INTRODUCTION

torytelling Organizations is about how people and organizations make sense of the world via narrative and story. Narratives shape our past events into experience using coherence to achieve believability. Stories are more about dispersion of events in the present or anticipated to be achievable in the future. These narrative-coherence and story-dispersion processes interact so that meaning changes among people, as their events, identities, and strategies get re-sorted in each meeting, publication, and drama. This book will identify eight types of sensemaking patterns of narrative coherence in relation to story dispersion that are the dynamics of Storytelling Organizations.

For 15 years I have written about what I call the 'Storytelling Organization.' Every workplace, school, government office or local religious group is a Storytelling Organization. Every organization, from a simple office supply company or your local choral group, your local McDonald's, Wal-Mart, to the more glamorous organizations such as Disney or Nike, and the more scandalous such as Enron or Arthur Anderson is a Storytelling Organization.[1] Yet, very little is known about how Storytelling Organizations differ, or how they work, how they respond to their environment, how to change them, and how to survive in them. Even less is known about the insider's view of the Storytelling Organization, its theatre of everyday life. Where you work, you become known by your story, become promoted and fired for your story. It is not always the story you want told, and there are ways to change, and restory that story.

Obviously the glamorous entertainment companies such as Nike, Disney, and even McDonald's and Wal-Mart are Storytelling Organizations. But, think about it, so are the less glamorous, less boisterous, ones like your hardware store, your building contractor, your realty company. They all live and die by the narratives and stories they tell.

This book is not an argument about there being only one way, narrating or storying, or a choice between narrative and story. It is not that there is only one form

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1 We have done research on each of these Storytelling Organizations (Goldco Office Supply: Boje, 1991; Disney: Boje, 1995; Nike: Boje, 1999a; Choral group: Boje et al. 1999; McDonald's: Boje and Cai, 2004; Boje and Rhodes, 2005a, b; Wal-Mart: Boje, 2007c; Enron: Boje et al. 2004, 2006).

of narrative coherence and story dispersion. Nor, being only *retrospective*, *in-the-now*, more *prospective*, or the neglected *transcendental* and *reflexivity*. It is that retrospective, now, prospective, transcendental, and reflexivity are in interplay creating dynamic forces of change and transformation of an organization with its environment. To treat what is different, as the same, blinds us to dynamics, with important implications for how these multiple ways of sensemaking dance together. It is this dance among sensemaking differences that gives us new understanding of complexity, strategy, organization change, and methodology.
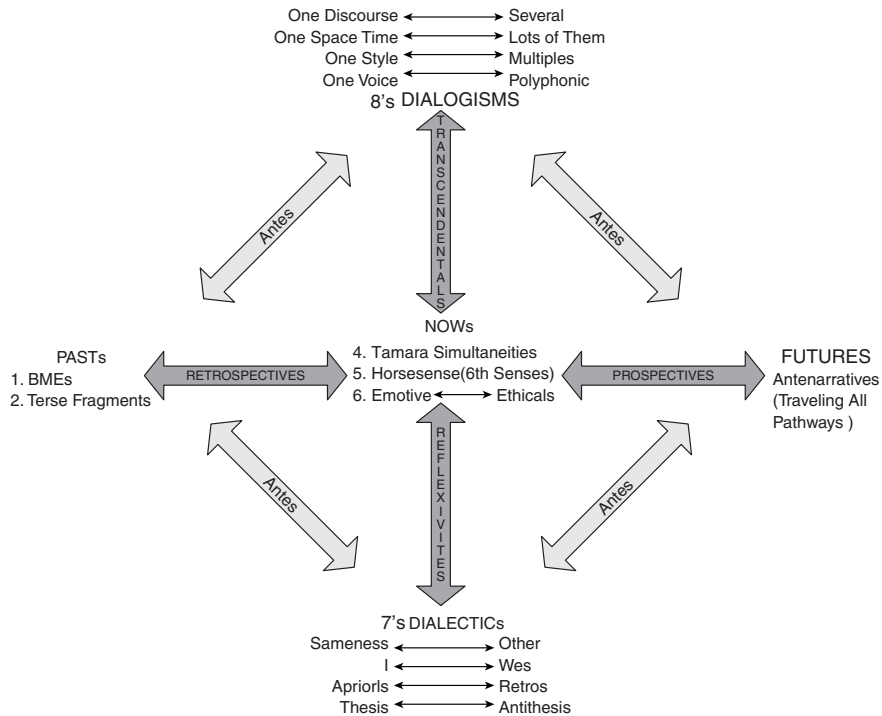
The structure of the book is as follows: the introduction will map, for the reader, eight ways of sensemaking (two are narrative-coherence; six are story-dispersion processes). Part I of the book looks at the complexity and collective memory implications of storying and narrating. The key point is the transition businesses and public organizations are making from Second World War system thinking (in one logic) to complexity thinking (that is a dance of diverse logics and languages of sensemaking). Part II is five chapters applying implications of the dance of narrative coherence and story dispersion to strategy schools. Each chapter contributes a new frontier for traditional strategy schools to explore. Part III is a couple of chapters on how narrative and story are being used in organization development and change programs. The final part of the book gives attention to method implications of how to study the interplay of narrative and story, as well as storying and narrating processes. Key is the concern for a 'living story' method in relation to 'dead narrative' text ways of study. In the final chapter, I have a bit of fun, and give tribute to dead narrative and story scholars who have influenced ideas expressed in this book. They are people I always wanted to meet and have a conversation with (Bakhtin, Benjamin, Dostoevsky, Heidegger, Ricoeur, and Stein).

MAP OF SENSEMAKING TYPES

At this point, putting together the eight ways of sensemaking into a map, will simplify their presentation, and give you, the reader, a way to visualize important interrelationships. Figure I.A maps important dynamics among eight ways of narrative and story sensemaking.

More research has been done on the past ways (BME and Terse fragments) of sensemaking, than on future ways (antenarratives), or the now ways (Tamara, Horsesense, and Emotive–Ethical). Even less is done with reflexivities (Dialectics), and hardly anything with the transcendentals (Dialogisms).

