Narrative Temporality: Implications for Organizational Research

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Abstract

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Our aim is to stimulate critical reflection on an issue that has received relatively little attention: how alternative presuppositions about time can lead to different narrative ways of researching and theorizing organizational life. Based on two amendments to Paul Ricoeur's work in *Time and Narrative*, we re-story narrative research in organizations as Narrative Temporality (NT). Our amendments draw upon the temporality perspective of Jean-Paul Sartre in order to reframe narrative research in organizations as a fluid, dynamic, yet rigorous process open to the interpretations (negotiated) of its many participants (polyphonic) and situated in the context and point of enactment (synchronic). We believe an approach to narrative organizational research grounded in NT can open up new ways of thinking about experience and sense-making, and help us take reflexive responsibility for our research.

Keywords: narrative research, time, synchronic and polyphonic narratives

'Time has no being since the future is not yet, the past is no longer, and the present does not remain.' (Ricoeur 1984: 7)

'We need to restore to knowledge a lost awareness of time.' (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2000: 92)

Our purpose is to stimulate critical reflection on the impact of time on our research practice, and to challenge researchers to take reflexive responsibility in the research process. The above quotes demonstrate our overall goal of bringing these two thoughts together in a way that might influence the understanding and conduct of narrative research on organizational life. We begin by suggesting time is a crucial, yet often taken-for-granted aspect of research because our temporal presuppositions, particularly whether we experience time in objective or subjective ways, influence how we study organizational life. In most narrative studies of organizations, time is usually dealt with in objective and implicit ways, conceptualized (explicitly or implicitly) as a passage through stages, a chronology of episodic linear events that exist regardless of those experiencing them. There is also often an assumption that meaning is carried through time. The narrative researcher's role is as an interpreter of stories and she or he can use research methods that incorporate different forms of narrative analysis to draw conclusions about

organizational processes. We suggest that our experience and consciousness of time is not so straightforward and that, for reasons we will present later, we need to embrace more nuanced and dynamic notions of temporality as a means of grounding our research in human experience.

Our contribution is to offer a re-storied notion of time and narrative through a way of thinking and researching we call 'Narrative Temporality' (NT). NT is a nexus of the work of two writers, Ricoeur and Sartre, and an integration of our own ideas about time-consciousness and narrative research. We make two simple amendments to Ricoeur's suppositions about time and historical research in *Time and Narrative* (1984, 1988) by incorporating the reflective consciousness of temporality from Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* (1956, 1963). Our amendments suggest time is experienced subjectively and narratives are spontaneous acts of meaning-making that take place and interweave through many moments of discursive time and space. If we accept this is so, then narrative research takes a different form — as a negotiated, synchronic, and polyphonic process in which we experience duration and connection in moments of narrative performance (speaking, listening, and reading). In other words, narrative research is reframed as a collectively constructed process over time — fluid and dynamic, and open to the interpretations of its many participants. This means thinking more critically about the relationship between temporality, lived experience, and research; redefining the role of the narrative researcher; exploring new research methods that are consistent with the assumptions of NT; and exploring different ways of 'theorizing' or narrating lived experience. If we accept NT as a viable approach, then we begin to explore forms of research that combine a concern for participation with a concern for the ethical responsibility of our interpretations of organizational life. It also means 'interpreting one's own interpretations, looking at one's own perspectives from other perspectives, and turning a self-critical eye onto one's own authority as interpreter and author' (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2000: iii). This article offers a way of helping narrative researchers accomplish these ontological and epistemological goals.

We begin by providing a brief summary of narrative theory and organizational research. Next, we examine suppositions about time, suggesting that a researcher's approach to narrative inquiry depends upon whether we understand time as cosmological or phenomenological, as an external or internal reality, as linear or fluid. This forms a basis for offering an alternative way of thinking about narrative research — one we call 'Narrative Temporality'. Lastly, we explore the potential implications of NT for narrative organizational research.

Time and Narrative Organizational Research

The Contours of Narrative Organizational Research

This article explores the relationship between time and research in organizational life within the context of narrative research. To begin, we will

re-present our brief story of narrative research on organizations, not as an in-depth survey, which has been done elsewhere (see Boje 1995, 2001; Clair et al. 1996; Clair 1997; Fairhurst and Putnam 1999; O'Connor 2000; Pentland 1999), but as a means of helping us situate our reframed temporal perspective.

Quite simply, a narrative can be seen, in the words of the Concise English Dictionary, as an oral or written 'recital of a series of events ... a story'. Narrative knowledge is based on the assumption that we make sense of our experience through integrated and sequenced accounts or stories (Polkinghorne 1988; Weick 1995), and that researchers can study and interpret those stories as a means of understanding organizational processes and events. Narrative organizational studies, in common with the blurring of genres in the social sciences, draws from many domains (for example, literary criticism, linguistics, rhetoric, and semiotics) to address a wide range of issues spanning modern, postmodern or poststructuralist, and also interpretive perspectives (for example, Fairhurst and Putnam 1999; Knorr-Cetina and Amman 1990). Whereas the words 'story' and 'narrative' are often used interchangeably in narrative research, we suggest that they are not the same. Stories, in the main, are seen to have the characteristics outlined by Gergen (1999) below, however, narratives do not always have such coherent plotlines or characters. We take Alvesson and Sköldberg's (2000: 93) position that 'all discourse is in some way narrative', because in speaking we are constructing a narrative of our lives. Such narratives embrace technical, academic, and everyday language, and are context dependent. We also suggest that our narrative accounts may or may not include stories. This is an important distinction between research taking a narrative mode of analysis, where stories are an epistemological tool for analyzing reality, and the radically reflexive approach we offer, where we (organizational members, researchers, ordinary people, and so on) create and make sense of experience in our narrative discourse with others (Cunliffe 2001, 2002). We outline various approaches to narrative research as a means of situating our own.

