Abstract A distinct conceptualization of cultural identity that is theoretically motivated by the classic taxonomies of the self developed by cultural anthropologist Irving Hallowell (1955) and cognitive psychologist Ulric Neisser (1988) is proposed. It is argued that Neisser's Conceptual Self, situated within Hallowell's Normative Orientation, affords a unique confluence of theoretical tradition that successfully transcends the problematic dualism between individual agency and cultural determinism. This Conceptual Self as Normatively Oriented is designated a cultural identity and defined as a form of conscious, reflexive and evaluative self-understanding pertaining to that facet of the self which knowingly commits itself to the shared values and practices of a particular cultural group. It is argued that past personal narrative is a privileged site for the investigation of cultural identity and its construction. The unique suitability of narrative analysis for the study of cultural identity is illustrated with an example from a Gros Ventre elder of the Fort Belknap Indian reservation in Montana.

Key Words cultural identity, cultural psychology, Gros Ventre, narrative, self-construction

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Conceptual Self as Normatively Oriented: The Suitability of Past Personal Narrative for the Study of Cultural Identity

One of the persistent dilemmas which confronts attempts by researchers in the human sciences is to understand how best to concentrate analytic attention upon the agency of the individual, on the one hand, while simultaneously assessing the pre-existing semiotic resources by which individual action is constructed, on the other. The theoretical tendency evident for several decades within the social sciences has been to reduce this tension either to the autonomous agent, an individual more or less creatively free from the conventions of cultural expression, or, alternatively, to the determined organism, an

individual more or less passively propelled by the law-like regularities governing cultural transmission.

Cultural psychology, of course, is one of several contemporary academic disciplines which seeks to transcend this conceptual dualism (Shweder & Sullivan, 1993). More specifically, cultural psychologists recognize that 'subject and object, self and other, psyche and culture, person and context, figure and ground, practitioner and practice live together, require each other, and dynamically, dialectically, and jointly make each other up' (Shweder, 1990, p. 1). It is this acknowledgment of the co-constitution of psyche and culture which gives rise to the study of 'culturally constituted selves' within cultural psychology. The examination of culturally constituted selves ensures that individual agents are understood to utilize in a variety of ways the shared cultural practices and symbols available to them for meaning-making. As a result, individual and subcultural variation within cultural communities is both interesting and significant. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that individuals can depart from cultural convention in infinite ways. Rather, it is an essential premise of cultural psychology that individual action is constrained by culture as much as it is enhanced by it. Ultimately, existing cultural discourses are seen to constrain variation in individual action within a particular cultural community, while simultaneously individual agents shape, alter and reproduce such discourses for present and future action.

It is the purpose of this article to advance a particular conceptualization of what we call 'cultural identity' that preserves both individual agency and cultural durability in the study of the culturally constituted self. In addition, we argue that the co-constitution of identity and culture is most salient in a particular form of social discourse: past personal narrative. Finally, we illustrate how narrative affords a privileged point of access for the study of cultural identity by examining a pivotal narrative account offered by an elder of the Gros Ventre tribe from the Fort Belknap Indian reservation in north-central Montana.

Culture and Identity: Forging a Synthesis

Culture and the Self

For the purposes of this discussion, culture may be understood to be public, patterned and historically reproduced symbolic practices which are available for human meaning-making (Geertz, 1973). Culture is public because such practices must be shared—there is no culture of one. Culture is patterned because such practices are organized and utilized systematically in order to be intelligible to

others—they are not randomly re-created with each usage. Culture is historically reproduced in that subsequent generations are socialized into using the intelligible practices of their communities. This is not to argue, however, that culture is merely 'transmitted' from one generation to the next. In fact, culture is constantly reproduced with new modifications as subsequent generations adapt to new circumstances. Finally, cultural practices are symbolic in that they allow for the ascription and communication of meaning or 'intelligibility' to others. For example, participation in language is one primary symbolic practice available to human beings for such purposes. This is not to argue, however, that such practices have uniform meaning for all members of a cultural community. In fact, the dialogic nature of much within-culture conflict may be attributed to disagreement about the meaning of central, shared symbolic practices.

