such as fairytale-like stories with instructions of moral, lecture or entertainment. The co-authors are often trained journalists with a talent in dramatic narrative, while the leaders themselves might participate in deciding what the co-author should include and exclude, and what to fabricate or alternate in order to create an appealing story and identity (Smith, 2005).

Robert Anderson is mentioned on the book-cover of Kroc's autobiography, in addition to being the author of the afterword added after Kroc's passing; hence his role as a co-author is visible, thus to no question from a reader's point of view. However, Kroc, in company with Lauder, do not elaborate on other people's contributions that have taken place, in sharp contradiction to Casey, Welch, Watson Jr. and Schultz who do it ever so openly. Shultz for instance credits the over seventy people that gave interviews, and the fifty people that read and commented on the early scripts:

*“Without their memories, stories, insights, and suggestions this book could not have been nearly as lively or complete”* (Schultz and Yang, 1997:339), while the literary agent:



“(...) *sprinkled stardust on this project and transformed it forever*” (Schultz and Yang, 1997:339).

Casey’s co-author Dick Seaver is quickly mentioned at one point; however, his secretary and many others are mentioned as the significant contributors in helping him to remember stories. The silence around the co-author baffles the reader, as one cannot help wonder why he is not acknowledged as the others. Welch’s relationship with co-author John Byrne is also questionable as he is thanked under Acknowledgments for his many hours with the author, and mentioned on the cover, yet does not appear to be accredited any copyrights to the book.

Dori Jones Yang is the most “visible” co-author as she is mentioned several places, while being recognized by Schultz under Acknowledgments, where she also has her own paragraph. Schultz’s description of their relationship and partnership leaves a trace of transparency, thus the co-authorship appears fruitful and reasonable to the reader. Watson Jr. mentions many contributors, yet as his narrative voice appears uniquely fragile and honest compared to the other leaders, the reader cannot help feel misled when it turns out the secret sharing between reader and author was not so secret after all.

Overall, the authors are open about the nature of the genre’s use of contributors. Lauder is the only author who does not include names of any contributors, which comes off as quite dishonest in the eye of the reader, when the norm among leaders appears to be that of openness about contributors’ help. In addition, as the authors leave the information to well *after* the story has ended, it affects the felt openness and honesty the authors have projected throughout the stories, thus offering a problem regarding the authenticity of the stories and identities.

Another implication to the collaborative authorships lies in the relationship between the leader and the contributors, as they all appear to strive to put the leader in a favorable light, which consequentially affects the perceived objectivity of the stories. The advice and knowledge the leaders pass on is expected to be based on a negotiation between co-author and leader, as to what to include and what to exclude to coincide best with the projected identity, thus reducing its authenticity and consequentially its perceived applicability to leadership theories and practice.

The genre appears to be used as a medium to convince the readers of the ideological identity projected through stories constructed to vow and impress readers. Popular strategies of the genre are narrative plots and patterns, strategic use of voice in the narrative, and evidence placements. The stories follow a chronological plot from childhood to present time, with comments from the narrator along the way to appear honest and truthful towards the reader. The narrative plots and patterns include the same elements in both groups of authors: fairytale stories, elements of surprise, highs and lows and anger and humor, which result in a great source of entertainment for the reader.

It appear the authors have acknowledged the need to focus on moral and ethics in order to seem authentic, which often come off as forced as it tends to be strategically placed in the texts in order to support their ideological character. In addition, no stories reveal serious unethical actions that do not coincide with the ideology of an entrepreneur and leader, which again appear suspicious to the reader. To deal with this implication, various sources of evidence accompany the stories where the reader is prone to question the accuracy or truth of the stories told, thus the leaders appear to be aware of the possible situation of reader questioning such a “pure” and ideal personality. By these strategies, there seems to be a tendency where leaders hope to change the audience’s perception of who they are as leaders, from what has previously been known or thought of them, to the ideal self that they themselves want to be remembered as.

A somewhat surprising finding is in regards to the stated goals and purpose of the books. The authors strongly take a stance from their stories being an attempt to contribute to any field of academics or leadership discourse, as books of how-to succeed, professional advice or frameworks for any theoretical purposes. Rather they all emphasize their purpose to *inspire*: students, leaders, entrepreneurs, or the public in general, “everyone” can benefit from reading their book as a source of inspiration to follow ones *dream* and *believe* in oneself. Their contribution to leadership discourse must naturally be questioned, as it does not appear as the leaders’ intent or purpose, either implicitly or explicitly, to contribute to any academic research or leadership theories.

The last arrow in Figure 1 that entails the audience perception is the only aspect in the figure that is not a result of the findings in the current thesis, as it lies outside the scope of the study. If the leaders use the genre as a medium to impress the audience, it can be safe to assume they

do not have any prior knowledge as to whether their attempt to change their image will indeed succeed in the end, thus it can be viewed as a *wish* from the leader's side to be able to do so. This leaves it as a somewhat different component, as it contains the element of *hope* in the process of constructing an autobiography to reach ones goal.

As the retired "I" approaches, the findings imply how all authors become increasingly offensive and emotional, where they seek to set the records straight, and get confirmation and recognition. Yet the underlying goals of changing the public perception of ones identity reveal indications of variations between the two groups of leaders, and will be presented next.

## **4.2 Differences Between the Two Groups of Leaders**

### **4.2.1 List of Comparison**

The main findings of how the two groups of leaders each address the audiences construct ideological identities and use the genre, are presented in Table 2 on the following page. The list of findings reveal a tendency of differences in both underlying goals of why they want to reach mass markets with their stories, and in regards to the identity dynamics behind the development of the ideological identity projected in the narrative. Details of each group's specific findings related to audience, identities and use of the genre of autobiography are presented after.

Table 2 *Summarized findings of similarities and differences between the two groups of authors*

Findings	Entrepreneurs	CEOs of well-established companies	COMPARISON
<b>1) Audience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Purpose: Set record straight to get closure</li> <li>- Aim: Change reader perception of their identity, to change image for company</li> <li>- Move from success stories and values, to a need to clear the author's and company's name</li> <li>- Marketing tool to win over mass market</li> <li>- Personal objectives behind publication</li> <li>- Explicit aim to inspire and teach, implicit aim to defend, get acknowledgment, and brag about own accomplishments</li> <li>- Address various stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Purpose: Defend historical identity</li> <li>- Aim: Set the record straight, get the final word and clear name</li> <li>- Addressees are thanked for support, or criticize for lack of it</li> <li>- All stakeholders as audience to repair their personal and professional images</li> <li>- Tool to clear ones name as retired</li> <li>- Explicitly aim to inspire and teach, implicitly aim to seek recognition, clear name, and defend ones actions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Similar</b> as they claim to have a goal to inspire, yet appear to seek to reach a larger audience with a goal to change the perception of themselves as leaders historically known to the public.</li> <li>- They all claim they do not want to contribute to guidelines or frameworks of theories of how to succeed in leadership</li> <li>- Both groups struggle to maintain the stated goal to simply inspire, as underlying, contradicting, goals appear long the narrative</li> <li>- Target audience: all stakeholders, including general public</li> <li>- <b>Different</b> as the managerial leaders appear to seek to improve the reputation of their public figure, while there is a tendency of entrepreneurs seeking to change perception of themselves as a means to an end: towards improving <i>company</i> image and reputation</li> </ul>
<b>2) Ideological Identity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Models of identity influenced by cultural values</li> <li>- Follow same ideologies of what constitutes an admirable entrepreneur</li> <li>- Mothers are honored as reason behind values and success</li> <li>- Emphasize ethnic origins</li> <li>- Younger versions less sophisticated, yet with clear entrepreneurial characteristics reflect being born entrepreneurs</li> <li>- Silence and gaps in stories and contradictions in identity</li> <li>- Relational identities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Negotiate identities with cultural ideology of leaders and models of identity</li> <li>- Mothers have important roles in their lives</li> <li>- Focus on moral and ethics perceived as attempt to seem authentic</li> <li>- Emphasize ethnic origins</li> <li>- Younger versions less sophisticated to balance identity</li> <li>- Contradicting identities</li> <li>- Wanted identity turns into narrator's true identity as the reader approach the final chapters</li> <li>- Relational identities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Similar</b> in the use of cultural models of the ideological leader, contradictions in identities use of origin and childhood values as reason behind integrity, and mother as source of values preached.</li> <li>- Tendency to use less smart versions of themselves to balance identity, and relate other great personas to their own identities</li> <li>- <b>Different</b> as the identities of the entrepreneur are strongly connected to the identity of their company, thus identity projected appears to be to create a "face" of the company. The leaders can be argued to project ideological identities primarily as a description of their own identity as a person and a leader.</li> </ul>
<b>3) Use of genre</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Plots and patterns chosen to support projected identity</li> <li>- Emotional voices</li> <li>- Narrative pattern and fairytale plot which can be argued to be designed to entertain</li> <li>- Evidence appear strategically placed</li> <li>- Chronological plot with comments from narrator</li> <li>- Voice characteristic</li> <li>- Indications of chosen stories to transfer legitimacy and relate identity to others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stories appear made to coincide with ideological identity</li> <li>- Reader interpret they get lost in narrative as own goals takes over</li> <li>- Fairytale plots</li> <li>- Transfer of legitimacy and relational identity</li> <li>- Chronological plot with comments from narrator</li> <li>- Various evidence inserted to back up claims</li> <li>- Humor</li> <li>- Emotional voices</li> <li>- Tools to transfer legitimacy and relate identity to others</li> <li>- Evidence of high priority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Similar</b> plots and patterns indicate following a design to entertain and project wanted identity to reach audience</li> <li>- Reveal the narrator's perceived true goal and purpose of the book in final chapters when narrated "I" approach narrating "I", and emotions change</li> <li>- Tendency of use relational identities and transfer of legitimacy, and strategic placed evidence to back up stories</li> <li>- Chronological plots with comments from narrator</li> <li>- Fairytale narratives, and use of humor and emotions increase readability and interest of leader and book</li> <li>- <b>Only small variances</b>, as same negotiation of fabrication vs. truth in stories, and use of favored plots and patterns known to the genre</li> </ul>

## 4.2.2 Entrepreneurial Leaders

### Audience

Lauder<sup>7</sup> explains how she will share secrets of her successful business and social life. She claims she will write openly and include personal, revealing stories of grief and lessons learned. Phrases such as “*I have a confession to make*” (Lauder, 1985:95) indicate how she hand the reader the role of a “Listener”, and herself the role as a “Secret Sharer”. She credits customers under Acknowledgments, and appear to address the reader as a customer or soon-to-be customer. Competitors’ unethical behaviors are mentioned multiple times, while focus is given to her own innovativeness in areas such as product development and marketing strategies.

Kroc appears to want the reader to be a “Forgiver” as he tries to be apologetic and regretful to certain episodes in life, while the Preface instructs the reader to remember how much Kroc invested in his company. Schultz addresses leaders and entrepreneurs as the main audience for his book, where he wants to be the “Friend” that inspires entrepreneurs to believe in themselves, and to further remind leaders of the importance of values and principles. He focuses on what the book should *not* be read as: a guide, instructions, a life story, a company story or a theoretical framework of how to succeed in the business. This statement appears misplaced as the stories include both his life story, history of his company and business, and advice of how to conduct ethical business. In the Prologue he explains how he wants to tell the story of Starbucks and the connection it has to his father, as the entrepreneurial spirit and customer focus have made Starbucks “(...) *a living legacy of my dad*” (Schultz and Yang, 1997:7).

