

## **Storiosis – a framework for organizational sensemaking in Aristotelian spirit**

Teppo Sintonen, PhD (econ), PhD (sociology)  
School of Business and Economics/Management and Leadership  
University of Jyväskylä  
Finland

Tommi Auvinen, PhD (econ)  
School of Business and Economics/Management and Leadership  
University of Jyväskylä  
Finland

David Boje, Professor  
New Mexico State University  
The United States

### **Abstract**

Leadership theory has encountered several paradigms, some emphasizing modernist rationality until ulterior postmodernist approach focused on cultural and discursive dimensions. The 20<sup>th</sup> century modernist paradigm favored rationality: once the theory of leader was invented, the narrative roots of leadership were forgotten. The purpose of this paper is to develop a theory of storytelling we are calling 'storiosis', which resonates with Aristotelian storytelling tradition – a source of several ulterior postmodernist and linguistic approaches. Storiosis is the activity of interpreting the storytelling by people in organizations; it is about the production, exchange, interpretation, and understanding of shifts in meanings in context of multiple situations. We have developed this theory by using empirical data collected from a large high-tech organization.

### **Introduction**

The scholars in the field of leadership and organization are well aware of modernist and postmodernist paradigms, as well as minor and major leaps from re-engineering school to cultural school involving leadership theories embracing traits, styles or contingency (e.g. Hatch 1995; Yukl 1999; Grint 2011). We know Fredrick Taylor with his seminal ideas of scientific management as we well know the leaders' trait theories of first Terman and then Stogdill from the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century (e.g. Northouse 2007). Moreover, it has every now and then been addressed how the traits of (ideal) leader was taken into cognizance already more than two millennia ago – for instance Galenus's human humors from the

first century were applied and developed in ulterior leader trait theories during late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century (e.g. Tyson & Jackson 1992).

However, it is not often addressed, that the Aristotelian origins of leadership theory were forgotten when the theory of leader was “invented” some hundred years ago (Boje 1999; Auvinen 2013). During the first decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century, after the great breakthrough of scientific management and modern, rationalist paradigm (Fisher 1985; Boje 1999; Alvesson & Spicer 2012) leadership theory turned away from its narrative roots. It was already Plato who argued, that those who tell stories rule the society – whereas Aristotle guided statesmen and leaders to persuade their audience and followers basing on inborn reasoning that stems from storytelling (Fisher 1985; Juuti 2001). In this paper, we will focus on narrative approach to leadership and organization theories following the ideas from Aristotle, Ricoeur (1984, 1991) and Fisher (1985; 1989; 1994). Instead of denying logical-scientific rationality and system of formal reasoning, narrative paradigm with its concept of narrative rationality intends to enrich modern tradition. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to reflect the leadership and organization theory along its Aristotelian origins.

There have been several openings to cope with the complexity of organizational and managerial discourse. Discussions have revolved around organizational sense making (Weick 1995), which seems to become an umbrella concept for many studies on organizational storytelling (Boje 2008, 2011; Gabriel 1998; Barry & Elmes, 1995; Rosile et al., 2013; Vaara, & Tienari, 2011). Also different narrative approaches have recently increased knowledge and understanding about strategy, complexity. In organizational level, studies have focused on organizational change (Beech & MacPhail & Coupland 2009), antenarrative aspects of mergers (Vaara & Tienari 2011), HRM issues in mergers (Syrjälä, Takala & Sintonen 2009), gender issues and gender telling (Ghererdi & Poggio 2007; Murgia & Poggio 2009). Some studies of entrepreneurship have also done by narrative approach (Essers 2009; Parada & Viladas 2010), and prospects of stories used in managerial or organizational learning have been examined (Gabriel & Connell 2010; Lämsä & Sintonen 2006; Collin et al. 2011).

Narrative studies have also focused on multiple aspects of leadership and organizations. For us, the most interesting studies are such that have problematized, in a way or another, the role and power of personalized leader, or outstretched the concept of leader or leadership. These studies have stated that a story can be considered as a leader, and thus the term leader do not plainly refer to a person (Parry & Hansen 2007). Leader’s existence can be considered as virtual, even fictional characters (e.g. Ronald McDonald) which can take over leadership functions from personal leaders (Boje & Rhodes 2006). Besides, informal leadership such as organizational resistance may involve fictional organizational actors, ghosts, which are constructed in organizational storytelling (Auvinen 2012). Thus, stories convey the power of a leader (Sintonen & Auvinen 2009) and leader’s existence can be considered as virtual, discursive construction (Boje et al. 2011).

