COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE at work

Antenarratives and Heteroglossia in Organizational Storytelling: A Living Medium Shaping the Future of Organizations in the Quantum Age

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Abstract

The literature on storytelling organizations presents a rich tradition for studying both narratives and living stories. These two storytelling dimensions tends to be viewed in opposition to each other. This paper focus on a third dimension: antenarratives. Antenarratives have two distinct features: they tell the story of the future of the organization in advance of its arrival and, as part of this process, they resolve tensions between narratives and living stories. Applying Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia, the purpose of this paper is further to enlighten the antenarrative processes of bridging the gap between narratives and living stories in prospective sensemaking of the future of the organization. Taking into account the quantum turn within social and human sciences and philosophies, the paper aims at enriching our understanding of how human and non-human voices take part in antenarrative processes of creating organizational futures. Antenarratives are therefore further conceptualized in the context of the quantum age. By bringing to the fore essential ecological aspects of Bakhtin's work and reading these aspects into his notion of heteroglossia, the paper offers a Bakhtinian-inspired lens through which antenarrative human-world relationships can be further enlightened. The paper suggests viewing the organization and its relationship with the environment as a living antenarrative medium creating future worlds in the quantum age. Furthermore, the paper suggests implications for the practice of managing the antenarrative living medium of creating new worlds. The paper advocates the inclusion of ethical, material, embodied and multimodal perspectives on storytelling, thereby advancing a storytelling philosophy in the quantum age.

1 Introduction

Story is one of the oldest tools used by people to make sense of and transmit their histories, beliefs, cultures and meaning in life (Barge, 2004; Durrance, 1997). Benjamin (2006) writes that for generations, stories of lived experiences

have been passed on orally between storytellers and story-listeners. Listening to a story always takes place in the company of storytelling; it is a relationship. Stories are brought home from faraway places by the much travelled man. Travelling and moving with the storytellers from context to context in multiple time-spaces, stories mingle with other stories told in the storytelling community. They are living and morphing multi-voiced stories.

As noticed by Benjamin already in 1936, somewhere in the passage from past to present, the ability of storytelling was lost and we became alienated from its practices. Less and less frequently do we encounter people capable of exchanging stories, as the story has removed itself from its oral tradition to be practised instead though storytelling in text. According to Benjamin, this movement demarcates the end of the art of storytelling and the advancement of the narrative approach.

By drawing on Boje's triadic storytelling framework (narratives, living stories and antenarratives), this paper seeks further to explore conceptually the gap between narrative and story, as well as the processes of working out the struggles and tensions innate in the gap. Whereas narratives are conceived of as retrospective, fixed, pre-plotted and single-voiced, living stories are ontologically in their here and now, open, living and multi-voiced. Antenarratives exist in the middle between the two. They are "fragmented, non-linear, incoherent, collective, unplotted, and improper storytelling" (Boje, 2001, p. 1). They are fragments that are woven together in and through the antenarrative process of prospective sensemaking or *making a bet*, always in process *before* narrative cohesion, always dynamically changing and morphing their content in open spacetime as they journey from context to context: "Antenarratives, therefore, morph as they move about. As such, these most fragile of travelers are prospectors, and they can be the most powerful transformative sensemaking of all, particularly, in complex organization, picking up and dispersing meaning from one context to the next" (Boje, 2008, p. 15).

The process of weaving together has much in common with Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia, a notion that is essential in Bakhtin's philosophy of dialogue. Both the antenarrative approach and Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia are therefore useful to apply as lenses throwing more light on the dynamic gap between narratives and living stories. The concept of the antenarrative accentuates Boje's special contribution to the storytelling field and has received much attention within a broad variety of organizational research (Barge, 2004; Boje, Haley, & Saylors, 2015; Grow, 2008; Hitchin, 2014; Rosile, Boje, Carlon, Downs, Saylors, 2013; Stierand et al., 2017; Vaara & Tienari, 2011).

Storytelling has for decades been accepted for its contribution to retrospective and prospective sensemaking, thereby constituting organization in spacetime. Known for his approach to retrospective sensemaking, Weick (1995) analyses how past events are interpreted and projected to future actions, indicating a temporalizing process from the past to the present to the future (Boje et al., 2015). In his more recent work, Weick has elaborated on prospective sensemaking by understanding organizing in the context of antenarrative. According to Weick, organizing is thus a bet that antenarrative fragments will have become ordered and that this ordering can be facilitated and enacted by storytellers. People thus experience being in the middle of a narrative, but only with the vaguest ideas of its beginning or ending. Without the boundaries of a beginning and ending, people dwell in the antenarrative (Weick, 2012).

In line with this thinking, the focus of this paper is on antenarratives as a mode of storytelling the organizational future in advance of its arrival. As antenarratives address the processes of making sense of, betting on, organizing and advancing the attractive future of organizations, managing antenarratives is highly relevant. Despite their relevance, however, antenarratives are largely overlooked in management and research, according to Boje: "Forward-looking antenarratives are the most abundant in business, yet the most overlooked in research and consulting practice. These fragile antenarratives, like the butterfly, are sometimes able to change the future, to set changes and transformations in motion that have an impact on the big picture. More accurately, antenarratives seem to bring about a future that would not otherwise be" (Boje, 2008, pp. 13–14).

The contribution of the paper is twofold. First of all, the paper adds to the conceptual development of the antenarrativist position by linking it to Bakhtin's heteroglossia. Originally, Boje's conceptual development of the antenarrative was inspired by Heidegger's existentialism of being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 2008). In his further conceptualization of antenarratives in relation to paradigms and methods, Boje, in collaboration with others (Boje, 2014; Rosile et al., 2013), developed the antenarrativist approach to storytelling. In this paper, this approach is elaborated on through the lens of Bakhtin.

Secondly, taking into account the quantum turn within social and human sciences and philosophies, the paper aims at enriching our understanding of how voices other than human take part in antenarrative processes of creating organizational futures. In the paper, antenarratives are thus further conceptualized in the context of the quantum age. By bringing to the fore essential ecological aspects of Bakhtin's work, and by reading these aspects into his notion of heteroglossia, the paper offers a Bakhtinian-inspired lens through which antenarrative human-world relationships can be further enlightened. The paper suggests viewing the organization and its relationship with the environment as a sociomaterial living medium creating future worlds.