Reflexivity refers to the (often subconscious) processes by which we know ourselves, and story our identity, in ethical appraisal. Like Roshomon, we retrospectively recall past events in a way that supports our concept of who we are. Thus if I see myself as kind, I may narrate my act of firing an employee as helping them to move on to a job better suited to them, a better 'fit' where they will be happier and more successful. If I see myself as efficient and business-like, I may see the firing as nothing personal, just a matter of performance numbers. In the now,

One Discourse ⟷ Several
One Space Time ⟷ Lots of Them
One Style ⟷ Multiples
One Voice ⟷ Polyphonic
8's DIALOGISMS

TRANSCENDENTALS

Antes   Antes

NOWs

PASTs   4. Tamara Simultaneities   FUTURES
1. BMEs   RETROSPECTIVES   5. Horsesense(6th Senses)   PROSPECTIVES   Antenarratives
2. Terse Fragments   6. Emotive ⟷ Ethicals   (Traveling All
                                                                           Pathways)

REFLEXIVITES

Antes   Antes

7's DIALECTICs

Sameness ⟷ Other
I ⟷ Wes
Apriorls ⟷ Retros
Thesis ⟷ Antithesis

FIGURE I.A   *Dynamics of narrative and story sensemaking*

Note: Arrows indicate key relationships among retrospective, prospective, now, reflexivity, and transcendental ways of sensemaking. Narrative forms include BME (Beginning, Middle, and End) linear narrative and Terse (Narrative) fragments, and the Antenarratives. The Now's, Dialectics, and Dialogisms are what I refer to throughout as story. Antes (short for antenarratives) besides leaning to the future, are also integral in moving in-between other ways of sensemaking.

I might reflexively notice that I am uncomfortable in the presence of the person I just fired. I might attribute this discomfort to the person's unpleasant personal qualities. Or, I might story the situation such that I am nobly carrying out an unpleasant but necessary job for the good of my organization. I might extend this sense of ethical self into the future, and incorporate change, by telling myself that I am too soft-hearted to do this type of unpleasant task in the future. In such a telling, I plan to delegate it to an assistant. Or, I may decide such firings are immoral, and that I cannot participate in this ever again. I begin to look for another job where I can be (prospectively) the kind of person I want to be or see myself as already being. Upward reflexivity includes the spiritual aspects of sorting out my life path. Downward reflexivity is about the many netherworlds, be they Dante's inferno, or worlds alive with ancestors and animal guides (as in native traditions). The middle world, the here-and-now, is the path I am on, the choice point between several paths open to me.

The key point about reflexive storying is that stories are about who I am, who I ought to be (be they spiritual aspects of self or higher self, or religious doctrine), and my relation to many other people, sometimes to people and animals in other worlds (higher or lower than this one, in many native traditions). The remaining ways of sensemaking take us in directions other than retrospective narrative-wholes or narrative-fragments. We will explore each aspect of Figure 1A, but first I want to give some explanation of why I treat story as something other than narrative. Many readers, no doubt, use narrative and story interchangeably.

How Narrative and Story Differ

Treating narrative and story as the same serves to erase any understanding of their interplay, the ways their dance creates transformative dynamics that work to change organizations. Narrative ways (1, 2, 3) and story ways (4 to 8) of sensemaking are oriented differently among our multiple pasts, multiple nows, and multiple futures, as well as, what is the breakthrough science, the study of dynamics of reflexivities (dialectics), and the transcendentals (dialogisms). The key differences are that narrative is a whole telling, with the linear sequence of a **b**eginning, **m**iddle, and **e**nd (BME); is usually a backward-looking (retrospective) gaze from present, back through the past, sorting characters, dialog, themes, etc. into one plot, and changes little over time.

The act of narrating, in the information age, gives full explication of a backward-looking (retrospective) chronology that leaves little to the imagination, in hindsight reassemblage, in order to achieve coherence. Often the past is reimagined from the vantage point of the present. Yet, there is the future-oriented (vision) narrative, and, to stay with temporality, the storying taking place in the now.

The most important of the story dynamics come into play because there are so many pasts, nows and futures. In my antenarrative concept (Boje, 2001a), I asserted telling can be about the future (prospective sensemaking).

Story, in contrast to narrative (that is centering or about control) is more apt to be dispersive (unraveling coherence, asserting differences). Narrative cohesion seeks a grip on the emergent present, which story is re-dispersing. The dynamics of the nows (simultaneous storytelling across many places or in many rooms at once) is what I researched in Tamara (using Disney as an example, in Boje, 1995). The emergent present keeps changing, but since we cannot be in every room at once, we interact with others taking different pathways to make sense of it all. The act of storying usually leaves the explication to the listener's imagination, in acts of co-construction, in an emergent assemblage sensemaking, across several (dialectic or dialogical) contexts. Participants oriented differently to pasts, nows, futures, dialectics, or dialogisms will have wildly different audience expectations about what a story ought to include and exclude. Walter Benjamin (1936) and Gertrude Stein (1935), in particular, argue that in the narrative-telling age, storytelling has been deskilled, and in particular we have lost skills in how to notice and listen to

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stories in the now. Fully explicated BME narrative is somewhat easier to identify in doing research. One can aspire to be a detective, reassembling tersely told narrative fragments. This ease of discovery has put narrative, with its drive for whole, coherence, full explication, in the upper hand. The contribution of this book is to emphasize that narrative and story are not the same, and are in interplay in ways not yet researched. There are instances, for example, where people assume a narrative whole to exist, but in story, the dispersion is so varied, layered, and in contest, no overall narrative whole may ever have existed.

Storytelling Organization is an 'and' relation between processes of narrating and storying, and between narrative and story forms. To simplify the writing, I prefer the term 'storying' to 'storytelling,' since 'telling' is orality, and an important dynamic is the relation of oral to text, and these to the visual ways of narrating and storying. Oral, text, and visual mediums are juxtaposed in ways that help us understand new aspects, and differences among Storytelling Organizations. Noticing the interplay of narrative and story's oral, text, and visual mediums will afford a more rigorous inquiry than has occurred to date in organization and communication research. In sum, the specific contribution this book intends is an inquiry into the interrelationships of narrating and storying processes with narrative and story forms, across the juxtaposed mediums of orality, textuality, and visuality. I believe this nexus to be at the heart of understanding new ways of sensemaking, that have important insights to be gleaned about complexity, strategy, organization change, and methodology. These topics are discussed in the book, with chapters composed of everyday and well known organizations.

Let us start with a new rendition of sensemaking.

EIGHT WAYS OF NARRATIVE AND STORY SENSEMAKING

Karl Weick (1995) presented a narrative sensemaking in a chapter on organization control. Indeed one facet of narrative sensemaking is the retrospective gaze from present into the past that assembles a beginning, middle, and end, demanding narrative coherence in a way which controls sensemaking by deselecting that which does not fit with the chosen beginning, middle, and end. In the past decade Weick has lamented limiting sensemaking to only retrospection, and to only the five-empiric perception senses (touch, smell, taste, sight, and hearing).[2] He specifically wants to look at emotion as a sixth sense. We can heed Weick's call, and look at how multiple ways of sensemaking interplay, in relationships among ways of narrating and storying, and in the forms, narrative and story. I propose eight types, knowing full well, there are others, to be discovered.