The possibilities and potentiality of stories from the point of view of leadership and organizations has been in focus during the past couple of decades (see e.g. Gabriel 2000; Brown et al. 2005; Boje 2006). Often the discussion has revolved around the question of the capability of storytelling leadership, or the narrative nature of leadership, to facilitate the organizational change and transformation (e.g. Boje & Rhodes 2006; Auvinen 2013). Stories are seen as a certain type of managerial discourse (e.g. Clark 1972; Marshall & Adamic 2010) and storytelling has been considered as a tool for management (e.g. Parkin 2004). In addition to this kind of an instrumental view, it has been proposed that using power or influencing by storytelling is such a complex phenomenon that it cannot be controlled as a tool (Boje 2008).

We propose that the revitalization of Aristotelian (*Poetica*) ideas of narrative/narrativity into present theory of organization and leadership goes through the Ricoeurian (1984, 1988, 1991) elaboration of the concepts of emplotment, discordance and concordance. Emplotment refers to activity of organizing events into a plot (Ricoeur 1984, 33). Aristotle's term plot does not mean a system of events, but rather to an activity to organizing events into a meaningful and unified system. Thus, emplotment is the act of composing plots. Furthermore, emplotment is, as an intellectual act, a form of sense making which takes place in narrative discourses. For us, discourse refers to an act of using language or linguistic event (Ricoeur 1976, 9) which emphasizes the dynamic character of the emplotment. We use here a concept of storiosis to connect Aristotelian conceptions of narrative to present organization and leadership theories. Storiosis refers to narrative sense making in organizational discourse. The core of the study is that we aim to examine how storytelling drifts in organizational discourse and how stories become interpreted in a flux of stories (cf. Boje 2008), and how concordance is created from discordant narrative elements in the storiosis.

This study do not limit only to leaders, but analyses sense making and meaning making in storiosis which occur between leaders and followers in organizational context. Indeed, the role of followers in leadership process is broader than previously given them in most leadership theories (Howell & Shamir 2005; Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012). Storiosis is an approach on leadership that considers both the roles of the leader and followers in leadership processes. The relation between a leader and followers is understood as being more than strict individual and bipolar relation because there exists cultural and social intervening features which exceed an individual. Stories and storytelling cannot be reduced to individual minds, but as cultural conventions they adjust, influence and regulate the communication and meaning making between a leader and followers and are a part of organizational discourse. (Boje 2008.)

Empirical analysis of this study focuses on the complexity of storytelling in a sizeable Finnish high-tech research organization. We aspired to acquire data from an organization, which have different kind of professions; both commercial and technical professionals. They represent also different organizational echelons.

## **Storiosis and narrative rationality**

The act of emplotment consists of the tension between discordance and concordance because of the heterogeneity of events and consistence of emplotted story. Being a synthesis of heterogeneous narrative elements, it configures multiple incidents and events into a complete story. (Ricoeur 1984, 1991; Cunliffe & Hibbert 2016) For Aristotle, concordance surpasses discordance, as the result is a complete narrative. The present organizational discourse delivers multiple discordant meanings, whether the speaker is a leader or other member of the organization. Organizational discourse becomes existent often by organizational storytelling. (Boje 2008, Jorgensen 2011, Grant & Marshak 2011) Furthermore, these stories are the targets for sense making, during which the members of the organization are trying to interpret and understand what the discourse means.

Storiosis is an application of the concept of semiosis. It derives from semiotics where the concept refers to an activity that, in a way or another, involves signifying process. It is a matter of production, exchange, interpreting and understanding meanings. In storiosis this activity and process is limited to stories. Similar to semiosis, storiosis is never without contexts. Instead, production of meanings and interpretation take always place in multiple social interaction and situations. Thus, as in the Aristotelian tradition where the activity of emplotment organizes discordant events into concordant plot, in the present complex organizational discourse storiosis enables the participants of the discourse to make sense of the discordant storytelling. Assuming that Aristotle's poetics is an art of composing plots through emplotment and synthesis of heterogeneous narrative elements (Ricoeur 1984, 33; 1991), then storiosis can be understood as sense making of the complex organizational discourse by telling and interpreting stories. Storiosis is a discursive platform where members of an organization can create concordance over multiple and multilayered (Boje 2008), thus discordant, organizational storytelling. Here lies also the interconnection between Aristotelian narratology and the present narrative organization and leadership theory. One should note that creating concordance it is not a matter of any kind of universal or all-encompassing understanding, but more like reaching a level of understanding, which is adequate to cope with the demands of present situations.

