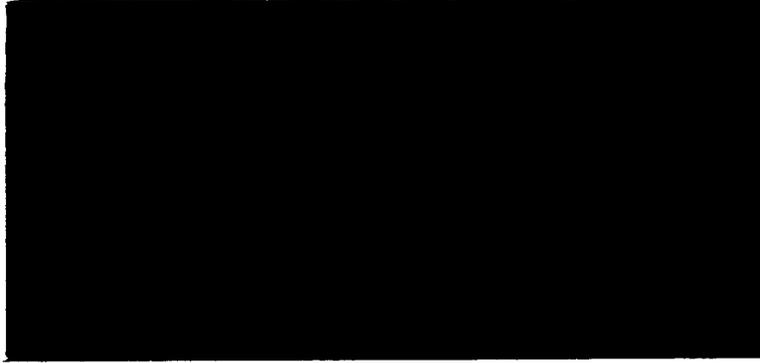# TRANSFORMATIONS

comparative study of social transformations

CSST
WORKING PAPERS
The University of Michigan
Ann Arbor

"Reclaiming the Epistemological 'Other':
Narrative and the
Social Constitution of Identity"

Margaret R. Somers
and Gloria D. Gibson

CSST Working   CRSO Working
Paper #94   Paper #499
                June 1993

RECLAIMING THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL "OTHER": NARRATIVE AND THE SOCIAL CONSTITUTION OF IDENTITY*

by

Margaret R. Somers
and
Gloria D. Gibson

Department of Sociology
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI 48109
(313) 764-6324
Bitnet: userGD52@umichum or Internet: MargaretPeggySomers@um.cc.umich.edu

RECLAIMING THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL "OTHER":
NARRATIVE AND THE SOCIAL CONSTITUTION OF IDENTITY

"A Word on Categories"

As I write, my editor at Harvard University Press is waging something of a struggle with the people at the Library of Congress about how this book is to be categorized for cataloging purposes. The librarians think "Afro-Americans--Civil Rights" and "Law Teachers" would be nice. I told my editor to hold out for "Autobiography," "Fiction," "Gender Studies," and "Medieval Medicine." This battle seems appropriate enough since the book is not exclusively about race or law but also about boundary. While being black has been the powerful social attribution in my life, it is only one of a number of *governing narratives* or *presiding fictions* by which I am constantly reconfiguring myself in the world. Gender is another, along with ecology, pacifism, my peculiar brand of colloquial English, and Roxbury, Massachusetts. The complexity of role *identification*, the politics of sexuality, the inflections of professionalized discourse--all describe and impose boundary in my life, even as they confound one another in unfolding spirals of confrontation, deflection, and dream...

The Alchemy of Race and Rights: the Diary of a Law Professor (Williams
1991, pp. 256-57)
(italics ours).

INTRODUCTION

Every knowledge discipline needs an *"epistemological other"* to consolidate a

cohesive self-identity and collective project.[1]   For the social sciences, the concept of

narrative--with its long association with the humanities and the historical profession-

-holds pride of place in filling that role. Variously formulated in binary terms as

"idiographic" versus "nomothetic," "particularistic" versus "generalizable," or

"description" versus "theory," the contrast between the "mere narrative" approach of

the historians and the more rigorous methodologies of the social sciences has

effectively cordoned off narrative studies from the legitimate "identity-terrain" of

social science epistemology.[2]   But a small revolution with potentially large

consequences is occurring in our contemporary knowledge culture.[3]   Over the last few

decades many historians have lost, abandoned, and even scorned narrative

explanation.[4]   At the same time, moreover, a protean *reframing* of the narrative

concept is seeping and/or being appropriated into the central epistemological

frameworks of a spectrum of other disciplines--including medicine, social psychology,

anthropology, gender studies, law, biology, and physics.

The expressions of this narrative reframing are broad and diverse. One aspect of many of the new works in narrative studies, however, is especially relevant to our understanding of how identities are constituted, namely the shift from a focus on *representational* to *ontological* narrativity. Philosophers of history, for example, have previously argued that narrative modes of representing knowledge (telling historical stories) were representational *forms* imposed by historians on the chaos of lived experience (Mink 1966; White 1984). More recently, however, scholars (political philosophers, psychologists, legal theorists, feminist theorists, social workers, organizational theorists, anthropologists, and medical sociologists) are postulating something much more substantive about narrative: namely, that social life is itself *storied* and that narrative is an *ontological condition of social life*. Their research is showing us that stories guide action; that people construct identities (however multiple and changing) by locating themselves or being located within a repertoire of emplotted stories; that "experience" is constituted through narratives; that people make sense of what has happened and is happening to them by attempting to assemble or in some way to integrate these happenings within one or more narratives; and that people are guided to act in certain ways, and not others, on the basis of the projections, expectations, and memories derived from a multiplicity but ultimately limited repertoire of available social, public, and cultural narratives.[5]

But there is a paradox. On the one hand, sociologists have by and large kept their distance from these studies of ontological narrativity.[6] Yet on the other hand, sociology has shown an immense interest in theorizing about the very themes these new approaches to narrative are addressing--the study of meaning, social action, social agency, and most recently, collective identity. Indeed the last two decades have been notable for the number of heroic efforts by sociologists to recast social analysis along the central axes of the interaction between *agency* and *structure*--that is, to develop a social theory that allows for human action which is nonetheless bounded and constrained by structural restraints (e.g. Abrams 1982; Alexander 1982, 1988a,

1989; Bourdieu 1977, 1990; Coleman 1990; Giddens 1977, 1985; Habermas 1979, 1984; Hawthorne 1976; Sewell 1986; Smith 1987, 1990a, 1990b; White 1992b)[7].

There are perhaps two reasons for this paradoxical distancing from the new narrative studies on the part of sociologists. The first is that social scientists overwhelmingly limit their definition of the term narrative to that of a representational form/method of presenting social and historical knowledge. And it is in this very methodological terrain, where the debate over what counts as valid explanation has raged, that social scientists have forged their unique identity and distinction from the humanities. As long as this representational definition prevails, then, social scientists--in order to *be* social scientists--must continue to view narrative as the epistemological other and in symbolic contrast to causal explanation. Indeed to the extent sociologists have engaged with narrative studies, the dialogue often recreates the familiar Manichean dichotomy between social science explanation and the narrative other. Whether in favor or disparagement, the encounters between sociology and narrative analysis seem inevitably to result in counterposing narrative to that of causality. Seidman (1991), for example, recently criticized the "foundational obsessionalism" of mainstream sociological theory while demonstrating his support for an understanding of social theory as "narrative with a moral intent." Seidman is a sociologist who strongly endorses the turn to narrative. Nonetheless, in his association of narrative with "story-telling particularism," he straps it into an unnecessary opposition to, and ultimately distancing from, the social sciences.[8]

The second reason for the neglect of the recently reframed narrativism follows directly from the self-identity project of the social sciences. From their inception, the social sciences have been concerned with what one political scientist calls the "primacy of epistemology" (Connolly 1991b), or the eclipsing of *discovery* and *ontology* by the context of *justification* (Somers 1989, forthcoming b).[9] The latter is comprised of the standards we use to know about the world, the grounds we rely upon

to legitimate these foundations of knowledge, the validity of competing methodologies, and the criteria for viable explanations. Discovery and ontology, on the other hand, refer to problem-formation and social being respectively. Both are seen as better left to speculative philosophers or psychologists. The consequences of this division of labor for a sociology of action are significant: 1) Issues of social being, identity, and ontology are excluded from the legitimate mainstream of sociological investigation; and 2) the social sciences focus their research on action and agency by studying primarily observable social behavior--measured variously by social interests, rational preferences, or social norms and values--rather than by exploring expressions of social being and identity. Therefore, precisely to the extent that sociologists are aware that the recent focus of narrative studies is towards issues of identity and ontology, these same studies are defined as beyond and outside the boundaries of appropriate social science concern.[10]

We argue in this chapter that the association of identity and ontology with philosophy or theoretical psychology on the one side, and action with interests, norms, or behavior on the other, is a limited model and deprives sociologists of the deeper analysis that is possible to achieve by linking the concepts of action and identity. To get these benefits, however, we must reject the decoupling of action from ontology, and instead accept that some notion of social being and social identity is, willy-nilly, incorporated into each and every knowledge-statement about action, agency, and behavior. Just as sociologists are not likely to make sense of action without focusing attention on structure and order, it is unlikely we can interpret social action if we fail to also emphasize ontology, social being, and identity.[11] We thus enlarge our analytic focus when we study social action through a lens that also allows a focus on social ontology and the social constitution of identity.[12]

Once we have acknowledged the potential significance of identity, however, we must reject the temptation to conflate identities with what can often slide into fixed "essentialist" (pre-political) singular categories, such as those of race, sex, or gender--

a tendency which has characterized a number of recent feminist theories in their efforts to restore the previously marginalized female "other."[13] Anthropological studies of different cultures have often been used to avoid this danger (Carrithers et. al, Mauss 1985; Dumont 1982). But, as Williams (1991, p. 256) illustrates in the quotation with which we begin this chapter, we do not have to resort to cultural "others" to recognize the false certainties imposed by categorical approaches to identity. We can avoid this danger only if we incorporate into the core conception of identity the dimensions of *time, space,* and *relationality*. And it is this enlargement that drives us to combine studies of action and identity with what we will be calling *conceptual narrativity*.

Once we have linked identity and action research to narrative analysis, however, we need to remember to focus our attention on the new *ontological* dimension of narrative studies rather than be satisfied with the traditional rendering of narrative as limited to a method or form of representation. The reason why is straightforward. While sociologists worry endlessly over the (unresolvable?) questions of what counts as valid knowledge (should it be pure "science" or "narrative with a moral intent?"), we are meanwhile being distracted from the exciting new developments in which researchers outside of sociology are coming to grips with a new, historically and empirically based, narrativist understanding of social action and social agency--one that is temporal, relational, and cultural, as well as institutional, material, and macro-structural. Engaging with this aspect of narrative studies clearly should be on the agenda for sociological studies of action and agency. After all, if research results are correct, then everything we know from making families, to coping with illness, to carrying out strikes and revolutions are at least in part a result of numerous cross-cutting story-lines in which social actors locate themselves (Somers 1986, 1992).

An energetic engagement with this new ontological narrativity, then, provides an opportunity to connect the long-term interest in a sociology of action with studies

of identity-formation. The hope is that bringing together narrative and identity can bring a new perspective to some of the seemingly intractable problems contained in social theories of action. For that reason we begin (Part I) by exploring the issues and the recursive fault-lines surrounding the sociology of action; Part II addresses the new sociology and politics of identity as an important development in the study of agency and structure; and Part III discusses in more detail the reframed concept of narrative. In Part IV we introduce the concepts of *narrative identity* and *relational setting* as conceptual links between the reframed approach to narrative and some of the enduring conundrums in the sociology of action. We end with Part V which considers the research implications of a conceptual narrativity.

I: THE PROBLEM OF ACTION IN SOCIAL THEORY

The problems in the sociology of action are rooted in the development, course, and consequences of the original eighteenth-century social science project--a project which fused together a revolutionary epistemology with a nineteenth-century rendering of historical change to create the great metanarrative of classical modernization. Let us start with the epistemology.[14]

Like the naturalistic fable that inaugurated its birth, the logic of modern social science has elements of the incoherent. Both were built of utopian fictions about society's emancipation from history. In the 1750s William Townsend, the late eighteenth- century English statesman, wrote a social parable about the isle of Juan Fernandez. The island (it had been made famous in England by the mythical Robinson Crusoe) was populated only by goats and dogs (men and women). According to reigning Hobbesian assumptions, these allegorical people should have had brutish, nasty, and very short lives in the absence of institutional authority. Townsend, however, endowed the island with a perfect harmony through a natural balance of population and food. He did not explain this by what we might today identify as an Orwellian allegory in which order is maintained through

bureaucratization or political tyranny. Rather the fable's utopianism was precisely in its inverse postulate: No state or artificial law was necessary to maintain the equilibrium. This mini-society flourished precisely because it was left to its natural laws--freed from what he viewed as the chains of state politics, kinship, religion, and "traditional" cultural institutions. Townsend built his case by borrowing a revolutionary new metaphysics--the laws of nature--from a revolutionary new epistemology--that of natural science. He combined these into a new science of society to conceptually liberate the social world from political or social authority and the claim's of its most articulate apologists, Hobbesian and Lockean political theory. Classical social science was born of this revolutionary epistemology constructed upon a myth and a metaphor about a unified social system whose parts expressed an inner working autonomous logic. Social thinkers of the late eighteenth century appropriated Townsend's anti-institutional naturalism--the optimistic belief that politics, philosophy, and symbolic meaning had been surpassed by the laws of nature and society--as the core metaphor of a new science of society. Prevailing Hobbesian assumptions thus yielded to a social utopianism and radical naturalism: for Hobbes, society needed a state because human were like beasts; for Townsend, it seems that natural law sufficed because humans were beasts. Liberated from the burdensome traditions of the past--elegant in its parsimonious simplicity--the revolutionary *science of society* had arrived.[15]

Complexity, however, made trouble in Eden. A great sociological conundrum was to sprout from this naturalistic fantasia: How to make coherent the meaning of human agency? The detachment of social science from the sphere of moral and political philosophy in favor of the scientific study of society and culture starkly posed the critical problem of whether this systemic notion of society be reconciled with an intelligible--that is to say, meaningful--understanding of human action? Could a naturalistic law-like representation of society be reconciled with an ontology which still accommodated moral agency rather than mere behaviorism, individualism

as well as social holism? Simply put, could there any longer be a place for the beliefs

and actions of social actors other than as mere reflections of the deterministic

societal laws at the heart of the new paradigm? If society is made up of humans, and

humans have free will to act, how is the capacity for *agency* accounted for in a

naturalistic ontology? Alexander (1982, p. 98) effectively articulates the problem:

How [can] sociological theories which do accept the *sui generis* collective character

of social arrangements... retain a conception of individual freedom and voluntarism?

From its inception, then, the upstart new science of society has been

aggravated with a great thorn of its own making. Devised to solve the problem of

how there could be any social order in a society comprised of autonomous individuals

(the Hobbesian and rational choice dilemma), the systemic solution created a yet

more intractable problem, one best parsed by the circularity of Marx's (1978[1852])

famous statement that "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as

they please..." To date, the dilemma of how to reconcile the naturalistic logic of

social science with human agency--that elusive escape artist which as Abrams (1980,

p. 7) has wryly suggested "is not a new discovery, although from Hobbes onward,

people have repeatedly unveiled it as solemnly as though it were"--continues to

provide grist for efforts at theoretical renewal in social theory. Arguably, the various

solutions, as much as the original problem, have since left the social sciences

fundamentally divided over the relative import of action and structure.

In this discussion of the conundrum of action we join with and benefit

immensely from the critical energies of many other approaches to social action (e.g.

Abrams 1982; Alexander 1982, 1988a, 1989; Bourdieu 1977, 1990; Coleman 1990;

Giddens 1977, 1985; Habermas 1979, 1984; Hawthorne 1976; Sewell 1986; Smith

1987, 1990a, 1990b; White 1992b). Our approach, however, is premised on the

assumption that we need to explore it as an *historical* problem and deploy for the

task an *historical epistemology* (Somers 1990, forthcoming b). The concept of an

historical epistemology is purposefully oxymoronic; it is intended to contradict the

assumed foundationalism of epistemology and standards of knowledge. The term

defines a way of carrying out social research based on the principle that all of our

knowledge, our logics, our presuppositions, indeed our very reasoning practices, are

indelibly, (even if obscurely) marked with the signature of time. They are "history-

laden."[16] The challenge of an historical epistemology is neither to discover nor to

invent the past. Rather it is to appropriate and interpret knowledge histories

through a reconstruction of their making, resonance, and contestedness over time.[17]

The goal of an historical epistemology is thus to explore the process by which

those problems which have such a formative place in theory construction get

identified as such--in time and over time. This means examining both the historical

construction of presuppositional social science concepts as well as the internal logic of

their categories and assumptions as they unfolded historically. The goal is not

primarily to understand "why" in sense of locating a sociological environment; it is

more to understand *how* competing ontologies of identity, political life, society, and so

on, gain currency and shape the empirical problems we encounter as sociologists.

Much of what we in sociology treat as abstract or presuppositional categories--subject

and object, agent and structure for example--carry within them "frozen" historical

arguments which have been abstracted into our familiar general categories. To

"unfreeze" requires an "undoing" and that requires history. Taking a look at the

historicity of apparently presuppositional categories of social thought also involves

asking how the historical construction and transformations of a concept shaped and

continues to shape its logical dimensions and its social meanings. Hacking (1990b,

p. 359; 1984, p. 110) calls this level of conceptual analysis looking at "words in their

sites." It is another approach to historicizing by locating conceptual problematics not

only in time, but in conceptual space. Sites include "sentences, uttered or

transcribed, always in a larger site of neighborhood, institution, authority, language"

without which ideas would be just words, not concepts. Looking at the rise and fall

of moral and social concepts as words in their sites, and in time, reveals their existence as historical--and thus contingent.