The underlying reason for Schultz’s book appears to be personal: to defend himself and his company on one side, while on the other side dedicate his work to his late father as a last attempt to get “closure”. He responds to stories that have framed him as capitalistic and cold-hearted, and the role as a “Friend” comes off as increasingly desperate in the attempt to convince the reader.

---

<sup>7</sup> For practical purposes, the data collection is referred to by each leader’s surname only, leaving out full references or co-authors. For full references, please refer to the Bibliography.

All stories appear to lead up to the final chapters of the “great defense” towards himself as leader, and towards his company. The strategy works to an extent as the previous stories has provided him with respect as a person and businessman in the eye of the reader, by the continuant demonstration of values and success. The reader has “forgiven” his shortcomings and been inspired by his strengths, thus are more open to believe in his final argumentations to clear his, and his company’s name. On the other side it creates implications for the reader-author bond, as the underlying goal appear dishonest.

Outside of her female audience, Lauder directly addresses the general public as she responds to myths that surrounded her. Stories of lawsuits and rumors of her not treating employees well are clarified, while personal aspects such as the divorce from her husband are brought up. As the reader approaches the final parts of her narrative there is a tendency of her defending her “living large” mentality, as she responds heavily to earlier critique regarding her lifestyle. Kroc chooses a more aggressive approach when he responds to rumors about him, and especially his company, which appears to be an attempt to gain respect and acknowledgment for his accomplishments and sacrifice.

Competitors are indirect addressees in Lauder and Kroc’s book, as they mention all actors by name and do not seem to hold much back when stories of their wrongdoings are spilled out. With claims such as French perfumers owing her for the popularity of perfumes, and accusations of competitors spying and copying her strategies, Lauder may seek to slowly convince the audience of her special decency and talent *while* she directs strong critique towards her competitors.

Other addressees of Lauder’s are her employees, partners and family, as she credits all people that contributed to the success of her company. Kroc dedicates his book to all those who support his company, and Schultz to his family and partners.

### Ideological Identity

Lauder concentrates her character as a strong and persistent fighter in a manly-dominated business world, where emphasis it made on her hard work, inner drive and integrity. She stresses her visionary and innovative persona and how she is self-made and confidence, yet with have a good heart and integrity.

Professor Paganucci compares Kroc's story with a "(...) *Horatio Alger story, which illustrates in practice what one is preaching (...)*" (Kroc and Anderson, 1977:1). His introduction captures the reader as he comes off as a reliable source that writes quite inspirational, as models of a hard-working American is emphasized as:

*" (...) his firm belief that in the United States a person can reach or exceed any reasonable goal"* (Kroc and Anderson, 1977:2).

Kroc himself paints a picture of a man reluctant to follow authority, and a leader with great temper. The characteristics are mostly aligned with the character introduced by Paganucci in the Preface, thus experienced as reliable. However some contradictions appear, which will be elaborated on shortly.

Schultz emphasizes his *humbleness* as an entrepreneur and leader, and wants to be viewed as a man with vision and care for his employees and society and a true "Believer", as he draws on the cultural model of "Rags-to-Riches". He dedicates his values and success to his mother, a strategy he shares with both Lauder and Kroc:

*" (...) the American Dream was vibrant, and we all felt entitled to a piece of it. My mother drummed that into us"* (Schultz and Yang, 1997:15).

Schultz further makes sure to mention his childhood as multicultural as his friends and neighbors were of different cultures and origins. The portrayal of an "Ethnic American" that accomplishes the American Dream is apparent in all three books. Lauder elaborates on her parents' European heritage, and the values she extracted from them, and Kroc mentions at several occasions his Bohemian roots.

As her primary audience is women, Lauder appears to connect the model of the "Caring-Mother-Who-Struggles-to-Make-Ends-Meet", with the guilt that follows her early success, as her family is put second. Schultz mentions several times his gratitude towards his wife, and the guilt he has felt towards his son. The stories of a successful leaders' inadequacies add desired weaknesses to the identities in chapters where the leader's success are elaborated on: guilt, longing, love and emotions balance the success stories, thus bringing out a likable personality which appear more authentic.

All three authors use models of identity such as the “Underdog”, or the “Good-Hearted-Entrepreneur” who fights against the capitalistic companies that undermine quality for profits. Schultz compares himself to a myth of a misunderstood genius, quotes Beatles songs, and starts each chapter with inspirational quotes from other famous people, as to relate his identity to that of other great personas.

There are tendencies of some stories being included and some excluded in order to conform to the identities projected. Lauder mentions regrets to certain employees leaving due to her leadership style, and appears to seek to convince the reader of her fine treatment of employees. Kroc admits he is an aggressive leader while he simultaneously amplifies his generosity as a leader, as he has given people without education a chance to succeed.

Lauder focuses on the balance between family and business, Schultz honors his wife and the sacrifices she made and how he tried his best to be involved in his son’s life, while Kroc appears to focus on justifying how he neglected his first wife with his order of work as first priority, before family. His identity as entrepreneur and businessman appear to be put as the most important, and it seems he dedicates many chapters to convince the reader, and probably more importantly himself, that he was correct in his assessment.

Lauder and Schultz on the other hand, emphasize how the role of a parent and a spouse is equally important as the role of an entrepreneur. There is a tendency of them leaving out any possible details of them neglecting their families, while they include stories of the guilt and sorrow that came with all the hard work. Thus, they carefully select the stories and comments to illustrate the identity of an honorable entrepreneur who experience grief of being “forced” to prioritize business. Hence, they too appear to be seeking confirmation to their choice, similar to Kroc.

As mentioned previously, some contradictions occur in the projected identity of Kroc’s. The identity he wants to project appears to be affected by how he has been scrutinized in the media, thus it appears he goes to great lengths to convince the reader of his honorable persona. However, Kroc’s daughter is hardly mentioned, which adds substantial silence to his story, and further confuses the reader. It can be argued that he avoids the topic in order to conform to the wanted identity of an admirable, sacrificing entrepreneur who rightly prioritized business over family, yet the silence works against his attempt to appear honest.



Schultz goes in great details about the guilt of how he treated his father before he died; yet no stories include what he actually said to his father. It appears to be a strategy to be able to conform to the wanted identity, as hurtful comments towards family members does not fit well with the illustrated ideological self.

Lauder has a struggle of identity as she goes on about her remarkable integrity in a business where competitors manipulate, and where the corporate giants try to steal her ideas or ruin her chance of success, meanwhile she herself offers advice on how to play this manipulative “game”. It appears she is pulled between two desires: to put competitors in a negative light and push herself up on a moral pedestal on one hand, and express her cleverness and superiority in the industry on the other. Further, a conflict of identity surfaces when Lauder stresses how she always has the customers’ best at heart, yet it appears as though the seller in her often over-writes the narrative. She is to some extent aware of the conflict of interest as she emphasizes her aggressive sales techniques as justifiable due to her products working. She further does not mention any stories that might work against what female readers view as inspirational behavior.

Kroc barely convinces the reader of his giving nature when his contributions to charities are mentioned, as the reader can’t help raise the question of his lack of support towards his *own* family, and especially his daughter. He does not seem aware of the implication that follows the silence of his daughter, and how it tarnishes the identity of the honorable and giving leader who he so badly tries to project.

The authors all have in common the struggle of carrying the identity of an entrepreneur who on one side, and the role of a leader on the other. As they include stories of the entrepreneur that fights for his or her creation in a “merciless” world of business, there is a tendency where it appears they try to illustrate to the reader how they are not capitalistic, manipulative leaders of multinational corporations, but leaders true to their original values and beliefs that drove them as young, passionate entrepreneurs to begin with.

Schultz distances himself and his company from large multinational companies, simultaneously preaching the message of how leaders from large companies do not equal unethical leaders. Consequentially, it seems he unknowingly contradicts his own message as he, as the leader for a global company with 11,7 billion dollars in net revenues (Schultz,

2011) with a strong focus on ethics in business, chooses to *distance* himself from other large companies, instead of making himself the perfect example of his own message.

Lauder separates between the wise narrating “I”, in a position to teach and pass on knowledge, with the younger “I”, that is a naïve striver. With the younger version of Lauder as more vulnerable, it appears the narrating “I” seeks to demonstrate how she, as a powerful and confident woman today, once was young and inexperienced filled with self-doubt. Lauder’s focus on the “perfect balance” between family and business is revealed as not understood by the younger, ungrateful self:

*“I was not so wonderful and very patient. And too young and inexperienced to recognize what I had” (...) “my perfect balance” (Lauder, 1985:33).*

Lauder’s charisma, talent, excitement, impatience, and how she acts on instincts are features in all of her narrated identities in order to project an identity of a “born entrepreneur”. Kroc also makes sure to include the characteristics he seeks to portray early on, as the young self is a tough, hard working boy, who learns and grows professionally via apprenticeships.

Hence, it appears to be a tendency where the authors introduces the reader to a less sophisticated version of themselves as young:

*“That was just one of the many mistakes I would make (...)” (Kroc and Anderson, 1977:11).*

The younger version of Kroc is arrogant, naïve, and a striver to act sophisticated. Kroc’s narrating “I” come off as self-defensive, self-centered and highly critical towards many of the people mentioned towards the reader. The older narrator appears to be proud of his accomplishments and feels eligible to teach others based on his success.

Schultz’s narrating “I” teaches with a hint of superiority and justification different from the younger, humble entrepreneur illustrated earlier. It appears he tries to defend his historical figure as a leader for a giant global corporation, by representing an ideal leader with culturally ideal values.

The different “I”s of Schultz’s learn by mistakes: as a youngster with dreams about a life outside the projects, as a struggling entrepreneur who fights for his idea, and as a manager that faces problems with investors and employees. As with Lauder and Kroc, it appears he makes sure to include characteristics that support his ideological identity early on, as he characterizes the early versions of himself as visionary, bold and eager to learn.

There is a tendency to be spotted of the authors’ identities being influenced by the culture they live in. Strong sets of values and principles in the conduct of business may be seen as important to illustrate in order for readers to “buy in” on the stories, thus like and trust the identities: Lauder emphasizes family values, Kroc all his charity work, and Schultz focuses on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), ethical conduct and value to his stakeholders.

### The Genre of Autobiography

Lauder writes her stories chronologically, from her childhood and onwards. The last chapter can be read and interpreted as one grand advertisement, with tips and advice that encourage readers to buy her products. She divides the chapters in three main parts, where the first part is about her childhood, her passion for the industry, and how she was a visionary from a young age. In the second part she elaborates on her accomplishments, describes herself as a fighting entrepreneur that wins against the giants, while she simultaneously makes sure to namedrop those who went against her. The plot can be interpreted as a choice to direct the reader towards the identity she tries to project. In the third part she defies the cultural ideology of a humble entrepreneur as she stresses the ideal entrepreneur as a leader who should be proud, and entitled to brag. Her final tips on makeup and beauty appear to act as promotion for her brands, as she directs readers to take action and try her products.

It can be argued that Lauder loses touch as she gets too self-absorbed and superior, and further sidetracks on her stated purpose when mentioning people from her socialite world appear to be more important than her stated goal of offering valuable advice to her female readers. In the Epilogue her voice again shifts as it gets calmer and more philosophical, when she summarizes how it has been to live the American Dream and what her thoughts for her company’s future successes are. When her more superior voice takes over, Lauder addresses the reader saying she is aware she brags. When she lectures, her voice moves from polite and

classy, to at times condescending; at one point reader feel she indirectly “threatens”, as she claim how husbands might cheat if the readers do not buy her products. The strategy adds to the reader perception of the book being a final effort to market her company and brands before she retires.