Some organizational researchers see narrative as a mode of communication and way of knowing and interpreting the world. This is based on the notions that: (1) we can conceptualize society and its institutions as storytelling communities and (2) people communicate primarily through stories. Within literary and cultural studies, this position is exemplified through narratology, that is, a structuralist examination of the underlying formal structure, coherence, sequencing, and purpose of stories (whether fact or fiction, oral or written). Stories are seen to have an internal temporality and coherence. Gergen (1999), for example, states that intelligible narratives have a number of characteristics which lend coherence: a valued endpoint or goal; relevant causally linked events ordered in a linear, temporal sequence; demarcation signs (the beginning and ending of the story); and characters with stable, coherent identities. There is also an identifiable narrative voice lending authority to the narrative (Bal 1985). In addition, Weick and Browning (1986), following Fisher (1985a, 1985b), suggest that stories are powerful because we utilize them to determine, justify, and guide our lives. When we need to judge a situation, we question whether it coheres against our own

stories and determine whether characters behave in characteristic ways. So, time (sequencing) and plot (storyline) are two essential qualities in making sense of experience; our stories have a 'temporal unity' (Ricoeur 1984: ix–x) and the plot 'grasps together' and organizes goals, cause and effect, initiatives and actions, and intended and unintended consequences.

Contemporary narratologies also address the issues of coherence and chronology, but in a way different to that outlined above. Poststructuralist and postmodern narratologies attack coherence and chronology by problematizing and deconstructing narratives and narrative authority. Such critiques assume narratives are ongoing, dynamic texts constructed in an infinite number of ways by readers or listeners rather than storytellers (Bal 1985; Currie 1998). Instead of looking for coherent storylines, shared meaning, and common values, postmodern narrations look for multiple meanings, contradictions, and how narratives privilege some and exclude others. At a macro-level, the political and ideological nature of meta-narratives (world views such as progress through reason and science) are uncovered to expose how they control society and knowledge production and distribution by determining what is 'true' and 'right'. These then become the criteria for evaluating competence and the legitimacy of action and knowledge (Lyotard 1984; Knights 1992). Boje (2001), for example, looks at how ante-narratives or pre-narrations develop coherence and become part of an ongoing dialogue. At the micro-level, postmodern narratologists deconstruct texts and examine individual narratives as a means of studying power relations and exploring how hegemonic storylines may reinforce prevailing stories and marginalize and suppress other voices (Boje and Rosile 1997; Clair 1998; David 1999; Martin 1990; Townsley and Geist 2000).

Narratives can also be seen as both fictional and creative rather than as descriptions of what is real (Clifford 1986; Mink 1978; Van Maanen 1988) because they offer ways of ordering relations which generate their own imaginative spaces. This approach draws on social constructionist suppositions that language is not literal (a means of representing reality) but creative in giving form to reality (Alvesson and Karreman 2000; Berger and Luckmann 1967; Hatch 1997; Linstead 1994; Watson 1995). Thus our sense of self, others, and social and organizational life emerges in our moment-to-moment, relationally responsive, talk-entwined activities, specifically, in oral encounters and reciprocal speech (Shotter 1993: 29). Such narratives take place in many discursive times and contexts in which we improvise, respond, draw on past narratives, and create new ones.

In the field of organization and management studies, ethnographers often use narratives as a research method to see what they might tell us about aspects of organizational life such as culture, processes, strategy, and member identities (for example, Abbott 1992; Boland and Schultze 1996; Gephart 1991; Luhman 2000; Rosen 1985; Smart 1999). Using research methods such as participant observation, case studies, interviews, histories, biographies, and documentation from organizational members, researchers access narratives and analyze their mimetic content, that is, what the stories say. Narrative researchers may also analyze the diegetic form of stories, that is, how the

story is told, who narrates it, how, and a comparison of different tellings (Ryan 1992). From the mimetic perspective, storylines and characters are seen to mimic or reconstruct reality, thus research is a way of establishing the link between the content of stories (narrative properties) and organizational issues. For example, Maynard-Moody and Musheno (2000) compare stories from street-level workers (citizen agent narratives) with the dominant scholarly narrative (state agent narrative) to highlight the different emphasis and meaning given to work discretion. Narratives are also seen as central to building community meaning. From a mimetic or diegetic perspective, organizations are viewed as 'a collective storytelling system in which the performance of stories is a key part of members' sense making and a means to allow them to supplant individual memories with institutional memory' (Boje 1991: 106). One might focus on both a mimetic analysis of storyline patterns, characters, types of stories, and so on, and a diegetic analysis of who can tell (and perform) stories and where they might be told. Typically, mimetic analysis involves some form of coding of the content of stories, while a diegetic analysis focuses on the theatrics of story performance.

Interpretive researchers also focus on both the mimetic and diegetic process of storytelling, but are more concerned with the subjective and differing interpretations of participant narratives. Interpretive analyses often identify different communities of interpretation, how each community tells different stories of the same event, may use different storytelling resources, and how different narratives may interweave and unfold to create new possibilities for action (Gubrium and Holstein 1998; Weick 1995). O'Connor (2000), in her study of narratives and organizational change, examines the stories of different organizational members: a story told at a launch event, conversations in meetings, and public statements. She specifically addresses the issue of time by suggesting that narratives are embedded in the past, present, and future, and within broader company, industry, and community narratives. In other words, narratives do not just tell us about the past (as in O'Connor 1999), they also offer a way to invent the future and to re-narrate organizational life (Barry and Elmes 1997; Downing 1997; O'Connor 1997). Weick (1993), for example, analyzes a narrative of wetland firefighters to draw conclusions about sense-making and organization. He later (Weick 1996) uses the firefighting narrative to draw parallels with the experience of educational administrators and suggest how, by using a firefighting metaphor, they can develop more effective organizing practices. The question remains, however, as to how these various approaches to narrative research are influenced by our conceptions of time.

A Brief Summary of Objective and Subjective Conceptions of Time

Conceptualizations of time are embroiled in a long-standing debate between time as a physical, cosmological, objective experience and time as a psychological, phenomenological, subjective experience. The essential difference between these positions can be illustrated by contrasting scientific with experiential conceptualizations. In the words of Robert Levine, 'for the

physicist, the duration of a "second" is precise and unambiguous: it is equal to 1,192,631,700 cycles of the frequency associated with the transition between two energy levels of the isotope cesium 133' (1997: 27). Modern science has mainly focused on the materiality of time, its objectivity and ability to structure social and organizational action. Since the 19th century, the drive for efficiency, speed, and mass production has conceptualized time as denatured, linear, episodic, and event oriented. Standardized time is the key ingredient that makes possible efficiency, material abundance, and other technological successes of modern life. Time, as measured precisely in seconds and punctuated by time-driven events (schedules, deadlines, job times, annual appraisals, and so on), is a means of controlling and unifying action through function. Capitalism judges time by its economic value — time is money.