Whereas contemporary discussions of culture among social researchers are routinely marked by disagreement over fundamental terms and definitions, preferred conceptualizations of the 'self' are even harder to come by. Given the interest of this article in situating cultural identity within the broader notion of the culturally constituted self, it seems worthwhile to consider in some detail the concept of 'self' and its relationship to 'intentional worlds' or 'moral universes' (Shweder, 1990, 1991)—the sociocultural environments in which selves are constructed. Volumes could be written about the self as an object of social science inquiry. Most researchers would agree that theoretically useful notions of the self minimally involve the reflexive awareness of a sentient being which contrasts with its awareness of others or its environment. It is not our purpose here to provide a comprehensive overview of the literature on the self. Rather, we will attend to two classic taxonomies of the self in an effort to situate and motivate our conception of cultural identity.

Cultural Identity

'Cultural identity' as a scientific designation for an interesting psychological phenomenon is not new. It apparently occupies a conceptual space with other, more popular constructs in psychology, such as ethnic identity (Keefe, 1992; Phinney, 1990; Smith, 1991), cultural identification (Oetting & Beauvais, 1990–1991) and acculturative status (Berry, 1990). Each of these constructs refers to an individual's avowed membership or participation in a particular ethnic or cultural group. Arising within the traditions of variable-analytic psychology, these constructs are concerned primarily with the classification of people's experience into theoretical categories as predetermined on a priori

conceptual grounds. In contrast, the commitments of a cultural psychology genuinely devoted to accounting for the semiotic nature of human experience include the interpretive study of situated and meaningful human behavior (or action) as well as the careful analysis of individual diversity within cultural communities. Within this analytic framework, treatments of cultural identity are few and far between. McNaughton (1996), in the most sophisticated of these treatments, has employed cultural identity in his exploration of diverse parenting practices within particular cultural communities. Given his primary focus upon parenting practices, however, the reader is left to infer what precisely McNaughton means when he writes of cultural identity (although he appears to use it interchangeably with 'ethnic' identity). Thus, it is our purpose here to stake out in explicit fashion the conceptual parameters of a cultural identity construct as situated within the fundamental commitments of cultural psychology.

In this article, we present and defend a conceptualization of cultural identity that draws from and depends upon elements of two classic taxonomies of the self as formulated by cultural anthropologist Irving Hallowell and cognitive psychologist Ulric Neisser. More specifically, we will argue that one of Neisser's (1988) five kinds of self-knowledge—the knowledge implying a 'Conceptual Self'—instantiated within one of Hallowell's (1955) five basic orientations provided to the self by culture—the 'Normative Orientation'—offers firm theoretical ground for a facet of the culturally constituted self—the 'Conceptual Self as Normatively Oriented'—which we refer to as 'cultural identity'.

Taxonomies of the Self: Hallowell's Basic Orientations

The cultural anthropologist Irving Hallowell (1955), in an effort to remedy cultural anthropology's overly circumscribed study of human *culture* at the expense of analytic attention to human *behavior*, noted several 'basic orientations' provided by culture to individuals seeking to act intelligently in the worlds they apprehend. According to Hallowell, anthropology's traditional 'culture-centered' approach resulted in sophisticated and nuanced ethnographic data that nevertheless inherently represent the standpoint of the outside observer: 'These cultural data do not easily permit us to apprehend, in an integral fashion, the most significant and meaningful aspects of the world of the individual *as experienced by him* [sic]' (p. 88, emphasis ours). In order to more fully approximate 'an inside view of a culture' (p. 88), then, Hallowell introduces the concept of a 'behavioral environment'. This behavioral environment is a product of the organism's interaction

with the external world and defines the 'behavioral field' so central to the organism's psychological reality. For example, Hallowell notes that the capacity for color vision can radically alter the behavioral environment of an organism independent of any changes to the external world. Thus, according to Hallowell, the goal of attaining cultural description that more closely approximates the view of the cultural subject depends upon reorganizing ethnographic data in a manner that 'permits us, as far as possible, to assume the outlook of the self in its behavioral environment' (p. 89).