Kroc’s voice is aggressive as he curses, “shouts”, and highly emotionally responds to critique. He follows a linear sequence where he starts with his childhood and moves onwards, with added flashbacks, reflections and interruptions that add “presence” to the narrator. The critical tone of voice can be interpreted as seeking to explain or justify him as a person and leader, as he lashes out on other people’s wrongdoings. The book appears to act as a medium to be able to sort out, explain and get revenge on situations that have affected Kroc during his career, hence it can be argued that the medium offers a last attempt to set the record straight about his company before he passes away.

Schultz begins every chapter with an inspirational quote, which can be viewed to be a way to connect his identity with the “greatest”. The stories are told chronologically as they start with his childhood and continue with stories from youth, entrepreneurial struggles, and the difficulties to shift to the role as a manager and later as leader. The book ends on a philosophical note, where he repeats his values and visions.

Schultz early on supports his ideological self, in a sense that appears to be of something mystical, or rather extraordinary:

*What's almost inconceivable to me today is how the ideal person came to me, just when I needed him most, to help articulate our common values and grow the company. Perhaps it was destiny" (Schultz and Yang, 1997:81).*

Schultz as a narrator is present as he often interrupts stories to comment and lecture. When the book draws to an end he compares himself to the misunderstood legend and address the reader directly as he hopes that he has reached the readers, and changed their mind about his company. This indicates how he wants to be remembered for his honorable business conducts, and he further repeats the importance of values with a quote from one of the Beatles’ members. He adds how his focus on values are “(...) *out of sync with the cynicism of the 1990’ s*” (Schultz and Yang, 1997:335), and compares himself to Forest Gump and baseball

player Cal Ripken as humble and talented visionaries. Earlier in the narrative he adds a similar note when he comments: *“I like to think of myself as a visionary (...)”* (Schultz and Yang, 1997:118).

The narrative is vivid with lively descriptions of people and places, and several chapters build up tension to prepare the reader for a fall, after several pages of stories of success. Issues or memories of his father appear multiple times in the book, perhaps to remind the reader of his vulnerability and human flaws. However, this appears to be a tendency among all authors when the narrators’ voices have been exceedingly preachy over a longer period of time.

Kroc begins his book with a catchy introduction that immediately captures the reader, and builds expectation of what is to come. The Preface reveals university lectures in 1976 as what sparked the interest for him to write his story. From a reader’s perspective, it has the effect that it adds evidence to his significance and talent in leadership, entrepreneurship and in storytelling.

Kroc’s stories follow stages of accomplishments as he learns from apprenticeship. He starts the first chapter with a comparison of his billionaire status to the poor, hard-working man that struggled to support his family in the early years. In chapter 5 he interrupts the until then linear sequence as he goes back to present time, then continues to go back and forth in time which may be said to add “life” to the narrative. He closes the book by adding conclusive remarks of what his company has achieved, and what goals he has for the company’s future. Kroc ensures the reader how he will never stop working, a statement he shares with Lauder. These endings support the entrepreneurial identity of the hard-working, self-made entrepreneur who “lives” for the company until the very end.

Schultz as the narrator comments on the stories where he makes wrong choices, which might indicate a strategy of demonstrating his ability to reflect on previous situations, thus admits to his shortcomings. Early on his narrative voice is humble and confident, yet scared and down-to-earth, then it gradually turns superior. This appears to be a result of his own perception of his unique morals and principles. However, Schultz differs from the other authors, as he does not mention business partners or employees by name: when he disagrees with anyone, he does so politely with a composed voice. The strategy works well for the reader, as he does not

“scream out” accusations like Lauder and Kroc that lead to negative associations to the ideal identities the leaders seek to project.

In the final chapters however, Schultz’s voice turns increasingly defensive and personal, as it appears the entrepreneur in him seeks to correct the image of his company, once and for all. The change in narrative affects how the reader interprets the underlying goal of publishing the autobiography; hence a certain amount of skepticism might develop from the reader’s point of view.

Schultz mentions the shock he felt when he learned how many customers saw his company as a faceless, corporate giant, and how this made him decide that he, as leader, should be more present in the company’s marketing strategies. The real purpose of the book may be interpreted as revealed to the reader, without the author’s awareness of the implications it has for the authenticity of the story and identity projected.

To provide evidence for her ideal identity, Lauder includes pictures that coincide with her stories, mentions many prominent names and her role as a socialite, and her extensive fans and customer base. As Lauder explains the dynamics of the industry at the time, she has the possibility of having the last word of the “truth” about the industry, and what role her brand had as opposed to the competitors. What Lauder writes in her narrative is historically relevant, as she claims to be first with certain in-store promotions such as gift-with-purchase, strategies that are still practiced today. The rest of the narrative however, can be judged to be of little interest to any leadership discourse.

Kroc uses pictures, connects his story to other famous entrepreneurs and appears to include media coverage that illustrates the identity he wants to demonstrate. He addresses earlier critique directed towards him and his company, from operators of unions and activists, to his large, publically criticized donation of Nixon’s campaign for presidency. The book can be seen as last chance for him to convince the public of his ideological identity, thus hopefully improve his company’s image.

For evidence to his stories, Schultz uses articles from renowned magazines and newspapers, quotes from employees, partners, family and friends, and mentions famous and influential people who supported him. He elaborates on how his employees signed out of labor unions, and how a book on sociology supports his idea of social benefits for employees. He adds

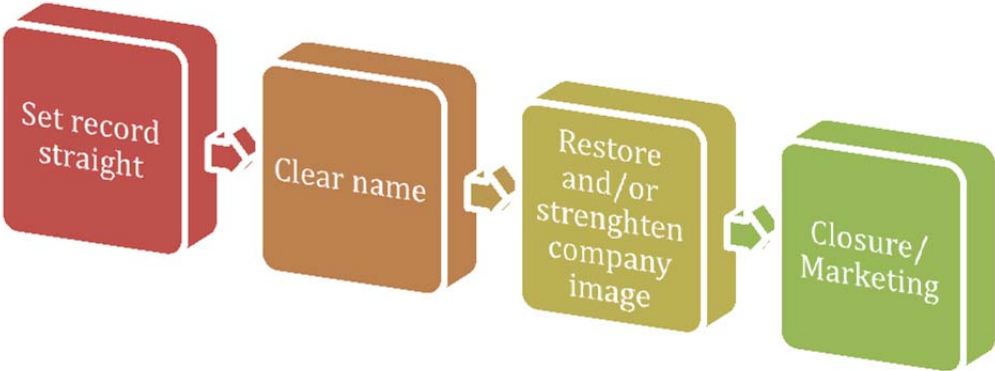
honorary rewards received, while his co-author adds under Acknowledgments how Schultz “(...) really is who he says he is”(Schultz and Yang, 1997:340) which in turn appears to be intended to convince the reader to believe in the identity projected.

Both Lauder and Schultz make sure to mention the struggle with identities as strong and confident entrepreneurs and leaders, yet emotional, insecure and self-doubting at times, both professionally and privately. The strategy appears to be a way to illustrate how they are able to reflect upon their multiple identities, and openly share “all” parts of their personalities, which can be said to be an already known tool within the genre of autobiography in order to project a balanced, likable character.

Summarized

There is a tendency of the autobiographies seeming to act as medium for the entrepreneurs, as founders, leaders and *souls* of the companies, to set the record straight and to clear their name.

Figure 2 *Proposed underlying purpose and goal for entrepreneurial leaders to publish an autobiography*



As illustrated in Figure 2, findings suggest a tendency where entrepreneurs create a strong connection between themselves as a person, and the “personality” of the company. It can be interpreted as entrepreneurs seeking to change the company’s image via the representation of their own ideological self, as they perceived to be the “face” of the company.

When the *company* name has been in the eye of the media and public scrutiny, it can be to great agitation and anger for the entrepreneurs. They may believe to have sacrificed most of their lifetime to build up the reputation of their company, and thus perceive it as a personal attack to their own identity. If the audience is “won over” by the story and identity projected, the authors can be reassured they have succeeded in the restoration of the company name, and thus strengthened its image. Knowing they have done their best marketing effort to improve the company image, they can reach a state of perceived “closure”.

The entrepreneurs can be argued to react personally, and with the same amount of despair and defense as when the leaders from well-established companies defend their identity and former leadership decisions. Findings from the books written by former leaders of well-established companies are presented next.

#### **4.2.3 Leaders From Established Companies**

##### Audience

Implicitly, it appears both Casey and Welch want the readers’ role to be “Students of Their Wisdoms”. Welch instructs the reader in his Prologue to use his book as inspiration only. He later addresses his successor and expresses his belief in him, and indirectly General Electric, while he along the narrative addresses the many people that did *not* support him.

Watson Jr. introduces his book as a story of him and his father, of his father’s company, and his lessons learned about power. He creates a relationship with the reader as a “Secret Sharer”, where his perceived honesty creates an aura of readers as “Friends” that listen to the author’s inner thoughts, which it appears he *must* share in order to get peace of mind. The method is effective as it captures the audience’s attention and trust from the very start.

Other addressees are his family and former employees, when Watson Jr. explains the reasons behind his wrongdoings and thanks them for their support. It appears that he goes to great lengths to defend his father, as he writes back to the historic figure and the great influence he



had in elite societies. Watson Jr. further critiques the Justice Department due to a lawsuit, which comes off as an attempt to defend the actions of his father's company.

Casey addresses the general public, his previous organizations, his students, the media, and the government. He credits those who supported him, critiques those who went against him, and goes about to explain his former actions to previous employees. He addresses his students as he elaborates on the great rewards of teaching, which for the reader comes off as a strategy to show honorable sides of him as a person while giving himself the legitimacy to write the book.

With the general public, it can be read and interpreted that Casey seeks to sort out doubts, rumors or misconceptions that have surrounded him as leader. He answers back to accusations, critiques many people, addresses critics claiming he was right with several of his predictions, and explains to the reader how he was mistakenly branded the "bad guy" as he understood what was necessary, when others did not.

Welch appears to aim to set the record straight, share his success story, preach his values, and clear his name when he addresses the public. Comments on his marriages, as to why they ended are elaborated on, and when he addresses the media in particular he explains how they created a distorted image of him in the public. He names particular companies, journalists, and specific citations in media, and focuses on his and the company's efforts regarding CSR related issues. The picture he draws of himself can be viewed as being that of the leader who has unmistakably been branded as cold-hearted and without moral, as he appears to think he always had stakeholder value in mind. How Casey critiques the media and their great lack of respect and moral, indicates how he seeks to add evidence to his claims:

*"(...) there were times when I was appalled at the lack of responsibility on the part of the media"* (Casey, Seaver and Valenti, 1997:295).

He further directs strong critique towards the government as he reveals unethical conducts, and unfair treatment from political figures. However, the criticism can be said to contradict his previous stories where he *himself* uses his social status for personal gains. He is aware of the contradiction, as he justifies it by its "innocent" nature. Yet seen from the eye of the reader, with his sarcastic and critical revelations about the governmental officials in

Washington and with his focus on ethics in the conduct of business, it has a negative effect on his projected identity as he fails to negotiate between the historical identity and the ideological identity.