As an example of how storiosis creates concordance, we analyze how leader and subordinates make sense of storytelling in a high technology organization and in a bank. We begin with the assumption that there is a continuous flux of stories, which discursively constitute the organizational reality (Boje 2008, 2011). In this flux of stories individual actors – both leaders and followers - try to make sense of their reality by interpreting the stories, i.e. participating storiosis. The tension between discordance and concordance takes also place in the storiosis.

The challenge of this study is to explore and understand the storiosis from the point of view of discursive influencing. In the case of both organizations, we chose certain story or story like statements, which the leader told in public for the members of the organization

to show how storiosis begins and leads to certain interpretations of the members of the organizations. We also show that the interpretations were not unitary, but varied according to the rationality behind them. Hence, although concordance overcomes discordance in storiosis, it appears to be multiple and multilayered. In the original situation in which the statement become articulated organizational hierarchies were present: the speaker was a leader and listeners were subordinates by their formal position. In the high technology organization it was also the first speech and appearance of a new leader, whereas in the bank the leader was senior CEO who has given many speeches before. Both of the leaders have certain intentions, which they wanted to deliver by the speech. This is the reason why we start the empirical part of this article by analyzing the leaders' own conceptions of their statement and the situation.

Furthermore, the listeners had also certain intentions to interpret the statement which derives from the situational, hierarchical and social contexts. Their interpretations are analyzed in after leaders. In general, human communication can be considered as a interpersonal and intersubjective discourse in which participants are conveying meanings to elicit some kind of response and to have an influence on their audience. This applies also to storiosis which is understood here as a discursive site of influencing. We are speaking about influencing in a sense that we do not fix storytelling to personal power of a leader or manager (see also Boje & Rhodes 2006). Influencing is understood here through the rationality of interpretations that the storyteller and listeners assign to stories.

In the examination of the rationality of interpretations we use the model of narrative rationality introduced by Walter Fisher (1985; 1989; 1994). We consider this model particularly appropriate because people, as storytellers and listeners, try to make sense to stories by pondering also the rationality of a story and narrative rationality is a constituent of concordance creation in storiosis. We do not assume that there exist any kind of universal rationality, but instead, rationality can be examined from relativistic point of view, i.e. different speakers and listeners interpret stories from different angles, positions and contexts. As a result of these kinds of interpretations the conceptions may vary notably and be inconsistent, but still they are based on some kind of rationality.

Fisher's model is used here in suggestive manner to avoid some pitfalls of analysis it may lead. Boje (1999) has criticized the model as being too formal and its' lack of context. The criticism can be taken in to account in two ways. First, we are not analyzing the formal content of stories, but the interpretations of their tellers and listeners. We are asking the conditions of how the stories are created and how they live in the flux of stories in the organization. Second, we are accounting also for the social situations and contexts in which stories become recounted and how they produce different interpretations, which are still concordant with the preconditions of the situation.

The model is following. Fisher has divided narrative rationality in two aspects: coherence and fidelity. The coherence includes three parts or items. Structural coherence refers to the order or arrangement of the blocks in a story. Material coherence depends on how the

story is understood in relation to other relevant stories. In characteriological coherence there is regard for the narrator's contribution to the intelligence, integrity and goodwill of the story. The aspect of fidelity is divided into two parts or items. Fidelity of a story, i.e. its' truthfulness for the listener, consists of reasons and values. Reasoning can be based on imagined facts or it can be sound. Values can be expressed implicitly or explicitly and they are confirmed in a way or another in a story. Fisher's model is illustrated in the figure 1.

Figure 1. Summary of narrative rationality (Fisher 1994).

