GENEALOGIES OF BECOMING – ANTENARRATIVE INQUIRY IN ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract

We propose in this article to take a story approach to organizational analysis. This implies that organizational life is perceived as polyphonic, equivocal, dialogical, unfinished and unresolved. We describe this approach as antenarrative inquiry in that it seeks to question established truths and moralities embedded in the narratives of the present. Antenarrative inquiry thus suspends beginnings, middles and ends in narratives and gives room for other voices. We propose Foucault's power analysis, genealogy, as a method for antenarrative inquiry. We demonstrate the ideas of genealogy by relating it to Ricoeur's work on narrative and time where experience is portrayed as a mimetic circle where endpoints lead back to pre-narration. We argue instead that organizational life is result of complex chains of interactions, negotiations and struggles. Genealogical scrutiny thus shakes up the mimetic circle and opens up for new interpretations of organizational life by revealing the power relations embedded in the conditions in which this life is storied and re-storied.

Introduction

We make four antenarrative moves in the paper. In this first section, we explore the relations between narrative and story in organizational analysis and we propose genealogy as a method for antenarrative inquiry. *Secondly*, we explore the principles of Ricoeur's work on *Narrative and Time*. *Thirdly* we clarify the principles of a story approach in relation to Ricoeur's work. *Finally*, we describe the principles of genealogical analysis and relate it to organizational analysis.

The first antenarrative move is to explore the relations between narrative and story in organizational analysis. We suggest that organizational life often represented *as* and *in* narratives (Cunliffe, Luhmann and Boje 2004; Czarniawska 2004). As such this life is represented as individual or institutionalized accounts, which are plotted and which have a relatively clear, beginning, middle and end (Boje and Durant 2006). Such narratives institutionalize and strengthen particular traits in organizations. They construct a sense of self and a sense of what the organization is all about (Chappell, Rhodes, Solomon, Tennant and Yates 2003). Through narrative we create coherence and unity from many different forces present in the context in which we live, breathe and act. According to Ricoeur (1984), these forces – caught in the notion of time - become human time by means of narrative.

But narrative also has a darker side. Derrida describes it as a *violent instrument of torture* (2004, p. 78). Derrida thus takes an uncompromising attitude towards narrative. For him narrative is linked with an overall modern emphasis on truth, essence, unity and rationality. Organizational life is thus represented as a linear sequence of beginning,

middle and end thereby overlooking the different voices and complex interaction inherent in creating this life. Narrative becomes a tyranny of truth in demanding an "I" capable of organizing a narrative sequence and telling the truth (Derrida 2004, p. 81) – to tell us exactly what happened (Derrida 2004, p. 72).

Through narrative analysis, organizational life thus becomes imprisoned in what Boje and Durant refer to as a modern obsession with the coherence of *beginning, middle* and *end* (BME-narratives) (Boje and Durant 2006). Narrative is a *whole telling* with a linear sequence of beginning, middle and end, and organized around a single plot that changes little over time (Boje 2008). Narrative thus contains a moral and "agreed" interpretation on something that is in reality fragmented, pluralistic, paradoxical and ambiguous. Narratives are moral imprisonment that seeks to control our interpretations, our actions and our potentials (Boje and Durant 2006, p. 19).

Walter Benjamin is concerned the art of storytelling is coming to an end (1999, p. 83) and is being replaced with information, which, unlike storytelling, aims to convey the abstract essence of discourse. For Benjamin this is symptom of the secular productive forces of history, where storytelling becomes narrative and is gradually removed from the realm of living speech (p. 86). Modern narratives are then no longer born from experience; they don't contain "…counsel woven into the fabric of everyday life…" and they don't contain the integration of word, soul, eye and hand (e.g. Benjamin, 1999, p. 86, pp. 105-106).

Instead modern narratives are removed from the realm of living speech as noted above. This means that they are severed from the stories of everyday life. Modern narratives may be compared with what Bakhtin calls official and orthodox language (Bakhtin 1994, pp. 199-200), which means that they are dogmatic, monolithic, authoritarian and hegemonic to everyday life in organizations. Embedded in these narratives are particular practices of power (e.g. Foucault 1979; Gordon 1980; Foucault 1993) that govern appropriate talk and actions in terms of governing expectations, roles, norms and standards in organizations. Results are that dialogues and positions become fixed with little room for other voices.

In other words, we have to regain narrative to what Bakhtin calls the people's second life in organizations. Here narrative would be linked to the peoples' unofficial language (Bakhtin 1994, p. 198); that is to what he calls a *carnival* type of language. In organizations such narratives would expose the gay relativity of established truth and conceptions. They would emerge from a more free communication characterized by openness, mutuality and laughter as well as it contains the acceptance of mutual mocking and debasement of positions (pp. 199-200).

The first step for regaining narrative to the people's second life is for Nietzsche *critical history*. This is a radical step since critical history actually refuses narrative – that is, critical history is deployed in order to refuse who we are (Haugaard 1997). Critical history is characterized by dragging the past "before the court of justice"; investigate it meticulously and finally condemn it (Nietzsche 1997). In this sense, critical history refuses narrative; it knocks it off its pedestal and transforms it into something that is always *antenarrative* (Boje 2001). In this process, narrative also loses its privileged and hegemonic position as an expression of experience (e.g. Jørgensen and Boje 2008).