### Ideological Identity

Casey describes himself as a humble, hard working, competitive and challenge-seeking business leader, whose focus is on principles and integrity in business conducts. He is a smart, social Irish man, a “Listener” and a “Learner”, and a great visionary. The Foreword added by his friend Jack Valenti in 1997, introduces the author with words of appraisal, which supports the identity projected by the narrator himself. “Casey’ s Law” appears throughout the stories as the “moral compass” based on his own lessons learned. The “law” acts as a durable model of the ideal identity he projects, and is often referred to throughout the chapters, to “hand over” the wisdom to the reader. “Murphy’ s Law” is the opposite moral; the negative voice in his head, which is based on the identity of his first boss. It is the negative voice that “tells” him he will fail or that something is impossible, and appears to be applied as a metaphor to enhance the virtuousness of his own law, while increasing the feeling of success and victory he achieves as he conquers obstacles.

Watson Jr. elaborate storytelling about the family feuds and the insecurities that followed led to several positive reviews from media at the time the book was published, in regards to the perceived honesty from the author. A true servant for his country, he comes off as the son who lived in the shadow of his father, the honest visionary leader that struggles with bitterness and a bad temper.

Welch is the funny, charismatic and unconventional business leader with a PhD background, who succeeds due to persistence, confidence and trust on his own instincts. The latter is the main characteristic portrayed in the book, and is included in the title of the book. He uses the feature *visionary* often, as with the other leaders, mentions his competitiveness and talent, and appears to balance his identity with humbleness, self-critique and vulnerability.

When Welch writes back to allegations of him being a cold-hearted business leader, he mixes funny stories of him as young and less wise with emotional stories of the significant influence from his mother, which can be interpreted as a strategy to gain sympathy. Welch uses his

origins as a tool where he refers to himself as the “*Irish street kid*” (Welch and Byrne, 2001:80), and includes other cultural models such as:

*“This is the story of a lucky man, an unscripted, unincorporate type who managed to stumble and still move forward (...), (...) a small-town American story”* (Welch and Byrne, 2001:xvi).

When Casey defends his previous strategies of letting go of hundreds of employees in economic downturns, a conflict of interest surfaces seen from a reader’s perspective: on the one hand he wants to defend his actions, while on the other hand he needs to conform to the ideal identity he seeks to portray. He can be said to fail to undertake the “good guy” image where he fights the giant corporative leaders, as the fact that he has fired many offers too big of a contradiction to the “Good-Hearted-Underdog” image he appears to construct. Further, stories where he plays “God” for selfish objectives are stories in sharp contrast to the identity portrayed as the honest, morally responsible businessman who takes a strong stance from exploitation of power for personal gains.

Finally “Casey’s Law” preaches always to look forward, yet he chooses to tell a story where he seeks revenge years after a defeat in a school contest. He explains it as an *exception* to his persona, yet it rather reflects a challenge in conforming to the constructed identity. The story of Casey’s wife’s death, where he falls into a depression and fails to follow his own law, presents a needed break in identity, thus strategic to his storytelling as to illustrate deeper emotions, and reveal how he falls short to his own moralization at times. The story is told when more “human” sides to him are sorely needed to balance the ideal persona projected, thus appears to have been done consciously by himself and the co-author.

Casey further negotiates between the strong businessman who does not care about what others say, and the older narrator who wants to set the record straight and get revenge. The impact of the latter increases towards the end of the book, as Casey goes in great depth with recent critique regarding his last job. Casey draws a picture of a “people-man” that did what was necessary to help the greater good, which could indicate how he tries to defend his historical identity projected in the media during his career. The narrator can be interpreted on one side as defensive, revenge seeking and self-important, while on the other side reflective, humble and witty. It can be argued that he wants to tell stories of success and struggle, reveal those

who betrayed him throughout the years, while illustrating how “Casey’s Law” prevailed; the ultimate payback towards his first boss.

Welch’s narrating “I” appears defensive, self-critical, self-absorbed and bragging, yet funny and honest. He shares stories of success, lessons learned, and elements from his social life in the business elite. The perceived shift in narrating tone of voice is when the narrated identity closes in on the narrator, as the writing turns increasingly vulnerable and reflective over his past. Watson Jr. also writes lessons learned of power and family. The narrating tone of voice is self-critical and reflective as he tells the story of the rivalry and hate, respect and love between himself and his father. The stories of his father’s brilliance, how he went from “Rags-to-Riches” and what he accomplished, appear to be narrative acts to honor his father. Simultaneously Watson Jr. reflects on how *he* is not, and never will be, as good as his father. He constantly compares himself to him:

*“Maybe he was trying to test me, but it was a test no one could pass”* (Watson Jr. and Petre, 1990:80).

Writing an autobiography seems to have been a therapeutic process for Watson Jr., as it acts as a medium where he can reflect on his fathers’ lack of encouragement and pride towards his son’s accomplishments. His father appears to be the main underlying addressee as he frequently reflects on how he should have understood his father better, while he forgives the past and wishes he could make up for all the fights and misunderstandings:

*“I can see it now from his [father] point of view”* (Watson Jr. and Petre, 1990:38)

*“(…) Dad was very much on my mind. (...) - underneath all that was a great love and respect. I couldn’t have resented him as much as I did unless it was based on some much deeper emotion”* (Watson Jr. and Petre, 1990:89).

Watson Jr.’s contribution to the American army, and American politics, appears to be elaborated on as a last attempt to please and impress the reader, his father and himself. As the narrated “I” closes in on the narrating “I”, fear of not being “someone” surfaces:

“(...) *my worst fear in retirement was of being dead in the water*” (Watson Jr. and Petre, 1990:411).

Watson Jr. addresses some chapters to other family members, where he as a somewhat wiser narrator, forgives them for their wrongdoings. The narrating “I” reflects a lonely old man, filled with regrets and longing for the family that has passed away. He further reveals the fear and anger that followed a the heart attack, and how it led to a need to get away from his father’s business:

“*I don’t think I understood at the time why (...), or the depth of emotional turmoil I was in*” (Watson Jr. and Petre, 1990:396).

“*Only in retrospect can I see how panicked I was*” (Watson Jr. and Petre, 1990:396-397).

This appears to be a significant shift for the narrated “I” as the younger, yet grown-up version of himself decides to release himself from his fathers company, and sail for months to “free” himself from the burden he was born to carry.

Welch balances the ideology of a great leader with his earlier years’ less-than-perfect features: full of himself and rebellious, the younger versions lack confidence, and are naïve, emotional and insecure. In the Author’s Note, Welch instructs the reader to see the “I” in the narrative as him *and* his supporters, yet the acclaimed value diminishes quickly, as stories of the author’s accomplishments and personal successes unfolds. Casey claims:

“(...) *I’ve never sought, nor ever desired, the limelight*” (Casey, Seaver and Valenti, 1997:243).

Yet he continues to portray an identity fond of himself and his talents. The comment rather reflects a *desire* to be the humble leader, as opposed to being truthful.

Mothers are mentioned as important figures in all the author’s lives, illustrated by for instance Welch’s final sentence in his Epilogue:

“*I wish my mother could have been there*” (Welch and Byrne, 2001:437).

For Watson Jr. the ideal leadership is his father's leadership which included political efforts, thus he makes sure to include his own accomplishments at those areas, in order to relate his own identity with that of his father's. His father's work in politics and business supports the ideological identity the author himself appears to demonstrate, via stories of his business and political accomplishments. Any situations of firing people, as Casey and Welch admit, are not told as his father's, and therefore his own, ideology of leadership is to protect all employees.

### The Genre of Autobiography

Casey's narrative plot is stories of "Fall and Enlightenment", a "Call to Action" via "Casey's Law", and a memoir of his life and career. His stories follow a chronological order, from childhood to present. He includes stories of his health problems when he addresses critique from the public, which steers his identity away from the historical identity of a "cold-hearted" corporate leader, towards the ideal self it appears he tries to project. Several chapters build up suspension with final phrases such as:

*"(...) the key question remained: how well would the chairman of the company, (...) and I hit if off?" (Casey, Seaver and Valenti, 1997:67).*

In the final chapters, Casey preaches about the importance of the reduction of drug abuse at work places, and encourages leaders to take action and become socially responsible as he directs a final plea to the next generation to adopt his view of ethical behavior. The earlier "careless" narrative voice that easily shake off criticism changes as the stories close in on present time, as Casey turns into an aggressive, hurt and appalled leader who appear to want to defend himself and his actions. It changes the perception of the goal of his book, as it is interpreted as a move from a want to share his memoirs to inspire and teach, towards an underlying need to clear his name, while offering payback to those who went against him. The leader's writing turns anxious, as he in the final chapters appears to set the record straight which reduces the trustworthiness of the identity projected.

Casey uses diverse strategies to add evidence to his stories and projected identity, and similar to the other CEOs, he mentions government officials by name, presidents and prominent businessmen that have supported him. He adds how renowned companies headhunted him

throughout his career, and the many great leaders that envied him for his characteristics and working morals. A special emphasis is made on his courage to stick with principles during disagreements, and how he has let partners take the credibility of his sacrifices and courageous actions on many occasions. A business magazine's positive rating of American Airlines, with Casey as CEO, appear to be strategically placed in the text when the stories comprise a turbulent period of his leadership.

Casey's dominant voice seems to teach on one side, and defend on the other. There are elements of superiority and sarcasm in his voice when he highlights how his leadership talents were common sense to him, for instance how he reasoned to create a successful strategy “ (...) *without too great a burnout of brain cells (...)*” (Casey, Seaver and Valenti, 1997:246), or how he makes fun of governmental officials as he understands how to manipulate them.

There is a tendency in Casey's book of him seeming to want to be remembered as a great man and businessman, a devoted American that contributed to the greater good for the American society. The leader writes negatively about many people and companies that affected his reputation in the public domain. An implication with Casey's narrative is when he quotes himself and others, or writes long dialogues with quotes of others, without him having been present when the situation took place. This acts as a reminder to the reader that many employees and partners have contributed with their memories to the project, diminishing the sense of a personal revelation from the author's side.

Watson Jr.'s narrative plot can be read as “Confessional Self-Examinations”: the stories are chronologically written, with recurrent references to his father along the narrative. The pattern consists of highs and lows, confidence and insecurity, seemingly on the path to please his father. The perceived honest voice of the narrator works as a tool to gain sympathy and trust from the reader. The end signalizes Watson Jr.'s accomplishments to have honored his family name, which adds coherence to the story as the main pattern in the narrative seem to be the quest to satisfy his father. The author returns to the war site from his time as Air Force pilot, where he finds “peace of mind”, as the work place was where he gained confidence as a young man. His lifelong need for confirmation appear to have come to an end, as he realized he has accomplished something on his own, outside of his father's achievements; thus the story can be interpreted to end with a symbol of his unique contribution to America.

Welch's plot reflects "Fall and Enlightenment", with advice offered in the final chapters based on his experiences. As with the other authors, the stories begin with his childhood and then chronically move through business and private success stories. His golf triumphs and social life are included, as similar to the other authors, which appears to be in order to transfer legitimacy to areas outside business. He ends his story as he presents the next CEO, which can be interpreted as him being happy and content with his final choices and accomplishments.