Narrative Rationality		
Coherence	Fidelity	
<p><b>Argumentative/ structural</b></p> <p>Determined by arrangement of blocks included into story</p> <p><b>Material</b></p> <p>Determined by comparing and contrasting a present story with stories told in other relevant discourses</p> <p><b>Characteriological</b></p> <p>Determined by how the reader/listener adheres to the message of story, i.e. intelligence, integrity and goodwill that the author as a narrator has embodied in the story</p>	<p><b>Reasons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facts are facts</li> <li>- Facts omitted or misinterpreted</li> <li>- Sound reasoning</li> <li>- Key issues addressed</li> </ul>	<p><b>Values</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implicit/explicit</li> <li>- Appropriateness to the nature of belief of the story</li> <li>- Effects of adhering to the values to one's concept of self</li> <li>- Confirmation or validating the values in one's experience</li> <li>-Story fostering of the human conduct</li> </ul>

### The Data

The group of interviewees worked for the high technology organization, which is traditionally known as research orientated public organization. With almost 3000 personnel is the biggest high technological applied research organization in Northern Europe. We concentrated on two of its major divisions, marketing/administration and manufacturing/research. Former is responsible for strategic decision making in business activities whereas latter represents the core competence, high-technology research. Since major organizational change, a strategic reform in fall 2006, the organization has been

moving from research-led to business-led organization. It is also a matter of transformation from state owned research institute to business oriented research center. While the organization used to be a not for-profit organization (being a part of the Finnish innovation system under the domain of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy), according to the new strategy commercialization of new techniques and innovations is the primary goal.

The marketing/administration division is leading the organization to new business orientated organizational culture and manufacturing/research division has to adapt into it. The change has created a tension between the divisions, which is in the core of our empirical analysis, too. The leader interviewed, titled as business development manager (hereafter BM) represented marketing/strategy division. An essential part of his job was to push forward the new strategy. We focused on one particular statement of BM and interpretations it generated among his followers. The statement was performed in a meeting as a part of his speech as a newly chosen leader and it enunciated the core conception of the new organization. This speech generated an ample flux of stories in and after the social situation. Here we follow that statement and examine its' diffusion in the organization by analyzing how it became interpreted among those members of the organization who were in the audience when the statement was announced.

The first interviews for this study took place during July 2006 – January 2009. The main theme in the interviews related on BM's statement about his objectives as a new business development manager in a strategy meeting in fall 2006. BM was interviewed three times and each colleague/subordinate once. In addition to the leader we interviewed also three of his colleagues/subordinates who were present in the original meeting.

The identities of the organizations and each interviewee are concealed for ethical reasons. In the following empirical part, the abbreviations used in the text are following. BM refers to business manager of the high tech organization, and C1-C3 to three subordinates/colleagues of BM.

## **Analysis**

In the empirical chapter, we analyze the business manager's (BM) own conceptions of his speech and the statement, and his subordinate's interpretations of the statement. The purpose is to show how the BM and subordinates create concordant understanding over the issue. We named the speech as Awakening -story because its purpose was to shake the organization out of sleep. We wanted to examine/map the diverseness of the interpretations, which the Awakening -story and the statement produced. How different people interpret them and how the same person, the BM, interprets them in different moments.

### **3.1. The BM's Awakening -story and the statement**

We start the analysis by introducing the BM's description of the strategy meeting, in which he performed the statement. This was also his first official presentation in the organization. The description is from the second interview, which took place autumn 2007. The content of the statement is that the organization should develop to such direction that its' products will create several spin-off enterprises and this will become concrete in a way that fifty percent of the current personnel will not be after five years working for the organization. According to the BM, this led to uncomfortable feeling in the meeting because the audience misinterpreted the idea of the statement. This is a starting point to the storiosis concerning the Awakening –story, which also the BM notices himself at the end of the extract 1. The launching of the Awakening –story also evoked confusion and discordance about the meaning of the speech among the audience.

Extract 1.

My first words, yes, if I remember correctly, I stood up in front of the audience, and it was a strategy meeting I have to add. The first words were that we have succeed in the frames of strategy if only fifty percent of you who are in this room now are not any longer working for this organization after five years. [laughing] After this, a hush descended over the crowd. People were looking downwards and watched their toes and thought that what the hell that guy is trying to say. That was the beginning of the story par excellence. (BM)

His authority was based on the position, which his own superior assigned to him in front of the audience. One should notice that the BM and his superior were representing the business division of the organization and the audience belonged into research division. Thus, there was a tension in the situation from the beginning because the relation between these two divisions was discordant. It stems from the ongoing organizational change which has started two years before the strategy meeting. Hence, the context of the speech, namely confronting interests of the two divisions, was a source for discordance of the manners how the speech will be interpreted.

The organizational change forms the widest context for the analysis of narrative rationality of BM's conceptions. The purpose of the organizational change has been to transform a state owned research institute into business oriented research company. This has brought along the formation of the business and research divisions, and more business oriented management. It has also divided the personnel into supporters and abolitionists or conformists and misfits. In the extract 2. the BM is illustrating the organizational change.