Thinking about the problems in a sociology of action through an historical epistemology leads to a different strategy for thinking about the ontological stalemate in the sociology of action--namely, that a theoretical resolution cannot proceed independently of an historical exploration. The metatheoretical attempt to resolve the conundrum of action flounders on the unexplored historicity of its central categories. *We need to look at the encoding of category by history.* The theoretical task is thus at once an historical one: we cannot overcome the impasses of our theories without a new look at the histories they encode. But we cannot reread history without a new conceptual framework--at least tentative. Since each task requires the other, both must proceed at once.[18]

Classical Modernization as Metanarrative

To illustrate: We have seen that the conceptual framework of modern social science has a built-in aporia between actors and society--an aporia in part born of the revolutionary epistemology described in the opening paragraph. But the aporias of agency and system are not only a product of the logic of social science. Even more important, *they rest on the core of an historical "metanarrative" of classical western modernization* embedded in the logic. Social theory is as much history and narrative as it is metatheory. In its very construction all theory presumes a prior question to which the theory is designed to be an answer (Gadamer 1989; Collingwood 1970)-- hence the theory itself it is already an intervening moment in a narrative process of knowledge construction. In the form of an "answer," social theory contains a historicity which can only be disclosed by discovering both the original historical problem it was designed to solve and the complex ways in which answer has found its way into the core of our most presuppositional concepts. Modern social theory emerged as the answer to the macro-sociological question by which our social science founders were possessed: namely, how to explain the emergence and the nature of the

modern world and its epochal break from "traditional society? To answer this question, the classical founders constructed a social theory based upon an appropriation of the historical and empirical world. Indeed the very power and durability of sociological thought can only be explained by the substantive and historical answers to which it lays claim.[19]

What were the consequences of this inextricable entanglement between the new social scientific naturalism and the historical transformations of modernity? A most unique idea: If the nature of modern society could be conceived as organized according to the systemic laws of nature, the emergence of modernity could be explained by a self-generated, rational, and progressive logic shed of the constraints of ethics and law, political authority, religion, and kinship. New concepts were thus unleashed. The social world was now conceptually bifurcated between "tradition" and "modernity" driven by the relentless motor of technical rationality which had the power to remake society, institutions, social life, even the drama of human intentionality itself, in its own image.

Nothing could have been more ironic and paradoxical. A master-narrative of modernity was produced through the lens of a self-consciously, indeed belligerently so, anti-historical, anti-narrative, naturalistic conceptual frame. The results are the strange hybrid we unconsciously live with today--a social science sprung from a utopian vision of escaping the past (history) that is nonetheless constituted upon a metanarrative framework. Classical modernization theory--the macro-theoretical story aimed at describing and explaining the making of the modern western world, its structural and its social dynamics--was the outcome, indeed the great and lasting invention, of this complex fusion of history and theory. The foundational story deeply encoded within modern social science had all the formal components of analytic narrative--causal emplotment (the engine of industrialization), a beginning (traditional society), a middle (crisis of industrial revolution), and end (resolution into modernity), and leading protagonists in action (classes in struggle). The only

thing missing, however, was **conceptual narrativity**. Its conceptual core--classes, society, social actors, social action--were devoid of ontological historicity. Temporality, spatiality, relationality, and concrete linkages all gave way to the utopian ideals of social abstractionism. And in this paradoxical combination can be found the source of many of the problems of social action.

Modern social theory was thus crafted out of epic moments in history. Plagues, wars, famines, and revolutions all play their parts; the Black Death, the English Civil War, the Reformation, the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution all figure as shadows in the heart of the metatheoretical and theoretical framework. Society, social action, the social actor, causality, and even *social change* are each terms carrying within themselves pieces of the great metanarrative of modernity. But the stories and researches (Lieberson 1992) that constitute some of our most important and significant theories are completely invisible; that is, they have been naturalized to the point where what is in fact a narrative--that is a *constructed* story--becomes metatheory. The narratives that have so long constituted social theory are excluded from the very definition of theory and relegated to the realm of "just history."

But the consequences are ironic. On the one hand, it is their very powers of abstraction which serve to privilege theories over "mere history." Who among us has not been thoroughly convinced by the post-positivist argument that facts are "theory-laden," and that histories are organized by theoretical categories? But, on the other hand, few among us would "accuse" a theory of being "*history-laden*," that is, actually constructed on the basis of a story? The lowly status of history is evident in the scorn "empiricism" is met with. To the extent that empiricism suggests that there is such an activity as the assemblage of raw facts, such derision is well-deserved. But the case we are making is something different altogether: Not "raw facts" but constructed *stories* sit in the core of virtually all of our social theories.

We have arrived at one of the reasons for the enduring presence of the ontological impasse between *actor* and *society* in social theory; the terms are themselves creations of a particular historical narrative. It is their unexamined and deeply problematic historicity that reproduces the dilemmas in a sociology of action. If sociology's impasses are in the original fusion of macro-historical analysis and epistemology, and if the concepts we use to describe the world are historicized and limited, it follows logically that we must deconstruct the historicity of the concepts we use by means of an historical epistemology. The challenge this poses for a sociology of action is to develop ways of knowing, exploring, and explaining that can accommodate historically constituted concepts of human agency, institutions, cultures, and social identities. This historical dimension of theoretical practice is one which subjects claims of naturalism to the challenge of competing historical epistemologies.

Historicizing Agency

Recall the epistemological template for the problem of action as expressed in Townsend's fantasia of the goats and the dogs on the isle of Juan Fernandez. This naturalistic epistemology was one moment of the general revolutionary Progressivism of eighteenth and nineteenth century science and politics in which societal laws of nature--rather than laws of the state--now explained the social world. But naturalism inevitably threatened to annihilate the subject. Faced with this dilemma, sociological theory did not bury a theory of action. Rather, it conjoined its new found naturalism with the ontological counterpart to social structural progressivism and created the "revolutionary idiom of action"--*the compulsion to individuate* was at once both naturalistic and an historical creation of modernity. Recognizing and naming the revolutionary idiom at the heart of theories of agency are the first steps to understanding the problem the idom has left us with. The next step is to deconstruct its historicity.

Sociology's discovery of the social actor emerged from a convergence of mushrooms, reason, and revolution. In the first case, the Hobbesian abstraction ("Let us...consider men...as if but even now sprung out of the earth...like mushrooms..without all kinds of engagement to each other") celebrated the emancipatory vision contained in the idea of the self-interested individual free to create his/her world anew.[20] Second, the Kantian critique positing reason over the naturalism of Hobbes's ontology appealed to progressive minds and lodged the idea of the morally autonomous modern individual on firm grounds. Finally, the French Enlightenment sealed the amalgamation: Voltaire's, Diderot's, and Rousseau's free self was driven naturally to repel the force of political authority, tradition, custom, and institutional bonds--all in the name of freedom from domination.

But the appropriation of the conceptual agent from the philosophers by the social scientists involved a critical transmutation. They moved the foundations from a transcendental to an empirical and historical grounding because social science's individual actor could not, of course, remain a Hobbesian or Lockean pre-social being. Rather, the sociological innovation was to reconceive the social actor as a *developmental product* of the modernizing process of *progressive individuation*. Only this way could a sociology of action dovetail with premises of classical modernization: The process of achieved individuation towards "freedom from..." was enmeshed within the continuum of societal change--from *traditional to modern* society. Individuation itself could thus be seen along a progressive continuum running from political and/or religious embeddedness to freedom. Authentic social action necessarily meant a facing away from all that "tradition" represented--the past, institutional relations, contingency. From the French Revolution, the triumph of political and economic Liberalism, and the German route to modernity, modern social science derived the lesson that the free modern self which comprised the actor of modern society had to be an autonomous self severed from the archaic ties of the past

and *others*. Action thus became authentic only when it was striving forward toward individuation and "freedom from..."

Social science's modern actor was thus conceived through a blending of philosophy with Newton. At a stroke, a philosophy of moral autonomy was refashioned to accommodate the progressive naturalism of modernization theory. This new revolutionary idiom of agency raised to *a priori* status an abstracted fiction of the social subject. Agency and social action became theoretically embedded in the historical fiction of the individuating social actor whose natural state was moving toward freedom from the past and separation from symbolic association, "tradition," and above all, the constraint of "others." Marx's celebration of bourgeois society as a necessary societal stage in the progression of freedom, Weber's autonomous individual as the only valid subject of action, and the early Durkheim's moral individual freed by the overturning of gemeinschaft all confirmed the sociological appropriation of this revolutionary idiom.[21] They each built their theories on the duality of subject and object, the individual versus society. The identity of the subject was abstracted from history; social relations and institutional practices--even collective memory--would exist as external objects of power and constraint.

Yet herein lies the explanation for why the revolutionary idiom of action generates an incoherent and unintelligible ontology. The sociology of action is rooted in the strange premise that *somewhere* and *somehow* between the social and historical production of agential beliefs, needs, even individuality itself on the one side (through modernization, socialization), and on the other, the *reception* of and acting upon these beliefs by a fully formed subject, the original process of social constitution is lost and the modern social actor becomes a fixed and universal self driven to maintain separation and autonomy from others. No longer ontologically natural as in natural rights theory, the sociological agent becomes an historicist product of modernization. The twist is that social science's discrete individuating actor becomes *naturalized* by virtue of becoming modernized. For sociological theory--

a theory of modernized society--what is modern becomes naturalized; hence presuppositional.

From Freedom in Separation to Constraint by Others

But here the sociology of action confronts a recurring problem. Even sociologists have not failed to note the inconsistency between the postulates of the revolutionary idiom and the abundance of evidence which calls into question the assumption that modern social agency--in the absence of domination--is universally oriented toward and constituted by a naturalized state of individuation. Why, for example, do social agents sometimes act within "traditions?"[22] Why do some people in some places seem to value "relationality" more than separation (Gilligan 1982) and others value autonomy considerably more than community? Why do so many social movements not try to overthrow the state but work to persuade the state to meet its promised obligations (Somers 1986)? Why, more than thirty years after the Civil Rights movement--a movement for universal rights-- are there discussions about whether blacks should be called African- Americans? Why the interest and controversy around proposals for an Afrocentric approach to knowledge (Asante 1987)? Why do "moderns" "continue to infuse values, institutions, even mundane physical locations with the mystery and awe of the sacred" (Alexander 1989, p. 246)? Why are people willing to die in situations where there is minimal likelihood of achieving instrumental goals (Calhoun 1991c)? Why do some families consider neighborhood associations to be more valuable than cash (Stack 1974)? Why did (and do) working classes strike to preserve the honor of their skills and crafts (Reddy 1987)? Why is social capital often more valuable than material capital (Bourdieu 1984; Lamont 1992)?

Faced with such questions there have been two logical choices for the social sciences: 1) to toss out the revolutionary idiom as a useless heuristic for explanation-- and by implication, call into question one of the central postulates of sociology and its grounding in classical modernization theory, or 2) to preserve the revolutionary

idiom by looking *outside* of it for an explanation of anomalousness from its vision. It is the second course that has characterized sociology's approach to the "meaning of meaning" (Putnam 1975). To preserve the pristine status of the revolutionary idiom, "deviant" behavior has been consistently explained by the *power of the social order to determine social action over and above the naturalized state of individuation.* For if social action appears to derive meaning in ways that are incompatible with the revolutionary idiom of action--then only a phenomenon *external* to the modern actor can explain this incompatibility. Hence the entity of "society"--the object in a subject-object duality--becomes the determinant of all constraining action (whether through economic forces, bureaucratic control, or internalized constraint and shared norms). The most common sociological understanding of the modern version of this constraint is "internalized norms" mediated through society's regulative institutions of law, religion, family, community, education, kinship, and social policy. More radically, (from Marx and Weber), constraint derives from the state itself, now conceived as a dangerous residual of traditional forms of domination that has been modernized through capitalist development and class formation (Marx) or through the rationalizing processes of bureaucratization (Weber).

The Institutional Conundrum

But here we confront the second great problem of social theory--the problem of institutions. The institutional problem exists ambiguously among the shadows of societal determinism. Since research on social institutions has always figured prominently in the social sciences, until recently the problem has not achieved the publicity of that of action (March and Olsen 1984; Powell and DiMaggio 1991). But surely it is as great a conundrum: We have seen how a sociology of action by necessity takes as its universal state a striving for "freedom from...." And we have in turn seen that in this context acting within the constraints of relationality can only be made intelligible through the notion of societal constraint. But if relationality is embedded in institutions external to the social agent, where do

institutions come from? The problem is highlighted by recalling Townsend's fable
and the narrative of modernization. Both displaced law, moral authority, and power
to peripheral status in a naturalistic societal paradigm. The consequences were that
the autonomous societal market would now rule the conceptual terrain where
institutions and relationships had once prevailed. But, no less than that of agency,
this produced a glaring enigma: On the one hand, power and institutions were
reconceptualized as epiphenomena of a naturalistic social system. That made
institutions into functions of societal principles writ large--principles which were
crystallized in the individuation and analytic autonomy assumed to be characteristic
of the modern social actor. But on the other hand, these very institutions were also
to serve as the explanation for the sociological conception of relational constraint.
How could power and institutions embody *both* the individuating principles of modern
action and the expressions of modern relational constraint?

This, then, is the problem arising from the awkward coexistence of
naturalism, the revolutionary idiom, and sociology's conceptual confrontation with
institutions. Faced with expressions of agency that cannot be located within an
analytic state of individuation, sociological logic must rely on institutional
domination to explain the deviancy. A dominating state, laws, bureaucracy, the
power of ideology and/or social norms, become the mechanisms of explanation for the
failure to account for relational social agency. The permutations on this theme can
be staggering: tradition, social control, bureaucratic manipulation, institutional
rationalization, false consciousness, norms, roles, and values are but a few of the
mechanisms assumed to be expressions of societal constraint. The true
accomplishment, however, was the conceptual consolidation of what was to become
the great agony of modern social theory. The modern agent--freed by modernity from
traditional relationality to arrive at a condition of ontological autonomy--co-exists in
sociology's theoretical universe alongside both the naturalism of a systemically
conceived society and a simultaneous notion of domination and control from

institutions and others. Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, with different normative premises, each carried forth the dualism of the individuated actor against society.[23]

Thus sociologists relentlessly push human agency into the reductionist *cul de sac* against which we so insistently rail. As long as the social actor is represented as the analytic individual, relational action challenging the postulates of the revolutionary idiom--action organized through patterns of community constraint, for example (whether defined as private--family, church, tradition, or public--economy, state), cannot be considered authentic but rather a result of societal constraint or domination. No amount of willfully pushing and prodding this revolutionary idiom of action will resolve the conundrum; the problem lies in history, not in will.

II: THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY: FROM UNIVERSALITY TO CATEGORY

In recent years classical social theory has been confronted with a set of extraordinary challenges--ones that have arisen in part from external political and social transformations and in part from theoretical attempts to make sense of those social developments. The political and social elements are best represented by such factors as the "failure" of western working classes to carry out their "proper" revolutionary (class) interests, the collapse of communist regimes, the radical increase of women in the workforce, and the resurgence of ethnic solidarities and cultural nationalisms throughout the world. Among the responses to these changes are the vast array of "new social movements" that have arisen to prominence in the last twenty years (Green parties, gay and lesbian liberation movements, and so on), the explosion of a feminist consciousness which valorizes female "difference" as much as equality, and the politics of multiculturalism.[24]

Although they takes no universal form (Aronowitz 1992, p. 12) the various expressions of this new "politics of identity" all share the common feature of being constituted by people who previously felt marginalized from dominant political channels and more mainstream social movements. Similarly, these are also groups and individuals who have been marginalized by our prevailing social theoretical

accounts for why people act the way do. Thus, for example, classical theoretical accounts of social movement organizations focus on class interests as a motivating factor for action and/or "instrumental" calculi to achieve specifically power-oriented goals. But rather than emphasize traditional issues of labor and production, the new politics and movements of identity stress "expressive" goals of "self-realization" (Pizzorno 1979, 1985) while they attempt to positively restore previously devalued differences (e.g. female care-taking and "being-in-relations," Chodorow 1978; Elshtain 1981).

To make sense of these striking developments, new theories of action and agency have emerged. These new theories of "identity-politics" have shifted explanations for action from "interests" and "norms" to *identities* and *solidarities*, from the notion of the universalistic social agent to particularistic categories of concrete persons. Based on the assumption that persons in similar social categories and similar life-experiences (based on gender, color, generation, sexual orientation, and so on) will act on the grounds of common attributes, theories of identity-politics posit that "I act because of who I am", not because of a rational interest or set of learned values.