Welch's tone of voice is nostalgic as he elaborates on his developments towards success. The narrator's voice turns defensive and emotional when it appears he sets off to set the record straight, and feed evidence into the stories to support his claims. In the Epilogue, his voice changes again to that of gratitude and affection as he acknowledges people who have supported him throughout his career. He further mentions how he longs for his mother to witness his accomplishments, which reveals a vulnerability and fragility not exposed before in the narrative. It makes the reader empathize with him, and with his final Afterword from 2003, he offers the reader a last chance to reflect on his identity as a good-hearted and talented person and leader.

The bitterness in Watson Jr.'s narrative is dominant, together with a perceived desperate voice of a lonely man longing for approval. He uses letters as evidence to his stories, quotes speeches he made and cites newspaper articles that speak highly of him. Quotes from letters received from prominent businessmen and politicians, after his father's death support Watson Jr.'s claim of his father's importance. A letter addressed to Hitler seeks to defend his father's contact with the German leader prior to the war. Other stories revolve around the relationship he had with presidents, thus can be interpreted as evidence for him to transfer legitimacy to areas where his father also left a trace in history.

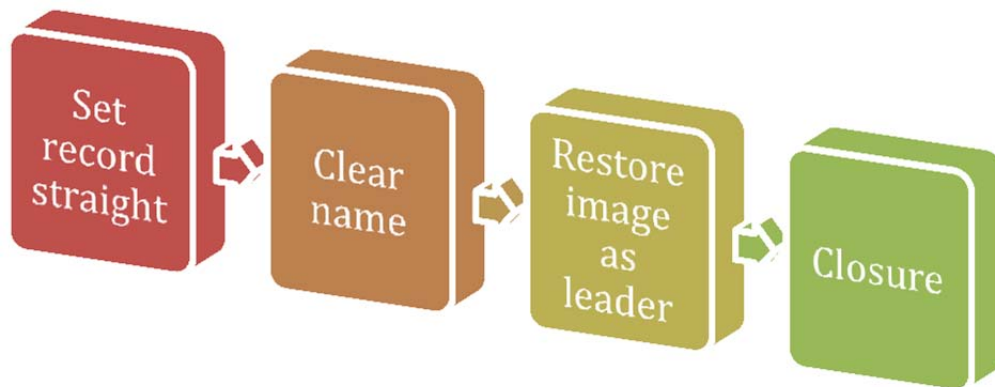
Welch uses letters and handwritten drawings to prove his creativity and contribution, mentions speeches held, and elaborates on his relationship with prominent business people. He adds how *Forbes* printed one of his ideas, and uses the Appendices to seemingly convince the reader of his creative side as the "evidence" supports his stories of how he creatively scribbled down ideas on napkins and small sheets of paper.



## Summarized

For the leaders from established companies, the medium appears to act as a last attempt to set the record straight to restore their own image, and further achieve a perceived “closure” as retirees.

Figure 3 *Proposed underlying purpose and goal for business leaders from established companies to publish an autobiography*



As demonstrated in Figure 3, the former CEOs seem to attempt to write back to the stories that have scripted them as certain personas in the public eye: as they seek to set the record straight, their objective can be interpreted as trying to get the final word regarding events concerning competitors, partners, media and government. These incidents appear to have affected them greatly throughout their careers, as it has affected the overall public opinion of them.

If they convincingly apply the medium to tell stories that project their ideal self, their name might be cleared and their image as business leaders restored, once and for all. It can be argued that the ultimate hope is of the audience believing in the ideological identity developed and described, so that the leaders can ultimately get closure.

As the third and final part of the research design, and as part of the overall research question, the findings presented are further discussed in context with leadership discourse, through the lens of the discourse on RoL.

## **Chapter 5, Discussion**

The current findings reveal strong indications of there being a dynamic between audience, ideological identity and use of the genre of autobiography: leaders seem to construct their identity according to cultural ideas of ideal leadership, which is further developed with help from co-authors. The autobiographical genre appears to be used to create a story to match the identity developed, with narrative plots and patterns that build up under the goal to be able to impress the readers. If successful, it can be interpreted as the leaders hoping to have influenced the public perception of who they are, thus improving their image and reputation.

A further comparison between the two groups of leaders in this study revealed tendencies of noteworthy differences between the two groups of leaders in regards to the underlying dynamics of the identity development, which consequentially led to differences in the underlying goal using the medium to reach an audience. Why the results appeared in the analysis is discussed further through the theoretical lens of RoL.

The current findings contribute to both strengthen the presence of RoL as a viable theory in leadership discourse, and to further extend the theory. The latter is done by adding a suggestion of leadership autobiographies as important components in leaders' management of own reputation and image. The chapter ends with some final reflections of the method and theory applied.

## 5.1 Leadership Autobiographies - A Romantic Notion

Leaders can be seen to be aware of how “leadership” as a term can assert high value and significance among people (Meindl and Ehrlich, 1987), thus in order to influence their own reputation, it would be logical for leaders to pursue the goal to align their previously known historical identity towards a more *ideal* identity favored in society. Potency and reliability are some of the characteristics people consider to be a part of leadership (Meindl and Ehrlich, 1987), thus appear to be popular to include in communication of one’s identity as a leader in order to appear authentic and trustworthy. The current findings also reflect such tendencies in terms of leaders’ elaborate use of success stories, and constant preaching of values and integrity.

To appear trustworthy is not the simplest task in an increasingly complex business world, and where stories of fraud and unethical behavior have flourished in media in the aftermath of the 2008-2009 financial crisis.

*“(...) we need to go well beyond ethics to understand what makes people and companies trustworthy. Just because a person is ethical does not mean people will or should trust them!”*  
(Hurley, 2012 cited in Green 2012a:1).

It can be argued that a strategy when the life story of a famous leader is “revealed” is to draw upon cultural models cherished by society, such as stories of “Rags-to-Riches”, or stories of a struggling entrepreneur who, against all odds accomplishes the American Dream. Brockmeier and Carbaugh (2001:287) add to this notion, as they emphasize how the self and the narratives applied to project an identity results from culture and the discourse the authors are part of:

*“(...) “my story” can never be wholly mine, alone, because I define and articulate my*

*existence with and among others, through the various narrative models — including literary genres, plot structures, metaphoric themes, and so on — my culture provides”.*

With the the application of familiar models of identities in autobiographies, leaders can attribute themselves the status as a role model, thus laying the grounds to be eligible to inspire others. With the careful selection of characteristics connected to charismatic leaders, the audience in turn expects inspirational stories (Bligh, Kohles and Pillai, 2005). This heroic perception is particularly present in relation to entrepreneurs, as there is a tendency in today’s society to view successful entrepreneurs as heroes; a “*romanticized figure who is going to come in and save the day*” (Matias, 2011).

As the current findings indicate, the audience might play a significant role in how leaders develop their identities, as they draw on the cultural ideals of leadership present in their culture. In the conduct of leadership rests an artistic notion in being able to create an ideological identity (Grint, 2002 cited in Jackson, 2005:1318), and this is what the leaders appears to pursue as they choose the characteristics that they, and the culture they are part of, accept as qualities that are admirable, and which appear authentic.

In this view, autobiographies may become a desirable medium to use, where professional writers can be hired as co-authors and be expected to exploit the genre to meet audience expectancy. The romantic notion of leaders goes hand in hand with the romantic narratives of fairytale-like stories of failure and success, of struggles and conquests. The storylines can be argued as “*acts of legitimization*”, as they seek to defend earlier decisions and rationalize prior behavior, which is in line with what Meyer and Rowan (1977 cited in Staw, McKechnie and Puffer, 1983:583) found of leaders’ goal to legitimize their actions to the public, in order to satisfy the social demands to appear rational and knowledgeable as a leader. The symbolic management of stakeholders involves the art of how to present good or bad news (Staw, McKechnie and Puffer, 1983): autobiographies as a narrative genre offer the brush to paint a picture of the ideal self who the leaders want to portray.

As the stories build up around tales of heroic figures, there is a tendency of the authors simultaneously talking negatively about others: partners that allegedly went behind their backs, the “big corporate giants”, family members they had disputes with or former friends. As the reader continues on, the narratives shift from happy and inspirational voices, to perceived declarations of bitterness and despair. As part of the process to change the reader’s perception of them as leaders, it can be argued that the leaders diminish other people in their stories, to that of less honorable and heroic than themselves. However, this is not uncommon in the world of business and politics, yet as Green (2012:2) amplify:

*“Trashing individuals’ reputations is a corrosive way to defend an institution’s reputation. Ironically, that kind of act tends to destroy the institution’s perceived trustworthiness. Which in turn eventually destroys their reputation. Which eventually destroys their influence”.*

The leaders attribute success and failure to both themselves and others, which can be interpreted as a means to balance the attribution of responsibility in favor of their own. As they seek to convince the audience of their “true” identity, the narrative plots can be seen as filled with self-presentational biases (Salancik and Meindl, 1984). It is a “*retrospective rationality*” (Staw, 1980 cited in Bettman and Weitz, 1983:165-166) behind the choice of medium, as the leaders appear to use the genre to impress the audience with success credited to themselves, if ever so discretely or indirect. Ultimately, this indicates an attempt to credit success to the leader him-/herself, while making sure the audience comprehends how failures were due to external factors, hence not directly the leader’s fault alone. On a contextual level, it reflects the existence of self-serving attributions found by Staw, McKechnie and Puffer (1983), as there is a tendency of leaders actively and ruthlessly attributing blame to external factors in order to clear their own name.

Noteworthy is how the leaders and co-authors balance the self-serving attribution delicately, as if aware of the pitfall that follows if *all* failures are attributed to external factors. As Salancik and Meindl (1984) found, it pays off to attribute parts of the blame to ones own leadership, as the act of accepting blame illustrates how unforeseen events did indeed happen, yet are under control. In line with Starbuck’s notion of organizations having to meet the social demands of rationality (1983 cited in Staw, McKechnie and Puffer, 1983:583), it can be argued that autobiographical stories are handpicked to defend prior decisions heavily scrutinized by stakeholders as being rational and logic responses at the time.

The genre offers a unique medium to defend actions, as they are put in between captivating fairytale-like stories that project a highly talented and honorable leader who did what was “necessary”. It offers a chance to communicate stories that bring out empathy and understanding from the audience, in other ways than via thirty minutes news clips or through statements in newspaper articles. Autobiographies offer a lively and entertaining narrative where comments from the author help create a “face” to the stories being told.

The act of self-presentation is perceived to reflect charisma in some societies (Groves, 2005) hence the act of publishing ones life story already creates a certain kind of expectation among readers of the leader’s identity. It all comes down to the ability the co-author has to deliver a story that captures the audience from beginning to end, a story that manages to create a “myth” around the leader with the help of a carefully constructed identity that impresses and inspires.

Most readers are aware of autobiographies as written “with” co-authors and that, as part of all genres, there are certain narrative frames and structures that must be followed. As the current findings from the six autobiographies studied revealed, few attempts were made to hide the help from the co-author, and stories are openly attributed as a result of contributors’ memories.

Lakoff and Johnston (1980 cited in Smith, 2005:11) claim it is of less importance whether a narrative is true, than whether it is coherent and matches the *perceived* reality. As Benjamin Wilkomirski stressed, when accused for fraud for the book “Fragments: Memories of a Childhood 1939–1948” from 1996, it was always up to each reader individually to interpret his story as fiction or truth (Gibbons and Moss, 1999 cited in Anderson, 2001:132). Thus, although outside of the scope of the current thesis, it is possible that stories are accepted as true versus merely fabrication, as long as the leader’s identity is not too far outside of what the audience expects, and the stories match the identity projected. This is however only speculations and inquires further studies, yet it is likely that this assumption is what writers of autobiographies use as a guide of how to produce the final text. The books are a source of entertainment and, as part of the stated goals of the authors, a source of *inspiration* for readers.