This 'outlook' of the self within its behavioral environment can be understood by attending to certain 'basic orientations' provided by culture that shape self-awareness and ultimately allow researchers to 'bring into focus the actual structure of the psychological field of the individual' (p. 88). Hallowell (1955) explains:

> Culture may be said to play a constitutive role in the psychological adjustment of the individual to his world. The human individual must be provided with certain basic orientations in order to act intelligibly in the world he apprehends. Such orientations are basic in the sense that they are peculiar to a human level of adjustment. They all appear to revolve around man's capacity for self-awareness. If it be assumed that the functioning of human societies depends in some way upon this psychological fact, it is not difficult to understand why all human cultures must provide the individual with basic orientations that are among the necessary conditions for the development, reinforcement, and effective functioning of self-awareness. It is these orientations that may be said to structure the core of the behavioral environment of the self in any culture. (p. 89)

Hallowell (1955) has offered five basic orientations which culture provides in service to adaptive human action. The Self-Orientation is simply the reflexive awareness of personal existence and action within the behavioral environment. Hallowell thus implies that self-orientation is more than mere sentience, since other creatures may act in their behavioral environments without truly reflexive awareness. In contrast, Hallowell emphasizes that language provides an important cultural means for self-orientation among people which animals do not possess. The Object Orientation is the awareness of diverse objects within a sphere of influence that are generally conceptualized, categorized and classified. According to Hallowell, this orientation ensures that the self acts within an orderly universe. Once again, he emphasizes the importance of language as a cultural tool in the conceptualization of a predictable behavioral environment. The Spatiotemporal Orientation is the implicit awareness of one's location in space and time that necessarily predicates action. Of particular interest here is the ability of

culture to provide the self with a means for maintaining temporal self-continuity. The Motivational Orientation is the awareness of objects in one's sphere of influence with regard to the personal satisfaction of needs. Thus, it is not enough, according to Hallowell, for the self to conceptualize and classify objects in its behavioral environment, for the self must interact with such objects with regard to its needs, wants, interests and attitudes. Finally, the Normative Orientation consists of those criteria (ideals, standards, values) provided by culture which are used in self-evaluation and the judgment of one's own conduct and the conduct of others. It is primarily this last orientation (which permeates and is permeated by the others) with which our discussion of cultural identity is interested, for it most conspicuously provides the self with an explicit awareness of the moral order of things.

There are several important features of Hallowell's (1955) basic orientations worth noting. First, these basic orientations are Hallowell's relatively early attempt to transcend the conceptual dualism between individual agents and pre-existing cultures—he explicitly recognizes that culture plays a 'constitutive role' in human self-awareness. Second, as a cultural anthropologist, Hallowell approached his treatment of the self from his study of culture. His basic orientations are cultural tools provided to the individual for the purposes of self-construction and 'mediated' action (Wertsch, 1991, 1997). Third, these basic orientations as cultural tools imply a taxonomy of the self inasmuch as several related but conceptually distinct facets of self-awareness are evident in their relationship to the basic orientations (e.g. the relationship of the self to space, time, the world of objects, etc.). Finally, this implied taxonomy of the self—emerging as it does from Hallowell's explicit attempt to acknowledge the constitutive role of culture in human experience—provides a sophisticated theoretical basis for the development of psychological constructs that capture certain discrete features of selfhood without lapsing once again into either reified categories advanced in artificial isolation from one another or the conceptual dualism which dismisses the co-constitution of psyche and culture. We will return to this discussion of Hallowell's basic orientations provided to the self by culture in our more thorough treatment of cultural identity. First, however, it will be fruitful to consider another taxonomy of the self advanced by the cognitive psychologist Ulric Neisser.

Taxonomies of the Self: Neisser's Kinds of Self-Knowledge

As a cognitive scientist, Ulric Neisser (1988) is concerned with discerning how individuals come to know themselves in terms of the

processing of self-relevant information (and the concomitant kinds of mental operations required to do so):

> Considered as a unitary object, the self is full of apparent contradictions. It is simultaneously physical and mental, public and private, directly perceived and incorrectly imagined, universal and culture-specific. Although there is nothing with which we are more familiar, we are often enjoined to know ourselves better than we do. One way to clarify this puzzle may be to consider what makes it possible for individuals to know themselves at all, i.e. to analyze the information on which self-knowledge is ultimately based. (p. 35)

In contrast to Hallowell, then, who approaches the self through his study of culture, Neisser (1988) has approached the self from the domain of cognitive psychology. Instead of basic orientations provided by culture, Neisser's approach involves discrete kinds of self-knowledge that emerge through information processing during human development.

More specifically, Neisser (1988) seeks to distinguish 'among several kinds of self-specifying information, each establishing a different aspect of the self' (p. 35). These aspects of the self, according to Neisser, are experienced as a unitary whole, even though they are 'essentially different selves: they differ in their origins and developmental histories, in what we know about them, in the pathologies to which they are subject, and in the manner in which they contribute to human social experience' (p. 35). The phenomenological qualities of integration and coherence among the selves depends upon both the unique attributes of one of these selves—the Conceptual Self—as well as certain properties of stimulus information which specify their cohesion.