Antenarrative denotes "…the fragmented, non-linear, incoherent, collective, unplotted and pre-narrative speculation, a bet" (Boje 2001, p. 1). For Boje, *antenarrative analysis* is a solution to the crisis in modern narrative methods. Antenarrative analysis is the analysis of stories "…that are too unconstructed and fragmented to be analyzed in traditional approaches" (Boje 2001, p. 1). Story is before – "ante" - narrative. To emphasize story instead of narrative means to uphold the unfinished and open character of interpretations and experiences. It is thus a condition for reflexive practice where we

engage in the "…act of questioning the basis of our thinking, surfacing the taken-for-granted rules underlying organizational decisions, and examining critically our own practices and ways of relating with others" (Cunliffe and Jun 2005, p. 227).

Unlike narrative, story has no borderlines: "It is at once larger and smaller than itself, it is entangled in a play with other "stories", is part of the other, makes the other a part of itself etc. and remains utterly different from its homonym, narrative (Derrida 2004, p. 82). Stories occur in the moment and go in unpredictable directions. They float in a soup of bits and pieces. They are never alone but live and breathe in web of other stories (Boje 2001, p. 18). Stories, when compared to narratives and dominant ideological repertories are certainly more dialogical and polyphonic, they tend to be always surrounded by scaffoldings of emergent contexts and deconstructionist critique as if they were always under construction, as if their authors resisted stories being high-jacked for dominant narratives.

Antenarrative inquiry, in other words, means to resist taken-for-grantedness and to praise the unfinished and the unresolved because this is the condition for learning something new. Antenarrative inquiry is the attempt to free stories from the linear sequence of beginning, middle and end in narrative (see next section). Organizational life is instead often perceived in categories first introduced outside of the realm of organizational theories or managerial sciences, namely in the literary scholarship of Bakhtin (e.g. Bakhtin 1981, 1994) or in philosophy of politics (Arendt, 1998), but presently imported into the realm of the sciences of organization and management. As such organizational life is viewed as polyphonic and plural and where internal tensions, contradictory forces and paradox are seen as inherent in organizational life.

Antenarrative is an attempt to shake narrative by emphasizing that language is fundamentally open-ended, unfinished, unresolved, ambiguous, dialogical and plural. Antenarrative is before narrative but this "before" should be considered a permanent condition where the narrator is displaced in favor of emphasizing the historical conditions and circumstances in which stories develop(ed), evolve(d) and change(d). The intention, however, in antenarrative inquiry is not to execute the narrator. The intention is to increase her awareness of self by making her conscious of how she is affected by organizations, societies and cultures; that is to make her stronger and independent by making her more reflexive of self and her relationship with other people.

To increase this awareness of self, we employ, as noted above, Nietzsche's critical history. For that purpose, Nietzsche developed and employed *genealogy* to question the grand narratives of his contemporaries; in particular Christianity and Enlightenment modernity (Nietzsche 1992; Nietzsche 1997). By writing a genealogy of morality for example, Nietzsche wants to show us that morality has a history and thus that morality is an invention of a particular human type (Ansell Pearson in Nietzsche 1994, p. x).

As such, Nietzsche argues that we need a knowledge of the conditions and circumstances in which that particular morality grew, evolved and changed; "morality as consequence, as symptom, as mask, as tartufferie, as illness, as misunderstanding, but also morality as cause, as remedy, as stimulant, as restraint, as poison" (Nietzsche 1992, p. 456). To gain an awareness of self is for Nietzsche to gain what he calls a *historical spirit* – an awareness of who you are and where you come from in order to master yourself on a higher level (Nietzsche 1992, First essay, section 2). This includes an awareness of the darker sides of our history because without acquiring a bad conscience we cannot envisage higher norms and new states of being, and we cannot attain self-mastery (Kaufmann 1992, p. 448).

Foucault later develops Nietzsche's genealogy into his analytics of power (Foucault 1978; Foucault 1984). Genealogy thus becomes

employed in writing *the history of the present* (Foucault 1979, p. 31). It is an analytics of power used with a particular purpose – to make us more reflexive of the present by *creating an alternative memory* (Jørgensen 2007, p. 15). To write a genealogy is first of all a reflexive endeavor directed against our taken-for-granted ways of thinking, acting and speaking. Genealogy is antenarrative inquiry in seeking to go beyond narrative imprisonment by trying to reconstruct the conditions under which stories grew, evolved and changed before they became trapped in narrative coherence.

Genealogy records the history of interpretations. This means that present day narratives are not more true or just than others. They have a history where time has been interpreted and reinterpreted again and again according to particular historical conditions and circumstances. As such, interpretation is not the search for the single coherent plot in texts, talk and actions because interpretation already lies underneath them: when there is no single coherent plot to interpret "…then everything is open for interpretation" (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982, p. 107). This groundlessness is at the heart of antenarrative.

It means that we must leave behind the idea of narrative coherence. We are instead searching for an awareness of the conditions and circumstances in which narratives were configured thereby shaking the truth and morality claims of narrative and thereby opening up for other interpretations and other voices. We will now go ahead with describing the principles of antenarrative inquiry. We will first delve deeper into the notion of narrative by means of a description and discussion of Ricoeur's idea of narrative as three-fold mimesis. This will be used in subsequent sections as a reference point for discussing story and genealogical analysis.