'In the realm of psychological experience, however, quantifying units of time is a considerably clumsier operation. It is this usually imprecise psychological clock, as opposed to the time on one's watch, that creates the perception of duration that people experience' (Levine 1997). From a subjective perspective, time is the experience of duration because its measurement is influenced by human experience. We experience duration in the moment, the moment just passed, and the anticipated moment to come. Thus, as Levine states, there is much evidence (for example, Block 1994) to show that objective and subjective assumptions of time 'not only diverge from one another, but that both are subject to great distortion' (Levine 1997: 29). In particular, the individual experience of duration passes more quickly (slowly) when experiences are pleasant (unpleasant), are not urgent (urgent), are very busy (not busy), have a variety (no variety) of tasks, and engage a right-hemisphere (left-hemisphere) mode of thinking (Levine 1997: 37–48). Of course, individual experiences can also be mediated by one's social, economic, and cultural context and the way we each imagine, describe, and use time (Levine 1997: 76).

These objective and subjective positions are reflected in organizational practice and theorizing alike. How we conceive of time has a major influence upon our ideas of what organizational life should look like, as well as how we research and theorize about organizational life. Objective conceptions of time influence our activities: the time of year and day influence what we do. For example, in the spring quarter, on Tuesdays, I teach in room 306 at 6:30pm. However, I also experience that time in embodied and subjective ways: challenging and energetic discussions with students often means that time passes quickly and pleasantly.

Implications of Time for Narrative Research in Organizations

At the two extremes, objective notions of time imply that we all experience the passage of time in the same way and can therefore generalize across contexts. Researchers working from objective notions often focus on understanding the causal connections between events, things, and stories. Subjective notions imply that the passage of time does not exist unless we experience it

and that connections cannot be made across contexts. Researchers working from a subjective stance may find themselves in a self-defeating position, for how can we hope to make connections if everything is experienced as 'pure and unrelated presents in time' (Jameson 1984: 72)? Neither extreme tells us much about people: about how we might live our lives, about our relationships with each other and the world, or about how our imagination helps us make sense of our experience (Johnson 1987). So how do these notions of time relate to narrative research?

Despite the perception that narrative research embraces subjective notions of time, we suggest this can be an unreflexive subjectivity if researchers focus on how other people experience time and space and fail to consider the impact of time on the research process itself — in other words, if we conceptualize the experience of our 'subjects' as a subjective passage through stages and moments, a chronology of episodic, linear events (this happened, then this, and so on) that we can then observe, interpret, and theorize in an objective way. In this approach, the researcher herself is outside time, sitting between the narratives of the 'native' and academic worlds (Van Maanen 1988). The native story is abstracted from the moment of enactment, interpreted, theorized, and rewritten as an academic story. Thus, we distance ourselves from everyday life (objectivize) as we apply appropriate research methods and procedures, observe, investigate, and interpret the (subjectively experienced) lives of others (Linstead 1994). While unreflexive subjectivity (as one of our reviewers commented) allows us to enjoy music or our garden, it can be dangerous in organizational research because as researchers we assume we have the right and ability to narrate the lived experience of organizational members. We may be experts in our own lives as academics, but not necessarily as members of someone else's organization. We may think we are telling the stories of organizational members when we are actually narrating our own academic accounts of the lived experience of others. The danger lies in interpreting narratives as literal and using them to impose our story or a particular storyline upon others.

To illustrate this point, we offer a story from AC:

'My initial Ph.D. topic focused on using chaos theory to study how managers work and learn under conditions of uncertainty. I recorded unstructured interviews with managers and analyzed the transcripts (mimetically) from a chaos frame. It took me a long time to realize that the emerging story was my own, using my language, and attributing my interpretations of cause and effect. The managers did not talk about fractals or strange attractors, they lived their lives through responsive interaction, making sense of what was happening in the moment. I was using my academic narratives to interpret the lived experiences of others, and in doing so offering a time-frozen, out-of-context, already-occurred snapshot of what I thought was happening.'

In other words, we take the stories of others and make them our own. Our academic accounts may then be seen as representational and used to teach 'effective' management and organizational practices. A mimetic approach to research also presupposes that narratives have a stable meaning and can be understood, interpreted, and translated by others in different times and contexts. In other words, there is still a degree of spatial, temporal, and

interpretive objectivity. This point is important to our narrative because, as we will demonstrate, these narratives do not capture the synchronic, and hence human and creative, aspects of narrating and meaning-making. As we shall see below, NT offers a radically reflexive, diegetic approach to research which considers the relationship between objectively and subjectively experienced time and the impact on our research practices. This approach explores how narratives are constructed and the impact our research narratives might have on others.

Re-Narrating Time as Narrative Temporality

In the remainder of the article, we offer an alternative way of thinking about narrative research situated in specific assumptions about the lived experience of time. As stated above, we call this way of thinking 'Narrative Temporality'. NT builds on the work of Ricoeur (1984, 1988) and Sartre (1956, 1963). Both authors, while taking differing positions, reflect upon the nature of time. Ricoeur's reflections have particular relevance for narrative researchers because he claims that 'speculation on time is an inconclusive rumination to which narrative activity alone can respond'. He weds Aristotle's narrative-plot theory (emplotment) with Augustine's temporality theory (the threefold present) to suggest that we organize our present experience around themes, in which are embedded past memory and future expectations. Sartre's contribution is the notion of a more dynamic temporality, in which past and future cling to the present, and time is experienced as a process of reflection or reflecting.

Through NT, research is re-narrated as a process in which researcher and organizational members (hereafter referred to as research participants) together negotiate meaning about the experiences of organizational members. This is based on the assumption that we make sense of what is going on around us through spontaneous narrative acts of consciousness (Ryan 1992), that is, we (organizational members, researchers, ordinary people, and so on) understand who we are and what we do as we listen, talk, and relate with others. In doing so, we interpret and construct our social realities in and through narratives enacted in many moments of time (duration) and across many contexts (spaces). In other words, from a radically reflexive NT perspective, narrative is not just a cognitive instrument (Mink 1978), or way of studying experience; rather, it is a way of being in the world. As a basis for this new practice of narrative organizational research, we review Ricoeur's notions of time, and then draw on Sartre's work (1956, 1963) to offer two amendments.