Identity-politics are relatively new on the agenda of social theory. But when viewed in the context of the perduring conundrum of explaining social action, these new theories of identity are easily recognizable as confrontations with the same intractable problem of agency discussed above: How to formulate viable sociological accounts of moral action which do not resort to external constraint (or "internalized" external constraint) to explain action that "deviates" from the universalistic premises of those concepts that have shaped our theoretical discourses, especially the revolutionary idiom with its emphasis on an individuated ontology. The solution has been to challenge the putative universalism of the modernist ontology itself, for it is only when judged against this alleged norm that women and other "others" have been found wanting. The new theoretical perspectives have argued, therefore, that

the putative universal social actor is in fact extremely particularistic--namely, white, male, and western. Most important, they claim that it is only in the context of this theoretical sleight of hand, one which claims universality for the particularistic and androcentric, that the experiences of "others" are suppressed, denied, and devalued in the first place. Thus the theoretical response has been not only to reveal the gendered, racially, or class-specific character of the "general" modern social actor. It has also been to propose and envision a theoretical alternative that transforms those very devalued traits of (female or racial) "otherness" into a newly esteemed ideal of selfhood and normatized social action.

Leading examples of such changes in feminist theory are the well-known works of Nancy Chodorow (1979) and Carol Gilligan (1982). Gilligan began by confronting the fact that for years scholars of moral development had pondered the seemingly unanswerable question of why women did not achieve the highest stages of development allegedly achieved by men. Social scientists and psychologists alike kept asking: Why are women anomalous to the norm? More specifically, they wanted to know why women were getting "stuck" at a "lower stage" of moral development, while men developed a sense of agency and judgment according to the theoretical social norm--that is, they become increasingly autonomous, individuated, and oriented to rules of abstract justice. Women, by contrast, were believed to be at a lower stage because they were found to have a sense of agency still tied primarily to their social relationships and to make political and moral decisions based on context-specific principles based on these relationships rather than on the grounds of their own autonomous judgments.

Students of gender studies know well just how busy social scientists have been kept by their efforts to come up with ever more sociological "alibis" for the question of why women did not act like men. Gilligan's response was to refuse the terms of the debate. She thus did not develop yet another explanation for why women are "deviant." Instead, she turned the question on its head by asking what was wrong

with the *theory*--a theory whose central premises defines 50% of social beings as "abnormal?" Gilligan translated this question into research by subjecting the abstraction of universal and discrete agency to the concreteness of comparative research into female behavior evaluated on its own terms. The new research revealed women to be more "concrete" in their thinking and more attuned to "fairness" while men acted on "abstract reasoning" and "rules of justice." These research findings transformed female deviance and "otherness" into variation and "difference"--but difference now freed from the normative devaluation previously accorded to it. In so doing, Gilligan contributed not only to a new recognition but to a theoretical and political celebration of the very female identity which prevailing theories had denigrated.[25]

Struggles over identity are thus being framed by the recognition that getting heard requires new theories. Scholars engaged in identity-politics, for example, are insisting that there are ways of knowing and defining experience that are different from but equally valuable to those experiences of the dominant discourse. While law professor Catharine MacKinnon (1989) insists, for instance, that it is difficult for women to stage a revolution using the tools of the oppressor--especially his *words*, cultural analyst Molefi Kete Asante (1987, p. 165), implies the same when he asks: how can the oppressed become empowered if they use the same theories as the oppressors? In "The Search for an Afrocentric Method," moreover, Assante (1987) not only challenges assumptions about the universality of Eurocentric concepts, he simultaneously restores dignity to the very qualities of "otherness" by which such Eurocentric theories had previously defined and devalued these same non-western identities.

Such theoretical challenges are indeed welcome. They move away from deriving the meaning of action and the definition of self from falsely imputed universalities and toward generating concrete notions of social being which begin from difference. This can only improve the prospects for a sociology of agency. At

the same time, however, the virtually simultaneous outcries of "essentialism" directed towards these new identity-politics testify to a whole new set of stubborn conceptual difficulties. Among the many questions we must ask, for example, are whether the new theories of identity-politics are not creating their own new "totalizing fictions" in which a *single* category of experience, say gender, will over-determine any number of cross-cutting other differences. Does this not run "roughshod" over women who might be "ill-served" by replacing all other forms of difference by the singular one of gender (Di Stefano 1990)? Feminists of color charge that feminist identity-theories focusing exclusively on gender oversimplify their situation since gender is just one of a number of other fundamental facets of identity and difference, such as poverty, class, ethnicity, race, sexual identity, and age (Hooks 1984; Jordan 1981; Lorde 1984).

Another question we must ask is how it is possible to claim *social* agency for these notions of identity if its putatively motivating force derives from "essential" (that is, pre-political--e.g. "woman," "African-American") or "fixed" categories constructed from given attributes. If identities are fixed there is no room to accommodate changing power relations or history itself as they are constituted and reconstituted over time. One of the most influential of these criticisms has been that directed by Joan Scott against the work of Chodorow (1978) and Gilligan (1982) discussed above. Scott (1988a) pointed out that even with a well-deserved refutation of abstract universalism, Chodorow and Gilligan had only substituted their own ahistorical and essentialist notion of "woman." Why, asked Scott, should we assume that "women" will all act the same under all conditions simply because of their biological sex or even their socialized gender-identities? Does that not open up the possibility for a female version of abstract universal agency and identity against which any number of historically different forms of female moral agency will be held newly "deviant?"

There is also a question about the allegedly stable content of the new categories of identity. To assume that simply because in some places and in some times women appear to be more morally "relational" than men in their sense of agency does not in any way support the more general conclusion that *all* women are more morally relational than men. Even if such a generalization could be demonstrated, however, do we really want to accept that these dichotomous concepts of gender distinction really *reflect* the social world? Is it not just as likely that the theoretical categories of exclusion helped *constitute* those gender differences in the first place? And if it is indeed the case that female identities are the consequence of categories based on false universality and exclusions, should we not *criticize and contest* these categorical identities rather than applaud them simply for their "anti-masculinism"? In short, even assuming the empirical case to be true, is it not a serious mistake to leap from the empirical presence of relational identities to their *normative* valorization? There is too much evidence of the suffocating and negative effects of "being-in-relations" to accept this move uncritically. The underlying argument here is that a gender-centered identity-politics does not take on the real challenge of criticizing, contesting, transforming, indeed escaping from the theoretical dichotomies which buttress and hierarchicalize forms of difference in the first place. Instead, the new identity-theories merely reify anew what is in fact a multiplicity of historically-varying forms of what are less often unified and singular but more often "fractured identities" (Haraway 1991). Thus while some scholars claim that establishing an identity or expressing self-realization is one of the goals of new social movements (Melucci 1989), there are others who consider the newly celebrated but fixed categories of "identity" and "self-realization" to be the problem itself, regardless of the fact that they are newly informed by the traits of the previously excluded.[26]

Finally, and perhaps most worrisome, we must question the slide from the gendered distinction between a moral and normative notion of relationality (women

are "relational," men are "self-interested") to a gendered distinction in the degree of *analytic* relationality between men and women. The latter is an impossible conclusion. Even if men can be shown to be less morally oriented towards relationships than women, this in itself is a result of the *social* and *relational* constitution of male identity. That is, *both* men and women must be conceived analytically as being embedded within and constituted by relationships and relationality. Whether or not the analytic relationality characteristic of both men and women devolves into a gendered distinction in moral or normative relationality must not be presumed a priori but can only be explored empirically and historically.

These questions and concerns usefully highlight the theoretical dangers contained in the new theories of agency being called identity-theories. In the absence of clearly positive theoretical and epistemological alternatives to the problem of identity, however, such criticisms can have the effect of only tossing theories of social action and identity back and forth between the abstract universality of the modern individuating agent who starves in a vacuum of abstraction, and the essential "woman" (or black, or Serbian, or gay man) who drowns in a sea of relationality, "experience," and identity. A number of studies from different approaches have therefore begun the task of developing positive theoretical and epistemological alternatives to these two mutually reinforcing opposites (Scott 1988a, 1991; Canning forthcoming; Poovey 1988; Minow 1990; Gagnier; Cohen and Arato 1992 are but a few.) Fraser and Nicholson (1990, p. 34) offer what seems to us to be one of the best summations of the challenge at hand. They suggest that alternative theories of agency--in this case feminist agency--should

> be inflected by temporality, the historically-specific institutional categories like the modern, restricted, male-headed, nuclear family taking precedence over ahistorical functionalist categories like reproduction and mothering. Where categories of the latter sort were eschewed altogether, they would be genealogized, that is, framed by historical narrative and rendered temporally and culturally specific.

Joining the many others who are struggling to give substance to this directive, we propose linking the concepts of *narrativity* and *identity* to generate a different approach to theories of social action, agency, and identity.

III: INTRODUCING NARRATIVITY

We argued above that what we know today as social theory and its attendant problems are the legacies of historicist fragments distilled into abstract ontological presuppositions about the modern actor. Recent challenges to these long-dominant presuppositions, however, have reified their own culturally and gender-specific identity stories and in the process created a new shade of universalism that contains its own historicist fragments, and its own inevitable exclusions. It would be a short leap to suggest simply that new stories need to be written, and perhaps old stories need to be recovered, in the effort to reconstruct a viable sociology of action. But different stories cannot merely be the product of one assertion against another. The classical story of modernity was constructed, like all narratives, through a particular epistemological filter conjoining eighteenth and nineteenth-century social naturalism with a revamped seventeenth-century ontology of the social agent.[27] Both were epistemological escapes from all we associate with historicity--time, space, relationality. The paradoxical consequence is that the master-narrative of modernity at the heart of social theory is conceptually both anti-narrative and ahistorical. If our new stories are not to sound relentlessly like variations on the old, we need more than historical deconstruction. In the task of rethinking theory and recognizing history we must also reconstruct and rebuild a sociology of action constituted on *conceptual narrativity*.

Reframing Narrativity

The last two decades have been notable for the degree to which historians have debated and increasingly scorned the value of narrative. But to understand why the new developments in narrative studies by other disciplines could proceed quietly uninterrupted, it is important to remember what exactly it was that the

historians were rejecting. The conception of narrative that is common to historians is one that is treated as a mode of representation--discursive, rather than quantitative; non-explanatory, rather than conditionally propositional; and non-theoretical, rather than one of the theoretically-driven social sciences.[28] The conflict among historians was solely over how to *evaluate* that representational form.[29] For "traditional" historians, narrative was seen as ideal because the accurate representation of history was the essence of the historian's craft; for the social science historians, the traditional narrative representational form was inadequate because it neither explained nor interpreted the past.[30] While the debate over representational narrative was raging among historians, however, others were quietly appropriating the abandoned concept and using it to produce major conceptual breakthroughs in their fields.[31] As stated above, however, the narrative concept employed in these new researches is radically different from the older interpretation of narrative as simply a representational form. The new notion recognizes narrative and narrativity to be concepts of social epistemology and social ontology. These concepts posit that it is through narrativity that we come to know, understand, and make sense of the social world, and it is through narratives and narrativity that we constitute our social identities. They argue, therefore, that it matters not whether we are social scientists or subjects of historical research for all of us come to be who we are (however ephemeral, multiple, and changing) by locating ourselves (usually unconsciously) in social narratives *rarely of our own making*.[32]

From diverse sources[33] it is possible to identify four features of a reframed narrativity particularly relevant for the social sciences: 1) relationality of parts, 2) causal emplotment, 3) selective appropriation, and 4) temporality, sequence, and place. Above all, narratives are *constellations of relationships* (connected parts) embedded in *time and space*, constituted by *causal emplotment*. Unlike the attempt to produce meaning by placing an event in a specified category, narrativity precludes sense-making of a singular isolated phenomenon. Narrativity demands that we

discern the meaning of any single event only in temporal and spatial relationship to other events. Indeed the chief characteristic of narrative is that it renders understanding only by connecting (however unstably) parts to a constructed configuration or a social network (however incoherent or unrealizable) composed of symbolic, institutional, and material practices.[34]

The connectivity of parts is precisely why narrativity turns "events" into *episodes*, whether the sequence of episodes is presented or experienced in anything resembling chronological order. This is done through "emplotment." It is emplotment that gives significance to independent instances, not their chronological or categorical order. And it is emplotment which translates events into episodes. As a mode of explanation, causal emplotment is an accounting (however fantastic or implicit) of why a narrative has the story line it does (Veyne 1984 [1971]); Ricoeur 1981, 1984-86). Causal emplotment allows us to test a series of "plot hypotheses" against actual events, and then to examine how--and under what conditions--the events intersect with the hypothesized plot.[35] Without emplotment, events or experiences could be ***categorized*** only according to a taxonomical scheme. Polkinghorne (1988, p. 21) implicitly addresses the difference between emplotment and categorization when he notes that social actions should not be viewed as a result of categorizing oneself ("I am 40 years old; I should buy life insurance") but should be seen as emerging in the context of a life-story with episodes ("I felt out of breath last week, I really should start thinking about life insurance"). Similarly, it is also apparent that serious mental confusion or political emotion rarely stems from the inability to place an event or instance in the proper category. Rather we tend to become confused when it is impossible or illogical to integrate an event into an intelligible plot (MacIntyre 1981). To make something understandable in the context of a narrative to give it historicity and relationality. This makes sense because when events are located in a temporal (however fleeting) and sequential plot we can then

explain their relationship to other events. Plot can thus be seen as the logic or syntax of narrative (Ricoeur 1979; Veyne 1984 [1971]; Polkinghorne 1988).

The significance of emplotment for narrative understanding is often the most misunderstood aspect of narrativity. Without attention to emplotment, narrativity can be misperceived as a non-theoretical representation of events. Yet it is emplotment that permits us to distinguish between narrative on the one hand, and chronicles or annales (White 1987), on the other. In fact, it is emplotment that allows us to construct a significant network or configuration of relationships.

Another crucial element of narrativity is its *evaluative criteria* (Linde 1986; Polanyi 1985). Evaluation enables us to make qualitative and lexical distinctions among the infinite variety of events, experiences, characters, institutional promises, and social factors that impinge on our lives. Charles Taylor (1989), for example, argues that the capacity to act depends to a great extent on having an evaluative framework shaped by what he calls "hypergoods" (a set of fundamental principles and values) (see also Calhoun 1991b). The same discriminatory principle is true of narrative: in the face of a potentially limitless array of social experiences deriving from social contact with events, institutions, and people, the evaluative capacity of emplotment demands and enables *selective appropriation* in constructing narratives (Somers 1986). A plot must be thematic (Bruner 1986; Kermode 1984). The primacy of this narrative theme or competing themes determines how events are processed and what criteria will be used to prioritize events and render meaning to them. Themes such as "husband as breadwinner," "union solidarity," or "women must be independent above all" will selectively appropriate the happenings of the social world, arrange them in some order, and normatively evaluate these arrangements.[36]

Four Dimensions of Narrativity

So far we have presented the meaning of narrative in its most abstract dimensions. These relatively abstract concepts, however, can also be expressed as

four different dimensions of narrative--ontological, public, conceptual, and "meta" narrativity.

ONTOLOGICAL NARRATIVES. These are the stories that social actors use to make sense of--indeed, in order to act in--their lives. Ontological narratives are used to define who we are; this in turn is a precondition for knowing what to do.[37] This "doing" will in turn produce new narratives and hence new actions; the relationship between narrative and ontology is processual and mutually constitutive. Both are conditions of the other; neither are a priori. Narrative *location* endows social actors with identities--however multiple, ambiguous, ephemeral, or conflicting they may be (hence the term *narrative identity*; Somers 1986). To have some sense of social being in the world requires that lives be more than different series of isolated events or combined variables and attributes; ontological narratives thus process events into episodes. People act, or do not act, in part according to how they understand their place in any number of given narratives--however fragmented, contradictory, or partial. Charles Taylor (1989, pp.51-52) puts it this way: "because we cannot but orient ourselves to the good, and thus determine our place relative to it..., we must inescapably understand our lives in narrative form..."[38]

But ontological narrativity, like the self, is neither a priori nor fixed. Ontological narratives make identity and the self something that one *becomes* (Nehamas 1985). Thus narrative embeds identities in time and spatial relationships. Ontological narratives affect activities, consciousness, and beliefs (Carr 1985, 1986) and are, in turn, affected by them. Like all narratives, ontological narratives are structured by emplotment, relationality, connectivity, and selective appropriation. So basic to agency is ontological narrativity that if we want to explain--that is, to know, to make sense of, to account for, perhaps even to predict, anything about the practices of social and historical actors, their collective actions, their modes and meanings of institution- building and group-formations, and their apparent

incoherencies--we must first recognize the place of ontological narratives in social life.