Narrative temporality

Ricoeur's theory of time and narrative is a theory of narrative temporality (Cunliffe,

Luhmann et al. 2004). Construction of experience is for Ricoeur captured in the notion of *human time*. By distinguishing between time and human time, he maintains that time exists beyond subjective experience and he seeks to overcome the object – subject divide present in the literature on time (Kemp 1999; Cunliffe, Luhmann and Boje 2004, p. 269). Time does not only exist as an existential subjective act as claimed by Augustin, Husserl and Heidegger (Ricoeur 1988; Kemp 1999); time exists as facts with a *before* and an *after*. Ricoeur suggests that narrative can reconcile objective and subjective conceptualizations of time by combining Augustin's theory of time as threefold present with Aristotle's writings on plot to develop a theory of time as threefold mimesis (Cunliffe, Luhmann and Boje 2004, pp. 269-270).

This means also that there are forces in time that interact with human experience. Arendt argues that action and speech are always concerned with the matters of the world "…out of which arise their specific, objective worldly interests" (Arendt 1998, p. 182). She distinguishes between a *physical worldly in-between* which consists of the worlds of things and the worlds of physics. However she also identifies another in-between, which consists of deeds and words and owes its origin to men's acting and speaking. This *subjective in-between* is not tangible but despite of this, this in-between is no less real. She calls this reality *the web of human relationships* (Arendt 1998, pp. 182-183).

Time exists as a fact and condition for human existence and it is expressed in words, concepts, artifacts, rituals, symbols etc. (Henriksen, Nørreklit, Jørgensen, Christensen and O'Donnell 2004, pp. 19-20). The relationship between time and human time is mediated by language where the use of language is governed by tacit rules such as norms, traditions, conventions etc. (Wittgenstein 1983; Shotter 2005; Jørgensen 2007). *Human time* is the experience of time. Ricoeur claims that between the activity of narrating a story and the temporal character of human experience,

there is a correlation which is not incidental but must be perceived as a transcultural necessity.

Ricoeur's hypothesis is that "…time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full meaning when it becomes a condition of human existence" (Ricoeur 1984, p. 52). Ricoeur explores the relations between time and narrative through what he calls three moments of *mimesis*. He refers to these three moments as *mimesis1*, *mimesis2* and *mimesis3*. What brings these moments together is *the power of configuration*. He suggests that the meaning comprised by the power of configuration is the result of the intermediary position between two operations which Ricoeur calls mimesis1 and mimesis3 and which constitutes the two sides of mimesis2.

This procedure is contrary to the scientific procedure, which Ricoeur calls the semiotics of a text (Ricoeur 1984, p. 53). Instead, Ricoeur's approach is inspired by hermeneutics and the hermeneutical task is to reconstruct the set of operations, whereby a work lifts itself above the opaque depths of life, action and suffering and to be given by an author to readers who through their reception of the work change their ways of acting. Semiotic theory is, according to Ricoeur, only interested in the literary text. Hermeneutics, however, is concerned with the interplay between history, text, authors and readers (Ricoeur 1984, p. 53).

He suggests that what is at stake is the process by which the textual configuration mediates through the prefiguration of the practical field and its refiguration in the reception of the work. It is the reader who is the operator and by means of acting – the action of reading – creates the unity that criss-crosses from mimesis1 to mimesis3 through mimesis2 (Ricoeur 1984, p. 53). The relations between mimesis1, mimesis2 and mimesis3 constitute in this way "…the dynamics of emplotment", that is how plot is shaped. It is this dynamic, which according to

Ricoeur is the central element in the description of the relations between time and narrative.

Ricoeur, in other words, claims to solve the problem of the relations between time and narrative by showing the mediating role that emplotment has between the moment of practical experience, which goes before emplotment, and the moment of refiguration that follows it. We are following, therefore, the destiny of a prefigured time that becomes a refigured time through the mediation of a configured time" (Ricoeur 1984, p. 54). Human time, the experience of things, is historical: there is a before (mimesis1) and an after (mimesis3) with intimate relations between them.

Emplotment emerges on the background of a prefigured time that becomes a refigured time through the power of configuration. Narratives are created within a "circle of mimesis" (Ricoeur 1984, pp. 71-76) where post-understandings lead back to starting points and within that dynamics incorporate pre-understandings of what he calls semantic structures, symbolic resources and temporal characteristics" (Cunliffe, Luhmann and Boje 2004, pp. 270-271).

Plot mediates in three different ways. First, it mediates between individual events and the story as a whole: "…It draws a meaningful story from a diversity of events or incidents (Aristotle's pragmata) that it transforms the events or incidents into a story … In short, emplotment is the operation that draws a configuration out of a single succession" (Ricoeur 1984, p. 65). Secondly, the plot draws together heterogeneous factors such as "… agents, goals, means, interactions, circumstances, unexpected results" (Ricoeur 1984, p. 65; Chappell, Rhodes, Solomon, Tennart and Yates 2003, p. 45).