Charismatic leaders “win” people over as they vividly express ideologies and images for the future, while they amplify chosen values and identities (Shamir, House and Arthur, 1993). The autobiography is argued to be a tool for successful CEOs from established companies to express their values, and for entrepreneurs to connect their personal values to that of their company’s. As Smith (2005:10) emphasizes: “*stories about the lives of entrepreneurs are inspirational and influential in the creation of effective role models*”, a fact leaders appear to exploit when they emphasize their books as a purely “honorary” desire to inspire new generations with details from their “extraordinary”, successful business lives.

Although the stated goal of “inspiration only” slowly evolves to reveal a tendency of strategic goals of impression management, the genre still rides along the romantic notion readers have of entrepreneurs and business leaders as heroes. As mentioned by Bligh, Kohles and Pillai (2005:347):

*“(...) in the context of a fallen leader and an unsuccessful administration, followers are increasingly receptive to an incoming leadership ‘hero’ who can ride in on the proverbial white horse (or perhaps Hummer in this case) and ‘save the day’”.*

As Meindl, Ehrlich and Dukerich (1985) found, people have a romanticized and heroic view of leaders in terms of what they do, their abilities and the overall effect they have on people’s lives. This can be argued to maintain the popularity of leadership autobiographies as the stories build on this particular notion: leaders construct an ideological identity based on what the audience and society perceive as an ideal leader.

The suggested development of an ideal identity is a process where the leader and the hired co-author work together to add and exclude stories that fit the developed identity. The co-author further uses his or her narrative skills to draw upon the genre, and create a fairytale-like story cherished by society that, in line with what RoL refers to as misattribution towards leaders, supports a heroic vision of leaders. It appears leaders seek to impress the audience and thus “win” them over, as a strategic act in line with RoL’s notion of impression management, where the objective is to change the reputation and image into their own favor. It implies a tendency where leaders take advantage of the romantic view of leaders and leadership, and

use the autobiography as a medium to manage their reputations to ultimately affect the public opinion of what person and leader they “truly” are.

This hope, or rather, this *expectation* that readers will be impressed by the story, and be convinced of the identity illustrated in the narrative appears to be grounded on prior knowledge of misattributions of leaders on one hand, and faith in the genre of autobiography on the other. What contribution the current findings are predicted to have in today’s leadership discourse is elaborated on next.

## **5.2 Contribution to Leadership Discourse**

The current findings confirm how the theories of RoL still play an important role in leadership discourse, as findings suggest how it leaders can manage their reputations based on self-serving attributions in the development of ideological identities in autobiographies. The findings further extend the knowledge of the theories as it reveals a tendency of the development of ideal identities in autobiographies as part of a strategy of impression management. The current thesis demonstrates how autobiographies to this date have been overlooked as important components in the management of leaders’ image and reputation, as previous studies of RoL have lacked any connections of the theory to the genre of leadership autobiographies.

In addition, the current findings provide some indications that may support Smith’s (2005:17) earlier suggestion of entrepreneurs being open to lower their moral on the fabrication of their stories in biographies, as the books are used as “*socially exploitable equity*” to manage reputations. However, further research is needed to gain a better insight on the topic.

## **5.3 Reflections on Method and Theory**

Some theorists (Pedersen, 2009 or Phillips and Hardy, 2002) stress the lack of any mainstream definitions or general agreements of how to apply discourse analysis to obtain best results within the practice of social sciences. Naturally, this implicates researcher’s



comprehension of the method used, thus possibly the evaluation of the study. However, measures have been made in order to make the study as transparent and comprehensible for the reader as possible.

As a researcher I have influenced the outcome of the findings in the analysis and interpretation of the narratives, thus other studies conducted by other researchers may present different results. The complexity of critical discourse analysis as research design also forces the exclusion of several contextual factors that might have been of great relevance to the study, for example studies of American culture or of the reader perception of autobiographies. However, the contextual factors included are regarded as sufficient in order to reach the objectives of the current thesis.

As a scholar from leadership studies, I am not fully excluded from the romantic notion of leaders and their status as “heroes”. Meindl (1990 cited in Bligh, Kolhes and Pillai, 2011:1059) emphasizes the implications of science related to leadership, as a strong belief in leadership tends to create expectations beyond reality for the researcher as well. However, although the current study focuses on theories of RoL, it is not claimed to be a definite or “only” truth. It is an interpretation of a genre’s role in a discourse and therefore part of an ongoing discussion, open for critical assessments.

Some researchers direct weaknesses to the RoL theory as they claim leaders are important for company success (Bligh, Kolhes and Pillai, 2011). In a study of value connected to successful executives’ performances in Fortune 500 companies, Barrick et al (1991) found how executives do have significant impact on economic performance. They further suggest how Meindl and his colleagues’ results (Meindl, Ehrlich and Dukerich, 1985 and Meindl and Ehrlich, 1987) were due to the use of inexperienced judges, as their use of financial analysts as judges lead to quite opposite results. Other studies direct critique to the theory’s focus on a single leader, as it is “*only through cooperation and coordinated action that these leaders are able to achieve a high level of financial performance for their organization*” (Yukl, 2008:716), while House, Spangler and Woycke (1991) demonstrate the importance of charisma and personality to leaders’ effectiveness in a world that grow increasingly complex.

It should however be noted that Meindl’s (1995 cited in Hansen, Ropo and Sauer, 2007:545) goal was to remind readers of the importance of leadership for people in organizations, not to

diminish it. The same applies for the current thesis, as it is nowhere implied that leaders are not significant in organizations, or that the romantic view of leaders is either right or wrong for that matter.

Leadership has multiple meanings and frames of reference among people: when people interpret and judge leader's attributes they draw on individual experiences, social interactions and points of reference via cognitive processes such as rationalization, liking, and projection, to explain leaders' actions, attitude and decisions (Bresnen, 1995). As stated before, audience perception of leadership autobiographies are excluded from the current analysis, as its complex nature lies beyond the scope of the current thesis.

House and Aditya (1997:462) raise an important issue with leadership theories in general, as most leadership literature is based on a limited set of assumptions that strongly reflects Western, industrialized culture, and especially American, individualistic values:

*“All of the currently prominent theories are authored by American scholars. One limitation of these theories is that they do not address the issue as to whether they can be generalized to other cultures. It is very likely that most of these theories are culture-bound, reflecting U.S. assumptions, values, and beliefs”.*

This implication is noteworthy in relation to the current study's findings as well, and therefore elaborated on as a last note under the final chapter.

## **Chapter 6, Conclusion**

The current study of leaders and autobiographies has been motivated by the apparent contradictions of leaders communicating their success stories, based on pure motives of desires to inspire next generations of leaders. Questions regarding leaders' true goal of contribution to leadership discourse led to the formulation of the following research question:

***How do the presumed authors of autobiographies attempt to influence the discourse on leadership?***

A narrative analysis was conducted in order to analyze relevant aspects connected to leadership autobiographies. Findings indicated there is a process of identity development among leaders where ideal identities are formed based on culturally available models, in order to hopefully impress the audience via the genre of autobiography, and ultimately affect the public perception of who they are as people and leaders. Put in context with theories of RoL, leadership autobiographies are suggested to be important components in the symbolic management of stakeholders, as readers convinced by the stories are expected to further believe in the ideological identity portrayed.

As the medium is popular between former business leaders from established companies and entrepreneurs, the leaders were divided into two separate groups whereas a sub-question was raised:

***What are the differences and similarities between leaders of established businesses and entrepreneurs?***

A further comparison of the narrative analysis of the data collection indicated important differences in regards to the aspects of identity development and in underlying goals. All authors claimed their goal were to inspire; yet there was a tendency of the entrepreneurs using the medium as a tool of impression management to ultimately change the *company* perception. Their identity as a person and a leader appeared strongly connected to the identity of the company, thus marketing efforts of company name were interpreted to be the ultimate goal in order to reach a sense of “closure”. Former leaders from well-established companies were found to seemingly use autobiographies as a strategy of managing their own reputation, with the ultimate goal to improve their own image as a leader and person, in order to reach a final “closure”.

Due to limited scope and a narrow research question, there are several limitations to the findings presented in the current thesis. The focus within the narrative analysis has been set to involve audience, identities and use of genre as this was regarded as of greatest significance in order to answer to the research question. Naturally, several topics of interest, such as the processes of memory and psychological factors that trigger memories and self-perception are excluded.

As mentioned earlier, reader perception is not studied in the current thesis. A study that entails interviews, focus groups or surveys on reader's perception in regards to for instance the perceived authenticity of identities projected and stories told, are relevant to study as an extension to the findings of leader's hope, or most likely *assumption*, that readers believe in the identities and stories told.

The findings of the current thesis are based on a data collection where only one out of six books has been written by a female leader. Further studies of female leaders and their use of the medium, or comparative studies of leadership autobiographies written by men and women respectively would be applicable.

On a discursive level, the restrictions of the data collection limit the findings to be that of one culture only, namely the American business culture, similar to most leadership studies discussed in the thesis. As cultural differences are excluded from the current findings, it would be relevant to include other countries' use of the medium, based on the current findings. As collectivism prevails in Scandinavia where the current thesis is published, the American individualism (House and Aditya, 1997) that forms the models of representation in the analysis can be said to limit the findings to be useful for American-related research only. However, the current study's findings offer valuable insights to bring further into a discussion of autobiographies and the romance of leaders in European or Asian business cultures.

In addition, the findings have only been discussed in relation to theories of impression management and attribution of leadership, as part of the discourse on romance of leaders and leadership. Other results and conclusions are likely to occur if discussed in relation to other theories within leadership and sociology, or further within other fields of study such as literature, linguistics, history or psychology.

Focus on the historical aspect would be of great relevance as the current findings help raise an important question: As leaders of large companies and as significant contributors to American business, what does it imply to the authenticity of company and economic history if leadership autobiographies are found to fabrications, based on attempts to change the leaders' own stories and identities into the author's own favor? In the years following the financial crisis discussed above, questions of this nature appear to be of even greater relevance than before, thus worth investigating further. Hopefully the contribution of the current study is only the start of a continuant, fruitful discussion of autobiographies and their role in, not only leadership discourse, but in other discourses in society as well.

## **Bibliography**

### Books and Articles

Anderson, L.R., 2001. *Autobiography*. London: Routledge

Barrick, M.R., Day, D.V., Lord, R.G. & Alexander, R.A., 1991. "Assessing the Utility of Executive Leadership", *The Leadership Quarterly*, 1991, vol. 2; no. 1; pp. 9-22.

Bettman, J.R. & Weitz, B.A., 1983. "Attributions in the Board Room: Causal Reasoning in Corporate Annual Reports", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 1983, vol. 28; no. 2; pp. 165-183.

Bligh, M.C., Kohles, J.C. & Pillai, R., 2005. "Crisis and Charisma in the California Recall Election", *Leadership*, 2005, vol. 1; no. 3; pp. 323-352.

Bligh, M.C., Kohles, J.C. & Pillai, R., 2011. "Romancing Leadership: Past, Present, and Future", *The Leadership Quarterly*, 2011, vol. 22; no. 6; pp. 1058-1077.