2 See Weick et al. (2005)

1   BME Retrospective Narrative

BME stands for Beginning, Middle, and End, and for their retrospective assemblage into a rather linear narrative coherence. It is a form that Aristotle (350BCE) immortalized in the *Poetics* of six elements: plot, character, dialogue, theme, rhythm, and spectacle. Aristotle dictated that these be in a particular order, with plot the most important, and spectacle the very least. Nowadays, however, one can see that that order is reversed, and spectacle rules supreme, and plot is hard to find. Spectacle includes the spin, the costuming, the razzle-dazzle substitutes for good old-fashioned BME plot development, in politics and in organizations. BME retrospective narrative, and all its poetic elements, is important to business. Rhythm, for example, helps us understand the processes of complexity. Dialogues among stakeholders constitute a frontier issue for strategy. Changing organizations so that spectacle has the substance of characters with integrity and authenticity, and so that the plot espoused is what gets enacted, has ethical import. Kenneth Burke (1945: 231) made two simple changes to Aristotle's six poetic elements. He combined dialogue and rhythm into one (agency), and renamed Aristotle's elements, resulting in Burke's famous Pentad model.

Aristotle's Six → Burke's Pentad

Plot → Act

Character → Agent

Theme → Purpose

Dialogue + Rhythm → Agency

Spectacle → Scene

Burke (1937, 1972) regreted not having included 'Frame' as a Pentad element. By the way, Aristotle also wrote about frame. To the end Burke remained fixated on Aristotle, on the ratio aspects of Pentad, and BME. Given that there are now many plots, many characters, many dialogues, many themes, many different rhythms, and multiple spectacles in a complex enterprise, there is a major research methods challenge: how to trace all these interactions.

Czarniawska (2004) takes a petrification approach, arguing that in strong culture organizations, founding BME narratives are immutable, with later tellings just adding concentric rings to the narrative, like a tree trunk, year-by-year. It is assumed that founding narrative emerges fully formed, as in the mind of Zeus. Or that strong corporate cultures have 'many strategic narratives [that] seem to follow a simplified variation of … the epic Hero's Journey' (Barry and Elmes, 1997: 440, bracketed addition, mine). But, results of my founding narrative research, such as at Wal-Mart, suggest there is no originary Beginning narrative telling. For example, in 1972, when Wal-Mart began filing annual reports, all one finds is 'Our eighteen Wal-Mart stores that already existed as of February 1, 1970' (p. 4) and 'Wal-Mart Stores Inc. began through an exchange of common

stock Feb 1 1970' (p. 8).[3] In 1973, there is mention of a 'twenty-eight year history' (p. 2). In 1974, there is more, 'We're all proud of our record to date, and we're confident this is just the **beginning of our Wal-Mart story**' (p. 3, bold mine), and there is this more complete BME rendition:

> … President and Chairman, Sam M. Walton, who opened his first Ben Franklin variety store in Newport, Arkansas in 1945. One year later, Mr. Walton was joined by his brother, J. L. 'Bud' Walton, now Senior Vice President.
> In 1947, Bud Walton opened a Ben Franklin store in Versailles, Missouri. The two brothers went on to assemble a group of fifteen Ben Franklin stores and subsequently developed the concept of larger discount department stores. The Company's first Wal-Mart Discount City store opened in Rogers, Arkansas in 1962.
> In October 1970, Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. became a publicly held corporation and became traded in the over-the-counter market. August 25, 1972, the Company's stock was listed and began trading on the New York Stock Exchange…. **Wal-Mart's success story** has always been one of people who are completely dedicated to the performance of their jobs to the total good of the Company' (p. 4, bold, mine)

This raises the question, 'do originary founding narratives exist, or are they retrospective concoctions, retrofitted, after the fact, after many years?' The brothers were opening stores in the 1940s, but not putting together a coherent narrative (in the reports) until 1974. I also found, that, in subsequent Annual Shareholder Reports (through to 2007), the BME journey is never petrified exactly the same way, from one year to the next. The important implication is that a lack of petrification may be the key strategic force of BME hero's journey narrating. The reason is, strategic journey narrative faces a dilemma: how to appear to be the same over time, and to appear to be different, reflecting shifts in innovation and the environment. The balancing of sameness and difference in narrating identity is the subject of Ricoeur's (1992) work. We can see sameness and difference played out during Sam Walton's leadership, when founding narrative was skillfully told in nuanced ways. But after Sam's death, two of his successors, David Glass, and Lee Scott Jr., rarely refer to the petrified narrative, trotting it out when there was a scandal, to claim they were operating within the founder's vision. Or Sam Walton's son (John), or his wife (Helen), are introduced into the report, to answer charges being brought against the executives that they are not following in Sam's footsteps (1997 Wal-Mart Annual Report):

> *John Walton*: 'I've grown up with the company' says the son of founder Sam Walton … before Sam Walton died, John told him that 'what he had done went far beyond Wal-Mart to make American business better' (p. 7)

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3 See Wal-Mart.com for annual reports for years 1972 to 2007

> *Helen Walton*: Wal-Mart's First Lady … 'As our Company has grown questions have come up about where Wal-Mart is going and if Sam would approve,' Helen said. 'I believe he would. I feel good about our leadership, especially in this last year.' (p. 10)

By 2001, Wal-Mart's Annual Report is including long lists of lawsuits it is facing, and by 2003 this list includes the Dukes vs. Wal-Mart class action lawsuit brought on behalf of 1.6 million past and present female employees, which becomes the largest punitive suit in corporate history (expected award could be as high as $11 billion, US). By 2004, CEO Scott is saying, 'We must always do the right things in the right way, but we can also **be more aggressive about telling our story**. It is after all, a great story, from the jobs we provide to the consumers we help, to the Communities we serve' (p. 3, bold, mine).

There are at least four implications of a focus on the changeable aspects of founding narratives (rather than their more stable or 'petrified' qualities). One implication is that BME retrospective sensemaking can be highly adaptive, and its lack of petrification-stuckness, is a strategic advantage. A second implication, is that Storytelling Organizations, such as Wal-Mart, struggle to adapt their reputation asset (BME journey narrative rendition to founding story), to *balance* what Ricoeur (1992) calls their sameness-identity, with a difference-identity, that is, claims that they are changing radically from their past ways. Third, whereas Sam Walton was acknowledged as a talented storyteller, it is not clear that his successors are. This is another reason, in annual reports, to hark back to Sam's stories rather than successors to offer new ones. Finally, there is a dance between telling BME full-blown narratives, and telling more fragmented narratives.

It is the narrative fragments we explore next, which, in organizations, are more common than BME narratives.

2   Fragmented Retrospective Narratives

In 1991 I published an article in *Administrative Science Quarterly*, about narrative and story that now seems so obvious, I hesitate to restate it. In transcribing eight months of participant observations of the talk among customers, vendors, salespeople, secretaries, managers, and executives in Goldco Office Supply (as in the above Wal-Mart study), there was rarely a BME retrospective whole narrative to be found. In business, it seems that BME is quite a rare form. Instead, there were mostly fragmented retrospections, so coded, and so well understood by participants, that a word, a nod, a photo, could each imply some whole narrative moments. So coded, that to an uninitiated observer, the narrative exchange went completely unnoticed. I called this 'terse telling' of fragments.