But where do ontological narratives come from? How are people's stories constructed? Above all, ontological narratives are social and interpersonal. Although psychologists are typically biased toward the individual sources of narrative, even they recognize the degree to which ontological narratives can only exist interpersonally in the course of social and structural interactions over time (Sarbin 1986; Personal Narratives Group 1989). To be sure, agents adjust stories to fit their own identities, and, conversely, they will tailor "reality" to fit their stories. But the interpersonal webs of relationality sustain and transform narratives over time. Charles Taylor (1989) calls these "webs of interlocution," others (MacIntyre 1981) call them "traditions," we call them "public narratives."

PUBLIC NARRATIVES. Public narratives are those narratives attached to cultural and institutional formations larger than the single individual, to intersubjective networks or institutions, however local or grand, micro or macro-- stories about American social mobility, the "freeborn Englishman," the working-class hero, and so on. Public narratives range from the narratives of one's family, to those of the workplace (organizational myths), church, government, and nation.[39] Like all narratives, these stories have drama, plot, explanation, and selective appropriation. Families, for example, selectively appropriate events to construct stories about their descent into poverty. The mainstream media arrange and connect events to create a "mainstream plot" about the origin of social disorders. The seventeenth-century church explains the theological reasons for a national famine. Government agencies tell us "expert" stories about unemployment. Taylor (1989) emphasizes the centrality of public to ontological narrative when he states:

> We may sharply shift the balance in our definition of identity, dethrone the given, historical community as a pole of identity, and relate only to the community defined by adherence to the good (or the saved, or the true believers, or the wise). But this doesn't sever our dependence on webs of interlocution. It only changes the webs, and the nature of our dependence (p.39).

CONCEPTUAL NARRATIVITY. These are the concepts and explanations that we construct as social researchers. Because neither social action nor institution-building is solely produced through ontological and public narratives, our concepts and explanations must include the factors we call social forces--market patterns, institutional practices, organizational constraints. Herein lies the greatest challenge of analytic and conceptual narrativity: to devise a conceptual vocabulary that we can use to reconstruct and plot over time and space the ontological narratives and relationships of historical actors, the public and cultural narratives that inform their lives, and the crucial intersection of these narratives with the other relevant social forces.[40] To date, few if any of our analytic categories are in themselves temporal and spatial. Rather, our modern sociological use of terms such as "society," the "actor," and "culture" was for social science purposes intentionally abstracted from their historicity and relationality. The conceptual challenge that narrativity poses is to develop a social analytic vocabulary that can accommodate the contention that social life, social organizations, social action, and social identities are narratively, that is, temporally and relationally constructed through both ontological and public narratives.[41]

METANARRATIVITY. This fourth dimension of narrativity refers to the "master-narratives" in which we are embedded as contemporary actors in history and as social scientists (Jameson 1981; Lyotard 1984; Foucault 1972, 1973). Our sociological theories and concepts are encoded with aspects of these master-narratives--Progress, Decadence, Industrialization, Enlightenment, etc.--even though they usually operate at a presuppositional level of social science epistemology or beyond our awareness. These narratives can be the epic dramas of our time: Capitalism vs Communism, the Individual vs Society, Barbarism/Nature vs Civility. They may also be progressive narratives of teleological unfolding: Marxism and the triumph of Class Struggle, Liberalism and the triumph of Liberty, the Rise of Nationalism, or of Islam. The example of the master-narrative of

Industrialization/Modernization out of Feudalism/Traditional Society, is only one of many cases in which a metanarrative becomes lodged in the theoretical core of social theory.

We have also pointed to what is perhaps the most paradoxical aspect of meta-narratives: their quality of *denarrativization*. That is, they are built on concepts and explanatory schemes ("social systems," "social entities," "social forces") that are in themselves abstractions. Although metanarratives have all the necessary components of narrativity--transformation, major plot lines and causal emplotment, characters and action--they nonetheless miss the crucial element of a conceptual narrativity.

IV: THE CONCEPTUAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE NEW NARRATIVE

So far, we have elaborated some of the dimensions of narrative analysis and have identified the major types of narrativity. What, then, are the implications of this conception of narrative for social theory? How can narrativity help us understand social life and social practices? If narrative is indeed a constitutive feature of social life as we so claim, our first analytic challenge is to develop concepts that will allow us to capture the narrativity through which agency is negotiated, identities are constructed, and social action mediated (White 1992b; Taylor 1989; Cohen 1985; Somers 1986, 1992). Although our four kinds of narrativity are relevant to social theory, it is the third that we consider the most important if theories are to adequately account for social action and collective projects. This is because conceptual narrativity is framed by temporality, spatiality, and emplotment as well as relationality and historicity. In the next section, we examine the two central components of conceptual narrativity: *Narrative identity* and *relational setting*.

Narrative identity

Recall the trap of the sociology of action. The mythic heroism of the social actor was canonized in a revolutionary idiom, an idea so potent it dissolved classical

views of the mutual constitution of the subject and the social world. While the classical view believed autonomy to be conditional upon social and political embeddedness, the new idiom substituted the notion that the freedom of the self was conditional upon an antagonistic differentiation of the individual from his/her cultural and institutional webbing. Social relations and "traditions" became the "object"--the domain of constraint--in a subject-object duality. Social connectiveness became part of the *external* structure alone. It was the object in a subject-object, individual against society, antagonism from which the actor was impelled to be free. Theories of identity-politics are the most recent response to this theory of action that so frequently cannot account for deviations from its ideal-typical formulation. We have noted, however, that many difficulties arise when these new identity perspectives take those same "deviations" and move them onto newly rerevalorized ontological foundations. Thus, for example, the argument that women are more attuned to "being-in-relations" than to the (male) norm of individuation becomes the grounds for a new theory of fundamental analytic differences between men and women generalized from what is in fact a questionable *normative* affirmation of the moral relationality believed to be characteristic of female identities.

The concept of a narrative identity dovetails with the move to reintroduce previously excluded subjects and suppressed subjectivities into theories of action. At the same time, however, the narrative identity approach firmly rejects the tendencies of identity theories to normatize new categories that are themselves as fixed and removed from history as their classical predecessors. The approach builds from the premise that narrativity and relationality are conditions of social being, social consciousness, social action, institutions, structures, even society itself--that is, the self and the purposes of self are constructed and reconstructed in the context of internal and external relations of *time* and *place* and *power* that are constantly in flux. That social identities are constituted through narrativity, social action is guided by narrativity, and social processes and interactions--both institutional and

interpersonal--are narratively mediated provides a way of understanding the recursive presence of particular identities that are, nonetheless, not universal.

The importance of conceptual narrativity is therefore that it allows us to build upon the advances and simultaneously to transcend the fixity of the identity concept as it is often used in current approaches to social agency. Joining narrative to identity introduces time, space, and analytic relationality--each of which is excluded from the categorical or "essentialist" approach to identity. While a social identity or categorical approach presumes internally stable concepts, such that under normal conditions entities within that category will act predictably, the narrative identity approach embeds the actor within relationships and stories that shift over time and space and thus precludes categorical stability in action. These temporally and spatially shifting configurations form the relational co-ordinates of ontological, public, and cultural narratives. It is within these temporal and multi-layered narratives that identities are formed; hence narrative identity is processual and relational. In this sense, the narrative identity approach shares much with the relational epistemologies most associated with Harrison White (1976, 1992).[42]

The analytic relationality of the narrative identity concept is thus at odds with the normative relationality of theories of identity-politics. Feminist identity-politics, for example, see relationality as a normative ontology--that is, women are socialized to be more relational than men. This quality of "being-in-relations" in turn makes women more "caring." In the narrative identity perspective, by contrast, relationality is used only analytically--that is, *all* identities (male and female) must be analyzed in the context of relational matrices because they do not "exist" outside of those matrices[43] At the same time, this analytic relationality tells us nothing in advance about the value or moral quality of those relationships and relational identities. The meaningful implications of a relationally-embedded concept of identity can only be determined by empirical inquiry, not by a priori assumptions. In other words, to say that identities are forged *only* in the context of ongoing

relationships that exist in time, space, and emplotment, is not to say that "being-in-relationship" is somehow "better" or "worse" than the individuating notions of agency. It is, rather, to divest conceptual narrativity of any particular normative implications. The interdependence and connectivity of parts characteristic of narrative analysis makes relationality an analytic *variable* instead of an ideal type or normative stand-in for an unchanging sense of "community." Relationships may be more or less bonded, the experience of them may be more or less constricting or enabling--but again, this is a question of narrative contingency not utopian ideals (see Calhoun 1980 for a similar argument about the use of "community" as a variable rather than an ideal type).

This argument can be exemplified by class-formation theory. Class-formation theory explains action with the concept of interest. Since interest is determined by either the logic and stages of socioeconomic development or by universal rational preferences, the social analyst imputes a set of predefined interests or values to people as members of **social categories** (e.g., traditional artisans, modern factory worker, peasant). Historians commonly argue, for instance, that the decline of traditional domestic modes of production and its (this decline's) concomitant threat to custom, created an "artisanal interest" from which explanations for social movements can at least in part be derived. Although social science historians almost always demonstrate with subtlety how these interests are mediated through intervening factors (culture, gender, religion, residential patterns, etc.), the interests remain the foundational explanation for working-class practices and protests. Making sense of social action thus becomes an exercise in placing people into the right social categories by identifying their putative interests, and then doing the empirical work of looking at variations among those interests (e.g.McNall, Levine and Fantasia 1991; Wright 1985).

But why should we assume that an individual or a collectivity has a particular set of interests simply because one aspect of their identity fits into one

social category? Why should we assume that activist artisans (people who work in a particular way) should be defined above all by their "artisanal" interests simply because they are members of the "declining artisanal mode of production" category? To let "class" stand for a determinative experience is to presume that which has not been empirically demonstrated--namely that identities are foundationally constituted by categorization in the division of labor.

Substituting the concept of narrative identity for that of interest circumvents this problem. A narrative identity approach to action assumes that social action can only be intelligible if we recognize that people are guided to act by the relationships in which they are embedded and by the stories with which they identify--and rarely because of the interests we impute to them. Whereas interest focuses on how we as analysts *categorize* people's role in a division of labor, the narrative identity approach emphasizes how people *characterize* or locate themselves within a processual and sequential movement of life-episodes. Whereas an interest approach assumes people act on the basis of rational means-ends preferences or by internalizing a set of values, a narrative identity approach assumes people act in particular ways because to *not* do so would fundamentally violate their sense of being at that particular time and place.[44] In another time or place, however, or in the context of a different prevailing narrative, that sense of being could be entirely different. What is most significant is that narrative identities are constituted and reconstituted in *time* and *over* time--that is, through narrative processes. Calhoun (1991), demonstrates this in his narrative about how Chinese students, who had initially displayed no interest in politics, formed cohesive political identities during the one month they were thrust into the overpowering drama of Tiennanmen Square.

The "narrative" dimension of identity there and elsewhere, thus presumes that action can only be intelligible if we recognize the various ontological and public narratives in which actors plot or "find" themselves. Rather than by interests, narrative identities are constituted by a person's temporally and spatially-variable

"place" in culturally constructed stories comprised of (breakable) rules, (variable) practices, binding (and unbinding) institutions, and the multiple plots of family, nation, or economic life. Most important, however, narratives are not incorporated into the self in any direct way; rather they are *mediated* through the enormous spectrum of social and political relations that constitute our social world. People's experiences as workers, for example, were inextricably interconnected with the larger matrix of relations that shaped their lives--their regional location, the practical workings of the legal system, family patterns--as well as the particular stories (of honor, of ethnicity, of gender, of local community, of greed, etc.) used to account for the events happening to them.[45]

It would be hard to find a more compelling illustration of the narrative identity concept than in Steedman's (1987) widely-read sociological autobiography of her English working-class childhood in the 1950s. According to the dominant scholarly accounts (e.g. Hoggart 1959; Seabrook 1982), the extreme poverty of mid-century English working-class life was compensated by a robust "independence, pride, and sense of community." Sociologists have long assumed that social experience did in fact conform to this depiction of working-class identity. Steedman's narrative shatters all of our assumptions about the attributes of identity and agency that should normally fit with this form of social categorization. She presents us, instead, with an aching picture of the "class longings," and narratives of envy and desire (that life might be different), which characterized her life of underprivileged exclusion from the dominant culture. Steedman's representations of identities constructed of emotional and material poverty unfold sociologically in the context of the relational complexity in which her life was embedded, and in the narratives she inherited from her mother's life--ones in which gender intersected with class and so utterly challenge the usual attributes attributed to both of those categorical identities.[46]

The narrative contingency of identity is similarly vividly suggested in Davis'(1991) historical sociology of the notorious "one-drop rule" in racial classification. Davis' study demonstrates the numerous conflicts which accompanied a particular type of racial classification which failed to take into account the historical intermingling of different races. By declaring that anyone with even a drop of African blood was a "Negro," the burden of proving one's identity--for blacks and whites--made it obvious that the category was too rigid to account for those lives which failed to conform to the dominant public accounts of racial purity and segregation. The irony was that the very people or groups who deliberately created racial classifications in the first place often could not even identify correctly those individuals they wanted to classify; obviously skin color was now a poor indicator of race. The impact of America's imaginative one drop rule, moreover, went beyond public and private struggles over personal identity. By compelling all children of mixed blood to live in the black community, "the rule made possible the incredible myth among whites that miscegenation had not occurred, that the races had been kept pure in the south" (Davis 1991, p. 174). The issue of who gets to define a person is still not settled, it continues even today. One of the key decisions many principle investigators make about research projects concerning race is whether their interviewers should categorize the race of respondents or whether the persons being interviewed should get to choose their race from a preselected category.

An important theoretical distinction needs to be made at this point between two kinds of classifications: Those based on (1) taxonomical categories of identity aggregated from variables (age, sex, education, etc.) or "fixed" entities (woman, man, black) and, (2) categories that coincide with a narrative thematic. For instance, it is not hard to classify certain narratives as falling in the category of the "heroic Westerner," or "the virtues of American democracy." This is a classification, however, of the *narrative* itself: It can still be abstracted from context and its ontological meaning kept in tact. By contrast, the classification of an actor *divorced*

from analytic relationality is neither ontologically intelligible nor meaningful. In her study of audience responses to western movies, for instance, Shively (1992) appropriately must classify by theme the western movies she shows her audiences. Yet while these thematic classifications of the narratives remain stable throughout the study, her findings reveal that audience identification with and response to those themes depends less on the racial category of the respondent (native american or white) and more on the actors' changing social and historical embeddedness.

Relational Setting

Another challenge of conceptual narrativity is to develop a vocabulary that will allow us to *locate* actors'social narratives in temporal and spatial configurations of relationships and cultural practices (institutions and discourses). We need concepts that will enable us to plot over time and space the ontological narratives of historical actors, the public and cultural narratives that inform their lives, as well as the relevant range of other social forces--from politics to demographics--that configure together to shape history and social action. We thus need a conceptual vocabulary that can relate narrative identity to that range of factors we call social forces--market patterns, institutional practices, organizational constraints, and so on.

Society is the term that usually performs this work of contextualization in social analysis. When we speak of understanding social action, we simultaneously speak of locating the actors in their "societal" context. But society as a concept is rooted in a falsely totalizing and naturalistic way of thinking about the world. As in Townsend's fable, for most practicing social science research, a society is a social *entity*. As an entity, it has a core essence--an essential set of social springs at the heart of the mechanism. This essential core is in turn reflected in broader co-varying societal institutions that the system comprises. Thus, when sociologists speak of feudalism, for example, we mean at once "feudal society" as a whole, a particular set of "feudal class relations" at the core of this society, a "feudal manorial economy",

and a concomitant set of "feudal institutions" such as *feudal* political units and feudal peasant communities. Most significantly for historical research, each institution within a society must co-vary with each other. Thus in "feudal societies," the state by definition must be a feudal state whose feudal character co-varies with all other feudal institutions; feudal workers must all be unfree and extra-economically exploited peasants. And in "industrial society," a "modern industrial/capitalist" state must be detached from civil society and the industrial economy, and industrial workers must be individual and legally free. To be sure, the synchrony is not always perfect. In periods of transition from one society to another, there occurs a "lag effect" and remnants of the old order persist against the pressures of the new. But despite these qualifications, the systemic metaphor assumes that the parts of society co-vary along with the whole as a corporate entity.

To make social action intelligible and coherent, these systemic typologies must be broken apart and their parts disaggregated and reassembled on the basis of relational clusters. For a social order is neither a naturalistic system nor a plurality of individuals, but rather a complex configuration of cultural and institutional relationships. If we want to be able to capture the narrativity of social life we need a way of thinking that can substitute relational imagery for a totalizing one. We thus concur with Michael Mann (1986, p. 2) who writes: "It may seem an odd position for a sociologist to adopt; but if I could, I would abolish the concept of 'society' altogether".[47] Substituting the metaphor of a *relational setting* for "society" makes this possible.[48] A relational setting is a pattern of relationships among institutions, public narratives, and social practices. As such it is a relational matrix, similar to a social network.[49] Identity-formation takes shape within these relational settings of contested but patterned relations among narratives, people and institutions.