Bresnen, M.J., 1995. "All Things To All People? Perceptions, Attributions, and Constructions of Leadership", *The Leadership Quarterly*, 1995, vol. 6; no. 4; pp. 495-513.

- Brockmeier, J. & Carbaugh, D., 2001. "Studies in Autobiography, Self and Culture" in *Narrative and Identity*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Pub. Co.
- Casey, A.V., Seaver, D. & Valenti, J., 1997. *Casey's Law: If Something Can Go Right, It Should*, 1st edn. New York: Arcade Publishing, Inc.
- D'Aveni, R.A., 1990. "Top Managerial Prestige and Organizational Bankruptcy", *Organization Science*, [Online], vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 121-142. Available from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2635058>. [7/25/2012].
- Detel, W., 2001. "Social Constructivism" in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, eds. Smelser, N.J. & Baltes, P.B. Oxford: Pergamon, pp. 14264-14267.
- de Vries, R.E. & van Gelder, J.L., 2005. "Leadership and Need for Leadership: Testing an Implicit Followership Theory" in *Implicit Leadership Theories: Essays and Explorations*, eds. Schyns, B. & Meindl, J., Information Age Publishing, pp. 277-303.
- DeVault, M., 1994. "Narrative Analysis", *Qualitative Sociology*, 1994, vol. 17; no. 3; pp. 315-317.
- Eakin, P.J., 1992. *Touching the World, Reference in Autobiography*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J.
- Eakin, P.J., 2004. "What Are We Reading When We Read Autobiography?", *NARRATIVE*, vol. 12; no. 2; pp. 121-132.
- Fairclough, N., 1995a. "General Introduction"; "Introduction Section C" in *Critical Discourse Analysis - The Critical Study of Language*, ed. Candlin, C.N. Essex: Longman Group Limited, pp. 1-20; 185-186.
- Fairclough, N., 1995b. "Discourse, Change and Hegemony" in *Critical Discourse Analysis- The Critical Study of Language*, ed. Candlin, C.N. Essex: Longman Group Limited, pp. 91-111.
- Fairclough, N., 1995c. "Discourse and Text: Linguistic and Intertextual Analysis Within Discourse Analysis" in *Critical Discourse Analysis- The Critical Study of Language*, ed. Candlin, C.N. Essex: Longman Group Limited, pp. 187-213.

- Gibson, D.E. & Schroeder, S.J., 2003. "Who Ought To Be Blamed? The Effects Of Organizational Roles On Blame And Credit Attributions", *International Journal of Conflict Management*, 2003, vol. 14; no. 2; pp. 95-117.
- Groves, K.S., 2005. "Linking Leader Skills, Follower Attitudes, and Contextual Variables via an Integrated Model of Charismatic Leadership", *Journal of Management*, 2005, vol. 31; no. 2; pp. 255-277.
- Hansen, H., Ropo, A. & Sauer, E., 2007. "Aesthetic Leadership", *The Leadership Quarterly*, 2007, vol. 18; no. 6; pp. 544-560.
- House, R.J., Spangler, W.D. & Woycke, J., 1991. "Personality and Charisma in the U.S. Presidency: A Psychological Theory of Leader Effectiveness", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 1991, vol. 36; no. 3; pp. 364-396.
- House, R.J. & Aditya, R.N., 1997. "The Social Scientific Study of Leadership: Quo Vadis?", *Journal of Management*, 1997, vol. 23; no. 3; pp. 409-473.
- Jackson, B., 2005. "The Enduring Romance of Leadership Studies", *Journal of Management Studies*, 2005, vol. 42; no. 6; pp. 1311-1324.
- Kroc, R.A. & Anderson, R., 1977. *Grinding It Out: The Making of McDonald's*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Lauder, E., 1985. *Estée: A Success Story*, 1st edn. New York: Random House, Inc.
- Meindl, J.R., 1995. "The Romance of Leadership As a Follower-Centric Theory: A Social Constructionist Approach", *The Leadership Quarterly*, 1995, vol. 6; no. 3; pp. 329-341.
- Meindl, J.R., Ehrlich, S.B. & Dukerich, J.M., 1985. "The Romance of Leadership", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 1985, vol. 30; no. 1; pp. 78-102.
- Meindl, J.R. & Ehrlich, S.B., 1987. "The Romance of Leadership and the Evaluation of Organizational Performance", *The Academy of Management Journal*, 1987, vol. 30; no. 1; pp. 91-109.
- Neuendorf, K.A., 2002. *The Content Analysis Guidebook*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

- Pedersen, O.K. 2009, *Discourse Analysis*. Copenhagen Business School; International Center for Business and Politics.
- Petersen, A., Barns, I., Dudley, J. & Harris, P., 1999. *Poststructuralism, Citizenship and Social Policy*. London/ New York: Routledge.
- Phillips, N. & Hardy, C., 2002. *Discourse Analysis, Investigating Processes of Social Construction*. California/ London: SAGE/ Thousand Oaks.
- Salancik, G.R. & Meindl, J.R., 1984. "Corporate Attributions as Strategic Illusions of Management", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, June 1984, vol. 29; no. 2; pp. 238-254.
- Schultz, H. & Yang, D.J., 1997. *Pour Your Heart Into It*. New York: Hyperion.
- Schyns, B., Felfe, J. & Blank, H., 2007. "Is Charisma Hyper-Romanticism? Empirical Evidence from New Data and a Meta-Analysis", *Applied Psychology*, 2007, vol. 56; no. 4; pp. 505-527.
- Shamir, B., House, R.J. & Arthur, M.B., 1993. "The Motivational Effects of Charismatic Leadership: A Self-Concept Based Theory", *Organization Science*, Nov., 1993, [Online], vol. 4; no. 4; pp. 577-594. Available from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2635081>. [7/26/2012].
- Smith, R., 2005. "The Fabrication of Entrepreneurial Fable: A Biographical Analysis", *The Journal of Private Equity*, 2005, vol. 8; no. 4; pp. 8-19.
- Smith, S. & Watson, J., 2010. *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*, 2nd edn. Minneapolis: Minneapolis University of Minnesota Press.
- Staw, B.M., Mckechnie, P.I. & Puffer, S.M., 1983. "The Justification of Organizational Performance", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 1983, vol. 28; no. 4; pp. 582-600.
- Sutton, R.I. & Callahan, A.L., 1987. "The Stigma of Bankruptcy: Spoiled Organizational Image and Its Management", *The Academy of Management Journal*, [Online], vol. 30; no. 3; pp. 405-436. Available from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/256007>. [7/25/2012].



Watson Jr., T.J. & Petre, P., 1990. *Father, Son & Co.* New York: Bantam Books, Random House, Inc.

Welch, J. & Byrne, J.A., 2001. *Straight From The Gut.* New York: Business Plus.

Westphal, J.D. & Zajac, E.J., 1994. "Substance and Symbolism in CEOs' Long-Term Incentive Plans", *Administrative Science Quarterly, Sep., 1994*, [Online], vol. 39; no. 3; pp. 367-390. Available from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2393295>. [8/21/2012].

Williams, J., 2005. *Understanding Poststructuralism.* London: Acumen Publishing Ltd.

Yukl, G., 2008. "How Leaders Influence Organizational Effectiveness", *The Leadership Quarterly, 2008*, vol. 19; no. 6; pp. 708-722.

#### Websites

Green, C., 2012. 7/03/2012-last update, *Trust, Influence and Reputation* [Homepage of Forbes], [Online]. Available: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/trustedadvisor/2012/07/03/trust-influence-and-reputation/2/> [8/01/2012].

Green, C.H., 2012a. 1/19/2012-last update, *Books We Trust: The Decision to Trust by Bob Hurley* [Homepage of Trusted Advisor Associates LLC], [Online]. Available: <http://trustedadvisor.com/trustmatters/books-we-trust-the-decision-to-trust-by-bob-hurley> [8/01/2012].

Green, C.H., 2012b. 6/15/2012-last update, *Books We Trust: The Three Power Values by David Gebler* [Homepage of Trusted Advisor Associates LLC], [Online]. Available: <http://trustedadvisor.com/trustmatters/books-we-trust-the-3-power-values-by-david-gebler> [8/01/2012].

Matias, D. 2011, 5/17/2011-last update, *Are Entrepreneurs Modern Day Heroes?* [Homepage of Learn Liberty], [Online]. Available: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ChEImWVj\\_kY&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ChEImWVj_kY&feature=player_embedded) [8/15/2012].

Schultz, H., 2011. 2012-last update, *Fiscal 2011 Annual Report*, Starbucks Corporation,  
[Homepage of Starbucks] [Online]. Available to download as pdf:  
<http://investor.starbucks.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=99518&p=irol-reportsannual> [8/22/2012].

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

### FRAMEWORK FOR READING THE LEADERSHIP AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

#### The “I”

- How distinguish among the historical, narrating, narrated and ideological “I”(chapter 3)?
- Position of the *historical “I”* in the cultural world → prominent figure? What ID differences are important (gender, race, class, occupation etc.)?
- *Narrating “I”*: what is the tone (defensive, self-important, self-critical)? What stories does it want to tell? What is the gap between *narrating I* and the *narrated I*? Is the narrated I less sophisticated, and does it pay more attention to young/naïve or successful version of self? Are there many narrated I’s?

*Ideological “I”*: meaning of lives at the time written → what was the ideology the narrator was living under (Relationship of individual vs. collective, of history and time)? What public roles seem important/privileged?

- ➔ As a contribution to discourse
- ➔ Certain things are told, others left out → their ideological view of leadership

#### Identity

1. Models of ID at that time?
2. Any models used to represent the subject?
3. What are feat and characteristics of the ID?
4. What qualities/ experiences are excluded in order to conform to particular models of ID? Is there different ID in order or alternation (rotation)?
5. How does narrator negotiate fictions of ID and resistance to the constraints of a given ID in presenting himself as a typical subject?
6. Many ID? Conflicting? Significance of them? Is he aware? How does narrator explain differences, how can I describe it productively?
  - How do I see myself
  - How do I want others to see me?
  - How DO others perceive me?  
→ ID conflict if these conflict

#### Narrative plotting and modes

- Narrative plots/patterns?
- Pattern a confessional self-examination, a story of conversation through fall and enlightenment, a story of *individual self-making*, a call to action?
- Are there multiple plots? How does that effect? How does it start/end?
- What are the stories of the plots, where they available to narrator? Where culturally/historically does they come from (dominant culture or alternative cultural sources)?
- What social locations are mentioned (work, cultural stereotypes etc.)?
- Is pattern/plot recognizable/similar to other kinds of writings at the time?
- Relationship between narrative plot and models of ID/ideological I, ex self made man’s apprenticeship, stages, accomplishment, or validation?
- Has narrator drawn from/incorporated mixed media (letters, essays, images) to involve reader? What are their effect/constrain/ possibilities? Ex photo gives flesh to narrator/embodying himself to reader → from phantom narrator to dematerialize himself

#### Audience and addressee

- Many audiences?
- Is book dedicated to particular people
- Is it a crucial moment in narratives life? Why?
- Any implicit audiences?

- What are the general readers?

#### Own reflections:

→ Their organization

-> General public

→ Entrepreneurs have strong ID with their creation: telling “ I have the best organization”- cant write badly can you?

- What kind of reader does the narrator want me to be? Forgiving, secret sharer, friend? Where does he instruct me to be that, are there any instructions how to read it (ex preface)?