As a third contribution, the paper suggests implications for the practice of managing the antenarrative living medium of creating new worlds. In the field of storytelling in organizations, storytelling has become referred to as a sensemaking device (Rantakari & Vaara, 2017), a linguistic device (Barge, 2004), a sensemaking, organizing and discursive device (Weick, 2012), and an epistemic device (and ontological premise) (Riach, Rumens, & Tyler, 2016). This paper is reluctant to apply the metaphor of a device, as it bears within it connotations of an object or a machine, an apparatus or a method, all aiming at producing a desired effect or fulfilling a particular purpose.

In place of the concept of the device, and drawing on Bakhtin's philosophy of dialogue, the paper suggests applying the concept of a living medium, as stories not only transmit meanings but are active in sensemaking at the same time as they themselves are changing and morphing during their journey in time-spaces. In that sense, it can be argued that stories constitute a living medium for creating new worlds. Following the quantum turn, the paper advocates the inclusion of ethical, material, embodied and multimodal perspectives on such a living medium.

The paper is structured in the following way. To begin with, Boje's triadic storytelling framework (narratives, living stories, antenarratives) is viewed through the perspectives of materiality and multimodality, as well as ethics, as these perspectives constitute some of the more recent and quantum-oriented trends within the storytelling field. Following on from here, antenarratives are related to narratives and living stories a both paradigmatic and a theoretical conceptual level, thereby advancing a storytelling philosophy in the quantum age. Hence, the antenarrativist approach to storytelling is accounted for. This section also reflects upon the theoretical contributions offered by the narrative and living story perspectives to the management of storytelling organizations.

Hereafter, the paper proceeds by relating the antenarrativist position to Bakhtin's philosophy by going deeper into his concepts of centripetal, centrifugal and heteroglossic forces, as well as his more ecological perspectives on human-world relationships It is suggested that one views the ensemble of human and non-human voices partaking in the antenarrative processes as a living, growing medium creating new worlds. It is argued that Bakhtin's philosophy throws further light upon the antenarrative processes of creating new worlds in the quantum age. As a final section before the concluding remarks, the paper reflects upon the implications for management of adopting the antenarrativist approach.

1.1 *The Material and Ethical Trends in Storytelling*

In the academic history of the fields of organization and management, many different turns have seen the light of day and proposed new perspectives and ways of understanding the world of organizations. Among these are the narrative and discursive turns emphasizing the social constitution of the world through language, meaning and discursive practices. The interrelationship between storytelling and discourses is not always clear in the literature, as they can be viewed as two interrelated yet different theoretical fields. According to Rantakari and Vaara (2017), narratives are closely related to the discursive perspective on organizations. However, the two authors emphasize narrative temporality, defined as the structured sequence of events, as a distinct feature of the narrative. Following Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008), narratives and living stories referred to in the storytelling field have much in common with big and small stories; they discuss these two concepts through from a discursive perspective.

In this article, the approach of storytelling is adopted as the organization is assumed to be constituted through enacted storytelling, and as the human being is conceived of as a storytelling animal: "man is in his actions and practice, as well as in his fictions, essentially a storytelling animal. He is not essentially, but becomes through his history, a teller of stories that aspire to truth" (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 216). The temporality of narrative and living stories differs as the beginning and end of narratives are closed within a fixed spacetime frame, whereas living stories are in open spaces with open beginnings and open endings. Storytelling unfolds through history as the life stories of human beings. Still, in the paper, storytelling is considered to be interrelated with discursivity: discourse is defined as "the infinite play of differences in meanings mediated through socially constructed hegemonic practices, especially in stories […]. Story is a domain of discourse" (Boje, 2008, pp. 257–258). Storytelling is a subdomain of conversation, discourse, dramaturgy and communication (Boje, 2014). For that reason, the article draws on discursivity when sensemaking.

Storytelling in organization and management research took its beginning in the 1980s by looking into story as static text, later turning to "the in situ dynamics of co-producing stories" as well as "the systemic complexity of storytelling organization" (Boje, 2005, p. 2). Alongside this development, storytelling has evolved to cover fields such as strategy, organizational change, identity, organizational development and learning, gender and entrepreneurship (Rantakari & Vaara, 2017).

1.1.1 *The Turn Towards Materiality and Multimodality*
Most recently, and inspired by the quantum and new material turn in social sciences (Boje, 2014, p. 69; see also Barad, 1996, 2003; Orlikowski, 2010; Orlikowski & Scott, 2015), Boje's storytelling approach has been further developed, as not only human beings but also non-human beings such as living organisms and artificial things and objects are

assumed to take an active and performative part in material storytelling (Strand, 2012) or quantum storytelling. Quantum storytelling is defined by Boje as a way of grasping the meaning of being—the lifetime of material entities ontologically being-in-the-world (Boje, 2011b; Svane, 2019b). Hence, matter in the sense of human beings, living organisms, and artificial things and objects plays a part in constituting the social, material and historical organizational reality. In some of Boje's most recent work (Boje, 2014; Boje & Sanchez, 2019), his storytelling framework has been on a journey into the quantum age, a journey shared with the field of organizational theory adopting the concepts of material discursivity, sociomateriality, multimodality and performativity. Inspired by Barad's (2007) notion of 'spacetimemattering', quantum agential materiality, meaning, space and time are thus worked into narratives, living stories and antenarratives.

Following Barad's (2007) criticism of those social scientific approaches that conceive of the world as a social construction and hence overemphasize language, meaning and discourse at the expense of materiality, the field of storytelling has viewed the emergence of a multimodal and material trend (Rantakari & Vaara, 2017). Assuming discourse not to be limited to language, discourse is viewed in its multimodal nature, incorporating the modalities of materiality such as images, design, technology, music, gesture, sound and other modes of meaning-making (Iedema, 2003, 2007). Multimodality thus takes the view that the discursive and the material co-emerge as a historical and situational phenomenon—that is, in Baradian spacetimemattering.