One of the most important characteristics of a relational setting is that it has a history (MacIntyre 1981), and thus must be explored over time and space. A

relational setting is traced over time not by looking for indicators of social development, but by empirically examining if and when relational interactions among narratives and institutions appear to have produced a decisively different outcome from previous ones. Social change, from this perspective, is viewed not as the evolution or revolution of one societal type to another, but by shifting relationships among the institutional arrangements and cultural practices that comprise one or more social settings.

Spatially, a relational setting must be conceived with a geometric rather than a mechanistic metaphor since it is composed of a matrix of institutions linked to each other in variable patterns contingent on the interaction of all points in the matrix.[50] A setting crosses "levels" of analysis and brings together in one setting the effect of, say, the international market, the state's war-making policies, the local political conflicts among elites, and the community's demographic practices of a community-- each of which takes social, geographical, and symbolic narrative expression. This cross-cutting character of a relational setting assumes that the effect of any one level (for example, the labor market -sector) can only be discerned by assessing how it is affected interactively with other relevant dimensions (for example, gender and race). To do so requires that we first *disaggregate* the parts of a setting from any presumed covarying whole and then reconfigure them in their temporal and geographic relationality. In this way, for example, different regions of a single nation-state are no longer cast as variants of a single society, but as different relational settings that can be compared.[51]

V: CONCEPTUAL NARRATIVITY AND THEORIES OF ACTION AND AGENCY

Narrative Identity and Social Meaning

A major advantage of the concept of narrative identity is in the challenge it poses to the false dichotomy too often posed between ideal versus instrumental meanings of action.[52] One sociological claim is that action is only authentic when it

is expressive rather than instrumental. To enforce the point, material goals--such as bread and wages--are typically called instrumental while ideal activities are usually associated with qualitative concerns in daily life. Weber, for instance, argued that if wages were of secondary importance for German workers that was evidence of the superiority of ideal action.[53] From the same assumptions, neoclassical economists go to equal lengths to provide support for the primacy of self-interest among workers in order to support the concept of rational action. And most currently, it is theorists of the new identity-politics who distinguish the new social movements (from the old) by their putatively exclusively ideal--hence, identity--focus (Pizzorno 1979, 1985; Melucci 1989).[54]

Yet from a narrative identity perspective there is nothing self-evident about the instrumental nature of wage demands any more than that of the ideal nature usually attributed to cultural activities. Just as an adequate material life is an essential means of preserving normative relations, so cultural and symbolic relations provide material resources for livelihood (Stack 1976; Berg 1987; Polanyi 1977). Similarly, instrumental strategies and identity-politics appear to be increasingly linked in research findings about the new social movements (Touraine 1985; Cohen 1985; Cohen and Arato 1992).

Many examples defy attempts to periodize or categorize a transformation from instrumental (material) to ideal (identity) ends. Joyce (1987) has collected an array of studies illustrating the remarkable variation in "the historical meanings of work." It is not just that work signified honor as much as livelihood; equally important, even when money wages were at stake, it was impossible to separate their value from that of the "dignity of the trade" (see also Joyce 1991; Reddy 1987; Sonenscher 1987). Many years ago Smelser (1959) demonstrated that collective movements aimed at factory reform (surely the quintessential "instrumental" object) were motivated by working families' efforts to hold the "traditional" family together against the destabilizing impact of women and children's factory labor. And when

nineteenth-century working people demanded the vote on the grounds of their "property in labor," it was not the autonomous workmanship ideal of Locke on which they founded these claims, but on the relational property of apprenticeship--a form of familial cohesion (Somers forthcoming a).

The meaning imputed to the appropriation of material life should not , therefore, be presumed until historically explored. When we look at wage-struggles, for instance, as part of an a priori system of categorization, we inevitably classify them as expressions of instrumental goals. But when we view these same wage-struggles through the lens of a narrative identity analysis, we are immediately impressed by the difficulty of classifying them as solely either instrumental or ideal. Wages served every purpose from maintaining social honor, to preserving families, to asserting independence in the face of newly imposed factory regimes. Historical studies demonstrate the vast range of variation in the use of bread and wages. Indeed if there is any common narrative theme that emerges from these studies, it is that wage-struggles appear to be most commonly viewed as a form of *provisioning*--a characteristic social activity that defies either ideal or instrumental classification in its focus on maintaining relational continuities over *time* and within *space*.[55]

The narrative identity concept allows us to make this shift in the interpretation of action from an a priori categorization to a focus on contingent narratives of meaning. The example of the conceptual shift from ideal versus instrumental agency to the concept of provisioning, for example, strikingly supports the switch from fixed notions of agency to relational analyses of identity formation. If persons are socially constituted over time, and space, and through relationality then *others* are constitutive, rather than external, to identity; they are simply other subjects, rather than external objects, in the social order. From this perspective authentic social action can readily encompass institutional practices that organize social inclusions and institutional exclusions--such as trade unions or community associations.[56] Historical and contemporary studies indeed suggest that structural

autonomy, and sometimes normative, was more often than not contingent upon the grids of social relationality (everything from collective memories, to political power and policies from above, to competing social claims, to pasts and futures of intractable social connections, and public narratives) that variably adhere to the interstices of an individual life.[57] These institutional and symbolic relationships are no mere external set of norms to be "stripped away by the sociologist" to discover the "real processes analytic self" (MacIntyre 1981, p.26); they are not "internalized" sets of societal rules residing within the human being. Rather they are constitutive to self, identity, and agency.

Consider the comments of one late eighteenth century English artisan on some of the progressive French notions of liberty that threatened to dismantle regulative welfare policies:

> It cannot be said to be the liberty of a citizen, or of one who lives under the protection of any community; it is rather the liberty of a savage; therefore he who avails himself thereof, deserves not that protection, the power of society affords (cited in Thompson 1971).

For this individual, others were not part of the external problem of constraint but constitutive--for good or for bad--of his narrative identity.

Race, Gender, and Power

Although we argue that social action is only intelligible through the construction, enactment, and appropriation of narratives, this does not mean that actions are free to fabricate narratives at will; rather, they must "choose" from a repertoire of available representations and stories. Which kinds of narratives will socially predominate is contested politically and will depend in large part on the distribution of power. This is why the kinds of narratives people use to make sense of their situation will always be an *empirical* rather than a presuppositional question. It is essential, in other words, that we explicate, rather than assume or take for granted, the narratives of groups and persons. The extent and nature of any given repertoire of narratives available for appropriation is always historically and

culturally specific; the particular plots that give meanings to those narratives cannot be determined in advance.

Since social actors do not freely construct their own private or public narratives, we can also expect to find that confusion, powerlessness, despair, victimization and even madness are some of the outcomes of an inability or powerlessness to accommodate certain happenings within a range of available cultural, public, and institutional narratives. Thus in everyday talk we characterize the most incoherent of experiences--and especially those where we feel controlled by a greater power than our own--as "Kafka-esque".[58] And it is for this reason that gender studies and critical race theory have so eagerly argued for the importance of new public narratives and symbolic representations that do not continue the long tradition of exclusion so characteristic of dominant ones.

Patrizia Violi (1992), for example, reminds us how critical the presence or absence of particular narratives have been to the construction of both male and female subjectivity. The archetypical "universal" narrative allows men "to objectivize" themselves and their own experiences in these stories--stories that not only represent maleness, but in effect replicate the metanarratives of classical social theory. In pointing out that women do not have available to them the same normatively valued forms of symbolic representation, Violi notes the difficulties women have constituting social identities. These representational silences are therefore tantamount to keeping invisible not only the differences between men and women but also the very subjectivities of women. Seeing representation, narrative and subjectivity as part of the same process, Violi (1992, p. 175) argues that unless female subjectivity is made visible through narrative "it will remain confined within the closed space of individual experience." Choosing narratives to express multiple subjectivities is a deliberate way of rejecting the neutrality and objectivity appearance typically embedded in master narratives. Steedman's (1987) analytic autobiography of her English working-class roots is perhaps the most powerful

example we have available to date of the power of alternative public narratives in countering the potential damage to identity-formation caused by singular dominant narratives. The public narratives of working-class community she had available as a child omitted women, just as many of the current feminist accounts of identity omit class and poverty (Collins 1991). In this context of narrative silence toward her own experiences, Steedman presents a picture of a self's (her mother) absolute longing and absence. Challenging the silence, Steedman articulates a counter-narrative--one which joins gender and class, with many other relational complexities of English life--and thus she lays the groundwork for a newly reconstructed process of identity-formation.

Struggles over narrations are thus struggles over identity. In an examination of their legal training, for instance, Patricia Williams (1991) and Charles Lawrence (1992) explicitly reject silencing the human voice in order to produce "abstract, mechanistic, professional, and rationalist" (Lawrence, p. 2286) legal discourse. Embracing the notion of multiple subjectivity, Williams tells us that she does not use the "traditionally legal black-letter vocabulary," because she is "intentionally double-voiced and relational" (1991, p. 6) Lawrence (1992) calls this kind of multiple consciousness by another name--"dual subjectivity." Either way, these scholars or color contend that writing counter-narratives is a crucial strategy when one's identity is not expressed in the dominant public ones. Furthermore, it is not surprising that the narratives of excluded voices reveal "alternative values" since narratives "articulate social realities not seen by those who live at ease in a world of privilege" (Minow 1987, p. 10). The centrality of ontological narrative in the construction of social identities is also revealed in a story Williams tells about starting law school at Harvard University. With "secretive reassurance," Williams recalls, her mother explained why she knew the young black student would succeed at the prestigious university. "The Millers were lawyers, so you have it in your blood" (Williams, p. 216). Encoded in that story about the white slave holder

(Attorney Austin Miller) who had purchased and impregnated Williams' great-great-grandmother was the proof that a category is neither fixed nor non-relational. If "one drop" of blood could be a narrative constructed to define and dominate a particular segment of the nation's population, could the story not also be changed so that a single drop of blood is a symbol of status and thus a source of empowerment?

Narrative Identity and Social Class

Conceptual narrativity also allows us to think differently about the relationship between social classes and social action. T. H. Marshall (1964), for example, in his classic study of citizenship correlated the stages of citizenship's development with epochs of class formation; each stage represented the expression of the interests of an emerging historic class. Underpinning this argument is the assumption that actors within the same category ("the working-class" "the gentry," "capitalist employers," "state bureaucrats") will have shared attributes--hence shared interests directing them to have similar citizenship practices. Naturally this assumption leads us to expect intra-class uniformity throughout each period of citizenship-formation: All the members of a single category of actors--the eighteenth-century English "working class," for example--should behave similarly and have the same capacities with respect to citizenship, regardless of other differences such as residence, family, or gender.

But evidence shows otherwise. Even though eighteenth-century English working people certainly shared important attributes--they were propertyless in most respects, exploited by their employers, and working for wages--their conditions and degrees of empowerment with respect to citizenship were not uniform but varied dramatically across the social and geographical landscape. More important, the "same" working class differed radically as to whether they even perceived the laws of citizenship to be rights in the first place (Somers 1991). Neither class nor status divisions could account for these differences since those in similar class situations maintained different degrees of power across regions.

From the narrative identity perspective these same working-classes would be seen as *members* of political cultures whose symbolic and relational "places" in a matrix of narratives and relationships were better indicators of action than their categorical classification. From this angle of relational membership, identities are not derived from attributes imputed from a stage of societal development (be it pre-industrial or modern), or by "experience" imputed from a social category (such as traditional artisan, factory laborer, or working-class wife), but by actors' places in the multiple (often competing) symbolic and material narratives in which they were embedded or with which they identified.[59] We would thus no longer assume that a group of people have any particular relationship to citizenship simply because one aspect of their identity fits into a single category known as the "working class". Social action loses its categorical stability, and group embeddedness and cultural representations become more important than class attributes--thus directing us to investigate citizenship-identities by looking at actors' places in their relational settings, or what Bourdieu (1977, 1985, 1986) would call a "habitus." As a general proposition, this would direct us to expect greater contingencies of agency. We would be considerably less concerned with "deviation" and more fascinated by variation.

This shift would in turn allow us to make sense of a situation in which even though a large group of English people could be similarly categorized as "working-class"--in that they shared working-class attributes (lack of ownership of means of production, landlessness, and so on)--their political activities varied radically depending upon their settings.[60] In the case of eighteenth-century England the effects usually attributed to proletarianization were in fact overdetermined in many instances by particular narrative relationships and institutional practices (including national apprenticeship laws, the participatory rules and expectations of enforcement, the durability of partible inheritance, the local control and symbolic meaning attached to skilled work, and the skilled practices of affiliation). In a context configured by these relationships, certain working communities were able to

offset many of the "normal" consequences of propertylessness with a more powerful form of "property" in association and membership (Somers forthcoming a).

CONCLUSION

We have argued that both an epistemology and a metanarrative of modernity were embedded in the origins of modern social science--that of a naturalistic logic of society and a progressivist "revolutionary idiom" of the modern social actor. But the two co-existed uneasily. In joining naturalism to ontological individuation, the social sciences had welded together a social agent firmly situated in an oppositional relationship to the intersubjective context of which it was an inextricable part. In the now naturalized condition of modern individuation, the social actor was thus *constrained* to enter into social relations with others. In philosophical terms, the subject-subject relationship that had prevailed in traditional political and moral philosophy was replaced by the subject-object one--the individual against society.

We have pointed out that as a result, much of the data of human activity has been inexplicable; by default, it has been explained by recourse to various themes of social determinism. As a result, women, non-westerners, and minorities often are defined in social analysis as "irrational" or "anomalous." Consider the "problem" of those many nineteenth-century working-class movements, for example, that deviated from Marxist predictions of revolutionary class consciousness when they demanded state intervention to protect their rights. All too frequently, these movements have been labeled by historians and sociologists as "reformist," or as victims of "social control" and "false consciousness." This barely conceals a hidden contempt for those putatively duped objects of history who acted differently than would the putatively universal modern actor. Yet as long as we continue to conceptualize others as sources of external constraint--a position logically necessary to the individual/society dichotomy--we are forced to label such relational and institutionally-oriented goals as "backwards-looking," "reactionary," or as evidence of "social control."[61] Action and agency that fail to conform to the postulates of the revolutionary idiom are explained

by the external power of order, or internalized institutional constraint--be it norms or social laws, bureaucratic power, or economic forces. Why? Because the dispossessed ghost-like individual self is "less liberated than disempowered" (Sandel 1982, p. 178). Indeed one could go further; such a person cannot--even heuristically--exist.

This sociology of action thus leads to a puzzling circularity: It strives to assert moral agency against the naturalistic logic of society, but its criteria for authentic action negate the historical weightiness of analytic relationality and narrativity. By aspiring to capture a fiercely individuated notion of behavior *all* of the time, the revolutionary idiom does not achieve an historical intelligibility of action even *some* of the time. Its presuppositional claims have consistently been unable to account for the constitution of agency through relationality. The consequences can be dizzying tautologies: Ontologically emptied of relationality, agency can only be explained by recourse to the external social order; deprived of substance, action can only be a response to collective constraint. Social theory has reproduced the very problem it set out to solve--how to find a theory of action in the shadow of a naturalistic determinism.

But reductionism is not the only problem that can result from social theories of action. When agency is explained through internalized social norms or externalized constraint, the meaning of action becomes historicist--a mere reflection of its immanence within the accordant level of the developing social order. In this kind of historicism characteristic of classical theories of the modernizing process, people are detached from historical continuity over time and space while they simultaneously are made and remade by the restless momentum of changing social conditions. This hubris, too, fades under the glare of research. There is considerable evidence for the presence of certain existential themes--death, for example--in all expressions of identity--despite tremendous variation in strategies deployed to tame them.[62] Thus historicism too must give way to explanation that can accomplish what is the *sine qua non* of theory--the capacity to theoretically account for recursive

patterns. In this project, tentative claims for circumscribed patterns of social arrangements and human action might be identified, but to arrive at these safely we must immerse ourselves in history as well as theory.[63] If the aim of sociology is to generate explanation that is indeed meaningful, the capacity of its logic to lay the basis for achieving that end will depend on its epistemological principles and categories being informed by time, space, and narrativity.[64]

Bringing the rich dimensions of ontological narrativity to the new identity approaches in social action theory is one way of doing this. It not only addresses the incoherencies of theories of action which leave vast numbers of social actors and social practices thoroughly unaccounted for--redefined as "marginal," "deviant," or "anomalous." It also builds upon the strengths of the recent shift in sociologies of action from universal notions of agency to more particularistic identities--a shift which endows the previously marginalized with a powerful new sense of subjectivity.