Finally plot mediates in a third way: "… that of its temporal characteristics. These allow us to call plot, by means of generalization, a synthesis of the heterogeneous" (Ricoeur 1984, p. 66). Emplotment combines in different ways two temporal dimensions: one chronological

and one that is not: "The former constitutes the episodic dimension of narrative. It characterizes the story insofar as it is made up of events. The second is the configurational dimension, through which the plot transforms events into a story" (Ricoeur 1984, p. 66). Plot provides an end point of the story, which organizes the individual events and which makes it possible to follow a story.

This end point of the story, its conclusion, must be acceptable as congruent with the events brought together in narrative (Ricoeur 1984, pp. 66-67). The final stage of the mimetic circle is called mimesis3. With reference to Gadamer (1992), this stage corresponds to "application" (Ricoeur 1984, p. 70). Mimesis3 is where "the world of the text" intersects with the hearer/reader. It is where narrative experience is manifested in words and actions and becomes the object of "public" attention and where it undergoes inter-subjective negotiation and so forth.

After having described the idea of narrative experience and narrative temporality, we will now criticize the idea of narrative and take us in the direction of story in the following section. We thereby construct a more critical view on narrative and argue that instead of narrative temporality, we should *speak of polyphonic temporality*.

Polyphonic temporality

Ricoeur presents human existence as a process directed towards the future with life as a continuous process of narration. What we at every moment may call the plot involves an interpretive organizing of life where the plot is continuously re-storied or/and reorganized throughout the duration of life. Ricoeur follows Gallie's argument here and argues that the explanations a narrative contains are "…not born from something but "proceeds" in some way or another from some discourse that already has a narrative form" (1984, p. 149). Narrative is clearly hegemonic to story in the emphasis on plot

as a basic condition of human existence, and where story is always subjected to the totality of the mimetic circle (narrative order).

To narrate a story in Ricoeur's circle of mimesis is to reduce heterogeneous factors into a single order. It is not necessarily a perfect order in the sense of not allowing internal tensions, paradoxes, inconsistencies, sudden reversals, horror and pity (1984, p. 73). These internal tensions and inconsistencies derive from the fact that narrative has a history; it proceeds from something. Still, Ricoeur's model is definitely not antenarrative analysis, nor story analysis. The emphasis is on what Bakhtin calls the centripetal forces of language. forces that seek to overcome what he calls *heteroglossia* – that is the condition that the word uttered in that place and that time will have a different meaning than under other conditions (Bakhtin 1981, p. 263 and p. 428).

Ricoeur's theory of experience as a mimetic circle is hermeneutical and the strategy of the theory in terms of understanding experience is likewise hermeneutical; namely to interpret the meaning of the text, or in other words to find the unity of the text. We feel however that a more critical strategy is required in relation to the analysis of organizational life. We don't necessarily say that a hermeneutical strategy accepts relations of power in organizations; on the other hand, it doesn't question them. In any case, we feel that we cannot leave the question of power unattended in relation to narrative analysis in organizations. Especially because organizations from the early days of organizational theory and until now were perceived as the modern instrument; as the manifestation of the rational society and rational decision making (Weber 1971); that is the non-human, objective and effective bureaucracy.

That does something to narratives because they are not constructed independently of the practices of power. Relations of power are embedded in narratives in the sense that they are reflected in and served by those narratives in so far as they construct ideological climate – but these power relations also surface in stories, be it in less obvious and unequivocal

manner, since they are accompanied by echoes of resistance and "talking back" to dominant ideologues (e.g. Fairclough 2001; Jørgensen 2007). Power relations govern the ways in which experience is constructed. Our knowledge and memories are governed by relations of power embedded in the *language games* (Wittgenstein 1983) by which life is constituted both individually and socially. But as noted earlier in the paper, modern narratives have removed themselves from the realm of living speech. This indicates that the mechanisms of power – that is surveillance, representation and expectations (Clegg 1989; Hardy and Clegg 1996; Clegg, Courpasson and Phillips 2006) - lead to the construction of linear, rational and stylized narratives that are far removed from the practices of everyday life.

We don't deny the presence and construction of narratives and we don't deny that these narratives are important for human existence. But they are important in a less glorious manner than as usually described, which will be the center of human identity and experience. Instead, and in line with Nietzsche's critical history, we perceive narrative as mask and disguise (e.g. Foucault 1984); as a retrospective rationalization of talk and actions that, in reality, were not rational and were not logically coherent with previous actions. We thus perceive narrative as a modern *spectacle*, which pacifies actors in a passive consumption of commodity spectacles and services, and which distracts them from recovering the full range of their human powers (Boje, Luhmann and Cunliffe 2003).

In other words, relations of power produce an *excess* of rational and linear narratives. This excess is a manifestation of the expectations, norms, standards etc. for talk and action produced by society and organization. In capitalist societies and organizations, these expectations, norms and standards can be caught under the name of *competition*, *consumption*, *effectiveness* and nowadays *flexibility* and *globalization* (Sennett 1999; Bauman 2004), whereas there is little room for *ethics* (e.g. Bauman 1989; Jørgensen and Boje 2008), *passion*, *recognition* and *community* (Bauman 2004). Modern principles of management, organization and governance have created a void in human existence, which means that narratives have moved further and further away from living speech, as noted earlier with reference to Benjamin.