Ricoeur's 'Aporetics'

Ricoeur reviews much of the philosophical speculation about the nature of time. Starting with the work of Aristotle and Augustine, and moving to Kant, Husserl, and Heidegger, he provides an in-depth discussion of various

conceptualizations of time. He calls the philosophical debate between a cosmological or objective vision and a phenomenological or subjective vision of the nature of time the 'aporetics' (an unresolved contradiction) of temporality. We will focus specifically on Ricoeur's interpretation of the work of Aristotle and Augustine, because by combining Augustine's perspective of time with the Aristotle's theory of plot he provides a powerful resource for narrative research. Ricoeur's purpose is to gain a platform to resituate the conceptualization of time beyond an objective–subjective dichotomy through the use of narrative theory when writing historical research. We extend his work to consider the impact on research and writing about organizational life.

Aristotle focused attention on objective notions of time (a correct and true view of time) through his search for absolute regular movements as the key to the definition and measurement of time. He believed that time does indeed have a physical nature, yet can only be conceived through a human act of abstraction. He states that time has to do with the ability of the human mind to insert abstract numbers, 'to distinguish two end points and an interval' (Ricoeur 1988: 14), as we observe and measure physical movement. In contrast, Augustine claimed that time is experienced in more subjective ways, existing only through the human act of distention as events are understood in retrospection, in the moment, and in anticipation. Time has no extension other than our immediate experience of it; thus, the measurement of time is only possible as the human mind stores sense perceptions in memory (Pelikan 1986). Thus, the past and future exist only in our experience of the present: the past no longer exists on its own because we interpret it through our present experience; the future is only anticipation; and the present is a transition from the past to the future. Ricoeur summarizes this argument: 'Time has no being since the future is not yet, the past is no longer, and the present does not remain' (1984: 7). Augustine calls this the threefold present of memory, expectation, and attention: (1) memory — in recounting events, we bring out the memory of things as they were ordered in the past; (2) attention — in living events, we give momentary attention to the instant as it passes from the future into the past; and (3) expectation — experience invokes expectations, predictions of what we foresee unfolding in the future. We use both present and past experiences to make sense of the present and past, and to anticipate the future. For example, colleagues may become angry in a meeting because of a comment someone just made (attention) that relates to a heated debate in last week's meeting (memory). So we may intervene in the interest of collaborating on a future project (expectation). This example suggests we interpret or make sense of the present from both past and future (anticipatory) experiences — we make connections in time and across time.

Ricoeur is hard pressed to see any possible philosophical transition between Aristotle's objective time and Augustine's subjective time, but he professes that they need to be reconciled. 'The problem of time cannot be attacked from a single side only, whether of the soul or of movement. The distension of the soul alone cannot produce the extension of time; the dynamism of movement alone cannot generate the dialectic of the threefold present' (Ricoeur 1988: 21). He suggests the use of narrative can reconcile the two conceptualizations

of objectively and subjectively experienced time and combines Augustine's threefold present with Aristotle's writings on plot to develop a threefold mimesis that allows us to understand the experience of time beyond either absolutist singular or individual solipsist experiences. Ricoeur builds upon Aristotle's notion that time may exist physically, but knowledge of it is an act of human abstraction, and Augustine's notion that abstract knowledge of time is only possible through the human act of distention to suggest human understanding of time is really a narrative act.

Ricoeur relies on Aristotle's theories of emplotment and mimetic activity to create his thesis that narratives (whether fiction, history, or research) can only be understood through a perceived temporal plot (beginning, middle, and end). Aristotle tells us that narratives have two functions. The first is emplotment: as we try to make sense of our experience, we organize actions and events around plots or themes, that is, the 'active sense of organizing the events into a system' (Ricoeur 1984: 33). The second function is mimesis: as we tell stories, we try to shape those stories and plots to mimic activity, that is, 'the active process of imitating or representing something'. From this perspective, mimetic activity dramatizes our experience (Linstead and Höpfl 2000). Ricoeur (1984: 54–71) incorporates Augustine's phenomenology of time with the theories of emplotment and mimetic activity to create a threefold mimesis: Mimesis1 (M1), Mimesis2 (M2), and Mimesis3 (M3). Table 1 summarizes this idea.

Narratives exist within a circle of mimesis (Ricoeur 1984: 71–76) where endpoints (post-understandings) lead back to or anticipate starting points,

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Table 1.
Threefold Mimesis

Mimesis1 (M1)
Narratives are embedded with an implicit 'pre-understanding' of a society's meaningful structures, symbolic systems, and temporal nature. Narratives presuppose a familiarity and understanding on the part of the reader or listener with:

1   Terms such as agent, goals, means, conflict, cooperation, success, failure, and so on
2   A symbolic system of rules, or norms, for the understanding of meaningful action, and
3   The rules of composition that govern the diachronic order of a story (Ricoeur 1984: 56).

In other words, there are basic, taken-for-granted cultural plots, themes, characters, values, and sequencing of events within narratives. For example, we easily recognize which characters represent the divide between good and evil, and the temporal acts of flash-forwarding and back-shadowing.

Mimesis2 (M2)
Narratives mediate between a 'pre-understanding' of M1 and a 'post-understanding' of M3, which is accomplished as:

1   Individual events combine into a whole story that
2   Provides an endpoint from which the story can be understood as a whole, and
3   In providing a beginning, middle and end, the whole story is understood as flowing from the past toward the future.

Mimesis3 (M3)
Narratives are the intersection of the world of the reader or listener and the world of action. They involve the re-creation of 'pre-understanding' to a 'post-understanding' of a society's meaningful structures, symbolic systems, and temporal character.

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and incorporate pre-understandings of semantic structures, symbolic resources, and temporal characteristics. This leads to a midpoint of emplotment or ordering. Time, according to Ricoeur, can only be understood and gain meaning as a narrative experience within this circle of mimesis. 'Time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full meaning when it becomes a condition of temporal existence' (Ricoeur 1984: 52). Ricoeur's thesis leaves us with a means to grasp the human experience of time — and that means is narrative knowledge.

How might a reconceptualization of time, one which crosses the subjective–objective divide, relate to research in organizations? If we conceive of life lived and interpreted in the moment, then how can we capture the reciprocal, interwoven, spontaneous, reality-constituting, sense-making activities as we carry out our fieldwork, interpretation, theorizing, and writing? We attempt to address these questions by offering two amendments to Ricoeur's work. Our amendments espouse a move from a diachronic (singular cause-and-effect understanding occurring across contexts and time) interpretation of organizational life to a more synchronic interpretation of organizational life as multiple interpretations occurring at multiple points in time and in multiple contexts — a temporality of social experience. We will go on to explore the implications of synchronic forms of narrative organizational research after discussing our amendments to Ricoeur's work.