But these fragments are *not* like the archaeologist's bits of pottery, for which there was once a 'real' pot as an originary artifice, at some specific time and place

in the past. Rather, these narrative fragments are like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, whose box cover has been lost. To our dismay, we discover that someone has mixed several puzzles together, and further, these puzzles may have some portions of their pictures in common, and other sections just missing. And we do not know how many puzzle makers were there to start with, or if they're ever was one or more whole, or originary puzzles. As Gabriel (2000: 20) cautions, the originary telling may be imagined, but actually never existed.

Narrative fragments are distributed across many different characters, meetings, texts, and visual displays. It was when I began to piece fragments together, to juxtapose different renditions, in varied mediums (oral, text, photo), that I detected (like a detective) what was being communicated, that participants all seem to understand, but that I had been trained (based on BME schooling), to ignore: that there was no whole narrative, never had been, but everyone assumed someone had heard it somewhere. It was this study of a medium-size, rather common-place office supply company (Goldco), operating in a few states (a region) that afforded my first understanding of the Storytelling Organization, defined as a, 'collective storytelling system in which the performance of stories is a key part of members' sensemaking and a means to allow them to supplement individual memories with institutional memory' (Boje, 1991: 106).

Goldco (tersely told) fragment of Founding Narrative

Doug: I look at Goldco as a toy that somebody decided to put in the company because it was fun and it also brought in/

Sam: Well, I'll tell you how that came about

Doug: I thought you would [*lots of laughter from the group*]

Sam: Sam Coche worked for Sea Breeze or something like that, oh you know the story/

Doug: No go ahead tell it, really it's important.

Sam: He got out there and he came over and they formed Goldco and Goldco does not mean Gold Company or anything else they took the first four initials from Billy Gold, which is G O L D and from Cochec., and that's how they got Goldco.

Doug: And it was a good living for a couple of people. It was a nice toy for Billy, he made a few bucks on the thing. He had some fun for it but then the motivation at that time was a whole lot different than it is today. We don't have the luxury of screwing around with something like that/ [*lots of cross talk at this point*].

[*Returns to turn-by-turn talk*].

So what? Most of the narrative is left untold ('you know the story'), and is not told in BME fashion, is interrupted, starts in the middle, is revised by the group, unfolds in animated conversation. Second, there are many frameworks in play: the

old school ways of a salesperson's culture are challenged by the conglomerate that brought Doug in to get the numbers in order so it can be bundled with other regional office supply firms, and sold as a potential national office supply enterprise. And what was ethical in the old time sales culture is now unethical in the more bureaucratic frame that Doug (and the conglomerate) expect (i.e. 'I look at Goldco as a toy,' is a powerful pronouncement by any CEO; once a 'good living,' 'he had some fun with it;' but 'we don't have the luxury of screwing around.') Especially since this is a meeting to decide which division to scrap, to make the year end numbers come out the way the conglomerate expects. In short, the telling is terse, it takes heaps of context understanding to notice when it is that which is between-the-lines, unspoken, yet conveyed, really matters.

In this book I make some changes, based upon subsequent research, to the concept. While my *Administrative Science Quarterly* article (Boje, 1991) introduced the concept of 'Storytelling Organization,' this book significantly adds to that concept. I go beyond retrospective sensemaking. This book introduces in-the-moment, as well as prospective and reflexive ways of sensemaking. Now I see *Storytelling Organizations* as an interplay of retrospective-narrative control (e.g. Doug's 'it was a nice toy,' or Wal-Mart's, 'Sam would agree with what our executives are doing') with prospective and reflexive (inward, soul-searching, or ethical) sensemaking. Some attempts that are backward-looking, seemingly whole, and tersely told fragments of narrative, along with more forward-looking (prospective), and some emergent (now-looking) glances, mingled with attempts are reflexive ('is this what we ought to be and do'). In short, whether in wholes or fragments, retrospective narrative sensemaking studies seem fixated on sorting the past according to the logic popular in the present. What seems so obvious now is that fragments are more abundant than the whole BMEs, some fragments purport to derive from BMEs that never existed, and many (perhaps most) fragments are not always retrospective. They look forward (prospectively) to invent the future.

3   Antenarratives

Antenarrative, along the 'arrows of time', is more attuned to prospective (future-oriented) ways of sensemaking. I invented the term *antenarrative* in my last SAGE book (2001a), *Narrative Methods for Organizational and Communication Research*. I wanted to contribute an alternative to the narrative-retrospective ways (BME and Fragments), which the fields of organization narrative and folklore seemed to ignore. Antenarratives are prospective (forward-looking) bets (antes) that an ante-story (before-story) can transform organization relationships. 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 impact on the big picture. More accurately, antenarratives seem to bring about a future

that would not otherwise be. The key attribute of antenarratives is they are travelers; moving from context to context, shifting in content and refraction as they jump-start the future. What is most interesting about them is how they morph their content as they travel. As in the Wal-Mart report examples they are rarely told, shown, or written the same way twice. They are travelers that pick up context (perspective, logic, situation) and transport it to another context. They are also discarding (forgetting, or choosing to ignore items previously acquired in other contexts).

For example, the following demonstrates some dynamics of antenarrative. In the 2007 Wal-Mart Annual Report there is a quote from the late Sam Walton (died in 1992): 'The best part is if we work together, we'll lower the cost of living for everyone, not just in America, but we'll give the world an opportunity to see what it's like to save and have a better life' (p. 3).

While Wal-Mart executives are making antenarrative retrofits of what Sam said, *What's Up Wal-Mart* and *Wal-Mart Watch* (both founded in 2005 by unions) are antenarrating a different story. They suggest that Sam must be turning over in his grave at the number of lawsuits for violations of labor standards (forced overtime, not paying for overtime), discrimination (among women, races, disabled), etc.[4] For example Wal-Mart Watch lists seven Sam Walton quotes concerning moral responsibility principles that Wal-Mart's current executives are not living up to:

1 **Protect Human Dignity** 'If you want people in the stores to take care of the customers, you have to make sure you are taking care of the people in the stores' – Sam Walton

2 **Ensure Quality and Affordable Health Care Coverage** 'You can't create a team spirit when the situation is so one-side, when management gets so much and workers get so little of the pie' – Sam Walton

3 **Use Market Power to Improve Supplier Conditions and Wages** 'We still want to drive a hard bargain, but now we need to guard against abusing our power' – Sam Walton

4 **Enable and Embrace Self-Sufficiency** 'Maybe the most important way in which we at Wal-Mart believe in giving something back is through our commitment to using the power of this enormous enterprise as a force for change' – Sam Walton

5 **Buy Local First** 'For Wal-Mart to maintain its position in the hearts of our customers, we have to study more ways we can give something back to our communities' – Sam Walton

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4 The United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCWU) started WakeUp WalMart.com. The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) started up Wal-MartWatch.com in 2005.