#### Coherence and Closure

- Does narrator assert coherence to his story? Does that impression break down anywhere in text (digressions, contradictions, gaps, omissions, silences)?
- How does noticing this affect my reading of him, or my impression of the kind of “I” he wants to portray?
- Many/conflicting voices? Do they expand at some point, if so, what happens to them?
- Is closure tidy, if so, how? Is it permanent? Any alternatives suggested by narrative?

#### Evidence

- How does he win me over?
- How does he validate the truth?
- What evidence does he use to persuade the reader?
- How does he authenticate truth claims/justify writing the story?
- What authority does the evidence carry: personal, dreams, testimony of others? Any objective evidence, ex photos or references to historical events/places? When are these evidence put into text?
- Why and with what effects does placing one authority somewhere in text work strategically at that point, as oppose to another?
- *My responses*: do I ever feel he is *not* telling the truth? Why, any conflicting statements that causes me to doubt?
- What is at stake for narrator in persuading me?
- What is at stake historically/ for the larger society?
- What difference would it make if it were accepted as a true account of a life vs. simply fabrication?

#### Authority and Authenticity

- Does he address the “right” to tell the story? How does he imply/enact the authority?
- Is he troubled by the act of telling?
- How does narrator moderate/normalize any “transgressive” (?) aspects of public exposure?
- Does he have the option to use an authority figure to introduce the text/use him/her as citation in text to prove authority?
- Does he incorporate the biography of an authority person in his text?
- Any points of story where narrator’ s “I” have to reassert itself, if yes, how?
- In the end of the book, has the telling seemed to authorize the author?

#### Voice

- *I narrator, yet voices can be multiple*
- Is one voice dominant? Are there many, conflicting voices?  
→ “*monovocal*” or “*polyvocal*”
- If one voice dominates, where and how do other voices emerge, and how does the narrating “I” comprise them?
- If multiple voices, when do they emerge/disappear and why?
- Is there a blending/unresolved tension of voices?
- Is a relation given between narrator’ s voice and the collective voice of some larger, political community? What values/discourses is ID with that larger collectivity? → ID
- Are there many collectivities with distinct values/languages? What form does that incorporation take (dialogue, memories etc.)?
- *Theme of voice*: does narrator explicitly call attention to issues regarding the voice? Are speech/silence “thematized”?
- What happens in the end of book to the multiple voices, any closure?

#### Experience

- How/ when is appeal to authority of experience made in text? Is it gendered or made on basis of ex ethnic/ racial/national ID claim?
- Any doubts from narrator what claims can be made based on authority of experience?

- Does he reflect at any time upon the act of “reading” his own past or upon the interpretive schema he allow on that experience?
- Does he critique his ability to understand the experiences of the past?
- Do the different interpretations of an experience (if chapters written at different times) signal stages/changes in overall pattern/beliefs of the story being told?
- Do the changes (if “sequels”) signal that interpretation of experience is specific to a particular historical moment? → If yes, is it a signal of a shift in belief system/nature of memory/cultural shift in the stories told at that historical moment?
- *Me interpreting what constitutes experience*: how does my historical situation as a reader affect the legibility/readability of experience in text?

### Agency

- How does the author change narratives/write back to cultural stories that have scripted them as particular kinds of subjects (leaders, entrepreneurs, successful business people, Americans)?
- How is this changing of the terms of ones’ representation a strategy for gaining agency?
- Are there any passages where author seems to reproduce and/or contradict/interrupt certain cultural scripts of ID? Is he self-conscious about this act?

### **Own reflections**

→ Especially relevant regarding reader response

→ “*We usually assume, but I did*”

- *Negotiation of strictures about telling certain kinds of stories*:  
Use multiple voices/diverse strategies/alternate between difference in audience in negotiating the stories of ex entrepreneurs → what language does the narrator use/not use to tell the story? Is the political significance of language “thematized”?

### Knowledge/ self-knowledge

- *Define processes of methods of knowledge production, whether it’s a formal self-interrogation/examination of conscience.*
- Does the author have a method of interpreting dreams/experiences?
- Does he give space to multiple kinds of knowledge (intuitive, irrational, supernatural, mystical, symbolic)?
- How does the narrative interrogate cultural forms of knowledge valued at the historical moment of writing?
- What relation does the narrating “I” make between knowledge of the world/others and self-knowledge?
- Does the narrative itself generate alternative sources of knowledge?
- Does the *act* of narrating his life bring the author to different ways of knowing that life?
- What kinds of knowledge can reading about this life narrative provide readers?

### **Own reflections:**

-*Guts: I knew I had to do it*

### Collaborative Autobiography

- Is the book a product of more than the author?  
→ If yes, what kind of collaboration has taken place (as-told-to/ghost-writers)?
- If use of editors, transcriber, amanuensis (secretary/writer) or interviewer, what role has each person played, and what are my sources for knowing this?
- Who is presented as speaking in the narrative, who says “I”/who’ s voice do I hear?
- How has the editor/transcriber made/tried to make her presence in the writing?
- Any preface/framing story/notes that mention the relationship between narrator/informant and editor/collaborator?
- Does the plot/presentational format indicate problems of inequities in the relationship?  
→ If yes, what are their differences, and what’ s politically at stake due to these?
- Who has benefited socially/financially from telling the story?

### **Own reflections**

→”This is me, no one helped”

### Ethics

- Any revelations that can be hurtful/embarrassing for others (family, colleagues, friends) or might affect others reputation?  
→ If yes, where does the author signal that it might and how does he justify publishing it?
- What are the cultural conventions (agreements) at the historical moment of writing that set established limits to self-revelation?
- What purpose/motives might the narrating “I” have in violating these norms?

- Ethics of *readership*: what is ethically involved for me when reading the book in terms of narratives regarding ex suffering, difference or self-disclosure (revealing more of yourself)?

**Own reflections:**

- Values
- Employees

**Additional Notes**

- Authorship and historical moment
  - Cultural meaning/importance of time published was to contribute to leadership discourse
  - Written for the public
  - Significance of contribution?
  - Any political, economic, social forces that made leader write it?
- History of reading public
  - General public
  - Employees
  - Read for entertainment
- Temporality
  - Retirement
  - End of careers
  - Be aware of shifts in time and if tone of writing changes
- Audience/addressee
  - Life of narrative is when retired- why?
  - Anyone being addressed between the lines?
  - Audience is general public, employees
  - Difference in entrepreneurs and managers?
    - Entrepreneurs have strong identification with their company!
    - Might put the organization in a better light
  - Be aware of the tone, if leader is seeking something else from reader than simply tell about his past and accomplishments, ex want me to forgive?
- Coherence or closure
  - Any conflicting voices
  - Endings
- Memory/trauma
  - If any obvious characteristics, see paragraph with questions
  - Ex if clearly therapeutic process
- Authority/authenticity or authority of experience
  - Successful
  - Publicly known as successful person
  - Have hired writer himself → control
- “Relationality”
  - If speaks about people a lot other than himself
- Knowledge/ self knowledge
  - “Gut” feeling
  - “Knew I had to do it”
  - Knowledge provided to readers are that of a success story of a business man, to inspire others
  - Knowledge → INSPIRE

Reference:

Smith, S. & Watson, J. 2010. "A Tool Kit: Twenty-four Strategies for Reading Life Narratives" in *Reading autobiography, a guide for interpreting life narratives*, 2nd ed. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 235-251.

## Appendix 2

### FRAMEWORK FOR NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

#### 1. The different “I” s present in the narrative and the identity projected

##### The “I”

How distinguish among the historical, narrating, narrated and ideological “I”

- *Narrating “I”*:
  - What is the tone (defensive, self-important, self-critical)?
  - What stories does it want to tell?
  - What is the gap between *narrating* I and the *narrated* (Is narrated I less sophisticated, attention to young/naïve or successful version of self, or many narrated I s)?
- *Ideological “I”*
  - The *ideology* the narrator was living: What public roles seem important/privileged?

##### Identity

- Features & characteristics of the identity in the book
- Any models used to represent the subject?
- What qualities/ experiences are *excluded* in order to conform to particular models of identity?
- Different identities in order/ alternation (rotation)?
- How does narrator negotiate fictions of identity and resistance to the constraints of a given identity in presenting himself as a typical subject?
- Several identities
  - Conflicting?
  - Significance of them?
  - How does narrator explain differences?
  - What is my interpretation of it?
- Questions to be asked of leader (any conflicting answers?)

”How do I see myself?” ”How do I want others to see me?” ”How do others perceive me?”

#### 2. Narrating plots and patterns, and voice and agency in addressing the audience

##### Narrative plotting and modes

- Pattern of a confessional self-examination, story of conversation through fall and enlightenment, individual self-making or a call to action?
- Multiple plots?
  - Effect?
  - How does it start/end?
  - What are the stories?

- Relationship between narrative plot and models of identity/ideological I?
  - Self made man's apprenticeship, stages, accomplishment or validation?

#### Audience and addressee

- What kind of reader does the narrator want me to be?
  - Forgiving, secret sharer, or a friend?
  - Are there any instructions of how to read it (for example in preface)?
- Coherence and Closure:
  - Is there asserted coherence to the story?
  - Does that impression break down anywhere in text (contradictions, gaps, errors or silences)?
  - Does it affect my reading or impression of the kind of "I" the author wants to portray?
  - Many or conflicting voices?
  - If so, do they expand at some point, and what happens to them?
  - Is closure permanent?

#### Ethics

- Any revelations that can be hurtful or embarrassing for others (for example family, or colleagues), or that can affect others reputation?
  - If yes, does the author justify publishing the information/stories?

#### Agency

- How does the author change narratives or write back to cultural stories that have scripted them as particular kinds of subjects?
- How is this changing of the terms of ones' representation a strategy for gaining agency?
- Any passages where author reproduce, contradict or interrupt certain cultural scripts of identity? Is the author self-conscious about this act?
- Any negotiation of strictures about telling certain kinds of stories?
  - Any use of multiple voices or alternation between differences in audience in negotiating the stories?
  - What language does the narrator use/not use to tell the story?

#### Voice

- Is there one voice dominating or multiple?
- Is there any relation given between the narrator's voice and the collective voice of a larger, political community?
- What values and discourses lies in an identity related to that larger collectivity?



### 3. Evidence, collaborations and ethical implications

#### Evidence

- What evidence or validation of truth does the author use in an attempt to persuade me?
  - How does he/she authenticate truth claims?
  - Is the author justifying writing the story?
  - Why and with what effects does placing one authority somewhere in text work strategically at that point, as oppose to another?
  
- *My* response as a reader:
  - Do I ever feel he is *not* telling the truth?
  - What is at stake for narrator in persuading me, historically, and for the larger society?
  - What difference would it make if the stories were accepted as a true account of a life vs. simply fabrication

#### Collaborative Autobiography

- What kind of collaboration has taken place?
  - What role has each person played, and what are my sources for knowing this?
- Is there any preface or notes that mention the relationship between narrator or informant, editor or collaborator?
- Does the plot/presentational format indicate problems of inequities in the relationship?
  - If yes, what are their differences, and what' s politically at stake due to these?
- Who has benefited socially/financially from telling the story?

#### Reference:

Smith, S. & Watson, J. 2010. "A Tool Kit: Twenty-four Strategies for Reading Life Narratives" in *Reading autobiography, a guide for interpreting life narratives*, 2nd ed. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 235-251.