The material trend has also infused the storytelling field. Cunliffe and Coupland (2011; Rantakari & Vaara, 2017) thus suggest that sensemaking is more than discourse, emphasizing the role of embodiment in narrative sensemaking and struggles of meaning. Moreover, Shotter (2013, 2014) has discussed the mutual enrichment of relating Baradian materiality and Bakhtinian dialogue with each other. Finally, Kenneth Gergen, encouraged by John Shotter, invites new understandings of materiality and its agency through his concept of confluence among mutually defining entities (Gergen, 2009, 2010; Shotter, 2012). This discussion is in particular interesting in relation to Boje's storytelling framework, as Bakhtin's philosophy on dialogue (e.g. Bakhtin, 1981, 1984) constitutes one source of inspiration for the distinction between narratives and living stories, two storytelling moments that merge through the heteroglossic antenarrative interplay.

1.1.2   *The Turn Towards Ethics*

Entangled with the new material turn, and pushed forward by the financial crisis and the discourses on climate, sustainability and neoliberalism, ethics has also received intensified attention within the organizational field and, furthermore, within storytelling. Ethics is granted the role of being an indispensable capacity in performative world-making according to various social scientific researchers and philosophers. Barad speaks of the "ethico-onto-epistem-ology" (Barad, 2007), stating that our actions and doings have performative consequences in (re)configuring and bringing forth worlds. The ontological becoming of the world is thus an ethical matter to be entangled with both ontology and epistemology.

Acknowledged for her political ethics of plurality and plural phenomenology, Arendt (1958) states that the appearance of the world is conditioned on action and speech. As action and speech always occur in plurality, they can never be separated from politics and ethics. Action, speech, politics and ethics are therefore entangled with each other in the creation of the world. Arendt (1958) thus advocates that through action and speech, thinking and judging (Arendt, 1978), we have the capacity to create space for new beginnings. Just like MacIntyre in his work 'After Virtue' (1983), Arendt makes a call for the lost Greek virtues.

In his work on enlightened common sense, Bhaskar incorporates the critical ethical feature into the critical realism research programme and holds that a philosophy on critical enlightened common sense may work as a midwife for emancipatory change aiming at transforming praxis and bringing forth a better life, a better world and human flourishing (Bhaskar, 2016).

In his work *Storytelling organizational practices: Managing in the quantum age* – Boje (2014) relates several ethical approaches to storytelling, assuming that ethics constitutes an ontological way of being in being-in-the-world through fore-caring for the future (Heidegger, 2008). Moreover, ethics is a way of relating to otherness by being ethically answerable to oneself and others (Bakhtin, 1999). It is a way of being with others through action, speech and practices. In this sense, ethics requires a free space for actualized plurality and care for the space of togetherness and the place of the 'we' (Arendt, 1958). As storytelling may serve an essential role in teaching us how to think, feel and interact with society and with others (Adams, 2008), storytelling matters to the ontological formation of an ethical way of being.

2   Relating Antenarratives to Narratives and Living Stories

In order to discuss Boje's antenarratives, the conceptual storytelling framework needs to be unfolded. The storytelling framework consists of three dimensions, as illustrated in Figure 1. Storytelling is defined as the antenarrative interplay between grand (master) narratives with living stories unfolding in their webs of relations (Rosile et al., 2013). Antenarrative thus constitutes a process relationship in between narratives and living stories.

Figure 1: Triad Storytelling Model
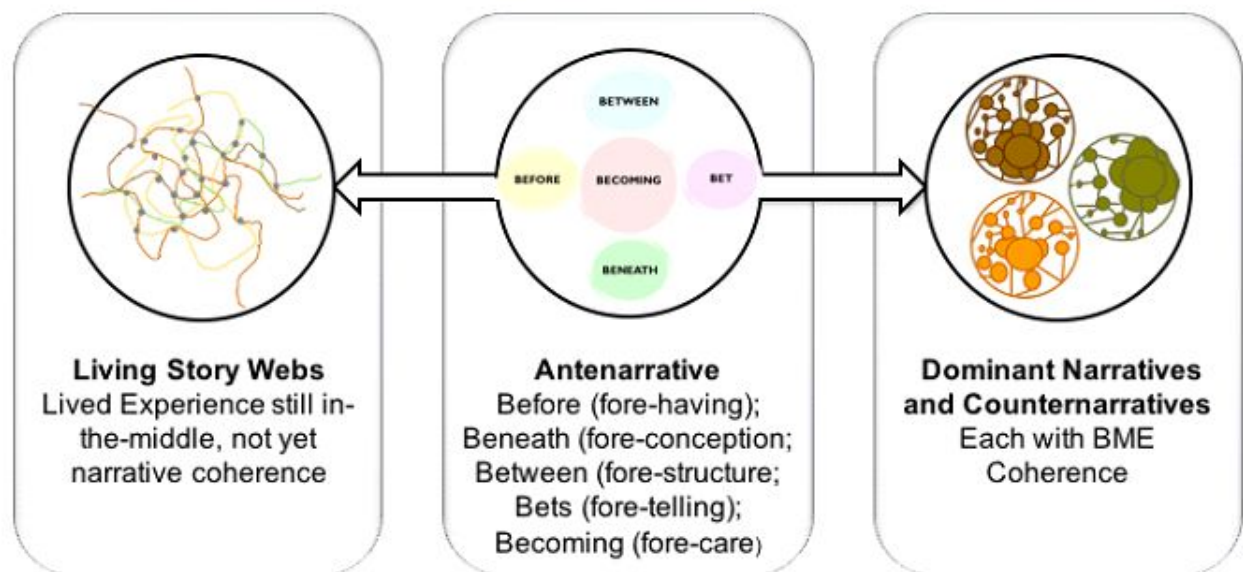
Developed by Marita Svane and David Boje.
Source: Svane, Gergerich, and Boje (2016) and Boje, Svane, and Gergerich (2016)

In the literature on storytelling in organizations, the conceptual difference between story and narrative is an ongoing discussion. Some researchers privilege narrative, others story; some use them interchangeably. Moreover, the meaning of their concepts may change from age to age and from philosophy to philosophy (Boje, 2014). As Boje (2011c) states, Czarniawska has defined stories along lines that are quite similar to narratives in terms of the imperative to have a plot. Later she refers to the story as a plotless narrative. Privileging story in his work from 1991, Boje (2011c, p. 2) refers to story as "an oral or written performance involving two or more people interpreting past or anticipated experience". Later, Boje incorporates embodiment and materiality into the concept of story by defining the story as the embodied lived story in spacetimemattering (Boje, 2014). Hence not only humans but also non-human actors and living thing-actants are included in the storytelling agency (Boje, 2012). In Boje's storytelling universe, story differs from narrative by its aliveness. To distinguish it from narrative, the concept of story is technically referred to as living story (Boje, 2014).