6   **Keep it Clean** 'I'd like to believe that as Wal-Mart continues to thrive and grow it can come to live up to what someone once called us: the Lighthouse of the Ozarks' – Sam Walton

7   **Prove Worthy of the Public Trust** 'As long as we're managing our company well, as long as we take care of our people and our customers, keep our eyes on those fundamentals, we are going to be successful. Of course, it takes an observing, discerning person to judge those fundamentals for himself' – Sam Walton

Successor CEOs Glass and Scott have asserted repeatedly that their philosophy, core values, and business ethics are just the same as Sam Walton's, but the unions are claiming just the opposite. Each is recasting elements of context into a forward-looking interpretation of Sam's way. Research into antenarratives has only just begun. For a recent study, see work on Sears UK (Collins and Rainwater, 2005), or work about Enron (Boje et al., 2004), or more on Wal-Mart (Boje, 2007c).

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 organizations, picking up and dispersing meaning from one context to the next.

4   Tamara

Tamara is now a seemingly obvious insight into how Disney's Storytelling Organization operates, one I first developed in 1993 (with Dennehy), and more rigorously in 1995 (in *Academy of Management Journal*). The problem Disney faced is the same for every complex organization, how to make sense of storytelling in many rooms, around the world, when you can physically only be in one place at a time. In the 'Now' (Figure 1), there are people in any given organization, narrating and storying, but situated in different rooms. Not being God, it is impossible for someone to be in all the rooms at once. In this simultaneous situation, people must choose which rooms to be in each day, stitching together a path of sensemaking. This phenomenon is so ubiquitous (to all organizations) it seems obvious. Yet it has not been researched, and the field of story consulting does not address it at all. The implication that needs to be explored is how do distributed, simultaneous storying and narrating processes work? This fourth type of story-sensemaking allows different and even apparently contradictory stories to be simultaneously enacted across different rooms (or sites) of an organization. However, the meaning derived by people in any given room, depends upon their path (what rooms they have been in). These insights come from a play called *Tamara* (by John Kriznac). Characters unfold their stories in the many rooms of a huge mansion, before a walking, sometimes running, audience that splinters into fragments, chasing characters from room to room, in acts of situated sensemaking. At each moment (in-the-now), audience members must choose which actors to chase into which room (yet cannot be in more than one

room at a time). This sets up a myriad of complexity dynamics that follow from the rather straightforward insights that storytelling is simultaneous, you have to ask others about stories performed in rooms you did not attend, and pathways influence what sense people take away from any given room.

For example, how do people find out what stories were performed in the rooms they are not in? How are the many choices of a sequence of rooms to be in during just one day, by each person, affecting the differentiated sense made to a story enacted in a current room? In strategy, the fact that people in different rooms are making strategy all-at-the-same-time, and are trying to sort their simultaneous action out, is why strategy-in-planning is different from strategy-in-implementation. In organization development, Tamara has important, yet unexplored implications. For example, since narrating and storying is simultaneous, yet distributed across different rooms where people meet to converse, as well as hallways, and cars (etc.), people are making sense of what they are missing in other rooms. If this is the case, then training executives in two-minute story pitches, or collecting archetype stories in focus groups, are rather shallow, flat-earth ways to try to change or lead a rather more complex, dynamic, moving Tamara-Storytelling Organization! Finally, for research methods, the implications of Tamara are in tracing the dynamics that are simultaneously distributed over time, to get at processes of emergence, pattern formation, and the ways sensemaking pathways (of room choices, and in which order) affect sensemaking. If a researcher is stuck in one room, not privy to what is happening in all the other rooms, then traditional methods (interviews, focus groups, etc.) are too low a variety way of doing the inquiry. A more dynamic story-tracing method, for example, would need to involve a team of researchers, experiencing the on-going, shifting frames of action. Across the disciplines of complexity, strategy, change, and research methods, one way to proceed is to look at the interplay of forces to gain more narrative control (forces for coherence may employ BME-coherence or enforce control by consistency), while the forces of story diffusion recognize the process of making room choices, choosing among multiple stories being dispersed, or among polyphony of voices or logics.

We have not begun the task of sorting out differences in patterns of sensemaking (how eight ways interplay differently) in simple versus more complex Tamara-Storytelling Organizations. Goldco Office Supply, as a regional firm, with a fairly flat structure, was rooted more in orality (of salespeople's way of telling). Goldco is less complex than Disney (with its workers being cast members), McDonald's (where a clown has a leader role), Nike (where 'spinning' a story is routine), Enron (where spin came undone), or Wal-Mart (whose founding story in annual reports is not told the same way twice).[5]

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5 See Boje and Rhodes, 2005 a,b for more on Ronald as a leader, even a board member at McDonald's; Boje (1995) for Disney studies; Boje (1991) for office supply. See Enron studies already cited above. Wal-Mart study of morphing founding stories, not behaving in petrified manner predicted by traditional theory, was presented to Critical Management Studies conference (Manchester, July 2007).

5   Emotive–Ethical

Emotional intelligence is now all the rage. Yet, in his early writing, in the 1920s, Bakhtin's (1990) notebooks were all about the relation of emotion to something all but forgotten: ethics. In the now, in the moment-of-Being, when one makes that choice of which door to enter (and all the doors not to enter), there is a once-occurrent ethical choice, that is also an emotional prompting (beyond just cognitive sensemaking calculus). We feel that there are times and places that if we do not act, no one else will. It is in those once-occurrent (now) moments, we have an emotive–ethical obligation to act, to intervene, to no longer be a bystander, to move from being spectator (bystander) to being the actor. This is what Bakhtin calls our *in-the-moment* answerability.

Answerability is our answer (in action) to a compelling story, told by the 'Other' that tugs our emotional passion, our outrage, and invites our capacity to act, to help, to do something for someone. For example, when Greenwald's 2005 documentary film, '*Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Prices*' was released, Wal-Mart commissioned a more expensively produced counter-film, Galloway's '*Why Wal-Mart Works and Why That Makes Some People Crazy.*' The film wars are over the issue of Wal-Mart's answerability, its ethics record, and both films make emotive–ethical appeals in their way of telling. Justification for emotive–ethical sensemaking can also be found in basic neuroscience studies. Work by Josh Green (and colleagues, 2001) at Princeton, using fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) found that presenting subjects with a Runaway Trolley Car story, elicited emotional responses to an ethical dilemma. Would a bystander, the only person next to a track switch, let a runaway trolley hit and surely kill a family of five, or throw the switch, so only one man would die. While such a moral dilemma engages the cognitive, it also stimulates the emotion area of the brain. There are circumstances in an organization that engage our emotion, and we make an ethical judgment, in-the-moment. These results in cognitive neuroscience suggest that there may be a middle-path between the age old argument, of cognition versus emotion. For me, I want to explore how emotive–ethical is a rediscovered mode of sensemaking. In short, what I am calling 'emotive–ethical' sensemaking is storying *in-the-now*, that addresses the important question of how an answerable decision to act (or to be the bystander) to change what happens to Others, gets done and undone in complex organizations. What is becoming clear in cognitive neuroscience has yet to be researched in organization studies. Yet, it is happening, every day, many times a day, in any complex Storytelling Organization, in any Tamara, when one chooses one door to enter a room of conversation, and chooses to speak out, or does not enter, or not engage, while the tug of emotive–ethical prompts that key moment of reflexivity: '*I am the only one who can act, and if I don't act, no one will act. I am therefore complicit with what will happen next to the Other.*'