Extract 2.



... what has happened here in our organization, yes. There has happened a big organizational change within last two years. And, the situation in which I told the Awakening story took place one year and four months ago, and the new organization was then quite alien for many. A new motto, business from technology, has already launched and some of the old-timer researchers considered it odd. And in other ways too, this was a new kind of form of organization. There were also some clumsy and rigid issues in the organization (...) and some economic challenges which the old organization did not fit. (BM)

The coherence aspect of narrative rationality can be found from the manner how the BM locates himself according to the organizational change. The characteriological coherence refers to the adherence to the message of story. In our case, it is a matter of how the BM's conceptions are in line with either the old or the new organization. As the extract 3 shows, the BM endorses the ideas of the new organization, which are articulated in the extract 2. He is also accepting the intellectuality and goodwill traits of characteriological coherence included into the promise of the new organization. He does it by promoting the business ideology built-in the arguments concerning commercializing the research. If the commercializing is not the ultimate means for subsistence of the organization, it leads, at least, economic/financial wellbeing, which is a benefit for all. Furthermore, this characteriological coherence aspect of narrative rationality is parallel with the BM's statement. Creating business from technology creates smaller spin-off enterprises which are either set up by the former researchers or they will recruit the researchers from the parent organization.

Extract 3.

...that I want to feed such an idea that if the technologies are developing in such a speed that people could really bring them on markets, and these peoples who have been making research on them could be courageous enough to go and commercialize the products they have invented. (BM)

This far we have showed how the BM's statement is in coherence and rational against his idea of the new organization. He has constructed a concordant interpretation of the issue for himself, but had left the others in confusion and inflicted the need of making sense of the situation.

Next, we examine how the BM constructs fidelity for his statement and position. In narrative rationality model there are three items which rise up in fidelity aspect: facts are facts, confirmation or validating the values in one's experience and sound reasoning. The BM spends quite lot energy in the interview to justify his statement. The last sentence of the extract three illustrates the facts are facts -type fidelity based on reasons. The BM considers the societal and economic condition of environment as a factual threat for the

organization and the organization fits not into the environment well enough. Thereby the organization must react to challenges posed by its' environment.

The extract 4 is an example of how he appeals to his former experiences to justify the business values built-in his statement. He posits himself as a brave and experienced forerunner in commercializing high technology innovations by explaining his participation in founding such an enterprises.

Extract 4.

...and, I flung myself into the development projects of printed electronics. And I was there when we started an enterprise which was a joint venture of some big corporations (...) thus I have been watching the supply and demand directly into eyes. And I am convinced that the potential is huge and we have to utilize it quickly. (...) And, we are now, our organization is [the current high-tech organization] investing into similar kind of development, yes, my opinion is that we have to be involved in these development projects. And we are busy to gain proofs of success. (BM)

The third tactic to appeal to fidelity is the sound reasoning. In the extract 5 the BM is turning the negative effect of his statement on the audience as positive force. The change from negative to positive is the issue which makes the reasoning sound. The BM offers not only to the old-timer researchers a solution which is in line with new business oriented organization, but he does it also in sensible and comfortable manner. The solution shows that the statement could lead to profitable opportunities and thus it is reasonable. The BM's interpretations of the Awakening story and his statement are fluctuating in a sense that depending on the context of speech, he appeals to different aspects of rationality.

Extract 5.

...Well. We have also had layoffs here, and people have interpreted it [the statement] occasionally negatively. And, I was thinking that by this message I may get the people to understand the situation positively. Yes, that Hello, wake up! There are a lot of prospects and potentials very close to us, and they, and this opens up great possibilities for researchers to become independent entrepreneurs, or great possibilities to become hired technology managers into new [spin-off] companies, which are investing to this branch/industry. (BM)

### 3.2. Reception of the Awakening story and the statement

We begin our analysis on subordinates' interpretations with brief consideration about the Awakening story and the statement, which the three subordinates (C1-C3) were asked to

describe as they remember it. All of them were able to tell the story including the statement embedded in the story.

We asked how the subordinates perceived the message embedded into the Awakening story. Interpretations of the message did not vary notably. According to C1, the message in BM's statement related to new possibilities for personnel and new spin-off enterprises, which are the prevailing means for organization X to commercialize the research. C1 also regarded as a message for listeners that also the leaders for new enterprises have to be found amongst the personnel of organization X. According to C2 the message was that if BM's statement will be materialized, then organization X will manage its economy well. Later in his interview C2 expressed his bafflement about the danger that all experts would leave the organization X. C3 regarded as the message that organization X has to evoke good business ideas that the personnel will move to real business from that government supported research.