Our Amendments to Ricoeur's Work

We chose Ricoeur as a basis for NT because of his exhaustive review of the philosophical debate on the conceptualization of time and his articulated thesis that narrative knowledge is a means of linking objective and subjective perspectives of time. We think an approach to research grounded in NT, based upon our amendments to Ricoeur's threefold mimesis, can cross the boundaries of the objective–subjective debate, open up new ways of thinking about experience and sense-making, and help us take reflexive responsibility for our research. Essentially, this means accepting that we can construct the measurement of time in seconds, days, years, and so on, that is, accepting a degree of objectivity. However, it is through our consciousness and experience of time that we live, narrate, and make sense of our lives. Readers of this article might hear the ticking of the clock as they read, but experience the passing of time in very different ways as she or he reflects, drinks tea, draws on past knowledge, writes, talks to a student, thinks of new ideas, gets the mail, and so on, all in the process of reading. Our amendments draw upon the temporality perspective of Sartre (1956, 1963) in order to reframe narrative research of organizational life as a fluid, dynamic, yet rigorous process, open to the interpretations (negotiated) of its many participants (polyphonic) and situated in the context and moment of enactment (synchronic). We believe that by adopting a negotiated, polyphonic stance and moving toward a synchronic notion of time, research participants can construct a more holistic and embedded narration of experience.

As we have seen, a central notion of narrative knowledge is meaningful time; that narratives are stories of our experiences in time, grounded in events or episodes which can be linked together in a temporal way, can be recounted because of plot, coherence over time, and memory — a diachronic approach. Our amendments incorporate notions that knowledge is a social, historical, and linguistic process in which the pure facticity of social reality is replaced by intersubjective and emerging realities and identities. In other words, we do not deny that there were past narrations or that there are things we call 'facts', but suggest that we interpret the past through the present and see those facts through acts of interpretation and social construction. For example, it is a 'fact' that my (AC) job title is Assistant Professor. What that means (who I am, what I do, how I interact, and so on) is socially constructed in my relationally responsive interactions with students, colleagues, and other people. We weave (consciously and unconsciously) narratives and make sense about what it means to be and to relate to others as an 'Assistant Professor' in responsive interaction. Such multiply constructed narratives may be contested, challenged, or accepted by participants. For example, Gabriel talks about the unmanaged organization in which 'desires and fantasies take precedence over rationality and efficiency... spontaneous uncontrolled activities happen' (2000: 125) that may be challenged by members of the managed organization. Within this realm, stories 'slip furtively in and out of sight' (Gabriel 2000: 127), may attain mythical status and, whether lies or facts, can have a powerful influence on storytellers and listeners. Stories may also incorporate poetic license (Gabriel 2000) or a poetic recreation of reality. We suggest these stories are not just about reality, but create our current experience and sense of reality in the moment of telling. Furthermore, if we accept radically reflexive NT, then social life and research itself are constituted by multiply enacted narratives and acts of interpretation — an ongoing accomplishment created and sustained by people living and researching their lives (Weick 1995). It is this issue that differentiates NT from most narrative studies of organizations which do not consider how the research narrative itself is constructed.

So how can we capture and explain the complex, emergent, and relational nature of social experience as near as possible to when it occurs? We suggest the following two amendments to Ricoeur's work may address this issue in the conduct and understanding of narrative organizational research.

First Amendment — An Emphasis on Performance:

Be it resolved that Ricoeur's position on narrative and time needs to be expanded to consider the context or space of narrative performances. We are not studying already constructed narratives, rather, narratives are performances in the moment, 'a product of imaginative construction' (Mink 1978: 145). Life is lived in the moment and much of our sense-making also occurs in the moment.

The need for this first amendment reflects our view that Ricoeur does not sufficiently emphasize a diegetic aspect of narratives, but only a mimetic aspect in his circle of mimesis. Thus, the amendment expands Ricoeur's

hermeneutic stance toward one that includes a poststructuralist or postmodern stance. Gubrium and Holstein state that 'as texts of experience, stories are not complete prior to their telling but are assembled to meet situated interpretive demands' (1998: 165). This implies that even though narrative knowledge is about meaningful time, the performance of narratives takes place in practical circumstances (contexts and spaces) and in particular moments (time) in which meanings may vary. Thus, the diegetic process of narrating is crucial to meaning-making: what I say, how I say it, what the listener hears, how she or he feels, and how she or he reacts or responds. We extend this argument to suggest that space and time are not necessarily separate dimensions because the unique circumstances of each moment, the context of performance and interpretation, and the specific interrelationships and connections that occur in the moment, all interweave to create a unique discursive time-space. In narrating our experiences, we engage in relationally responsive activity as we attempt to make our narratives meaningful to listeners in a particular context and help them see connections and participate (Cunliffe 2002). In each telling, stories may change as we respond to each other. Thus, we suggest that stories are not just chronologies (a sequence of events) but situated, responsive performances.

We suggest that narratives therefore generate unique discursive spaces which may unfold over time and interlink with other narratives in the moment to create shared discursive spaces in which meaning-making occurs. Shared discursive spaces emerge because we live in communities of practice (Van Maanen 1996) and draw on other stories (collective or individual) as comparisons and embellishments as we situate our narrative in a broader discursive space and orient the listener by linking our story to theirs. NT situates narratives as ongoing linguistic formulations, composed in the moment, and responsive to the circumstances of a particular time and context. They are not complete prior to telling, they do not have a pre-established internal coherence, but are ways of connecting and creating meaning in the moment of telling. Thus, meaning-making is a negotiated synchronic process because narrative performance and understanding are situated in many moments of time and context.

Does NT relate purely to oral performance or are written narratives also temporally and context sensitive? Part of organizational life is written, as is much of the research process. Organizational members and researchers create and receive written narratives: researchers study and analyze memos, minutes of meetings, personal accounts of critical incidents, our own research notes, and so on. Reading these narrations can also be constituted as an act of interpretation in the moment of reading. We have probably all experienced new insights as we reread our research notes. You may create your own interpretation when reading this article, may agree or disagree, may think we have used some poetic license — in other words, written narrations are also temporally and contextually sensitive.

Second Amendment — An Emphasis on Multiplicity:

Be it resolved that perpetual referring within the threefold mimesis occurs across past, present, and future time and contexts, resulting in multiple

threads of earlier narratives (M1) weaving together into multiple present
emplotments (M2), and continually recreating multiple futures (M3).