Navigating in the gap between narrative and story, Boje (2014) develops a storytelling philosophy, defined as the intra-play between grand (master) narratives and primordial living stories. In the storytelling philosophy, narratives and stories are assumed to be incommensurable and distinctive from one another, whereas antenarratives serve the role of working out the tensions between narratives and living stories, thereby paving the way for their transformation and for alternative futures to arrive (Rosile et al., 2013).

The storytelling philosophy has been developed through a historical review of the storytelling literature, including epistemic representative narratives brought forward by, for example, Czarniawska and dialogical living story advocated by, for example, Bakhtin and Boje. Furthermore, acknowledging the contributions from the interpretivist, materialist, abstractionist and practice-oriented approaches to storytelling, the storytelling philosophy is discussed as a

multi-paradigmatic approach, referred to as 'the storytelling diamond' (Boje, 2014; Rosile et al., 2013). Hence, the storytelling diamond grants space for discussions and interactions across various approaches to story-telling.

In the storytelling philosophy, the antenarrative process is conceived of as in between organizational storytelling paradigms, and in particular in between narrativism and living story. Thus antenarrative studies focus on the in-betweenness of narrativism and living story (Rosile et al., 2013)—that is, their mutual and possibly transformative interplay. As the antenarrative is both a question of ontological transformation and epistemological 'knowing' of the future, it works between epistemology and ontology and methodologically addresses the interplay between quantitative and qualitative methods. As such, antenarrative in itself constitutes a philosophical perspective, as well as it implying paradigmatic and methodological reflections.

Assuming the antenarrative approach to storytelling, the concepts of narrative and living story can be further developed along with the antenarrative process of erasing their gap. In particular, Bakhtin's dialogue enlightens the antenarrative process and its interplaying forces.

2.1.1   Narratives

As presented in Figure 1, narrative is making sense retrospectively by looking backward into the past and projecting the past into the future. It takes the form of a BME (beginning – middle – end) with a fixed beginning and fixed end. The middle is structured as a plot. Following Aristotle, narrative can be defined by its six elements: plot, characters, theme, dialogue, rhythm and spectacle. The structure constitutes a linear, single and simplified plot of events (Boje, 2014). The narrative structure works to organize actors and actants in a fixed geometrical spacetime frame. The spacetimemattering of the narrative ready-made world is therefore all settled and defined and in place.

The narrative tendencies towards singularity and simplifying abstraction give rise to concern when applied in storytelling organizations. The singularity of narratives implies the oppressing, silencing or marginalization of other voices that deviate from the narrative plot. As such, narratives can be used by management as a dominating and controlling medium for sensemaking in the organization. Ignoring, neglecting or overlooking events that do not fit into the coherency of the narrative structure, a narrative defines its own reality. Simplifying and detaching itself from the complexity of everyday life, it is nothing but an abstraction of a real concrete life. As such, one way of conceiving narrative is as an "epistemic", "intellectual" narrative (Boje, 2014) representing the ready-made world.

Used by management, narratives serve as a medium for defining and shaping organizational reality and organizational subjectivity in a direction that conforms with the narrative. The narrative thereby simplifies, reifies and objectifies the living world and its agential inhabitants. Riach et al. (2016, p. 2077) thus refer to narrative not only as an epistemic device for sensemaking, but also as an ontological premise that brings forth particular worlds, organizational subjectivities and material bodies. Therefore, "the categorized individualized life is subjected to simplifying structures in fixed and ready-made spacetime frames" (Svane, 2019a).

An organization may consist in a manifold of narratives either co-existing in clusters or opposing each other. Resistance against the narrative singularity, coherency and dominance may develop in the shape of counter-narratives, defined as being in opposition to the grand (master) narrative (Bamberg, 2004; Bamberg & Andrews, 2004; Frandsen, Kuhn, & Lundholt, 2016). The tension between narrative and counter-narrative positions may bring about disputes and conflicts, and they may cause the organization to change.

2.1.2   Web of Living Stories

In defining and unfolding the meaning of the concept of living stories, Boje is much inspired by the work of Benjamin and Bakhtin with regard to "the polyphonic manner of living story" (Boje, 2014, p. 5). Following both Benjamin and Bakhtin, living stories emerge, and are exchanged, shared and responded to as well as woven together and transformed, in the storytelling community (Benjamin, 2006) – what Boje also calls the living story web of storytellers and story-listeners (Boje, 2014). Differing from the singularity of the univocal narrative, the living stories are distinguished by their dialogical nature. According to Bakhtin's definition of the "great dialogue" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 71), all voices participate with equal rights for which reason the dialogue becomes rich in reference to other voices and their discourses, alternative worldviews, questions, doubts, criticism, counter-arguments and different interpretations. As life experience and experiences of events are made sense of and articulated through stories, living stories provide access to the life-worlds of storytellers. Travelling through space and time throughout a historical lifetime, the living stories are open ended until death occurs. Only then can the story of the storyteller be told from the beginning to the end (Benjamin, 2006); until then, the living story is in open spacetimemattering, always rendered open to the occurrence of new events, new meanings and new interpretations.

The temporality of living stories is the here and now. Living stories are told and shared in the here and now moment when real life and real-life events are occurring. The dialogical living story carries within it the voices of the

past as well as the anticipated responses by the voices from the future. Bakhtin thus considers living stories as emerging in the present. As such, they are both prospective and retrospective (Boje, Helmuth, & Saylors, 2013).