6   Horsesense

Grace Ann Rosile (1999) gave her presentation on horsesense at Jeffrey Ford's exclusive gathering of the most esteemed narrative and story scholars, at Ohio

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State University. Karl Weick encouraged Grace Ann to write up her talk and send this new way of sensemaking into publication at *Journal of Management Inquiry*. Grace Ann wrote it up, many times, but did not submit it for publication.[6] Horsesense is the most difficult of the eight ways of sensemaking to define. I can only define horsesense by telling you a personal experience story. It was June 2007. I had just returned from a plane trip, and had pulled the luggage too often and a side muscle was paining me. I approached Grace Ann, in her home office. Her back was to me. She said, 'Nahdion says he can cure your muscle pain.' Without another word, and retaining all my science skepticism, I marched from our house to the barn, opened Nahdion's stall door, did not look at him, and turned my back to him, clamping both hands, arms extended, to the high-bar of the stall. Nahdion, a 27-year-old Arabian stallion, noisily circled behind me, breathing hard, and snorting. He approached deliberately, putting his entire forehead against just the spot where I ached. He then gave me the best and most professional deep tissue massage I ever had. At times Nahdion was so vigorous, he lifted me off the ground. I held on to that bar, kept my eyes closed, and let it happen. When Nahdion was done, I thanked him, hugged him, and left. The pain was all gone. And it did not return on the next trip. What kind of sensemaking is going on between Grace Ann, Nahdion, and me? Surely cat and dog-lovers, and all horse-lovers, will have similar stories of inter-species sensemaking. Yet, horsesense is more than this. Horsesense is not just about communicating between people and horses. It is also about body-to-body energy connections, not by noise, smell, sight, taste, or touch, but some other kind of energy sensemaking. In biology, we know dolphins, whales, and some birds have a magnetic compass, can register pressure changes, and can sense radiation. Surely, we scientists are not so myopic as to deny energetic body sensemaking? There is, for example, Patricia Reily's *Seasense*, the sense sailors have of their relation to waves, currents, winds, and tides.[7] There is 'printers' sense,' the aesthetic sense compositors have for energetic graphic design, and the kind of 'energeia' sense (being-what-something-is even as it is changing) that Aristotle wrote about. Jerome Bruner (1986: 48) suggests a traffic sense and channel sense: 'My traffic sense is a different model from the one that guides my sailing into a harbor full of shoals, when, as the saying goes, I depend upon my channel sense.' Several implications of horsesense follow.

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6 For more on Grace Ann Rosile's horsesense, see http:horsesenseatwork.com

7 'And there we were'...An exploration of the role of sea stories in the United States Navy and Coast Guard' by Patricia Reily, University of San Francisco, School of Education, Organization and Leadership Program. Pat Reily coined the term 'seasense' at a STORI workshop in Las Vegas, Nevada (April 2007). Printer's eye is a sense I was exploring while working at UCLA in the early 1980s. STORI is Storytelling Organization Institute, http://storyemergence.org

The first implication is, in horsesense, identity is unchanging, its energetics some-
how discernable. In seasense terms, waves, currents, tides, and winds are in flux, but
their energy is discernable, to those experienced and gifted enough to make sense
of their configurations. A second implication is people, animals, and some indige-
nous people believe stones and even this planet (Gaia) are energetic beings.
American Indians believe that stones are alive; directions have energy, as do the ele-
ments (water, earth, air, and fire). In India (and elsewhere) it is thought that there
are seven charka (Sanskrit – Çakra) energy points in the human body: root, spleen,
solar plexus, heart, throat, brow, and crown. I have a breathing coach named Toni
Delgado, and she has been teaching me to balance charka energy points, to release
and replace energeia.[8] I do not know how it works, but the beneficial results are
self-evident. What has this to do with business? Perhaps Sam Walton, as he walked
through a store, began bagging products at the register, asking associates what items
were moving, etc., was doing a form of horsesense, a way of story noticing, that was
about tapping into the flow of action, putting his body in that flow, and keying into
the energies around him. They say some people have business-sense, can read the
market, like a seaman reads the waves. Or, they can sustain the energy of a change
effort, can read the mood of the organization. In sum, Tamara, emotive– ethical,
and horsesense are storying *in-the-now*, in the once-occurent choices made in the
present moment. From here we move in Figure 1, to map the reflexivity modes of
sensemaking.

7   Dialectics

In the language of business, there are multiple identities, the officially narrated
identity, and all the other ways of storying identity, not forceful enough to be
the dominant sensemaking currency. Here, we will look at four types: sameness
versus otherness (Ricoeur's dialectic of identities); I versus We's (Mead's con-
cept of internalized we's from parents, society, etc. battling with our I-ness);
the a prioris of cognition that come before retrospective sensemaking (Kant's
idea of intuitive sense of time and space before the five empiric senses); and of
course thesis versus anti-thesis (Hegel's idea includes synthesis and spiritual,
no spiritual for Marx, and no synthesis for Adorno).

We have already looked at Wal-Mart's problems in having an identity of same-
ness (unchanging petrified BME narrative) that is dialectic to an identity of dif-
ference (innovation, nuanced telling in answer to contemporary situations); this
dialectic of sameness and differences of narrated identity is seminal in the work of
Ricoeur (1992). Narrative control makes one way of coherence, the only
(approved), talked about way of sensemaking in an organization. Yet the officially

8 Toni Delgado's breath meditation energetic charka methodology is available at
   http: anextstep.org

narrated identity (of sameness), is always susceptible to some new (different) way of making sense of an organization, that can turn into some new complexity, envisioning some new strategic plot, or devise some way to transform a privileged way into a restoried way to make sense in a Storytelling Organization. Dialectics is at the heart of any business, and its transformations of one story, restoried into another, one identity becoming reimagined. There is always one way of sensemaking, at the apex of the managerialist hierarchy, a way of thinking that is the one accepted logical way to organize, while those in the middle, at the bottom, or customers and venders looking in, believe their own logics would work a whole lot better, and even resolve problems so obvious. Stakeholders cannot fathom why those standing atop the pyramid cannot see them in the very same way. There are several dialectic ways of sensemaking. First is to explore the relation of an official narrative of control (often a managerialist BME) or retrospective fragments in need of a detective, and all the other ways of story sensemaking (antenarrative, tamara, emotive–ethical, horsesense, etc.) that too often are left in the margins of a business (ignored customers, vendors, employees without voice, etc.). This is a common, and easily recognized dialectic, yet quite difficult to change.