In recognizing the importance of these new sociologies of identity, however, we have also tried to call attention to their considerable weaknesses--foremost among which are the conflation of analytic or structural relationality into normative values about "being-in-relations" (e.g. Chodorow 1978; Gilligan 1982), as well as the inadvertent ahistoricism that results from constructing new *categories* of identity. To be sure, there is still a place for the use of categories of identity in everyday social practice.[65] Brint (1992, p. 196), for example, rightly says that the sociological use of categories reflects the "belief that the experience of common conditions of life...makes people with shared attributes a meaningful feature of the social structure."[66] But it is precisely because this belief is accepted into social analysis too uncritically that new theories of action centered around identity are often empirically confounded. Our argument is that there is no reason to assume a priori that people with similar attributes will share common experiences of social life, let alone be moved to common forms and meanings of social action, unless they share similar narrative identities and relational settings. Bringing narrativity to identity thus provides the conceptual

sinews that will allow us to produce a tighter, more historically sensitive, coupling between social identity and agency.

Finally, the concepts of narrative identity and relational setting allow us to reconceptualize the subject-object dynamic of modern social theory. This dichotomous dualism is transformed into numerous matrices of patterned relationships, social practices, and institutions mediated not by abstractions but by linkages of political power, social practices, and public narratives. This simultaneously reconceptualizes social agency away from its unitary status of individuation, and towards an understanding of agency constituted within institutions, structures of power, cultural networks, and, more generally, those *others* who are a central analytic dimension (again, not necessarily normative) of that identity. In this view, institutions (however dominating or constraining) are wholly a product of collective practices rather than of external entities. These conceptualizations are themselves premised on the extensive research, across time and space, which already suggests that social identities are constituted by the intricate interweaving of history, narrativity, social knowledge, and relationality, as well as institutional and cultural practices.

NOTES

1. Discussion of collective projects in the establishment of professional identity include Larson (1977) and Abbott (1988a). For the social sciences in particular, see Zald (1991), Collini, Winch, and Burrow (1983), Hacking (1990), and Ross (1991).

2. Abell (1984, 1987), Abbott (1983, 1984, 1988b, 1990, 1992) have been in the vanguard of challenging this exclusion in the domain of methodology. Lloyd (1986) provides an excellent analysis of the development of these binary oppositions in the social sciences. A recent example of defining sociology by its opposition to "merely" writing history can be found in Kiser and Hechter (1991).

3. The term comes from and is elaborated in Somers (1990, 1993b).

4. On historians abandoning traditional notions of narrative or even standard notions of history per se, see e.g. Megill (1989, 1991), Novick (1988, 1991), Toews (1987), Eley (forthcoming), Stone (1979).

5. See especially Ricouer (1979, 1981, 1984-86). In law and critical race theory see Williams (1991), Lawrence (1992), Geertz (1983), J. B. White (1984); R. Dworkin (1982); in psychology, see Hales (1985), Kemper (1984), Bruner (1986,1987), Sarbin (1986), Gergen and Gergen (1986); in medicine, see Williams (1984), Kleinman (1988); in psychoanalytic theory, see Spence (1982), Schafer (1981, 1983); in education, see Witherell and Noddings (1991); in philosophy, see MacIntyre (1981), C.Taylor (1989); in gender studies, see Violi (1992), Zerilli (1991), Bell and Yalom (1990), Miller (1991), Personal Narratives Group (1989), Maynes (1989), Gordon (1986), Graham, Hinds, Hobby, and Wilcox (1989); in anthropology, see Daniel (1984), Turner and Bruner (1986), Ortner (1991); in physics, Cartwright (1983); in biology, Gould (1988, 1990).

6. This is beginning to change, e.g. Alexander (1989); Hart (1992), Sewell (1992), Somers (1992), Steinmetz (1992), White (1992b).

7. Harrison White (1992b) has broken critical ground by bringing narrativity (stories) into the heart of his structural theory of social action, and see also Bearman (1991). Alexander (1988a, 1989) has also theorized the importance of narrative to social action.

8. And despite their radically divergent evaluation of what counts as theory, the same conceptual polarities between narrative and causality are posited in the work of Abbott (1990, 1992) on the one hand, and Kiser and Hechter (1991) on the other.

9. This and the context of discovery were first formalized by Reichenbach (1947).

10. In his introduction to the special section on "Narrative Analysis in Social Science," Sewell (1992, p. 479) stresses this point in observing the highly unusual "departure [of the topic] from the usual fare of Social Science History and from the vision of social-scientifically informed historical study that has dominated the SSHA since its founding a decade and a half ago."

11. See especially Mauss (1985) and, more generally, Carrithers, Collins, and Lukes (1985).

12. Attention to identity-formation is slowly gaining ground in sociology. Significantly, the two major sources for these developments are both groups of "outsiders" from the discipline who are at once "marginal" to the theorized social actor: 1) women, people of color, ethnic minorities, and more recently, those who feel nationally excluded, see Collins (1990), Laslett (1992), Smith (1987, 1990a, 1990b), and Yeatman (1990) and 2) the "new social movements" in Europe and America whose goals of "identity-expression" have been used to distinguish them from more "instrumental" movements, e.g. Aronowitz (1992); Calhoun (1991a, 1991b, 1991c); Cohen (1985); Cohen and Arato (1992); Melucci (1989), Pizzorno (1985), Touraine (1985)..

13. Chodorow (1978), Elshtain (1981), Gilligan (1982), McKinnon (1989), Smith (1987, 1990a, 1990b), and Belensky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) are some examples of the reinterpretation of female "difference" into a form of gender identity. The criticism of categorical fixity is of course the animating impulse behind much of

feminist, post-modernist, critical race theory, and the "new historicism." Canning (forthcoming), Chartier (1988), Collins (1990, 1992), Davis (1991), Flax (1990a, 1990b), Fraser (1989), Haraway (1991); Laquer (1990), Lawrence (1992), Nicholson (1990), Scott (1988a, 1988b, 1991), Smith (1987, 1990a, 1990b), Tavris (1992), and Williams (1988, 1991) are among the many contributions that have recently shown that racial and sexual categories cannot be conceived as pre-political and/or outside the bounds of social constitution.

14. The next few paragraphs draw upon Somers (forthcoming b).

15. On the myth, see William Townsend (1979[1786]). The potency of the parable was not dependent on its lack of empirical validity. Malthus and Darwin were both inspired by its message--Condorcet passed it on to Malthus, and Malthus to Darwin. Yet both owed the success of their theories in large part to the impact on actual social policy that Townsend's anti-statist Dissertation enjoyed. His injunction that "legal constraint is attended with much trouble, violence and noise; creates ill will, and never can be productive of good and acceptable service: whereas hunger is not only peaceable, silent, unremitting pressure, but, [is] the most natural motive to industry and labor [and] lays lasting and sure foundations for good will and gratitude" spurred the repeal of the English Poor Laws which had long supported the poor in periods of unemployment. From this perspective, the true founder of modern social science was not Adam Smith who still argued for the moral role of political regulation, but this long forgotten figure of Townsend. See Polanyi (1944), especially Ch.7-10 for an important discussion of Townsend. On the discourse of "society", see Polanyi (1944, Ch.10); Bossy (1982); Williams (1976, pp.243-47).

16. This phrase is meant to evoke, but also to escape, the constricting binary, indeed almost Manichean, dichotomy between "theory-laden" versus "empiricist/positivist" conceptions of science and social science that frames the terms of controversy within most social science theory.

17. This conceptualization shares much with Taylor's (1989) "epistemic gain." See also Calhoun (1991b).

18. See Somers (1986, forthcoming a) for attempts to carry this out.

19. Lieberson (1992) makes a similar point about modern research.

20. Hobbes (1966, p. 109).

21. The early Durkheim could also be called here the Parsonian Durkheim since Parsons' reading was the most influential introduction and interpretation of his work. More recently Alexander (1988b) has reassessed Durkheim's contributions by focussing on the later writings. Among the most important findings of this reassessment is Durkheim's conclusive break with what we are calling the "revolutionary idiom" and the formulation of a critique of historicist readings of modernity that are among the most influential in today's cultural studies.

22. Alexander (1989, p. 246) rightly states: "there seems to be abundant evidence that moderns still seek to undertand the contingency of everyday life in terms of narrative traditions whose simplicity and resistance to change makes them hard to distinguish from myths."

23. For interesting secondary discussions that bear on this point see Dumont (1977, 1982), Benhabib (1981), Giddens (1977).

24. For discussion of the new identity-politics in theories of social movements, see footnote #12.

25. See also Elshtain (1981), McKinnon (1989) and Ruddick (1989) for extremely influential versions of feminist identity politics.

26. These criticisms of identity-theories are articulated in many different ways and places. Some of the most useful include Flax (1990a, 1990b), Fraser and Nicholson (1990), Haraway (1991), Lemert (1992), Scott (1988a).

27. Polanyi (1944) still presents us with the deepest understanding of the discovery of society. See also Collini, Winch, and Burrow (1983) and Block and Somers (1984), Dumont (1982), Carrithers et. al. (1985).

28. This view of narrative as methodology was importantly substantiated by the philosophers and historiographers. White (1981, 1984, 1987) and Mink (1966, 1978) both argued that despite the representational value of narrative, it had to be seen as a superimposed form that analysts/historians placed over the chaos of "reality" to organize it into coherency. See also Danto (1985) for a complex philosophical discussion of the analytic place of narrative in historical analysis. The major exception to this position, and a major influence on the new narrative approach, is Ricoeur (1979, 1981, 1984-86).

29. For a sampling of the raging debate among philosophers of history in the 1940s through 1960s over these issues, see Hempel (1959 [1942], 1965), Dray (1957), Gallie (1968), Atkinson (1978), and Gardiner (1952).

30. Hempel (1959 [1942]) of course initiated a major challenge to this in his theories of scientific narrative.

31. See note #5 above.

32. Cf. especially the "life stories" scholarship of Bertaux (1981), Bertaux and Kohli (1984), Freeman (1984); Linde (1986), Polanyi (1985).

33. This discussion of narrative draws from Somers (1992). For a range of discussions of narrative theory, see Scholes and Kellogg (1966); Genette (1980); Mitchell (1981); Jameson (1981); Brooks (1984); Barthes (1974 [1966]).

34. We are happy with Friedland and Alford's (1991, p. 243) definition of an institution as: "simultaneously material and ideal, systems of signs and symbols, rational and transrational...supraorganizational patterns of human activity by which individuals and organizations produce and reproduce their material subsistence and organize time and space...[t]hey are also symbolic systems, ways of ordering reality, and thereby rendering experience of time and space meaningful."

35. This is indeed a different approach to the concept of explanation that the strictest of analytic philosophers of science would accept--causality as a deductive instance of a generalization. Indeed the very strength and utility of the latter is its valid

"denarrativization" or abstraction of instances, elements, or events from time and space into categories. See Somers (forthcoming b).

36. For an especially useful empirical application, see Alexander (1989) for the impressive array of narratives that were deployed to explain action on both sides during the Watergate hearings.

37. This is *not* to endorse the hermeneutic claim that the actor's intentions or self-understanding is a *sufficient* condition for a sociological explanation of action. We argue only that analyses of actors' own self-stories are a *necessary* condition.

38. Samples of different approaches to ontological narratives can be found in Sarbin (1986), MacIntyre (1981), C.Taylor (1989), Bruner (1987), Bell and Yalom (1990), Bertaux and Kohli (1984), Crites (1986), Ferccero (1986), Freeman (1984), Gergen (1973, 1977, 1985), Gergen and Gergen (1986), Didion (1992), Swift (1983).

39. Organizational theory is one area of the social sciences that has used the narrative concept in particularly creative ways. Cf. DiMaggio (1988), Martin, Feldman, Hatch, and Sim (1983), Meyer and Rowan (1977), Meyer and Scott (1983), Mitroff and Killman (1975), Smircich (1983), Zucker (1991).

40. On narrative methodology in sociology and history, see footnote #2, cf. Abell (1984, 1987), Abbott (1990, 1992), Brown (1987, 1990), Isaac and Griffin (1989), Griffin (1991), Quadagno and Knapp (1992), Reed (1989), Sewell (forthcoming), Somers (1990, forthcoming b).

41. We are faced with an even greater problem in thinking about explanatory sociological narrative. Indeed in light of their status as the epistemological "other", constructing narratives would seem to be precisely what we as social scientists do *not* want to do. Should we not focus exclusively on explanation? As we argued above in the general discussion of narrativity, the presumed incompatibility between narrative and explanation may well be specious. Of course this raises the question of what counts as an explanation; there are, after all, competing positions on the validity capacity of different modes of justification. Rather than argue the nature of and case for

explanatory *narrativity* which has been done elsewhere and at some length, e.g.
Abbott (1990, 1992), Abell (1984, 1987), Aminzade (1992), Quadagno and Quadagno
(1992), Somers (1990, 1992), let us make the argument that when we say that
sociological explanations entail analytic narrativity that is not the same as arguing
that social science theory is *solely* narrative. As Alexander (1991, p. 149) recently
argued, it is also a code (Bernstein 1971). Even more important, to argue the case
for explanatory narrativity is not to argue that there is no qualitative difference
between at least the norms of analytic narrativity, on the one hand, and those of
cultural and ontological narrativity, on the other. The latter attain meaning through
internal integrity alone, that is, they are only partially subjected to external truth
criteria. But as Alexander (1991, p. 149) has also reminded us, "science differs from
other narratives because it commits the success of its story to the criterion of truth.
For every scientific narrative we are compelled to ask, 'Do we know whether it is
true?" The strength of explanatory narrativity, however, is that it steps out of the
typically "either/or version of "truth" versus "relativism" and uses criteria for
validity that are outside the extremes of "localism" versus foundational truth.
Narrative explanatory analysis, from this perspective, guides us to construct and to
believe in "the best possible account" at the same time that we know full well that (1)
what counts as "best" is itself historical and (2) that these criteria will change and
change again. See Longino (1990), MacIntyre (1973, 1980), Nehamas (1985), and
Taylor (1991).

42. Thus it is not at all surprising that in his recent book, White (1992) has made *stories*
and *identity* central aspects of his theory of social action. A useful summary of the
structural approach is offered by Wellman and Berkowitz (1988, p. 15):
"...mainstream sociologists have tended to think in terms of categories of social actors
who share similar characteristics: "women," "the elderly," "blue-colar workers,"
"emerging nations," and so on... this kind of approach has its uses, but it has misled

many sociologists into studying the attributes of aggregated sets of individuals rather than the structural nature of social systems."

43. Even an isolated "hermit" is a social actor and must thus be made intelligible through a relational and narrative approach.

44. Calhoun (1991) gives an example of how identity-politics moved Chinese students in Tienanmen Square to take risks with their lives that cannot be accounted for in rational or value terms.

45. Fantasia's (1988) study of varying cultures of solidarity is one of the best examples of the empirical power of the narrative identity approach over the interest-based one.

46. All of Steedman's writings (1987, 1988, 1990, 1992) could be seen as elaborations on the theme of narrative identity.

47. See also Tilly (1984) for the first of his famous "eight pernicious postulates."

48. See also Bourdieu (1985) on social space and the genesis of groups.

49. On the epistemological significance of networks and relational analysis over categories in understanding social structures see White, Boorman, and Breiger (1976, 1992)); for applications in historical sociology see Gould (1991), Mann (1986) and Bearman (1993).

50. The epistemological implications of recent work in historical geography have been little noted by sociologists. Exceptions include Aminzade (1992), Giddens (1985), Mann (1986), Tilly (1984).

51. An important view of the value of theoretically disaggregating social reality can be found in Bell (1976) and Walzer (1982).

52. See e.g. Pizzorno (1978, 1985), Melucci (1989).

53. See Alexander (1983a).

54. Cohen and Arato (1992) challenge this point effectively.

55. On the concept of provisioning, see Sahlins (1976). And for the importance of provisioning for gender analysis see Fraser and Gordon (1992).

56. See Parkin (1979) for a sociological elaboration of this basic Weberian and anthropological notion.

57. See e.g. Stack (1974), Vincent (1981), Tilly, Scott, and Cohen (1976).

58. Ortner calls this "rupturing of narrativity" in her analysis of Eliot Liebow's Tally's Corner where she gives a example of how power relations have ruptured the narrative identities--and thus "normal future-oriented" behavior--of urban African-American men (Ortner 1991). See also Haraway (1991) and Lemert (1992) on "fractured identities."

59. This is of course only an analytic distinction; no narrative can be purely one without the other.

60. This is a situation described in detail in Somers (1986, 1991). This of course fits much more with Weber's understanding of class as objective market chances divorced from values.