Extract 6.

...that there are great market opportunities... ..Maybe it was with slight humor... anyway quite serious matter, that it is exactly what we try to do, new enterprises and, surely the leaders have to be found amongst us, outside there is few people, who comprehend these technologies. (C1)

Next we will move on to analyse the subordinates' conceptions in the terms of the coherence aspect of narrative rationality. C1 rationalizes his conceptions from two points of view. First, he compares organization X's prevailing objectives to the objectives of BM's former company (see extract 7). The former experience of the narrator was in coherence with the idea of the new business oriented organization X. Here it is a matter of characteriological coherence which takes place in the issues in which the listeners are adhering the message of story.

Secondly, C1 is appealing to material coherence by comparing the statement to the official strategy plan of the organization (see extract 8). He also adds that personnel were aware of message of the statement. In other words C1 considers organization X's strategy and earlier client case as relevant discourse that supports the coherence of statement. This can be considered also as facts are facts rationality, because the strategy plan confirms the statement.

Extract 7.

BM was in that kind of spin-off company Y... indeed it was the very first company, which made good use of this product really ... developed the element, which added extra value and it had great potentials for future. (C1)

Extract 8.

... so we already knew what we were expected to do in this program, that one spinoff enterprise per year is born... it was written into the strategy. (C1)

Also C2 mentions the strategic developments program as a comparable other discourse in extract 9. BM's statement is in line with this strategic organizational discourse about objectives in general. But unlike C1, C2 doesn't mention about possibilities for personnel.

Extract 9.

We do have nowadays this business Z [specific field of technology], which was started in 2006 ... It is a wide strategic development program which covers whole organization X. Its purpose is to develop these affordable techniques for mass production of electronic components ... No more research for the pleasure of doing research, but it has to lead to some results [in business]. (C2)

Also C3 agrees with BM's statement about the need for business oriented research. But C3 also opposes the content of the statement by stating that they have been such an organization already before BM's entry. He also opposes the statement on the grounds of characteriological coherence by questioning the possibility to create a strategy program (extract 11). The statement includes the ambition that the new business oriented strategy will lead to successful commercialization of research, but C3 sees that promise unrealistic.

Extract 10.

...we just have to, it is exactly correct, that in some sense... I mean we actually do research for some commercial use. (C3)

Extract 11.

[Organization X's new strategy] such like, internationalization... top doers, high technology... you know, it is really hard to create any common strategy, which would be something else than nice phrases, that... (C3)

From characteriological aspect we considered also subordinates' personal conceptions and history with BM, because they reflect the coherence aspect of rationality. C1 and C2 didn't know BM before, but had heard many stories about him. Company Y was familiar for them because of long time cooperation between organization X and company Y. In characteriological sense it can be said, that BM was a representative of both organizations for the listeners in the first strategy meeting. Thus, BM was embedded in the organizational flux of stories in organization X before he entered into it. C3 was the only

who knew BM personally in advance. Extract 12 was chosen from other similar kind of extracts to illustrate the BM's former reputation as an experienced business oriented professional and how it is in line with his current character in the organization.

Extract 12.

He really has undergone much in the business world, and he knows it really well and has, you know, rubbed elbows with big boys. (C1)

The statement was contested more in the fidelity aspect than in coherence aspect of narrative rationality. In extracts 13-15 C1, C2 and C3 appeal both to sound reasoning and facts are facts issues in doubting the organizational change from research institute into a business-oriented company. They all consider the new business oriented strategy as unsound for older colleagues who have used to concentrate only to research. It is not plausible that those colleagues would start new careers any longer in ironic sense. On the other hand, there appears also a facts are facts reasoning in the same case. Beside the irony, they also recognized that it was a serious matter. They also considered that is a fact that old people cannot change their attitudes and careers easily.

Extract 13.

[BM's statement in the strategy meeting] it inflicted some sneering... all those 50year-old... to create new enterprises, well, that might cause some sneering... that at the age of 50 you leave the company, and as technology manager you go and spinoff enterprises. (C1)

Extract 14.

And in some sense I don't really think that those old fools [ole timer researchers] too easily then... then... because there has been so secure jobs, that ... that ... well is it risk taking, if you have been here for 15 years, even if you would say whatever? (C2)

Extract 15.