The need for this second amendment reflects our view that Ricoeur does not sufficiently discuss the dynamics of perpetual referring through time within the narrative process — a dynamic that creates a polyphonic, negotiated narrative. Here, we incorporate the reflective consciousness of temporality from Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* (1956, 1963). Sartre (1956: 130) distinguishes between a static linear temporality and a temporal multiplicity. In the former, time is irreversible and narrators narrate order in terms of chronology, of before and after. Temporal multiplicity incorporates a dynamic temporality in which time does not separate into discrete units located before or after other events, but is experienced as an infinite dispersion of multiple afters (pasts) and befores (futures). Building upon Bergson's theory (1938) of duration (*durée*), Sartre (1956: 135) suggests that the past and future cling to the present and even penetrate it. This interpenetrating of present, past, and future is experienced through a unity of perpetual referring — a process of reflection-reflecting. As we reflect on past events, our reflection is influenced by both our currently experienced moments in time and the future moments we may be anticipating.

Meaning-making is therefore not necessarily a linear or a cyclical process, but from an NT perspective is a negotiated polyphonic process: meaning occurs in the interplay between people's spontaneously responsive relations (Bakhtin 1986) to each other and the otherness of their surroundings. Narrative researchers often explain experience by focusing on narratives told in the past, failing to recognize the impact of momentary and future experience: the threefold mimesis. An example of this can be seen below in a research conversation between A and P, a project manager. The transcript of the conversation shows how both create meaning as each draws on their own experience (past narratives) in the process of emplotment:

P: 'We tend to do a lot of that around here where we like the idea of having an expedient answer and fail to understand the reason — which then doesn't get communicated back to the rest of the organization.'
A: 'Is that because there are no clear structures for dealing with this?'
P: 'Yeeess. I was talking to the I.T. Manager this morning ... And I said, "A month ago we were talking about how long it would take us to get the detailed layouts for this group, and a month ago I would have said two weeks. And yesterday in our meeting you said, 'I told you it would be four weeks' and I said 'Yeah'." Because what I've realized is the ratio of managers to people is so high for this group ... who have to agree to every scheme and it takes time...'
A: 'So is it the sheer number of people — and trying to coordinate all their inputs...?'
P: 'Yes, and some of it is because there isn't any kind of authority scheme that would help reduce those numbers. The other thing I came across recently was...'
      [Later I ask:]
A: 'So how do you feel about this unpredictability and uncertainty?'

This narrative shows the relationally responsive nature of the research conversation and the influence of temporality: P and A draw on past narrations, organizational and academic, (M1) to weave a narrative in the

moment (M2) and anticipate future narratives about how we might act or write up the research (M3). Your reading, in a different time and space (M2), may draw on other narratives (M1) to make sense, agree, disconfirm, or create new narrations (M3). This example illustrates the process of emplotment and perpetual referring as each reading of the narrative is unique to the circumstances and moment of performance — to the nuances of telling and listening as each reader's reflections, past narrations, pre-understandings, and post-understandings weave together. The circle of mimesis occurs in the moment of narration (as in the excerpt above and each reading of it) as we combine objective and subjective time (past, present, and future), stories (memories, attention, and expectations), and meaning to shape actions and identities in conscious and unselfconscious ways.

Implications for Narrative Research

Our position is that as narrative organizational researchers telling stories of others, we cannot avoid enacting and placing ourselves within those stories. Our interviews, case studies, and research conversations are all negotiated accounts embedded in subjectively experienced moments of time and context. This idea forms the basis of NT (see Table 2), which assumes that narrative performance (the relationally responsive activity of narrating), as well as a researcher's reading, listening, and interpretation, all influence the process of constructing organizational knowledge.

Where does this leave us in terms of researching organizational life? If we accept the two amendments as proposed, at least three implications emerge:

Table 2. Narrative Temporality	Narrative Temporality (NT)	
	Time	Time is subjective, experienced and enacted in different ways by different people.
	Narrative	Narratives are enacted over discursive space and time. Such discursive spaces overlap, contest, and influence each other to create other unique discursive spaces. Their significance occurs in the moment and varies across time and space. Narratives are constantly moving: being constructed and constructing storytellers and listeners. Stories interweave and therefore do not have definable beginnings, middles, and ends. Slippage occurs as different narrators construe meanings in different ways at different times. Events and talk are interwoven.
	Plot	Multiple plots converge, combine, and separate at different times and places. Our accounts are the product of memory and imagination.
	Researcher and Research	As researchers we cannot fully explain a past event because our narration of that event is another act of interpretation in a different time and space. Research itself is a negotiated narrative — a polyphonic and synchronic process constructed by many acts of interpretation across time and space.

(1) narrative organizational research becomes a negotiated, synchronic, and polyphonic process; (2) NT reframes the role of the narrative researcher as co-constructing narratives with research participants; and (3) we need to explore research methods that embrace the threefold mimesis. Overall, this means conducting and writing narrative organizational research with a reflexive and ethical responsibility for our acts.

First Implication: Narrative Research as a Negotiated, Synchronic, and Polyphonic Process

As we stated previously, many narrative studies of organizations assume that narratives have singularity, temporal structure, and chronicle continuity, and they focus on the relationship between narrative properties and the organization (for example, managerial roles, power bases, and organizational systems) as though they exist as entities separate from those who study or live them. Studying narratives from a purely mimetic perspective does not necessarily tell us anything about organizational life because we can never get back to the 'original' as we retell or interpret a story out of time and context. NT helps us understand narrative research in a different way (a radically reflexive way (Pollner 1991)), where we accept that both organizational members and researchers are narrators and constructors of meaning in the moment. The process of research is like 'Tamara' (Boje 1995), that is, a play in which a number of stories are told by storytellers (in the research excerpt above, these include A, P, the IT Manager, meeting participants, and so on) moving from one scene (organization, university, books, and so on) to the next while wandering and fragmenting audiences (researchers, colleagues, reviewers, and readers) follow them. Depending upon your passage points from stage to stage (or discursive space to space), you weave together very different narrations. Audience members (A, P, the IT Manager, reviewers, and readers) do not hear a whole narrative because multiple stories are enacted simultaneously. Thus, organizations and organizational research, like Tamara, thrive on perpetual referring as narrations are collectively enacted and reenacted through past, present, and future to make themselves and their environments. Meaning unfolds in a narrative performance, in time and context, as storytellers and listeners discuss their experiences, interweave their own narratives: a polyphony of competing narrative voices and stories told by many voices within different historical, cultural, and relational contexts. Such narratives may maintain, develop, or disrupt our sense of social order. For example, in their study of a US high-tech engineering laboratory, Luhman and Boje (2001: 162) found that non-managers described three narratives in the reproduction and renewal of organizing over time:

'*Cyclical*, meaning that the sequence of organizing events always restores previous social order no matter how many attempts to change. *Linear*, meaning that there may be bumps and U-turns, but generally there is progress in the order of organizing events. *Fragmented*, meaning confusion in the order of organizing events with no sense of stability or progress.'