61. See F.M.L. Thompson (1981) and Reid (1978) for a sense of how pervasive the social control thesis was in social history during the 1970s.

62. For examples see Bell (1980), Laquer (1981)), Needham (1978), Beidelman (1980), Burguiere (1982), Bloch and Parry (1982).

63. See Alexander (1989) on the importance of the sociological classics and the limits to historicism.

64. Scott (1988a) has made this argument most convincingly for the discipline of history.

65. The question of the epistemological place of categories in the context of an overall relational and narrative approach is a major theme of White (1992b). Calhoun (1991a) discusses categories and relationships by bringing White's "structural equivalence" and "indirect relationships" to the study of nationalism and identity.

66. And see White's (1992a) response to this criticism of what Brint sees as an overly relational approach to sociology.

REFERENCES

Abbott, Andrew. 1983. "Sequences of Social Events." Historical Methods 16(4):129.

Abbott, Andrew. 1984. "Event Sequence and Event Duration." Historical Methods 17(4):192.

Abbott, Andrew. 1988a. The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Abbott, Andrew. 1988b. "Transcending General Linear Reality." Sociological Theory 6:169-86.

Abbott, Andrew. 1990. "Conceptions of Time and Events in Social Science Methods: Causal and Narrative Approaches." Historical Methods.

Abbott, Andrew. 1992. "From Causes to Events: Notes on Narrative Positivism." Sociological Methods & Research, 20(4):428-455.

Abell, Peter. 1984. "Comparative Narratives." Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior 14:309-31.

Abell, Peter. 1987. The Syntax of Social Life. Oxford University Press.

Abrams, Philip. 1980. "History, Sociology, Historical Sociology." Past and Present 87:7.

Abrams, Philip. 1982. Historical Sociology. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Alexander, Jeffrey C. 1982. Positivism, Presuppositions, and Current Controversies, Vol. 1 Theoretical Logic in Sociology. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Alexander, Jeffrey C. 1983. The Classical Attempt at Theoretical Synthesis: Max Weber, Vol. 3 Theoretical Logic in Sociology. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Alexander, Jeffrey C. 1988a. Action and Its Environment: Towards a New Synthesis. New York: Columbia University Press.

Alexander, Jeffrey C. 1988b. Durkheimian Sociology: Cultural Studies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Alexander, Jeffrey C. 1989. Structure and Meaning: Rethinking Classical Sociology. New York: Columbia University Press.

Alexander, Jeffrey C. 1991. "Sociological Theory and the Claim to Reason: Why the End is not in Sight." Sociological Theory 9(2):147-153.

Aminzade, Ron. 1992. "Historical Sociology and Time Sociological Methods and Research 20(4):456-80.

Aronowitz, Stanley. 1992. The Politics of Identity: Class, Culture, Social Movements. New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc.

Asante, Molefi Kete. 1987. The Afrocentric Idea. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Atkinson, R. F. 1978. Knowledge and Explanation in History: An Introduction to the Philosophy of History. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Barthes, Roland. 1974(1966). "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of the Narrative." Occasional Paper, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham. Translated by Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang.

Bearman, Peter. 1991. "The Social Structure of Suicide." Sociological Forum 5, September.

Bearman, Peter. 1993. Relations into Rhetorics. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Beidelman, T. O. 1980. "The Moral Imagination of the Kaguru: Some Thoughts on Tricksters, Translation, and Comparative Analysis." American Ethnologist 7(1):27-42.

Belenky, Mary F., Blythe M. Clinchy, Nancy R. Goldberger, and Jill M. Tarule. 1986. Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind. New York: Basic Books.

Bell, Daniel. 1976. "The Disjuncture of Realms: A Statement of Themes." In The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism. New York: Basic Books.

Bell, Daniel. 1980. "The Return of the Scared?" The Winding Passage. New York: Basic Books.

Bell, Susan Groag and Marilyn Yalom, eds. 1990. Revealing Lives: Autobiography, Biography, and Gender. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Benhabib, Seyla. 1981. "Rationality and Social Action: Critical Reflections on Weber's Methodological Writings." In The Philosophical Forum 12(4):356-74 .

Berg, Maxine. 1987. "Women's Work, Mechanisation and the Early Phases of Industrialisation in England." Pp. 64-98 in The Historical Meanings of Work, edited by Patrick Joyce. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bernstein, Basil. 1971. Class, Codes, and Control. New York: Schocken.

Bertaux, Daniel and Martin Kohli. 1984. "The life story approach: A continental view." Annual Review of Sociology 10:215-37.

Bertaux, Daniel. 1981. Biography and Society. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Bloch, Maurice and Jonathon Parry, eds. 1982. Death and the Regeneration of Life. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Block, Fred and Margaret Somers. 1984. "Beyond the Economistic Fallacy: The Holistic Social Science of Karl Polanyi." Pp. 47-84 in Vision and Method in Historical Sociology, edited by Theda Skocpol. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bossy, John. 1982. "Some Elementary Forms of Durkheim." Past and Present 95.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. Distinction. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1985. "Social Space and the Genesis of Groups." Theory and Society 14:723-44.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1986. "The Habitus and the Space of Life-Styles." Pp.   in Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste. Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1990. The Logic of Practice. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. An Outline of a Theory of Practice. Translated by Richard Nice, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Brint, Steven. 1992. "Hidden Meanings: Cultural Content and Context in Harrison White's Structural Sociology. Sociological Theory 10(2):194-207.

Brooks, Peter. 1984. Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Brown, Richard Harvey. 1987. "Positivism, Relativism, and Narrative in the Logic of the Historical Sciences. American Historical Review 92(4):908-20.

Brown, Richard Harvey. 1990. "Rhetoric, textuality, and the postmodern turn in sociological theory." Sociological Theory 8(2):188-97.

Bruner, Jerome. 1986. Actual Minds, Possible Worlds. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bruner, Jerome. 1987. "Life as Narrative." Social Research 54(1):11-32.

Burguiere, Andre. 1982. "The Fate of the History of Mentalities in the Annales." Comparative Studies in Society and History 24(3):424-437.

Calhoun, Craig J. 1980. "Community: Toward a Variable Conceptualization for Comparative Research." Social History. 5:105-129.

Calhoun, Craig J. 1991a. Imagined Communities and Indirect Relationships: Large-Scale Social Integration and the Transformation of Everyday Life." Pp. 95-120 in Social Theory for a Changing Society, edited by Pierre Bourdieu and James S. Coleman. Boulder, CO: Westview Press and New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Calhoun, Craig J. 1991b. "Morality, Identity, and Historical Explanation: Charles Taylor on the Sources of the Self." Sociological Theory 9(2): 232-263.

Calhoun, Craig J. 1991c. "The Problem of Identity in Collective Action." Pp. 51-75 in Macro-Micro Linkages in Sociology, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Canning, Kathleen. Forthcoming. "Contesting the Power of Categories: Discourse, Experience, and Feminist Resistance." Signs.

Carr, David. 1985. "Life and the Narrator's Art." Pp. 108-121 in Hermeneutics and Deconstruction, edited by Hugh J. Silverman and Don Idhe. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Carr, David. 1986. "Narrative and the Real World." History and Theory 25(2):117-131.

Carrithers, Michael, Steven Collins, and Steven Lukes, eds. 1985. The Category of the Person: Anthropology, Philosophy, History, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cartwright, Nancy. 1983. How the Laws of Physics Lie, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Chartier, Roger. 1988. Cultural History: Between Practices and Representations. Translated by Lydia G. Chochrane. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Chodorow, Nancy. 1978. The Reproduction of Mothering. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Cohen, Jean L. 1985. "Strategy or Identity: New Theoretical Paradigms and Contemporary Social Movements." Social Research 52:663-716.

Cohen, Jean L. and Andrew Arato. 1992. Civil Society and Political Theory. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Coleman, James. 1990. Foundations of Social Theory. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Collingwood, Robin G. 1970(1939). An Autobiography. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Collini, Stefan, Donald Winch, and J. W. Burrow, eds. 1983. That Noble Science of Politics: A Study in Nineteenth Centry Intellectual History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Collins, Patricia Hill. 1990. Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment. Boston: Unwin Hyman.

Collins, Patricia Hill. 1992. "Transforming the Inner Circle: Dorothy Smith's Challenge to Sociological Theory." Sociological Theory: 73-80.

Connolly, William E. 1992a. Identity\Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press.

Connolly, William E. 1992b. "The Irony of Interpretation." Pp.119-50 in The Politics of Irony, edited by D. Conway and John Seery. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Crites, Stephen. 1986. "Storytime: Recollecting the Past and Projecting the Future." Pp. 152-173 in Narrative Psychology: The Storied Nature of Human Conduct, edited by Theodore R. Sarbin. New York: Praeger.

Daniel, E. Valentine. 1984. Fluid Signs: Being a Person the Tamil Way. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Danto, Arthur C. 1985. Narration and Knowledge: Including the Integral Text of Analytical Philosophy of History. New York: Columbia University Press.

Davidoff, Lenore and Catherine Hall. 1987. Family Fortunes. Chicago: University of Chicago.

Davis, F. James. 1991. Who is Black?: One Nation's Definition. Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania State University.

Di Stefano, Christine. 1990. "Dilemmas of Difference: Feminism, Modernity, and Postmodernism." Pp. 63-82 in Feminism/Postmodernism, edited by Linda J. Nicholson/ Mew York and London: Routledge.

Didion, Joan. 1992. After Henry. New York: Simon & Schuster.

DiMaggio, Paul. 1988. "Interest and Agency in Institutional Theory." Pp. 3-22 in Institutional Patterns and Organization: Culture and Environment, edited by Lynn G. Zucker. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger.

Dray, William H. 1957. Laws and Explanations in History. London: Oxford University Press.

Dumont, Louis. 1977. From Mandeville to Marx. Chicago: University of sChicago Press.

Dumont, Louis. 1982. Essays on Individualism. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Dworkin, Ronald. 1982. The Politics of Interpretation. Chicago. University of Chicago Press.

Eley, Geoff. Forthcoming. "Is All the World a Text? From Sociological History to the History of Society Two Decades Later." In The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences, edited by Terrence J. McDonald. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Elshtain, Jean. 1981. Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Fantasia, Rick. 1988. Cultures of Solidarity. Berkely and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Ferccero, John. 1986. "Autobiography and Narrative." Pp. 16-29 in Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought, edited by Thomas C. Heller, Morton Sosna, and David E. Wellbery. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Flax, Jane. 1990a. "Postmodernism and Gender Relations in Feminist Theory." Pp. 39-62 in Feminism/Postmodernism, edited by Linda Nicholson. New York and London: Routledge.

Flax, Jane. 1990b. Thinking Fragments: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and Postmodernism in the Contemporary West. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Foucault, Michel. 1972. An Archaeology of Knowledge. Translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Pantheon.

Foucault, Michel. 1973(1970). The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences. New York: Vintage.

Fraser, Nancy and Linda Gordon. 1992. "Contract versus Charity, Participation and Provision: A Reconsideration of Social Citizenship." Paper presented at The University of Michigan.

Fraser, Nancy and Linda J. Nicholson. 1990. "Social Criticism Without Philosophy: An Encounter Between Feminism and Postmodernism. Pp. 19-38 in Feminism/Postmodernism, edited by Linda J. Nicholson. New York and London: Routledge.

Fraser, Nancy. 1989. Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse, and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Freeman, Mark. 1984. "History, Narrative, and Life-Span Developmental Knowledge." Human Development 27:1-19.

Friedland, Roger and Robert R. Alford. 1991. "Bringing Society Back In: Symbols, Practices, and Institutional Contradictions." PP. 232-263 in The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis, edited by Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gadamer, Hans George. 1989. Truth and Method. New York: Continuum.

Gagnier, Regenia. 1991. Subjectivities: A History of Self-Representation in Britain, 1832-1920. New York: Oxford University Press

Gallie, W. B. 1968. Philosophy and the Historical Understanding. New York: Schocken books.

Gardiner, Patrick. 1952. The Nature of Historical Explanation. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Geertz, Clifford. 1983. "Local Knowledge: Fact and Law in Comparative Perspective." In Local Knowledge, edited by Clifford Geertz. New York: Basic Books.

Genette, Gerard. 1980. Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method. Translated by Jane E. Lewin. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Gergen, Kenneth J. 1973. "Social Psychology as History." Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 26:309-20.

Gergen, Kenneth J. 1977. "Stability, Change, and Chance in Understanding Human Development. In Life-Span Development Psychology: Dialectical Perspectives in Experimental Research, edited by Nancy Datan and Wayne W. Reese. New York: Academic Press.

Gergen, Kenneth J. 1985. "The Social Constructionist Movement in Modern Psychology." American Psychologist 40:266-75.

Gergen, Kenneth J. and Mary M. Gergen. 1986. "Narrative Form and the Construction of Psychological Science." Pp. 22-44 in Narrative Psychology: The Storied Nature of Human Conduct, edited by Theodore R. Sarbin. New York: Praeger.

Giddens, Anthony. 1977. "The 'Individual' in Writings of Emile Durkheim." In Studies in Social and Political Theory. New York: Basic Books Inc.

Giddens, Anthony. 1979. Central Problems in Social Theory. London: Macmillan Press.

Giddens, Anthony. 1985. The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration. Cambridge: Polity Press; Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gilligan, Carol. 1982. In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Gordon, Linda. 1986. "What's New in Women's History." In Feminist Studies/Critical Studies, edited by Teresa de Lauretis. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Gould, Roger V. 1991. "Multiple Networks and Mobilization in the Paris Commune, 1871. American Sociological Review. 56(6):716-28.

Gould, Stephen Jay. 1988. "Mighty Manchester." New York Review of Books, October 27.

Gould, Stephen Jay. 1989. Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co.

Graham, Elspeth, Hilary Hinds, Elaine Hobby, and Helen Wilcox, eds. 1989. Her Own Life: Autobiographical Writings by Seventeenth-Century Englishwomen. London: Routledge.

Griffin, Larry J. 1991. "Narrative, Event Structure Analysis, and Causal Interpretation in Historical Sociology." Paper presented at the Social Science History Association meeting, New Orleans, November.

Habermas, Jurgen. 1979. Communications and the Evolution of Society. Boston: Beacon Press.

Habermas, Jurgen. 1984. Theory of Communicative Action. Vol. I Reason and the Rationalization of Society, translated by Thomas McCarthy. Boston: Beacon Press.

Hacking, Ian. 1982. "Language, Truth, and Reason." Pp. 48-66 in Rationality and Relativism, edited by M. Hollis and S. Lukes. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Hacking, Ian. 1984. "Five Parables." Pp. 103-24 in Philosophy in History, edited by Richard Rorty, J. B. Schneewind, and Quentin Skinner. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hacking, Ian. 1990b. "Two Kinds of 'New Historicism' for Philosophers." New Literary History 21:343-64.

Hacking, Ian. 1990a. The Taming of Chance. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Halbwachs, Maurice. 1980(1950). The Collective Memory. New York: Harper & Row.

Hales, Susan. 1985. "The Inadvertant Rediscovery of Self in Social Psychology." Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior 15(October):237-282.

Haraway, Donna. 1991. Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature. New York and London: Routledge.

Hart, Janet. 1992. "Cracking the Code: Allegory and Political Mobilization in the Greek Resistance." Social Science History 16(4):631-68.

Hawthorne, Geoffrey. 1976. Enlightenment and Despair. London: Cambridge University Press.

Hempel, Carl. G. 1959(1942). "The Function of General Laws in History." Reprinted in Theories of History, edited by Patrick Gardiner. New York: Free Press.

Hempel, Carl. G. 1965. "Aspects of Scientific Explanation." In Aspects of Scientific Explanation. New York: Free Press.

Hobbes, Thomas. 1966. "Philosophical Rudiments Concerning Government and Society." Pp. 109 in The English Works of Thomas Hobbes, Vol. II, edited by Sir William Molesworth. London: Aalen, Scientia Verlag.

Hoggart, Richard. 1959. The Uses of Literacy. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Hooks, Bell. 1984. From Margin to Center. Boston: South End Press.

Isaac, Larry W. and Larry J. Griffin. 1989. "Ahistoricism in Time-Series Analyses of Historical Processes." American Sociological Review 54:873-90.

Jameson, Fredric. 1981. The Political Unconscious. Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Jordan, June. 1981. Civil Wars. Boston: Beacon.

Joyce, Patrick, ed. 1987. The Historical Meanings of Work. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Joyce, Patrick. 1991. Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1848-1941. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kemper, Susan. 1984. "The Development of Narrative Skills: Explanations and Entertainments." Pp. 99-124 in Discourse Development: Progress in Cognitive Development Research, edited by Stan A. Kuczaj, II. New York: Springer-Verlag.