... it was fun to observe, what kind of faces there was [in the strategy meeting], that [laughing] well is it a bit, well if I put it this way... that kind of dusty state apparatchiks are suddenly frighten out their wits, you can only imagine [laughing], that at least some ... well everyone hid their shock about it ... but they also realized,

#### 4. Conclusions

In this paper we have build an interconnection between Aristotelian poetics/narratology to present theory of organizations and leadership. We relied on the elaborations that Paul Ricoeur has made in his hermeneutics. Our argument was that the present organizational and leadership theory has its' roots in Aristotle, and this connection becomes visible via the concept of emplotment. In Aristotelian poetics/narratology, emplotment refers to a poetic act, in which discordant events people meet in their lives become understandable as concordant stories. Here lies the similitude between Aristotle and present organization and leadership theory. In present organizations, the organizational discourse consist of efforts to make the discourse understandable for its members. It is a matter of both leaders and subordinates, who are constantly trying to convert the discordant discourse to sensible and concordant.

We introduced the concept of storiosis to illustrate the process of converting discordant to concordant. Hence, storiosis is a manner of making sense of narrative organizational discourse. The flux of organizational stories contains heterogeneous set of multiple, inconsistent and conflicting narrative fragments, i.e. is full of discordant elements. As an empiric example of storiosis, we presented a case analysis of one Finnish high technology organization. In the analysis, we showed how the very first speech of a newcomer manager raised confusion among the audience, and how three members of the audience interpreted the speech.

The model of narrative rationality by Walter Fisher was used in analysis to show how the storiosis functioned and how concordance overcame discordance. The narrative rationality is a product of individual and interpersonal sense making which consists of discontinuations, incoherence and situational reasoning, and it embedded into organizational storiosis. We noticed that the different aspects of rationality appeared in multiple manner and they were partly overlapping. Also the acceptance, denial and contradiction of the BM's statement occurred in storiosis in multiple manners in a sense that the type of narrative rationality against which they were justified and explained varied situationally in the interviews.

Thus, we propose that the storiosis is a multifaceted and fragmented process of making sense, which do not lead to definite end or single and solid conceptions of any story. This was the case with the Awakening story. One should notice that although the interpretations of the content or message of the BM's statement were parallel among the subordinates, their interpretations of the Awakening story were not. This indicates that although not all interpretations are parallel or similar to each other, concordance in a form of coherent understanding of organizational discourse can be constituted. Therefore, the tendency to construct something coherent and understandable appears in Aristotelian poetics/narratology as well as in the present organizational discourse.

## References

- Aristotle, *Poetica*. [Runousoppi.] Finnish edition (1997). Helsinki: Gaudeamus.
- Auvinen, T. (2012). The Ghost Leader: An Empirical Study on Narrative Leadership. *EJBO Electronic Journal of Business Ethics and Organization Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 4-15.
- Auvinen, T. (2013). *Narratiivinen johtajuus. Tutkielmia johtajuuden tarinankerronnan tutkimuksesta ja käytännöstä* [Narrative leadership: Studies on leadership storytelling research and practice]. Doctoral dissertation. Jyväskylä: Jyväskylä Studies in Business and Economics.
- Beech, N. & MacPhail, S. A. & Coupland, C. (2009). Anti-dialogic Positioning in Change Stories: Bank Robbers, Saviours and Peons. *Organization*. Vol. 16, No. 3.
- Boje, D. (2008). *Storytelling Organizations*. London: Sage.
- Boje, D. & Pullen, A. & Rhodes, C. & Rosile, G.A. (2011). *The Virtual Leader*. The Sage Handbook of Leadership. Bryman, A. & Collinson, D. & Grint, K. & Jackson, B. & UhlBien, M. (eds.). London: Sage.
- Boje, D. & Rhodes, C. (2006). The Leadership of Ronald McDonald: Double Narration and Stylistic lines of Transformation. *The Leadership Quarterly*. Vol. 17, No. 1.
- Collin, K. & Sintonen, T. & Paloniemi, S. & Auvinen, T. (2011). Work, Power and Learning in a Risk Filled Occupation. *Management Learning*. Vol. 43, No. 2. 301-318.
- Cunliffe, A. L. & Hibbert, P. (2016). The Philosophical Basis of Leadership-as-Practice From a Hermeneutical Perspective. In Raelin, J. A. (Ed.) *Leadership-as-Practice. Theory and Application*. London: Routledge.
- Czarniawska, B. (1997). *Narrating the Organizations. Dramas of Institutional Identity*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.
- Essers, C. (2009). Reflections on the Narrative Approach: Dilemmas of Power, Emotions and Social Location While Constructing Life-Stories. *Organization*. Vol. 16, No. 3.
- Fisher, W. R. (1985). The Narrative Paradigm: In the Beginning. *Journal of Communication*. Vol. 35, No. 4.
- Fisher, W.R. (1989). *Human Communication as Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason, Value and Action*. USA: University of South Carolina.