The three narratives demonstrated the power of narration to maintain itself through changes in actors, shifting loyalties, personality conflicts, or storytelling effectiveness — in other words, the organization's 'narrative cohesiveness'.

So what is the purpose of NT research? Tyler (1986: 125), speaking about postmodern ethnography, perhaps best sums up the purpose as producing a 'cooperatively evolved text consisting of fragments of discourse intended to evoke in the minds of both reader and writer an emergent fantasy of a possible world of commonsense reality'. As a result, we can offer research narratives about how participants narrate and construct possible emerging worlds. The example below illustrates the form NT research might take. It begins with an excerpt from a research conversation with a manager and continues with the researcher's narrative:

Steve: 'My job has turned to high risk since deregulation — even though it is still highly regulated. Before it was real easy, now I feel like Paul Revere's horse — it was the horse that ran from Charlestown to Lexington — Paul yelled — nobody remembers the horse! That's the way I feel!'

'This was said with some humor and we both laughed, but the image of the horse and a sense of him doing all the work and getting little or no recognition resonated with me (haven't we all felt like that?). In exploring responsive speech acts, "resonance" allows the listener to sense and maybe feel and connect with what those implications may mean. Is the speaker trying to engage the listener's feelings in some way? Steve's use of metaphor and contradiction not only created a sense of his living, embodied relationships, but had a perlocutionary effect — in other words, I felt incredulous, I sympathized — whether this was his intent or not. His words also generated a much more powerful and lasting response from me than if he had said "the Finance Department are naive in thinking things are going to revert back to the old way of doing business" or "I get little recognition". In this way, poetic talk can make a crucial difference to the way we respond, act and make sense of our experience because it engages attention, invites response, leaves much open to the imagination, and gives color to a situation — the listener (reader) is provoked. Other managers described their organizations in similar poetic ways using different root or underlying metaphors.' (Cunliffe 2002: 138)

As the above illustrates, NT research interweaves at least three narratives: one exploring the possible impact of narrative practices on constructing meaning and experience in both organizational and research contexts; a second narrative assessing possibilities for understanding how organizational members may create and participate in their organization's language communities; and a third academic narrative (interwoven with other academic narratives) used as a means of making sense within academic language communities.

Second Implication: NT and the Role of the Researcher

Narrative researcher roles include omniscient storyteller, an objective storyteller, as a minor character in the story, or as the main character in the story (Hatch 1996). In many narrative studies of organizations, the researcher perceives himself or herself as interpreter and 'objective' storyteller of

organizational stories. Research accounts are written in the third person, to lend the story authority and legitimacy. As NT narrative researchers we are not objective observers, recorders, and interpreters of reality, but active participants in the creation of research narratives as we interweave our own community and personal narratives with those of other research participants. We suggest that NT researchers therefore have an obligation to be up front about themselves as positioned subjects and the narratives they are working from. This means accepting that our research voice is one narration among many, each narration having multiple readings. An NT researcher therefore embraces moral interdependence, a moral requirement to make available communicative opportunities (or socio-ontological resources) to all research participants (Shotter 1993). Ironically, this means that instead of hiding behind the objective voice, we take responsibility as one of the narrators and are up front about our 'poetic license'.

NT researchers surface the interpretive relationship between research participants, readers, and themselves, both in their research method and research account. Each of us has explored our role from this perspective in slightly different ways. For example, John Luhman and David Boje use the minor character perspective, incorporating a number of storytelling voices in their story of encounters between three storytelling organizations (a Choral Company, a group of researchers, the journal editor, and reviewers), thus reframing research as a polyphonic story (Boje et al. 1999). The voices of those 'under study' were not the only ones heard, but also the voices of the authors, editor, and reviewers in an attempt to explore the concept of 'hegemony' in research process. They went a step further by exploring the irony that a discussion of hegemony is itself a hegemonic move in the storytelling process of writing research (see the excerpt below).

Thus, shared meaning and narrative communities can be created and maintained through enacted narratives: rhetorical strategies, responsive dialogue, and oral and written speech genres. Research participants create meaning in different ways depending on our narrative communities: organizational members have their own practical ways of narrating or 'theorizing' their lives that are equally as valid as academic theorizing. The NT researcher role is not analyzing the narratives of others, but reflecting with participants on what those practical ways of theorizing and their implications might be. As one manager in a research conversation commented:

'What's curious here is the nature of our conversation. It's not fact-laden; it's somewhat theoretical — yet largely experiential. I'm saying "this is what I do...", you are saying "this is the way I've encountered...", which encourages me to say "Well, how do I encounter...?" It's tilted towards reflection, it encourages you to keep reflecting.

'You know it's interesting because most researchers ... I had a conversation with ... in which she did in fact have a structured guide, questions she wanted answers to — which I think is more a typical research conversation — the peculiarity of your topic ... because it's research preloaded to be reflective ... had the conversation early on taken the turn of saying "well how do you think managers..." ... it could have become "well, I believe this, I believe this..." and you with your notepad out saying "I'd better

record this down, these are statements of what he believes are fact" ... You are trying to get more reflection, right? "Tell me more about this... you mentioned...". So it's a different conversation, right?'

The excerpts and examples in this article illustrate ways in which NT organizational researchers can recognize the voices of all research participants (organizational members, researcher, other organizational analysts, readers, and so on) as we engage in creating narratives ('collecting data') and writing our research accounts. NT researchers adopt a radically reflexive approach (Pollner 1991), recognizing the impact of their own practices and suppositions as researcher-participants on the process of constructing knowledge. Organizational researchers embracing NT take reflexive responsibility by questioning their intellectual suppositions, recognizing research as a symmetrical and reflexive narrative involving many voices, exploring the constitutive nature of research conversations and ways of theorizing, and practicing reflexive writing strategies. She or he should reflexively interrogate her or his identity and relational practices to attempt more critical and expressive accounts of organizational life. We must recognize that our sense-making practices are embedded within our own collective narratives as researchers and organizational members. In other words, NT researchers take responsibility for the knowledge they construct by recognizing that researchers are positioned subjects; we are participants in our own organizational communities, with our own narratives and ways of talking, and engaged in our own narrative performances. Our research narratives are as much about our lives as the lives of others.