We need to restore narrative to the realm of living speech and thus to the people's second life. As noted, narratives would here be linked to a carnival type of language, which exposes the gay relativity of established truth and morality claims. Where such truth and morality claims lose their "untouchable" aura of seriousness, authority and self-righteousness and instead are exposed to laughter, ridicule and mocking. This includes in other words, the destruction and refusal of narrative as the centre of human experience. In other words, we refuse Ricoeur's model of narrative as the centre of human experience. What we instead are looking for, are concepts and methods that allows for a more reflexive self based on the recognition that our conceptions of self, other and reality are specific to special historical, social and geographical conditions.

In other words, we need Nietzsche's critical history and its application in genealogical analysis (see next section). This implies taking a story approach in to the analysis of organizational life, where antenarrative is becomes the main principle. This implies the recognition that our stories are always open-ended, unfinished and unresolved and further that experience is always polyphonic. According to Bakhtin, language always contains a multiplicity of voices that ensures the dynamics and development of language: "Alongside the centripetal forces, the centrifugal forces or language carry on their uninterrupted work; alongside verbal-ideological centralization and unification, the uninterrupted processes of decentralization and disunification go forward" (1981, p. 271). Narrative order and story disorder are thus countervailing forces that always exist side by side, and which ensures the development of language.

As such experience might better be described as *polyphonic temporality* instead of narrative temporality. Narrative has an important function in providing a stable center, which according to Spivak reflects humankind's common desire for assurance of mastery (Spivak 1997, p. xi). But this narrative mastery is an illusion, which is continuously challenged, penetrated and undermined by many different forces of time. Instead, we suggest that the meanings that humans construct in every moment of their life are highly situational, accidental, occasional and constantly fluctuating. As such individuals and organizations are always in a state of becoming and in a search for meaning. This becoming and search for meaning non-linear, discontinuous, fragmented and dialogical because action and speech always emerges in the worldly-in-between as noted by Arendt (noted earlier).

A story approach takes its starting point in this in-between and is thus more interested in the web of human relationships with its conflicting wills and intentions, which produce actions and speech (Arendt 1998, p. 184). Story, in other words, implies the analysis of actions and speech in a *plural* or *polyphonic* world. Speech and action take place *in* and *through* a *multiplicity of force relations* (Foucault 1993, pp. 333-334) in which no one is an author or producer of their life stories but instead are seen as shaped by language (Michelfelder and Palmer 1989, p. 2; Arendt 1998, p. 184) from which they become co-authors and co-producers of history through inter-subjective participation and negotiation.

What we at every moment may refer to as plot is in other words the result of a collective act of storytelling. It is "…a joint performance of tellers and hearers in which often overlooked, very subtle utterances play an important role in the negotiation of meaning and co-production in a story-telling episode" (Boje 1991, p. 107). Further this plot is never finished and never whole, always in stage of transition and change. In other words we are always searching for the plot. Story share the same characteristics as language in being fundamentally ambiguous, open-ended, negotiated, socially constructed, unfinished and unresolved. Language is a game or play with words, concepts and meanings (Wittgenstein 1983). Construction of reality is a complex, multi-flow process, which includes dynamic, spontaneous story-telling processes – and with increasing sophistication and complexity of these socio-cultural flows, storytellers and storytelling have to embrace and accommodate an increasing awareness of playing language games.

After having made a transition from a position of narrative temporality (narrative) to polyphonic temporality (story) we will now sketch some principles of one story approach to organizational analysis, namely genealogy.

Genealogy

The concept of story implies the suspension of beginning, middles and ends in order that more complex, dialogical and interactive stories of becoming become possible. We thus seek to allow for other voices to speak and gain a more reflexive relationship to the world. To perform such antenarrative inquiry, we propose drawing on *genealogical analysis* (Flyvbjerg 2001; Jørgensen 2002; Jørgensen 2007). We thus shift the emphasis in Ricoeur's model from the narrator and from narrating to the conditions and circumstances in which stories grew, evolved and changed.

Genealogy doesn't accept that the narrator has a unified identity, which defines the narrator's relationship to the world across time and space. In fact, genealogy doesn't see actors as narrators but rather sees the narrator as a character or role played by a storyteller, when reflecting on life at a distance thereby creating a mask and disguise for living life, which goes on with other people, and which is much more fragmented, splintered and multilayered. This means that genealogy emphasizes the context and spaces where life is storied, and re-storied (Cunliffe, Luhmann and Boje 2004, p. 272) – a viewpoint that makes life more dynamic, liquid, polyphonic and paradoxical. These

circumstances comprise other actors/actants (Latour 1996) with whom/what we engage.

As such the truth and morality claims of any narrative are thrown to suspicion and laughter in that, genealogy seeks to expose how power relations are embedded in narratives. It does that by exposing the cultural-political conditions in which narratives are framed; conditions which have a long history of how we have come to perceive and know things. Genealogy was Nietzsche's way of writing *critical history* that was acting counter to our time, thereby acting on our time and hopefully for the time to come (Nietzsche 1997, p. 60; Elden 2001, pp. 111-112). Later, it became an indispensable part of Foucault's studies of the relations between power and knowledge (Gordon 1980). Here, it was employed in writing the history of the present, which means taking an interest in the past in order to write the history of the present (Foucault 1979, p. 31).