Shared and responded to immediately, sensemaking occurs here and now as we go. The temporality and spatiality of the living story is thus the here and now. As opposed to the retrospective narrative, the living story is circumspectively oriented towards events occurring and happening in the situation and around in the peripherical landscape.

The heteroglossic weaving together of voices from the past, present and future enriches the living story with its multivocality. A story can therefore never be reduced to the perspective of a single author as in the case of narratives. As Bakhtin states: "narrative forms are always encased in a firm and stable monological framework" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 17; Boje, 2014). The multivocality of the living story does not reduce the uniqueness of the storyteller to Man-in-general (Bakhtin, 1999). There is no way that we can take the position of a pretender or bystander, conforming to or hiding behind an alibi of Man-in-general, as he does not exist. There is no excuse of falling into self-forgetfulness by letting oneself be absorbed into the 'they-self'—the world where 'they' prescribe the way of interpreting the world (Heidegger, 2008). From an ethical perspective, the storyteller thus needs to be answerable and responsible towards others (Bakhtin, 1999) by acknowledging that (s)he, as the performing storyteller, is unique and irreplaceable in the performed act or deed. Hence the storyteller is compelled to assume "responsibility" and "ownership" for their own performed acts and deeds and unique being (Bakhtin, 1999).

Viewed from a living story perspective, the organizational world is not a ready-made world but a world of events, open to a multiple of unforeseen possibilities and full of event potential (Bakhtin, according to Morson & Emerson, 1990). Exchanged and shared through the polyphonic dialogue of the infinite and unfinalized process of meaning-making (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984), living stories are in the middle with an open beginning and open ending (Boje, 2014). Just as the ontological nature of life is dialogical (Bakhtin, 1984), living stories are ontological by being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 2008). They are unfolding as stories of real life in open spacetimemattering processes (Boje, 2014). Living stories thus constitute the ontological life-world stories as they are told in the here and now of living life and are stories about things, self, others, events and the world (Boje, 2014).

Applied to the organization, the assumption of the organizational world and management differs from the narrative approach to management. Shifting from narrative to living stories implies a shift from conceiving the organizational world as resting upon consensus and cohesion to a conception of a world in dissensus, an incomplete and unfinalized wholeness, still alive, still in the middle of its becoming. Bakhtin refers to this conception of the world as the world of life—the only world in which we create, cognize, contemplate, live and die (Bakhtin, 1999). As such, there is no narrative construction that is true to life as life is lived in "real-life interaction" (Morson & Emerson, 1990). In contrast, due to the eventness of the messy and hence fragmented world (Bakhtin, 1999), the organization is continuously on the move through processes of making sense of and acting upon its unforeseen possibilities and potentialities. The Bakhtinian ontological assumptions resemble an open-world ontology (Tsoukas, 2017), conceiving of the organizational world as in a process of becoming, in flux, flow and change, and with an open and in principle unknowable future. In this sense, Weick's verbalization of organization into organizing makes sense in order to emphasize the process perspective of an unsettled organization.

Viewed from the dialogical living story perspective, the organization is to be conceived of as a storytelling community of acting storytellers and story-listeners, including all actors and actants from within and outside the organization who partake in enacting and making sense of the organization. In that sense, the storytelling organization is engaging in pragmatic, performative storytelling constitutive of organizational realities. Tamara Land (Boje, 1995) serves as a sociomaterial metaphor for understanding how the organization can be conceived of as a storytelling community where multiple living stories emerge, are exchanged and responded to, as well as woven together in the real-life interactions between storytellers and story-listeners in multiple, simultaneously occurring spacetime frames: "Tamara organizing is defined as the plurality of simultaneous, performative story spaces and the networking of co-producers in complex organizations" (Boje, 2005, p. 2; Boje, 1995).

When applying living stories as a manager, one of the main differences from the narrative approach, is the willingness of the leader to create spaces for living stories to be exchanged and listened to instead of marginalizing or overhearing voices. The ethic of this type of leadership addresses the acknowledgement and appreciation of dissensus and plurality. Inspired, among others, by Bakhtin, Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011) thus advance relational leadership, where leaders are embedded in relationally-responsive dialogical practices in everyday life and where the polyphonic and heteroglossic nature of life is acknowledged. Following the philosophy of Bakhtin, world, organization, identity and self, as well as things, are co-created in the dialogical relationship in the here and now. The task of leaders is to involve the many selves of the storytelling web in order to co-create and co-author unique and multi-voiced living stories with

open beginnings and endings - unique in the sense that the living stories are authentic (Boje et al., 2013), because the involved storytellers are ethically answerable to each other instead of being passive followers.

2.1.3   Antenarratives

It follows from the above account that narratives and living stories are inconsumable different from each other and represent a prevalent dualistic thinking within the literature of storytelling. In his quantum book on organizational storytelling practices, Boje (2014) states, however, that he wants to overcome his prior dualist theories of storytelling. Following this ambition, Rosile et al. state (2013) that the antenarrative process is about 1) searching for the marginalized or forgotten voices surpassed by the grand (master) narrative; 2) questioning the status quo; and 3) tracing transformative processes in between organizational storytelling paradigm incommensurabilities. The focus of the antenarrative process is thus on the processes in between narratives and living stories in terms of 1) how lived experience is shaped and reified, and assimilated into narratives; 2) ways that living stories are turned into dominant narratives; 3) struggles with counternarratives; and 4) the micro living stories.

Antenarrative is thus defined as the process that works in the gap between narratives and living stories: "antenarrative processes perform a transformation of stories into narratives, and narratives into stories, and therefore are in between" (Boje, 2014, p. 71). The morphing and transformational capacity of antenarratives therefore involves a form of repackaging, implying the recognition of new characteristics and the minimization of the old ones (Boje, 2011a). Furthermore, the temporality of antenarratives supports their bridging capacity. Not only are they looking forward into possible futures as part of prospective sensemaking, but they are also resolving the gap between retrospective sensemaking, looking backward into the past of what was already there and then, and the circumspective sensemaking of what is emerging in the present moment (Boje, 2011a).