Third Implication: Developing Research Methods Consistent with NT

How might NT research methods differ from other narrative research methods? Most narrative research methods assume that language helps us decipher already made significations and relatively fixed meanings, so we can study the general language systems, structures, stories, and so on to see how our subjects construct their world. We can then theorize about the discursive communities of organizations. NT suggests meaning takes place in time, in telling and listening to narratives, therefore there is not one self-contained narrative to analyze, so we need to focus on the process of narrating — on how participants together create a shared sense of the situation in responsive, interactive moments in the research conversation. Practically, this means exploring the often taken-for-granted relationships between speakers, listeners, utterances, and experience, and offering ideas about how we may create meaning in the narrative communities in which we live. Research participants study how organizational practices and identities may be created and maintained through rhetorical strategies, stories, and responsive narrations.

One such research method or practice is social poetics, which draws attention to narrative performance: the embodied nature of our intra-linguistic practices and their impact on our sense-making and reality-constituting activities. Specifically, research participants focus on how linguistic resources

such as metaphors, stories, irony, poetic imagining, gestural statements, and resonant ways of speaking help construct shared narratives and experience. Social poetics offers a way of linking individual speech acts to organizational discourse as a means of studying how people produce and are products of organizational narratives and the 'language collective' (Bakhtin 1986: 68) that surrounds them. In the research conversation, participants question their suppositions and examine how language helps us connect, make sense, act in, create, and negotiate our way through our organizational lives (for further explanation, see Cunliffe 2002).

Boje et al. (1999: 341) reflect on the narrative interactions and multiple narrations in the research and publication process by using a method described as 'triple reflectivity'. This method helps unfold the micro-level hegemonic moves of three storytelling organizations. The published research paper presented nine codes within the text, pointing out three levels of reflectivity and three organizations (A, B, and C) (Boje et al. 1999: Appendix, 359). The nine codes are:

1.A Highlighting where the Choral Company engages in story creation.
2.A Highlighting where the Choral Company engages in an ethical movement (an imposition of values) in the refinement of their story.
3.A Highlighting where the Choral Company engages in a micro-level hegemonic or power move.
1.B Highlighting where the researchers, ourselves included, engage in story creation.
2.B Highlighting where the researchers, ourselves included, engage in an ethical movement (an imposition of values) in the refinement of their story.
3.B Highlighting where the researchers, ourselves included, engage in a micro-level hegemonic or power move.
1.C Highlighting where *JMI* [the journal]'s editor and reviewers engage in story creation.
2.C Highlighting where the *JMI*'s editor and reviewers engage in an ethical movement (an imposition of values) in the refinement of their story.
3.C Highlighting where the *JMI*'s editor and reviewers engage in a micro-level hegemonic or power move.

Triple reflectivity offers a way of highlighting the negotiated, synchronic, and polyphonic nature of the research process by drawing attention to the way in which organizational and research narratives might be constructed.

Conclusions

In summary, NT attempts to draw attention to the need for organizational members and researchers to recognize the validity of all stories, the coordinated interplay of narrative performance, and the impact our narratives have in creating organizational lives and identities. NT research differs from other forms of narrative research because it focuses on how participants

continually construct a sense of their experience and identities, in moments of time and space (diegetic form), rather than on what plots, characters, and events might tell us about organizational processes (mimetic form). Essentially, we suggest that NT research explores how we come to construct and understand our experience and selves (as managers, researchers, and ordinary people) in time (in the flow of our moment-to-moment activity) and in relation to others. NT means recognizing that our research incorporates the circle of mimesis, drawing on past, present, and future narrations to create continually experience and identities. We construct and are constructed by cultural, social, institutional, and personal narratives (Clair 1997). NT research is therefore not about what exists but what might be, not an expert interpretation but a polyphony of voices, not about the object of study but the process of how we jointly make sense of experience in specific contexts and moments. The NT researcher studies how all participants' ways of making sense combine in conversations, and incorporate each voice in written accounts.

An important dilemma emerges from an acceptance of NT. If meaning is created in the moment of speaking, then by interpreting and explaining after the event, we are creating different meanings and moving further away from any 'original' experience. Our interpretations take place in a different time and context, each with different understandings. If we accept that participants in organizational life engage continually in narrative performance and story (re)construction, that we are not all-knowing researcher-narrators, that we cannot explain precisely 'original' events, nor tell others how to construct their worlds — then what can we do? Can we achieve 'closure' in our research of organizational life? From our position, the answer is that we cannot. But this should not paralyze organizational researchers nor delegitimize their efforts. We can participate, with organizational members, in making sense of experience by engaging in reflective conversations in which we jointly re-narrate and make sense of experience by drawing on past narrations (M1), present emplotments (M2), and by considering future possibilities for academic and organizational narratives (M3). This process involves imagination and poetic license as novel connections may emerge in our narrative performances. The outcomes are narratives about how we live our lives, make meaning, relate, and orient ourselves to our surroundings, and in doing so, create 'realities' and 'identities': in the process, we might revise, re-narrate, invent new, or continue with old narratives.

By amending Ricoeur's work and interweaving objective (that is, shared) and subjective notions of time through NT, we can extend organizational research beyond static forms to include reflexive explorations of the emerging experience of all participants. In other words, NT re-narrates research as a negotiated narrative about how people make meaning in their organizational or academic lives, in which we recognize the voices and interpretations of all participants in different moments of time and context. We are not claiming that our NT perspective should be privileged above all others, for to do so would defeat the reflexive, polyphonic values we espouse. We do suggest NT offers the potential for developing new approaches to narrative research and

can enrich our understanding of organizational life by offering different perspectives and different modes of interpretation. In particular, it can lead to more participative and reflexive forms of research practice that promote a degree of 'passionate humility' (Yanow 1997), a recognition that the researcher's voice is just one of many. In doing so, we recognize that people create their own knowledge and understandings of the way they live their organizational lives, and that those understandings should be part of the broader academic knowledge base.

Note

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