Fisher, W.R. (1994). Narrative Rationality and the Logic of Scientific Discourse. *Argumentation*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 21–32.

Gabriel, Y. (1998). Same Old Story or Changing Stories? Folkloric, Modern and Postmodern Mutations. In *Discourse & Organization*. Grant, D. & Keenoy, T. & Oswick, C. (eds.). London: Sage.

Gabriel, Y. (2000). *Storytelling in Organizations. Facts, Fictions and Fantasies*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc.

Gherardi S. and Poggio B. (2007). *Gendertelling in Organizations. Narratives from Male-dominated Environments*. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press.

Gabriel, Y. & Connell, N.A.D. (2010). Co-creating stories: Collaborative experiments in storytelling. *Management Learning*. Vol. 41, No. 5.

Grant, D. & Marshak, R. J. (2011). Toward Discourse-Centered Understanding of Organizational Change. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*. 47(2).

Howell, J. M. & Shamir, B. (2005). The Role of Followers in the Charismatic Leadership Process: Relationships and their Consequences. *Academy of Management Review*. Vol. 30, No. 1, 96-112.

Jorgensen, K. M. (2011). Antenarrative Writing. Tracing and Representing Living Stories. In Boje, D. (Ed.) *Storytelling and the Future of Organizations. An Antenarrative Handbook*. London: Routledge.

Kezar, A. (2001). Investigating Organizational Fit in a Participatory Leadership Environment. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*. Vol. 23, No. 1.

Lämsä, A-M. & Sintonen, T. (2006) A Narrative Approach for Organizational Learning in a Diverse Organization. *Journal of Workplace Learning*. Vol. 18, No.2.

Murgia, A. & Poggio, B. (2009). Challenging Hegemonic Masculinities: Men's Stories on Gender Culture in Organizations. *Organization*. Vol. 16, No. 3.

Parada, M. J. & Viladás, H. (2010). Narratives: a powerful device for values transmission in family businesses. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*. Vol. 23, No. 2.

Parkin, M. (2004). *Using Storytelling to Develop People and Organizations*. London, UK & Sterling, USA: Kogan Page Limited.

Parry, K.W. & Hansen, H. (2007). The Organizational Story as Leadership. *Leadership*. Vol.3, No. 3.



- Ricoeur, P. (1976). *Interpretation Theory. Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*. Fort Worth: TCU Press.
- Ricoeur, P. (1984). *Time and Narrative. Volume 1*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ricoeur, P. (1988). *Time and Narrative. Volume 3*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ricoeur, P. (1991). *Life in Quest Of Narrative*. In Wood, D. (Ed.) *On Paul Ricoeur. Narrative and Interpretation*. London: Routledge.
- Rosile, G. A.; Boje, D. M.; Carlon, D.; Downs, A.; Saylor, R. (2013). *Storytelling Diamond: An Antenarrative Integration of the Six Facets of Storytelling in Organization Research Design*. *Organizational Research Methods*. Vol. 16, No. 4.
- Sintonen, T. & Auvinen, T. (2009). *Who is Leading, Leader or Story? The Power of Stories to Lead*. *Tamara. Journal for Critical Organization Inquiry*. Vol. 8. Issue 8.
- Syrjälä, J. & Takala, T. & Sintonen, T. (2009). *Narratives as a tool to study personnel wellbeing in corporate mergers*. *Qualitative Research*. Vol. 9 (3). 2009.
- Uhl-Bien, M. & Ospina, S. M. (2012), *Introduction – Mapping the Terrain: Convergence and Divergence Around Relational Leadership*. In *Advancing Relational Leadership Research* (eds. Uhl-Bien & Ospina), Information Age Publishing Inc., USA.
- Vaara, E. & Tienari, J. (2011). *On Narrative Construction of Multinational Corporations: An Antenarrative Analysis of Legitimation and Resistance in a Cross-Border Merger*. *Organization Science*. Vol. 22, No, 2.