Originally, Boje defined two antenarrative dimensions: the prospective *bet* on which future will arrive and which events will happen, and the before-story that can transform organizational relations *before* living stories collapse into narrative coherence (Boje, 2001, 2008). Later, two more dimensions were added to the antenarrative framework due to the quantum turn (Boje, 2012) in order to emphasize that antenarratives are infused with agential materiality (Boje, 2011a): the *beneath*, addressing the lived experience and once-occurring events in terms of what is really going on locally beneath the abstract narrative, and the *between*, which deals with the relationships between the storytellers and the living stories in the web. Finally, a fifth dimension was added in terms of the *becoming*, which is about ethical enactment of the future.

The five dimensions are to be taken as intra-penetrating and of equal significance in working out the gap between narratives and living stories, and hence in transforming both narratives and living stories. Antenarrative processes thus unravel, disentangle and reweave threads of stories and narratives; antenarrative thereby seems to pave the way for "a future that would not otherwise be" (Boje, 2008, pp. 13–14).

The five dimensions distinguish antenarratives from grand (master) narratives typified by retrospective sensemaking, linear prediction of the future, coherency, singularity, abstraction and generalization, fixed structures, positions and relations, as well as an orientation towards a 'ready-made world' rather than 'world-making'.

Relating antenarratives to the web of living stories and distinguishing antenarratives from living stories seems to be a more obscure task simply because Bakhtin may also serve as a source of inspiration for the conceptualization of antenarratives. In support of the antenarrativist approach, however, it can be argued that through his concept of heteroglossia, Bakhtin actually works within the gap and clashes between monologizing and dialogizing forces, just as the antenarrativist approach works in the gap between narratives and living stories.

3   Heteroglossia and Antenarratives in the Quantum Age

Bakhtin maintains that even though the ontological nature of life is dialogue, its existential conditions are constrained by monologue. Instead of separating the two phenomena as an either/or, he suggests that one views human existence as stretched out between two opposing tendencies: the centripetal forces and the centrifugal forces (Booth, 1984). Both forces are part of the dialogue, but they work in two different directions. Whereas the centripetal force concerns processes of organizing and of imposing order and regularity, the centrifugal force works in the direction of disorganizing and disordering (Bakhtin, 1981). Taken to the extreme, the centripetal force may result in a closed-structured and schematized space that resembles the narrative ready-made world as "the narrative forms are always encased in a firm and stable monologic framework" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 17). Furthermore, the centripetal force serves to unify and centralize the verbal and ideological discourse of language, norms, thoughts and ideas. A unitary language and unified worldview only makes space for monological utterances, the content of which remains basically unchanged (Bakhtin, 1981). Opposing the centripetal force and its tendency towards a unified monologic consciousness

and a unified, cultural world (Bakhtin, 1984), the centrifugal force "disperses us outward into an ever greater variety of 'voices', outward into a seeming chaos that presumably only a God could encompass" (Booth, 1984, p. xxi). The centrifugal force creates space for the plurality of unmerged voices and consciousness.

According to Bakhtin, both processes are needed in the constitution of the world. The centripetal forces protect us from being overwhelmed by the chaos of the fluidity, variety and messiness of the world of life (Bakhtin, 1999), while the centrifugal forces prevent the world of life being subjected to and conforming to the world of culture (Bakhtin, 1999)—that is, the ready-made world. In fact, because Bakhtin associates the ontological nature of the world with dissensus, messiness and complexity, order can never be complete but requires work that is always disrupted by the centrifugal forces, on purpose or just because it happens. Consequently, the line between centripetal and centrifugal forces is blurred and the distinction between them is itself subject to the centrifuge (Morson & Emerson, 1990).

Heteroglossia works in the middle of the two processes: "the centripetal forces of the life of language, embodied in a 'unitary language', operate in the midst of heteroglossia" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 271). Alongside the centripetal forces, the centrifugal forces are simultaneously in play; by creating the space for multi-voiced dialogue, the forces of decentralization and disunification keep language alive and developing, and they afford an open space for multiple languages, life experiences and consciousness to interact. The aliveness of stories depends on the centrifugal forces and the heteroglossic process. As long as the centrifugal forces are in play, heteroglossia will proceed to widen and deepen. The life of language and utterances, and hence human existence, is thus in the midst between the contradictive and tensed-filled unity of the two embattling forces (Bakhtin, 1981).

From an antenarrative perspective, heteroglossia is interesting because of its capacity to piece and weave centrifugal living story fragments together. As their nature is messiness and disorder, the centrifugal forces register and respond to all sorts of alterations and deviations, diverse events and heterogenous elements occurring in real-life interactions and in the surrounding peripherical landscape. Heteroglossia thus translates and interprets all of these fragments into new meanings and tones, thereby disrupting the wholeness of language and the narrative cohesion.

Heteroglossia thus makes three central contributions to our way of understanding antenarratives. First of all, heteroglossia addresses the antenarrative process of merging and piecing together the living story fragments *beneath* and *before* narrative collapse. Travelling through space and time, heteroglossia is *betting* on the future while carrying within it the voices of the past and the present. It foregrounds the clash of social forces at play *between* narratives and living stories. It is performative in the *becoming* of the world.

Secondly, with the conception of heteroglossia, Bakhtin draws our attention to the need to consciously and actively manage the clash between the two forces through heteroglossia as heteroglossia is about creating the balance between the centripetal and centrifugal processes, both of which are needed in world-making. The concept of heteroglossia thereby also contributes to the antenarrative approach by supporting the conscious focus on, and methodological work with, the gap between narratives and living stories.

The third contribution Bakhtin makes with his notion of heteroglossia is with regard to the quantum turn. The voices taking part in heteroglossia do not only involve human beings, but also the voices of non-human living beings and inanimate objects. In Rabelais' carnivalesque, objects such as the mask and eating and drinking, the sensuous body, enter into the creative heteroglossic process of reversing the authoritative hierarchy, demarcating the renewal and change of the existing order of the world and in transgressing the self (Bakhtin, 1968). In Bakhtin's understanding, Rabelais thus strives to return a language and meaning to the body, and to return to language and meaning a reality and materiality (Bakhtin, 1981), thereby grounding the abstraction of meaning and ideas at the material and bodily level. Hence, material objects and bodies are acknowledged as performative in bringing forth new worlds.