Second, is what George Herbert Mead (1934) coined as the 'I–we' dialectic. It is the 'I' of narrative identity, and the many ways of storying the 'we's' (our parents, siblings, teachers, and various identity groups – (occupation, politics, gender, race, ethnicity, geography, students, etc.). We internalize many we's through socialization in the family, education, military, career, media, etc. We have been socialized to think in we-ways, and are said to struggle to define our I-ness. I–we is a form of reflexivity, when we pause to reflect upon how many we's control our I-ness. To the extent that I–we's include the spiritual, some may wish to stress more transcendentals (see Figure 1).

A third dialectic comes from the work of Immanuel Kant. He wanted to tame metaphysics of spirituality, and limit transcendental to a way of sensemaking that is quite different from BME and fragmented retrospective narrative. For this reason, I located it in Figure 1 among the kinds of dialectic reflexivities. For Kant, the five empiric ways of sensemaking perception did not deal adequately with intuition, and did not address what was a priori to retrospection. In particular, Kant argued that ways of temporality and spatiality were a priori and transcendental retrospective sensemaking. In business terms, some departments will take a longer term view looking at transformations rather than other departments staffed by people concerned with short term (some almost immediate) transactions with short-term time horizons (accounting, sales, public relations). And spatially, there is an obvious dialectics between those with a focus on local affairs, more regional ones, and those treating the global situation as their landscape. For example, a McDonald's chain in India will alter the menu radically to deal with local foodways, change the employee dress code in a Muslim nation, and offer much more aesthetic styles of décor in France. The key point in these dialectics are that there is always other stories than just the official one, there are many we's that affect (psychosocial) I-ness, the synthesis is not always happening, spirituality is

struggling to redefine transcendental, there are multiple time horizons, and local is trying to co-opt global (and vice versa).

The remaining kind of dialectic is what Hegel expressed about the teleology of spirit, which Kant and Marx soundly rejected (and readers following a more spiritual sensemaking path, may wish I located this among the dialogisms in Figure 1). For Hegel, the arrow of time, is of a path guided by the Spirit, but for Marx and then Adorno, it is not about transcendental appeals.

Marx, for example, thought a non-spiritual teleology, a determining political economy (instead of Spirit) would bring the working class (antithesis) to oppose the pesky capitalist (thesis), and yield a new synthesis: a democratic form of organizing, with workers and capitalists deciding together how to invest and organize the enterprise. But the dialectic ran a more Soviet course, and the revolution of the workers' liberation from oppression, did not occur.

Many critical theorists (e.g. Adorno, Horkheimer) decided to forget synthesis, and focus on the relation of thesis to antithesis. A non-theological (i.e. non-deterministic) dialectic has everything to do with complexity, strategy, and change processes.

These dialectics interplay with the modes of sensemaking discussed.

8 Dialogisms

This strange word comes from Mikhail Bakhtin. There are four dialogisms. Most research has been done on one voice (usually management's speaking for shareholders) and the many voices of polyphony. We are just beginning to look at the dialogism of styles, at the multiple styles of speaking, writing, and art that are involved in narrative and story ways of sensemaking. The third dialogism (its technical name is chronotope) gets at the interplay of lots of space–time ways of storying any situation. It can be storied as an adventure, as a trip into the future, as a descent into some netherworld. For Bakhtin (inspired by Einstein physics), there are space–time relations that are relativities. The most accessible example is the relativities of space–time in being global (pushing the future onto local) and being local (tending to tradition to keep the local coming into the global future). A fourth dialogism extends Kant's work on the cognitive discourse of how systems are constructed in language. Bakhtin takes this dialogism (called architectonics) into the interanimation of cognitive, aesthetic, and ethical discourses.

In business, for example, there is an effort to be ethical. For Bakhtin, as our discussion of emotive–ethics stressed, ethics is not always just cognitive, or a retrospective glance at precedent. Bakhtin stresses how our emotion gives us ethical awareness, something in the now, needing our attention.

Bakhtin also, even during his days of Soviet oppression, wrote often about the spiritual and religious. Unlike Kant, Bakhtin wrote of netherworlds, gave attention to transcendentals, beyond Kant's attempt to tame the metaphysical. This has implications for organizations.

For example, there is a burgeoning, very popular movement to reunite the spiritual (and/or religious) with leadership, strategy, and other organization practices. If we look at system and complexity, one of the key debates is over, what to do with Boulding's (1956) 'transcendental' level of complexity? Strategy is wrestling with how to become more spiritually and ecologically attuned (Landrum and Gardner, 2005). And in the field of organization change, there is more writing about spirituality than ever before. While I was editor of JOCM (*Journal of Organizational Change Management*), there were 68 articles, written by colleagues, on the relation of spirituality and business. There were so many spirituality and religion submissions that I finally helped co-found the *Management, Spirituality, and Religion Journal*, to handle the demand.

In business language, a dialogism is when people with different logics meet in the same time and place, and engage in something transcendental, on their differences, allowing for the possibility of something generative to happen, out of their explorations.

In the broader scope, dialogism, as we have seen, is difference in how different stakeholders hold a firm accountable for the stories they tell. It is definitely not about consensus, nor is any one logic going to sway people to their point-of-view. In the best case scenario, some new way of viewing how all the logics interrelate can emerge. It is more about learning to listen at a deep level of reflexivity, than it is about arguing to make one's story, the story the group adopts.

Dialogism is not the same as having a dialogue. A dialogue, in business (and the university), is about persuading, or facilitating consensus. The dialogue in Wal-Mart annual reports, would have everyone believe that all the stakeholders have happy faces, are part of the Wal-Mart success story, and have no complaints. People, in corporate settings, often learn the hard way to only express the logic the boss most wants to hear! In a business dialog, we are rarely free to express what we think, feel, believe, or intuit. Nor do we engage (very often, or more than once) in emotive–ethical acts, and be that one person who speaks back to power, asking power to be answerable to what is happening to the Other. And if one does, there are always more than one emotive–ethical counter-storying going on.

Dialogism in business can be about bringing stakeholders together, to express themselves, but more often narrative control (by a boss or some dominant coalition) is so powerful, so threatening, so terrorizing, that people are mostly silent, saying and posing whatever power wants to hear and see.