Neisser (1988) describes five distinct selves within his cognitive taxonomy. The Ecological Self is the aspect of personhood that situates self within a physical environment. It depends upon a variety of perceptual information, although its primary dependence seems to be upon kinetic information perceived visually. It orients the person in ongoing interaction with the environment. The Interpersonal Self involves species-specific signals (the implication is 'hard-wired' processes) which facilitate emotional rapport and communication with other human beings even in earliest infancy. As a result, Neisser portrays this self as engaging in 'immediate unreflective social interaction' with others (p. 41). Its goal is the achievement of intersubjectivity with others. The Extended Self is that aspect of personhood which is embodied in memory and expressed in anticipation of what is yet to come. It is the site of autobiographical construction and becomes more important for people as they grow older. The Private Self is awareness of unshared personal experience,

such as emotional pain in response to a distinct event. It also includes the awareness of unfolding experience while attending to one's own ongoing subjectivity.

Finally, Neisser (1988) argues that the Conceptual Self is the cognitive network of theories and assumptions with which the person reflexively locates herself in the surrounding world. It includes the wide variety of 'ethnopsychologies' (i.e. local understandings concerning the regularities of self, emotion and experience) around the world, and encompasses social roles (e.g. graduate student), presupposed internal entities (e.g. the soul) and socially significant dimensions of difference (e.g. intelligence). In addition, this Conceptual Self is responsible for integrating each of the other selves into a coherent tapestry of experience: 'The result is that each of the other four kinds of self-knowledge is also represented in the conceptual self' (p. 54). Thus, it is the Conceptual Self which is responsible for abstracting pertinent facets of the other selves (e.g. carefully selected autobiographical memories from the Extended Self) in the construction of a coherent (if not entirely accurate) self-theory. It is this latter self to which we shall return in conceptualizing cultural identity, for it most conspicuously relates to common notions about identity within psychology.

Taxonomies of the Self: Hallowell and Neisser Compared

There are several important features of Neisser's (1988) taxonomy of the self worth noting, especially in comparison with Hallowell's basic orientations. First, Neisser's taxonomy has little to say about the place of culture in the construction of self. In stark contrast to Hallowell (1955), then, Neisser seems to implicitly relegate the influence of culture to mere content variance within the processing activities of the selves in question. Thus, it is Hallowell who has espoused the more sophisticated understanding (in contemporary terms) of the relationship of personal agency with social structure in the cultural construction of mind. Second, this explicit taxonomy of the self is literally a taxonomy of selves—Neisser explicitly asserts separate ontogenetic origins for the five selves as well as discrete (but connected) functions of them. This again contrasts markedly with Hallowell's discussion of the basic orientations in which conceptually distinct features of the self are understood to be artificially imposed for analytic purposes only. Third, as a cognitive psychologist, Neisser seems primarily concerned with the formulation of a theory of mind which might adequately account for the development of various cognitive

capacities in response to particular kinds of available information. Thus, Neisser's taxonomy suggests an attempt to discern certain relevant features of a viable cognitive architecture which (he might hope) characterizes human psyches around the world. Whether Neisser's proposed architecture succeeds in adequately describing a universal human psyche is, of course, both a conceptual and empirical question. Fourth, the Conceptual Self as articulated by Neisser bears a striking resemblance to what social researchers have loosely referred to as identity. For example, both imply a self-construct that has a social or cultural content, and both are assumed to emerge relatively late in development. While it is beyond the scope of this article to explore the intricacies of the Conceptual Self as identity, it will suffice here to suggest a superficial correspondence in the terms (although Neisser himself makes no such comparison). Recognition of this superficial correspondence will help explain our subsequent terming of the proposed construct (cultural *identity*). Finally, whereas Hallowell's basic orientations are provided to the self by a pre-existing and durable moral order, Neisser's kinds of self-knowledge are the inherent artifacts of our complex mental machinery. Thus, Hallowell's analyses are primarily concerned with culture's role in the constitution of self from the outside in (from social structure to personal experience), whereas Neisser's analyses are primarily concerned with the implications of cognitive architecture for the constitution of self from the inside out (from brain to personal experience). It is these distinct but complementary approaches which set the stage for our conceptualization of cultural identity.

What Is Cultural Identity?