Moreover, Bakhtin conceptualizes human-world relationships as a dialogue not only between humans, but also between human and non-human forces. The non-human forces are related to what Bakhtin calls an alien world beyond human control (Bakhtin, 1968). Bakhtin conceives of the living in nature (organic) as well as of everything inorganic, as drawn into life, partaking in creating the plot and in the process of dialogical exchange and interaction: "But I hear *voices* in everything and dialogic relations among them" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 192). In Bakhtin's conceptualization of materiality, everything acts and takes part in the unified life of the whole (Bakhtin, 1981). As a consequence of extending the dialogue by incorporating the non-human voices and forces of living things and entities, Bakhtin inscribes his philosophy into an ecological human-world relationship.

The unified life of the whole is, however, not to be conceived of as settled. Due to its inherent struggles between centripetal and centrifugal forces, wholeness is always a matter of work, a project and task (Morson & Emerson, 1990). As such, the whole is always in a process of becoming, a process that is illuminated by Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia and Boje's concept of antenarratives.

Inspired by Bakhtin, John Shotter (2006) makes a useful distinction to conceptualize further the heteroglossic, antenarrative whole. The distinction is made between dead assemblages and living wholes. Dead assemblages are made

up of objective parts retrieving their meanings and characters irrespective of the whole, whether they are part of it or not. That is not possible for living wholes as they grow. Their constitutive parts enter into a mutually transforming process through which each of them grows along with the whole of which they are part. As such, both humans and the remaining world change through their mutual relationship. Self and other, human and non-human, the social world and the remaining world therefore take on new meaning and new materiality, and so materiality is no longer reduced to the symbolic but is material (Bakhtin, 1981). Following Bakhtin, Shotter continues unfolding the living whole by conceiving of change as the temporal and spatial reconfiguration of the transforming parts within the growing whole (Shotter, 2006.). This spacetimemattering process of the living growing whole is central to quantum antenarrative world-creation (Shotter, 2006; Svane, 2019b) and its inherent and struggling forces further illuminated by heteroglossia in this paper.

4   Managing Antenarratives in the Story-Creating Organization

Tamara Land storytelling, as performed by quantum theatre, is again useful as a metaphor for understanding sociomaterial storytelling in organizations. Hence, the Quantum Tamara Land organization is a multi-voiced and multi-spaced storytelling organization of story disorder and story fragments in spacetimemattering (Boje, 2005).

In Quantum Tamara Land, the audience become co-producers, moving around in ten different storied rooms and deciding which action to join (Boje, 2005), never getting the whole picture of the Tamara play (Krizanc, 1989), but having to piece the fragments together to create meaning on the way as they journey from space to space. Quantum theatre differs from the conventional theatre with its fixed scene and seated audience. Instead, quantum theatre takes place in a building, such as a hotel, with many rooms and levels, internal spaces and a landscaped area outside the building, thereby enforcing the audience to move around from room to room, chasing the story fragments as they occur in shifting contexts and multiple spacetime frames (Hitchin, 2014).

The metaphor of Quantum Tamara Land storytelling thus resembles the reality of organizational life, at least if we view the organization through the lens of quantum philosophy. Operating in spacetimemattering and in between narratives and living stories, four characteristics of antenarratives can be identified (Boje, 2005; Hitchin, 2014).

First of all, the sociomaterial heteroglossic story is a multi-plotted, multi-voiced story. The story of each member of the audience evolves in the real-life interaction in spacetimemattering processes; from a Bakhtinian perspective, it can therefore be conceived of as a heteroglossic product of polyphonic voices.

Secondly, as each member of the audience makes a choice of how to travel through the building, the audience as a whole does not experience the same order/sequence of events, but instead fragments that are pieced together in many different ways depending on the space and time of the journey. Because fragmented stories of experienced events are travelling across spaces and times in arbitrary ways, the antenarrative plot of the living stories is not fixed and ready-made a priori, but evolves during the journey with vague and open beginnings and endings. "Antenarratives thus morph their content as they travel" (Boje, 2008, p. 14). Multi-voiced and multi-plotted living stories are thereby kept alive and dynamic in changing spacetimemattering. As their emplotment is ever changing, people are continually in the middle of the narrative before cohesion (Weick, 2012).

Thirdly, it is hard to imagine that a unified wholeness is likely to occur, even though each storyteller may experience a coherence in their own storytelling (Hitchin, 2014). On the contrary, there may be just as many versions of the multi-plotted story as there are actor-spectators present during the play. The storied organizational world is thus kept alive. As the organizational life is unfolding in multiple simultaneous time-spaces, its complexity of the storytelling can never be fully grasped. The stories will always be incomplete and unfinished. Heteroglossic stories, languages, worldviews and consciousness are thus kept living and developing.

Fourthly, both Hitchin and Boje point to a political perspective in their interpretation of Tamara Land organization. Compared to conventional theatre, Quantum Tamara Land implies letting go of the control of action and speech, events and experiences, since the sociomaterial infrastructure of the organization to some extent is set free in open spacetimemattering. The organization is therefore viewed as a complex, messy and to a large extent unknowable site full of the uncertain, the unexpected and surprises. There is, however, still a political practice going on in terms of a scripted play, even in a play like Tamara (Hitchin, 2014). For that reason, the antenarrativist approach to management is highly relevant to Tamara Land organizations simply because the antenarrative process works with the tensed interplay between narratives and living stories.

Through the antenarrative processes of weaving and piecing together living story fragments, heteroglossic multi-plotted stories emerge as the actor-spectators share their experiences of events with those they meet on the way, meetings held in different ways depending on whom they are encountering—friends, strangers or acquaintances. At the end of the play, each member of the audience may have their version of the story of the Tamara play (Hitchin, 2014).