This demands that we see our thoughts, ideas, concepts, actions, norms and standards as descended from history. As such we have to follow the stories in order to understand the present, including the narratives which are an indispensable part of identity (Chappell, Rhodes, Solomon, Tennant and Yates 2003; Sfard and Prusak 2005). By writing a history of the present, Foucault wishes to go beyond the narratives of the present in order to open them up for questioning. He calls these uses of history, the *parodic*, *dissociative* and *sacrificial* uses of history (Foucault 1984, pp. 91-95; Bauer 1999, p. 62; Jørgensen 2007, pp. 71-74). They are characterized by the attempt to tear of the "masks" (narratives) of the present in order to write an alternative memory of what happened.

The parodic use is directed against reality in opposing "…the theme of history as reminiscence or recognition" (Bauer 1999, p. 61). It is concerned with getting "behind" history thus avoiding being seduced by the web of stories and narratives, all of which

conceal the emergence of phenomena in imagined truths and morality claims. These imagined truths are embedded in language games and thus in stories and narratives of heroes and scoundrels, rational explanations, romanticism, images and so on. Genealogical analysis seeks to tear off such masks and map actual events in their correct chronological order, in the proper context, and with a proper description of who is involved, and what part they play. This includes the winners, the losers, the marginalized and the privileged. Genealogy thus seeks to tell a different, detailed and varied story of the emergence of particular forms of life in organizations.

The dissociative use is directed against identity in opposing history as continuity or representative of tradition. The dissociative use of history is thus more closely linked to identity as the sense of self (Harré & Gillett 1994, pp. 103-104) and often expressed in people's narrating and narratives (Sfard and Prusak 2005; Pullen 2005; Chappell, Rhodes, Solomon, Tennant and Yates 2003). The dissociative use of history seeks to demonstrate the complexities, the contradictions and the paradoxes in relation to who people are and how they have become who they are. The dissociative use of history seeks to reveal that people are part of history and as such are subjected to influences and pressures to speak and act in particular ways. It may demonstrate that people are capable of practically anything in order to promote their own intentions and interests.

The dissociative use of history thus seeks to reveal the whole spectrum of human characteristics and human history. It doesn't allow us to forget the darker sides in the panoply of human identity and integrity. The dissociative use of history is directed towards peoples' image of themselves. Their 'own image' is conceived of as a construction and a mask, which may only provide a one-eyed and maybe even a narcissistic representation of who they are.

Finally, the sacrificial use is directed against truth in opposing the traditional "objective"

historian (Bauer 1999, p. 61). Power is as noted as an indispensable part of this development and the question of power is one reason why Nietzsche criticizes traditional historians of morality because the "… historical spirit itself is lacking in them …" (Nietzsche 1992, p. 12). The third use of history seeks to demonstrate how speech and actions originate and are driven from peoples' intentions, interests, passions, feelings and will. Foucault refers to this as "the will to power" (Foucault 1984, p. 89) or "the will to knowledge", which is, as mentioned before, inspired by Nietzsche (Nietzsche 1992, pp. 514-515; Nietzsche 1968).

The "will" penetrates the production of the text. The text, therefore, is anything but neutral, objective or value free'. It is saturated with passions, interests and intentions and exists in a continuous struggle and confrontation with other's passions, interests and intentions. Violence, blood, conflict, dominance and slavery are embedded in the production of texts – not liberty, equality or fraternity (see also Foucault 1984, p. 96). The sacrificial use of history perceives social processes as driven by people with different passions, intentions, interests and feelings. Developments are not the result of any objective truth. The sacrificial use of history demonstrates how phenomena are the results of many small force relations which interact in particular ways to create the larger patterns. Foucault's power analysis is unique since it not only assumes that reality is socially constructed—it also seeks to demonstrate in a very deep fashion *how* it is socially constructed.

According to Nietzsche everything said and done needs to be judged according to questions of whom, where and when - that is, there is no independently objective and de-contextualised truth or justice. It is "the good themselves who have judged themselves and their actions as good (Nietzsche 1994, p. 12). Therefore, Dreyfus and Rabinow claim that Foucault's genealogy is *interpretive analytics* (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982). Interpretive

analytics involves this kind of historical spirit where everything said and done is judged and evaluated according to the context in which it is said and done. It seeks to make people conscious of who they are, where they come from and why things are the way they are.

Through the use of history, Foucault wishes to bring subjected knowledge into play in order to show that things need not be so. History is his critique (Haugaard, 1997, p. 44). More specifically genealogy is "…an insurrection of subjugated knowledges" (Foucault 1980, p. 81). Two kinds of knowledge are resurrected. The first is historical contents that have been buried and disguised in coherence or formal systemisation (Foucault 1980, pp. 81-82). That is, narratives of the present impose an abstract and unitary order on material that is otherwise fragmented and distorted. This means that instead of looking at organizational change with the unifying order of the narrative, we should look at organizational change as a collection of dispersed events with their own history and identity and existing in their own specific context. It is through the revival of such local knowledge – local stories – that Foucault wishes to give us a more appropriate picture of the conditions of organizational change and thus wants to allow us to follow the stories before they become trapped in narrative.