Kermode, Frank. 1984. "Secrets and Narrative Sequence." In On Narrative, edited by W.J.T. Mitchell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kiser, Edgar and Michael Hechter. 1991. "The Role of General Theory in Comparative-Historical Sociology." American Journal of Sociology 97:1-30.

Kleinman, Arthur. 1988. The Illness Narratives. New York: Basic.

Lamont, Michele. 1992. Money, Morals, and Manners: the Culture of the French and American Upper-Middle Class. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Laqueur, Thomas. 1981. "Bodies, Death, and Pauper Funerals." Representations 1(1):109-31.

Laqueur, Thomas. 1990. Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Larson, Magali Sarfatti. 1977. The Rise of Professionalism: A Socioligical Analysis. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Laslett, Barbara. 1992. "Thinking about the Subject." Newsletter of the Comparative and Historical Sociology Section of the American Sociological Association. Vol. 5

Lawrence, Charles R. III. 1992. "The Word and the River: Pedagogy as Scholarship as Struggle." Southern California Law Review, 65(5):2231-2298.

Lemert, Charles. 1992. "Subjectivity's Limit: The Unsolved Riddle of the Standpoint." Sociological Theory: 63-72.

Lieberson, Stanley. 1992. "Einstein, Renoir, and Greeley: Some Thoughts about Evidence in Sociology." American Sociological Review 57(1):1-15.

Linde, Charlotte. 1986. "Private Stories in Public Discourse. Narrative Analysis in the Social Sciences." Poetics 15:183-202.

Lloyd, Christopher. 1986. Explanation in Social History. New York: Basil Blackwell.

Longino, Helen. 1990. Science as Social Knowledge. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Lorde, Audre. 1984. Sister Outsider. Trumansberg, NY: The Crossing Press.

Lyotard, J. F. 1984. The Post-Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Pres.

MacIntyre, Alasdair. 1973. "The Essential Contestability of some Social Concepts." Ethics 1.

MacIntyre, Alasdair. 1980. "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science." Pp. 54-74 in Paradigms and Revolutions, edited by Gary Gutting. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

MacIntyre, Alasdair. 1981. After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

MacKinnon, Catharine. 1989. Toward a Feminist Theory of State. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Mann, Michael. 1986. "The Origins of Social Power." Vol. 1. A History of Power From the Beginning to A.D. 1760. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

March, G. James and Johan P. Olsen. 1984. "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life." American Political Science Review 78(3):734-49.

Marshall, T. H. 1964(1949). "Citizenship and Social Class." Pp. 65-123 in Class, Citizenship, and Social Development: Essays by T. H. Marshall. New York: Doubleday.

Martin, Joanne, Martha S. Feldman, Mary Jo Hatch, and Sim B. Sim. 1983. "The uniqueness paradox in organizational stories." Administrative Science Quarterly 38:438-53.

Marx, Karl. 1978(1852). "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte." Pp. 594 in The Marx-Engels Reader, 2nd ed., Robert C. Tucker. New York: Norton.

Mauss, Marcell. 1985. "A Category of the Human Mind: the Notion of Person; the Notion of Self." Pp. 1-25 in The Category of the Person, edited by Michael Carrithers, Steven Collins, and Steven Lukes. Translated by W. D. Halls. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Maynes, Mary Jo. 1989. "Gender and Narrative Form in French and German Working-Class Autobiographies." Pp. 103-117 in Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives, edited by Personal Narratives Group. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press.

McNall, Scott, Rhonda Levine, and Rick Fantasia, eds. 1991. Bringing Class Back In: Contemporary and Historical Perspectives. Boulder: Westview Press.

Megill, Alan. 1991. "Fragmentation and the Future of Historiography." American Historical Review 96(June).

Megill, Allan. 1989. "Recounting the Past: 'Description,' Explanation, and Narrative in Historiography." American Historical Review 94(3):627-653.

Melucci, Alberto. 1989. Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society. Philadelphia: Temple Unviersity Press.

Meyer, John W. and Brian Rowan. 1977. "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony. American Journal of Sociology 83:340-63.

Meyer, John W. and John Scott. 1983. Organizational Environments: Ritual and Rationality. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Miller, Nancy K. 1991. Getting Personal: Feminist Occasions and Other Autobiographical Acts. New York: Routledge.

Mink, Louis O. 1966. "The Autonomy of Historical Understanding." Pp. 160-192 in Philosophical Analysis and History, edited by William H. Dray. New York: Harper & Row.

Mink, Louis O. 1978. "Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument." Pp. 107-124 in New Directions in Literary History, edited by Ralph Cohen. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Minow, Martha. 1987. "Foreword: Justice Engendered." 101 Harvard Law Review 10.

Minow, Martha. 1990. Making All the Difference: Inclusion, Exclusion, and American Law. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Mitchell, W. J. T., ed. 1981. Recent Theories of Narrative. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Mitroff, Ian and R. H. Killman. 1975. "Stories Managers Tell: A New Tool for Organizational Problem Solving." Management Review 64:18-28.

Moore, Barrington, Jr. 1978. Injustice: The Sources of Obedience and Revolt. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Needham, Rodney. 1978. Primordial Characters. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.

Nehamas, Alexander. 1985. Nietzche: Life as Literature. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Nicholson, Linda, ed. 1990. Feminism/Postmodernism. New York: Routledge.

Novick, Peter. 1988. That Noble Dream: The 'Objectivity Question' and the American Historical Profession." Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Novick, Peter. 1991. "My Correct Views on Everything." American Historical Review 96.

Ortner, Sherry. 1991. "Narrativity in History, Culture, and Lives." CSST Working Paper #66, University of Michigan.

Parkin, Frank. 1979. Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique. New York: Columbia University Press.

Personal Narratives Group, ed. 1989. Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press.

Pizzorno, Alessandro. 1978. "Political Exchange and Collective Identity in Industrial Conflict." Pp. 277-298 in The Resurgence of Class Conflict in Western Europe Since 1968, edited by C. Crouch and A. Pizzorno. London: Macmillan.

Pizzorno, Alessandro. 1985. "On the Rationality of Democratic Choice." Telos No. 63:41-69.

Polanyi, Karl. 1944. The Great Transformation. New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc.

Polanyi, Karl. 1977. The Livelihood of Man, edited by Harry W. Pearson. New York: Academic Press.

Polanyi, Livia. 1985. Telling the American Story. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Publishing.

Polkinghorne, Donald. 1988. <u>Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences.</u> Albany: SUNY Press.

Poovey, Mary. <u>Uneven Developments.</u> Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Powell, Walter W. and Paul J. DiMaggio, eds. 1991. <u>The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis.</u> Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Putnam, Hilary. 1975. "The Meaning of Meaning." In <u>Mind, Lanugage and Reality: Philosophical Papers,</u> Vol. 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Quadagno, Jill and Stan J. Knapp. 1992. "Have Historical Sociologists Forsaken Theory?: Thoughts on the History/Theory Relationship." <u>Sociological Methods and Research</u> 20(4):481-507.

Rawls, John. 1971. <u>A Theory of Justice.</u> Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Reddy, William M. 1987. <u>Money and Liberty in Modern Europe: A Critique of Historical Understanding.</u> Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Reed, John Shelton. 1989. "On Narrative and Sociology." <u>Social Forces</u> 68(I):1-14.

Reichenbach, Hans. 1947. <u>Elements of Symbolic Logic.</u> New York:

Reid, Alistair. 1978. "Politics and Economics in the Formation of the British Working Class: A Response to H. F. Moorhouse." <u>Social History</u> 3(3):347-61.

Ricoeur, Paul. 1979. "The Human Experience of Time and Narrative." <u>Research in Phenomenology</u> 9:25.

Ricoeur, Paul. 1981. "Narrative Time." Pp. 165-186 in <u>On Narrative,</u> edited by W. J. T. Mitchell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ricoeur, Paul. 1984-1986. <u>Time and Narrative,</u> 2 vols. Translated by Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ross, Dorothy. 1991. <u>The Origin of American Social Science.</u> New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ruddick, Sara. 1989. <u>Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace.</u> New York: Ballantine Books.

Sahlins, Marshall. 1976. <u>Culture and Practical Reason.</u> Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Sandel, Michael. 1982. <u>Liberalism and the Limits to Justice.</u> Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sarbin, Theodore R., ed. 1986. <u>Narrative Psychology: The Storied Nature of Human Conduct.</u> New York: Praeger.

Schafer, Roy. 1981. "Narration in the Psychoanalytical Dialogue." Pp. 25-49 in <u>On Narrative,</u> edited by W. J. T. Mitchell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Schafer, Roy. 1983. <u>The Analytic Attitude.</u> New York: Basic Books.

Scholes, Robert and Robert Kellogg. 1966. <u>The Nature of Narrative.</u> London: Oxford University Press.

Scott, Joan Wallach. 1988a. Gender and the Politics of History. New York: Columbia University Press.

Scott, Joan Wallach. 1988b. "On Language, Gender, and Working-Class History." Pp. 53-67 in Gender and the Politics of History. New York: Columbia University Press.

Scott, Joan Wallach. 1991. "The Evidence of Experience." Critical Inquiry 17(3):770

Seabrook, Jeremy. 1982. Working Class Childhood. London: Gollancz.

Seidman, Steven. 1991. "The End of Sociological Theory: The Postmodern Hope." Sociological Theory 9(2):131-46.

Sewell, William H. Jr. 1986. "Theory of Action, Dialectics and History: Comment on Coleman." American Journal of Sociology 43:166-72.

Sewell, William H. Jr. 1992. "Introduction: Narratives and Social Identities." Social Science History 16(3):479-88.

Sewell, William H. Jr. Forthcoming. "Three Temporalities: Toward a Sociology of the Event." In The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences, edited by Terrence J. McDonald. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Shively, JoEllen. 1992. "Perceptions of Western Films Among American Indians and Anglos." American Sociological Review, 57(6):725-34.

Smelser, Neil. 1959. Social Change in the Industrial Revolution. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Smircich, Linda. 1983. "Concepts of Culture and Organizational Analysis." Administrative Science Quarterly 28:339-58.

Smith, Dorothy E. 1987. The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Smith, Dorothy E. 1990a. Texts, Facts, and Femininity: Exploring the Relations of Ruling. Loudon and New York: Routledge.

Smith, Dorothy E. 1990b. The Conceptual Practices of Power: A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Somers, Margaret R. 1986. The People and the Law: Narrative Identity and the Place of the Public Sphere in the Formation of English Working Class Politics--1300-1850, a Comparative Analysis. Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University.

Somers, Margaret R. 1989. "Does Social Theory Need History?: Reflections on Epistemological Encounters in the Social Sciences." CSST Working Paper #33, Univeristy of Michigan.

Somers, Margaret R. 1990. "Narrativity, Culture, and Causality: Toward a New Historical Epistemology (or Where is Sociology After the Historic Turn?)." Paper presented at the conference on The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences, University of Michigan, October 5-6. CSST Working Paper #54, University of Michigan.

Somers, Margaret R. 1991. Political Culture and the Public Sphere: Rethinking the Making of Citizenship." CSST Working Paper #68, University of Michigan.

Somers, Margaret R. 1992. "Narrativity, Narrative Identity, and Social Action: Rethinking English Working-Class Formation." Social Science History 16(4):591-630.

Somers, Margaret R. Forthcoming(a). "Property, Law, and the Public Sphere in the Formation of Modern Citizenship Rights." In Early Modern Conceptions of Property, edited by John Brewer. London and New York: Routledge.

Somers, Margaret R. Forthcoming(b). "Where is Sociology After the Historic Turn? Knowledge Cultures and Historical Epistemologies." In The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences, edited by Terrence J. McDonald. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Sonenscher, Michael. 1987. "Mythical Work: Workshop Production and the Compagnonnages of Eighteenth-Century France." Pp. 31-63 in The Historical Meanings of Work, edited by Patrick Joyce. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Spence, Donald P. 1982. Narrative Truth and Historical Truth: Meaning and Interpretation in Psychoanalysis. New York: W. W. Norton.

Stack, Carol B. 1974. All Our Kin. New York: Harper and Row.

Steedman, Carolyn. 1987. Landscape for a Good Woman: A Story of Two Lives. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Steedman, Carolyn. 1988. The Radical Soldier's Tale: John Pearman, 1819-1908. London and New York: Routledge.

Steedman, Carolyn. 1990. Childhood, Culture, and Class in Britain: Margaret McMillan, 1860-1931. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Steedman, Carolyn. 1992. Past Tenses: Essays on Writing, Autobiography and History. London: Rivers Oram Press.

Steinmetz, George. 1992. "Reflections on the Role of Social Narratives in Working-Class Formation: Narrative Theory in the Social Sciences." Social Science History 16(3):489-516.

Stone, Lawrence. 1979 "Death." Pp. 242-259 in The Past and the Present. Boston and London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Stone, Lawrence. 1979. "The Revival of Narrative: Reflections on an Old New History." Past and Present 85:3-25.

Swift, Graham. 1983. Waterland. New York: Washington Square Press.

Tavris, Carol. 1992. The Mismeasure of Woman. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Taylor, Charles. 1989. Sources of the Self. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Taylor, Charles. 1991. "Overcoming Epistemology." Pp. 464-88 in After Philosophy: End or Transformation? edited by Kenneth Baynes, James Bohman, and Thomas McCarthy. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Thompson, E. P. 1971. "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd." Past and Present 50:77-136.

Thompson, F. M. L. 1981. "Social Control in Victorian Britain." Economic History Review, 2nd Series 34(2):189-208,

Tilly, Charles. 1984. Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Tilly, Louise, J. W. Scott, and M. Cohen. 1976. "Women's Work and European Fertility Patterns." Journal of Interdisciplinary History 6:447-76.

Touraine, Alain. 1985. "An Introduction to the Study of Social Movements." Social Research 52(4):749-87.

Towes, John E. 1987. "Intellectual History after the Linguistic Turn: The Autonomy of Meaning and the Irreducibility of Experience." American Historical Review. 92(4):879-907.

Townsend, William. 1979(1786). Dissertation on the Poor Laws 1786 by a Well-Wisher of Mankind. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Turner, Victor W. and Edward M. Bruner, eds. 1986. The Anthropology of Experience. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Veyne, Paul. 1984(1971). Writing History: Essay of Epistemology. Translated by Mina Moore-Rinvolucri. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Vincent, David. 1981. Bread, Knowledge and Freedom: A Study of Nineteenth-century Working Class Autobiography. London: Europa Publications.

Violi, Patrizia. 1992. "Gender, Subjectivity and Language." Pp. 164-76 in Beyond Equality and difference: Citizenship, Feminist Politics and Female Subjectivity, edited by Gisela Bock and Susan James. New York and London: Routledge.

Walzer, Michael. 1982. Spheres of Justice. New York: Basic Books.

White, Harrison C. 1992a. "A Social Grammar for Culture: Reply to Steven Brint." Sociological Theory 10(2):209-13

White, Harrison C. 1992b. Identity and Control: A Structural Theory of Social Action. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

White, Harrison C., Scott A. Boorman, and Ronald L. Breiger. 1976. "Social Structure from Multiple Networks I: Blockmodels of Roles and Positions." American Journal of Sociology 81(4):730-80.

White, Hayden. 1981. "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality. Pp. 1-23 in On Narrative, edited by W. J. T. Mitchell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

White, Hayden. 1984. "The Question of Narrative in Contemporary Historical Theory." History and Theory 23:1-33.

White, Hayden. 1987. The Content of the Form. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

White, James Boyd White. 1984. When Words Lose Their Meaning: Constitutions and Reconstitutions of Language, Character, and Community. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Williams, Bernard. 1983. "Two Lectures on Moral Philosophy." The Tanner Lectures. Harvard University, May.

Williams, Gareth. 1984. "The Genesis of Chronic Illness: Narrative Reconstruction." Sociology of Health and Illness 6:175-200.

Williams, Patricia J. 1988. "On Being the Object of Property." Signs 14(5).

Williams, Patricia J. 1991. The Alchemy of Race and Rights. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Williams, Raymond. 1976. Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society. London: Oxford University Press.

Witherell, Carol and Nel Noddings, eds. 1991. Stories Lives Tell: Narrative and Dialogue in Education. New York: Teachers College Press.

Wright, Erik Olin. 1985. Classes. London: Verso.

Yeatman, Anna. 1990. "A Feminist Theory of Social Differentiation." Pp. 281-299 in Feminism/Postmodernism, edited by Linda J. Nicholson. New York and London: Routledge.

Zald, Mayer. 1991. "Sociology as a Discipline: Quasi-Science and Quasi-Humanities." The American Sociologist 22(3 & 4):165-187.

Zerilli, Linda M.G. 1991. "Rememoration or War? French Feminist Narrative and the Politics of Self-Representation." Differences 3(1):1-19.

Zucker, Lynne G. 1991. "The Role of Institutionalization in Cultural Persistence." Pp. 83-107 in The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis, edited by Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.