Each of these stories can, however, be regarded as an incomplete and unfinished heteroglossic product woven together by the multiple co-producers that took part in the sensemaking and storytelling process—the actor-spectators of the audience and the characters, the building and the rooms, things and objects, as well as events and stories, action and speech, space and time. These living and voiced sociomaterial actants and actors thus enter into the heteroglossia of antenarrative spacetimemattering.

4.1 *Implications for the Story Creator*

The above four characteristics of antenarratives have implications for the story-creating manager as (s)he enters into and is part of the antenarrative living growing medium for transforming and bringing forth new organizational worlds, self and others.

Taking on the quantum perspective, the story creator interacts with humans, non-human living beings, material objects, space and time. All resources are co-participating in the heteroglossia of the antenarrative medium. Hence, story-creating requires embodied, material and multi-voiced practices. Not only Bakhtin, but Benjamin, too, picks up the embodied perspective on the story creator. Benjamin refers to the storyteller as an artisan or craftsman. "In fact, one can go on and ask oneself whether the relationship of the storyteller to his material, human life, is not in itself a craftsman's relationship…" (Benjamin, 2006, p. 377). Benjamin's description of the art of storytelling illustrates how storytelling is an embodied practice, an art of the artisan: "A great storyteller will always be rooted in the people, primarily in a milieu of craftsmen" (Benjamin, 2006, p. 373). With words, soul, eye, hand, gestures and material objects, the story creator thus enters into a relationship with the embodied practices. As such, the story creator needs to be sensible and sensitive to the multitude of semiotics at play other than in language-in-use (Iedema, 2003).

Moreover, situated sensibility and sensitivity seem to be important antenarrative capacities of the story creator. As the world-in-becoming in principle is uncertain and unknowable, complex and confusing, the story creator is moving around in what Shotter and Tsoukas (2014) poetically call a landscape of possibilities, puzzling surroundings and bewildering situations. From an antenarrativist perspective, the story creator is required to grasp almost unnoticeable fragments of alterations and deviations from everyday life. Such small fragments are vague signals of something that might be changing, signs that something new may be emerging and, if enacted upon, could pave the way for the arrival of new attractive futures. Without the capacity of sensibility and sensitivity, these vague and fragmented, embodied and material responses may remain unnoticed and forgotten. Viewed through the quantum lens, ethical concern and caring ought to be integrated into the performative antenarrative practices of bringing forth new worlds. At the core of such ethical practice is phronesis, also called practical wisdom. According to Aristotle, practical wisdom refers to practices of judging, choosing and acting in a way that serves the greater good not only of human beings, but of all living species in the world (Aristotle, 2009). In performative quantum world-creating, ethical concern encompasses the wellbeing of the world and of the creatures existing within it.

For that reason, the ethical story creator is compelled to listen to all kinds of voices in the world and to fore-care about their wellbeing. Hence, the story creator ought to acknowledge the sociomaterial diversity of stories lived and told. The ethical perspective implies that the story creator creates a free dialogical and ecological space for living sociomaterial stories to be shared and responded to.

The story creator therefore needs the capacity to be responsive to the performative consequences of each move, choice or action, to be able to judge and assess each move wisely, to be in touch with embodied felt emotions and with moral sensibilities invoked by the move, and to have the capacity to articulate feelings and concerns (Shotter & Tsoukas, 2014), revealing an attitude towards the becoming of the world. In Benjamin's (2006) view, the true storyteller transmits good counsel and learning, cunning and courage. These capacities are conceived of as essential to practical wisdom, working towards and caring about human and non-human flourishing and the wellbeing of the world-in-becoming.

5 Concluding Remarks

The scope of this paper was to study antenarratives and their relation to narratives and living stories through the work of Bakhtin and through the lens of quantum storytelling. The ambitions were to contribute to the conceptual development of antenarratives and a storytelling philosophy in the quantum age.

Viewing the storytelling framework through the quantum lens, materiality, multimodality and the ethics of plurality and politics are accentuated in Boje's more recent work. The paper reviews the way Boje defines the antenarrativist approach from a quantum perspective and positions the antenarrative approach within a storytelling philosophy.

Apart from conceptually relating antenarratives to narratives and living stories, the paper furthermore reflects upon the antenarrativist approach through the lenses of Bakhtin's heteroglossia and Benjamin's embodied conception of the great storyteller. Based upon Bakhtin and Benjamin, the paper argues that storytelling constitutes a living heteroglossic medium transforming itself, the world, and the co-participating story actors and actants. The antenarrative process is viewed as a heteroglossic process that embraces the interplay between narratives and living stories. What emerges as an outcome of these processes is viewed as the heteroglossic product: an infinite and unfinalized product that continues to be active and changing in the ongoing and never-ending process of world creation. Positioned within a storytelling philosophy, heteroglossia thus contributes to overcome the dualistic thinking that tends to separate narratives and living stories. Read through the quantum lens, heteroglossia contributes to overcoming the assumption prevailing in much storytelling literature that storytelling is exclusively a human and not a non-human practice. The paper thus argues that heteroglossia clarifies the entangling forces involved in spacetimemattering. The article thus contributes to further develop heteroglossia in the context of the quantum turn.

Moreover, the scope of the paper was to indicate implications for the management of antenarratives by identifying essential capacities. First of all, the paper suggests viewing the manager as a story creator that is co-participating in the living medium. Secondly, the paper suggests looking into at least four essential capacities to be cultivated and grown: 1) the capacity to create dialogical and ecological spaces and relations, allowing the multiple voices of actors and actants to be listened to and responded to; 2) the capacity to articulate and use language in order to tell stories; 3) the capacity to develop sensibility and sensitivity towards semiotics other than language-in-use, as storytelling is not only an oral practice but also an embodied and material practice of creating; and 4) the phronetic capacity to fore-care about the wellbeing of the world and all of its creatures, as well as to deliver good counsel when choosing, judging and acting, a capacity that brings into focus both the ethical and the political perspectives.

Taking into consideration the entanglement of ethics and politics, as well as materiality and discourses, the quantum approach to storytelling seems promising to pursue in future research. Moreover, antenarratives are highly relevant, as antenarratives address the processes of creating and enacting attractive futures. The field of storytelling is further advanced as an ethical and political research programme and as a philosophy in the quantum age.

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