The second is about reviving directly disqualified knowledge (Foucault 1980, p. 82) – stories that are deemed illegitimate and barred or excluded from analysis. These are the marginalized voices: the losers in the storytelling game – the stories that lost the battle and thereafter almost completely disappeared from the scene. These are the darker sides of history - those events that people might like to forget because they are embarrassing, shameful or just do not fit with their constructed images of themselves. People are not necessarily polite, civilized, noble, pragmatic or reasonable. Genealogy is open for the worst cases to occur (Flyvbjerg 2001, p. 95). People can be evil, immoral, obnoxious, selfish and capable of doing whatever it takes to promote their own intentions or interests. Genealogy reveals that the concept of liberty is

an invention of the ruling classes and not necessarily the basic condition of man (Foucault 1979, pp. 78-79). It reveals that rationality was born in an altogether reasonable fashion - from chance (Foucault 1984, p. 78; Bauer 1999, p. 61).

As such, genealogy doesn't see history as logical or directed to improvement and Enlightenment. On the contrary, because "…historical beginnings are lowly: not in the sense of modest or discreet steps of a dove, but derisive and ironic, capable of undoing every infatuation" (Foucault 1984, p. 79). Power should also be understood in this equally less glorious and more mundane manner. It does not derive from the king. The constitution of social life is instead derived from "…a complex set of petty and ignoble power relations" (Haugaard, 1997, p. 43). Power is the consequence of local strategies and is the overall effect of petty confrontations between actors fighting over what is true and what is just (e.g. Haugaard, 1997, pp. 68-69).

As such genealogy seeks to show how these "storytelling games" developed, where they came from, how they evolved and changed, who were involved and in what circumstances these kinds of story-ing were produced. Genealogy recognizes that actors have *descended* from many different places (Foucault 1984, pp. 81-83; see also Jørgensen 2007, pp. 66-67, and Bauer 1999, pp.60-61 on the notion of *descent* (Herkunft). Actors have a history and this history influences, limits and makes possible certain ways of story-ing realities. But descent does not stem from one place; it stems from many different places. This implies that the self has numberless beginnings and is fragmented, differentiated and shaped by accidents.

> "… to follow the complex course of descent is to maintain passing events in their proper dispersion; it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations - or conversely, the complete reversals - the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to

those things that continue to exist and have value for us: it is to discover that truth and being do not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents" (Foucault, 1984, p. 81).

Furthermore, genealogy seeks to show how phenomena have *emerged* (Foucault 1984; see also Jørgensen 2007, pp. 67-68, on the notion of *emergence*) as a consequence of complex "storytelling games" involving many different actors in different positions and with different intentions. In the same way as descent is not to be considered as an undisturbed continuity, neither is emergence the final stage of historical development. Emergence is linked with force and the purpose of an analysis of emergence is to delineate the interaction between different forces:

> "Emergence is always produced through a particular stage of forces. The analysis of the Entstehung must delineate this interaction. The struggle these forces wage against each other or against adverse circumstances, and the attempt to avoid degeneration and regain strength by dividing these forces against themselves" (Foucault, 1984, pp. 83-84).

"Force" and "struggle" are central to the analysis of emergence. It is a scene on which different forces meet face-to-face (Foucault, 1984, p. 84). While descent describes the character of the instinct and its inscription in the body, emergence is "…a place of confrontation" (Foucault, 1984, p. 84). Emergence is the result of a relation between forces. As a consequence, no one is responsible for emergence; "…no one can glory in it, since it always occurs in the interstice" (Foucault, 1984, p. 85). As such the actions of people have to be viewed in interaction with particular material circumstances and other actors. This means that emergence is never finished or complete. It moves through new relations and new confrontations, which carry with them new objects and new ways of speaking and where it becomes fixed in rituals, in procedures, in norms and rules, in concepts and words, in

systems and technologies, in stories, in storytelling and in narratives.

We have now described the principles of genealogical analysis and we will now draw some methodological implications and summarize the conclusions.

Discussion and conclusions

Genealogy has implications in terms of understanding and inquiring into organizational life. Neither Foucault nor Nietzsche takes for granted the identity of phenomena. Instead they search for the non-identical by exploring dissensions, disparities and differences (Bauer 1999, p. 63). In other words, genealogy searches for stories rather than narratives. It thus displaces what Bauer calls "…universalized accounts of history and create counter narratives that reject and subvert the ideological presuppositions of enlightenment" (Bauer 1999, p. 63). In order to do that, Nietzsche and Foucault uses history as noted before.

In practical terms, this requires a great collection of source material which might illuminate what takes place in different contexts and spaces and in different points in time: "Genealogy is gray, meticulous and patiently documentary" (Foucault 1984, p. 76). In other words we need source material which may provide rich accounts of the complex course of history which leads to the emergence of new organizational phenomena. These are accounts that ideally should make it possible to follow the stories as they progress, develop and change through interactions and negotiations among actors in different positions and with different intentions.