Dialogism is not the same as dialectic. Bakhtin, the inventor of dialogism, was exiled, got deafly ill, lost his leg, and had his dissertation rejected by Moscow, for daring to pose something different than the dialectic. So when I say dialogism is neither dialogue (as practised in business), nor the dialectics (above), this is quite definitive. Especially since Sorbanes-Oxley, companies are responding to challenges stakeholders (and even exposé journalists and activists) are making. A contemporary annual report is a mix of styles: numeric accounts, photos of happy stakeholders, letters by CEO, interviews with managers, and (favorable) comments by employees, customers, vendors, and community members. In short, there is a dialogism of very different styles of text (charts, strategy stories), the

attempt to mimic orality (interviews or letters by the CEO), and some visual artistry. Reports are looking more like magazines. It is a level of collective writing by artists, accountants, executives, consultants, and division heads that has yet to be studied (Cai, 2006).

Another example is the décor and architectural storying. For example, at Disney the executive suite is held aloft by the Seven Dwarfs (giant size). In the Dean's suite of my Business College, are paintings of all the white-haired male deans before this one, and on another wall statements about the importance of diversity. What is key to analyze is the juxtaposition of styles, the orality, text, and visual storying and narrating going on all around us, that is not being noticed. Story awareness (noticing stories, noticing what is getting story attention and story action) can yield some Nova experiences (Nova – Chevy car sold in Mexico, where the meaning is 'no go'). McDonald's seems to be ahead of the curve in awareness of stylistics, and has coined the term, 'McStylistics' (the ten choices of décor and architecture that franchisees can select from, but only in France).

The third dialogism (chronotopes) builds on what we said earlier about ways of narrating time and space. Putting this in business language, there are several adventure chronotopes in how people story a business history, or story its strategy: an adventure of conquest (our strengths and opportunities overcoming each weakness and threat), or application of a chivalric code (McDonald's clean, efficient, friendly service), an encounter with accident or novelty (Enron's off-the-balance-sheet transactions come undone), or the heroic CEO's biography of exploits (such as Bill Gates, or Phil Knight). There are also folkloric ways of narrating, such as the idyllic appeals to family, knowing one's shire versus the more global ways of doing business. McDonald's Corporation exhibits ten chronotopes, as we will review when we look at their strategy.

The fourth type of dialogism (architectonic of one discourse becoming several interacting discourses), in business terms, is all about the concern over how to think like a business. Does that mean just the purely cognitive ways of storying business, or does it include, as well, the aesthetic (such as the styles of a restaurant design or the graphic design of a report), and does it include the ethical? In complexity terms, how is the business being constructed in the stories and narratives? Is the emphasis on the cognitive (bottom line, nuts and bolts), or is there a more artistic appeal, and a whole section of meetings and reports devoted to stories of ethical practices?

In an era of collapsing business ethics (Enron, WorldCom, Arthur Anderson's collapse, etc.), there is a growing concern for being ethically answerable to each stakeholder of a business (and that list is getting longer each year). Business ethics was once just about the answer to the question what is the business of business? In the 1990s the narrative changes to testimonies about having a 'code of ethics' and then lately to monitoring that code of any violations. Not all, but many, ethical codes are hypocritical: say one thing, do another. The business ethics on the horizon, by my reading, is all about engaging in acts of reflexivity, on how to make the expressed stories realized in day-to-day organizational behaviors. This dialogism is concerned with how to align cognitive, aesthetic, and ethical sensemaking narrating

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and storying, in ways that satisfy multiple, diverse logics of very different stake-holders. Everything from the annual report, to photos in the lobby, to the theatrics of expression in meetings, is telling customers, employees, and communities, what kind of business is active there.

There is ever increasing stress in the business of answering the charges of one's critics. Each annual shareholder report is an answer not just to investors, but to exposé journalists, activists, unions, regulators, and community members. Each line of a narrative or story is an answer to something (either from an old battle, or some new one brewing). In short, these four dialogisms are happening already in and around every complex Storytelling Organization. People are coping with them, but without a language to make sense of them.

I have one final dialogism (named polypi, a hydra named in Hans Christian Anderson's 'Little Mermaid') that is the interplay of the first four dialogisms. There are important, groundbreaking implications of these interacting dialogisms, and their interplay with the other seven ways of sensemaking, for complexity, strategy, change, and methodology (the parts of this book).

Complexity   The eight ways of sensemaking constitute dynamics of complexity that business and public organizations are enduring, that is beyond open system thinking. System thinking worked well for post-Second World War industry, but there are now orders of complexity that exceed the vantage point of first cybernetic (control of deviations), and second cybernetics (amplification of variety). The two cybernetics are the yin and yang of open system thinking, and are critical to understand. But in Part I of this book, I want to try to move beyond system, to another level of complexity, one that Ken Baskin and I call the 'Third Cybernetics' (Boje and Baskin, 2005). Third cybernetics is about the interplay of the eight sensemaking modes, and develops Boulding (1956) and my mentor Lou Pondy's (1976) dream of going beyond open system, to multi-brained, multi-languaged, and multi-story, as well as multi-narrated organizations, engaged in acts of co-construction, and the kinds of co-generativity that the study of dialogisms opens up.

Strategy   Part II of this book is five chapters, laying out possible frontier issues for schools of strategy. Each chapter takes up a particular kind of dialogism. The cutting edge in strategy is how to enact successful, collaborative, multi-logic, and multi-voice strategies (polyphonic). A second area is how to align visual, textual, and oral ways of showing, writing, and telling a strategy to a variety of different stakeholders (stylistics). A third chapter deals with the interplay of ways of conceiving the strategy adventure in terms of different time and landscape horizons (chronotopes). A fourth chapter is concerned with perhaps the most important topic of strategy making, how to align espoused and enacted strategy so instead of spin, it is about ethical action that is answerable to a variety of stakeholder positions (architectonics). Finally, how can these four dialogisms interact in ways that are productive, so the hydra has some legs (polypi).

Change   Two chapters in Part III are devoted to change and organizational development approaches involving narrative and story. The first of these is about single organization change efforts, where the BME retrospective narrative is often the tool of intervention. I assert that other sensemaking modes can be even more effective, and achieve better results for more complex organizations. The claims of the two-minute BME narrative that is expected to transform an organization are greatly exaggerated. The other chapter is about large system or change in networks of organization that is done using narrative and story. The focus is on comparing dominant methods, and showing how they use narrative and story in different ways.

Method   The last part of the book is about methodology. One chapter is about living story method. My colleague Jo Tyler and I believe that stories live, that they can have a life of their own. I offer an autoethnography, a storying, in different ways of a family tragedy: the death of my Aunt Dorothy. Was it a suicide, or was it murder? A network of organizations produced narratives (some whole, mostly just fragments). But my extended family wanted a different kind of storying to occur. And it has kept the family divided for over 30 years. Doing living story research, changes the ground. And this one is no exception. I am now in contact with people I had not spoken to for far too long. The final chapter is a sort of Plato's dialogue, but meant to be more of a dialogism, a meeting of people I wanted to have a story circle with, and to see what might be generated.