These storytelling episodes that result in the emergence of new organizational phenomena thus become more like a game that changes with every move. Game or language game is a brilliant metaphor here as it incorporates the notion of moves, countermoves, tactics and positioning (Jørgensen 2007, p. 38). Like language

games, stories are always under constant change, which changes the conditions for the next move (see also Gergen, Gergen and Barrett 2004, pp. 42-44). The game (or games) takes place on many different scenes or sets.

This is similar to *Tamara*, Los Angeles' longest running play (described in Boje 2001). This play takes place on many different scenes and sets. It has actors, who come and go; the audience is rolled in and out and follows the stage acts in different scenes. It is a story - which never ends. The stories are never finished and always appear to be looking for their plots. Stories are not predictable; and the history of organizations are apt to be full of surprises, coincidences, inconsistencies, circumstance and chance – because people are wonderfully intelligent, wise, imaginative, cheerful, joyful and lustful but they are also sometimes irrational, incompetent, envious and greedy for power.

Story implies that we need knowledge about interactions and negotiations among actors. We don't want to argue for avoiding interviews with actors because individual actors are invaluable sources of memory in most cases, and it would be extremely difficult to interpret interactions without asking the actors who take part in these interactions. But these accounts need to be supplemented with other forms of source material and they need to be organized so that they provide knowledge of interactions in contexts, spaces and time. We don't want the actors to interpret their life story, to abstract or to generalize. We want them to describe what they do in interaction with other people. Simple questions of who did what, what happened, *where* and *when* did it happen, and what were the *circumstances* are genealogical questions.

In genealogical analysis such accounts need to be supplemented with other sources; for example what Foucault would call the archive: that is the collection of historical material (Jørgensen 2007, p. 56). This includes minutes from meeting, reports, letters, diaries, log books, accounts, budgets and other historical material produced in specific historical circumstances (e.g. Flyvbjerg 1991; Boje 1995; Jørgensen 2007). Finally these sources may be

supplemented by other research methods, which record interaction as it occurs in the moment. Examples are *tape recordings* (e.g. Silverman and Jones 1976) or *participant observation* (e.g. Boje 1991).

In principle, genealogy seeks to focus on what occurs in the moment of becoming. This may sound paradoxical, since genealogy is a special kind of historical analysis. But it implies the suspensions of presumptions and prejudices about what happened; presumptions and prejudices embedded in the language of the present. Instead we need to approach the event on its own terms. Events thus have to be studied as different events in order to notice how stories develop, evolve and change. For that purpose, Foucault uses archaeological descriptions in the first phase of genealogy.

Archaeology is characterized as a pure description of discursive events (Foucault 1995, p. 27). It is a method for organizing a description of such events, and the simple organizing principles are chronology, actors and space (Jørgensen 2007, p. 57). Foucault defines archaeology as a *non-interpretative discipline* and as a *systematic rewriting of history* (Foucault 1995, pp. 138-140). It is a *disinterested* (Flyvbjerg 1991, p. 98) and detailed rewriting of history, which is why genealogy is gray and patiently documentary. The purpose of this non-interpretative archaeological procedure is to open our eyes for a new and more complex and varied interpretation of history and to allow history to emerge "from below" so to speak.

Genealogy is the tactics by which archaeological descriptions are brought into play (Foucault 1980, p. 85). Genealogy is thus constructed from archaeological descriptions and it brings in interests, intentions and relations of power as key interpretive concepts for *mapping* out the political situation in a particular society or organization (e.g. Elden 2001): "…it (power) is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation…" (Foucault 1993, p. 334). Genealogy is thus an interpretative

strategy designed to initiate a critical stance towards the truth claims carried by language (Bauer 1999, p. 57).

In sum, we need to ground organization science in human action, interaction, imagination, in addition to intentions and interests. More specifically we need to show how these actions, interactions, imaginations, intentions and interests influence the storytelling performances in organizations and also how these storytelling performances influence the narratives of the present. Otherwise we do not get a proper understanding of narrative – we are bound to misunderstand them and explain them away as an act of god or some grand narrative. But instead of inventing an explanation, it is simply human will or more precisely the interactions, struggles and negotiations between many different wills that are the drivers of history.

Storytelling is not an act of Nietzsche's *will to power* (see for example Nietzsche 2003, pp. 136-139; Nietzsche 1992, pp. 54-55); rather storytelling and narratives are the results of relations of power in Foucault's sense of the word. The difference is that where will to power is a basic psychological instinct in man, Foucault sees all interests and intentions as the result of "…strategies without strategists" (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982, p. 109) with individuals viewed as the products of power (Foucault 1979, p. 194). That is, will itself is the product of history; the will is subjectively present but the direction of the will is socially moulded. As such people create history but they do not so as they please, but in the conditions and contexts determined by social relations and conflicts.

Both share an interest in using genealogy as a means of self-overcoming - to become aware of self and attain a reflexive self and thus use genealogy as a first step towards emancipation (see Fairclough 2001, p. 1) by making selves conscious about how ways of thinking, acting and talking have been constructed through history: "…that people accept as truth, as evidence, some themes which have been built up at a certain moment during history and that this so-called evidence can be criticized and

destroyed" (Foucault in an interview with Rux Martin 1988, p. 11). Genealogical history is made for *cutting* (Foucault 1984, p. 88; Nietzsche 1997, p. 75-76), hence breaking with the past for the benefit of the time to come.

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