Our discussion thus far has examined two theoretical approaches to the self, one from the sphere of cultural anthropology and one from the domain of cognitive psychology. The resultant taxonomies of the self (whether explicit or implied) differ in significant ways, owing in part to their distinct disciplinary origins, theoretical commitments and guiding assumptions. It is indeed tempting to try to offer a conceptual rapprochement between the two taxonomies, but, as with many such attempts, more is likely to be obscured than illuminated in such an endeavor. Nevertheless, we obviously think that something significant can be salvaged at the confluence of these two distinct approaches.

Cultural Identity Defined

For the purposes of this article, then, cultural identity may be under-

stood to be the Conceptual Self as Normatively Oriented. Recall that Neisser's (1988) Conceptual Self is understood to be a cognitive network of ideas about oneself. These ideas include representations of the other four kinds of self-knowledge, although such representa- tions—or 'meta-selves' (p. 54), as Neisser refers to them—are both incomplete and inaccurate. Furthermore, Neisser asserts that these self- theories are 'distinguished from the other four aspects of self by being based primarily on socially established and verbally communicated ideas' (p. 54). In sum, then, the Conceptual Self consists of the entire corpus of self-relevant abstractions which are conscious, reflexive and evaluative—that is, such abstractions are self-evident as opposed to hidden or invisible, self-relevant as opposed to general and detached, and self-appraising as opposed to neutral and uncritical. Furthermore, it is clear that Neisser allows for the role of sociocultural influence upon the cognitive content of self-theory.

The adequacy of Neisser's (1988) Conceptual Self for the study of what we term cultural identity is limited theoretically by both its overly broad and overly narrow scope. The Conceptual Self is overly broad in that it includes analytic attention to any self-evident, self- relevant and self-appraising conceptual abstraction tendered by the individual. As a result, study of the Conceptual Self might include such divergent phenomena of interest as self-esteem, gender identity and subjective well-being. And while all of these phenomena are indeed culturally constructed, there is no guarantee that analytic attention to their cultural constituents will be at all central to such investigations. Indeed, Neisser (1988) himself has demonstrated that one can write in great detail about the self without ever explicitly mentioning culture and its role in self-construction. Thus, the content area demarcated by scholarly explorations of the Conceptual Self is much too broad for our purposes here, and need not include specific reference to culture at all.

In contradistinction to this great breadth in Neisser's Conceptual Self, however, is the overly narrow character of his construct with regard to the fundamentally constitutive role of cultural practice for self-construction. That is, even where the Conceptual Self allows room for the investigation of social and cultural influence, such influence is described primarily as explaining content variance within a fixed and predetermined cognitive architecture as opposed to actually creating the self within a network of shared symbolic practices. For our purposes, then, Neisser's Conceptual Self requires an additional conceptual framework which privileges the pervasive and constitutive qualities of culture in order to be useful for the study of cultural identity.

This additional conceptual framework may be found in Hallowell's (1955) Normative Orientation. Recall that this basic orientation provided by culture for self-construction is concerned with the constitutive powers for the self of the shared moral order. That is, cultural norms, ideals, standards and values—indeed, cultural expectations generally—become the explicit focus of the self as normatively oriented. Taken in isolation, however, Hallowell's Normative Orientation fails to capture those features of the Conceptual Self—its self-evidence, self-relevance and self-appraisal—which are central to our conceptualization of cultural identity. Thus, when Neisser's Conceptual Self is explicitly cast within Hallowell's Normative Orientation, the result is a *form of conscious, reflexive and evaluative self-understanding pertaining to that facet of the self which knowingly commits itself to the shared values and practices of a particular cultural group*. This we call cultural identity.

Cultural Identity Assessed

For the purposes of our analysis, the theoretical viability of the proposed construct will depend upon three criteria: the construct must (a) merge important features of Neisser's (1988) Conceptual Self and Hallowell's (1955) Normative Orientation in sensible ways; (b) occupy an important theoretical space which is neither merely synonymous with the culturally constituted self, nor simply reducible to either identity or cultural norm or practice; and (c) transcend the conceptual dualism often apparent between individual agency and cultural determinism. It is now appropriate to assess the construct in terms of these theoretical criteria.

First, in defining cultural identity, we have combined all of the important features of both Neisser's (1988) Conceptual Self and Hallowell's (1955) Normative Orientation. It is left to the reader to evaluate whether we have done this in sensible ways.

Second, while either construct taken in isolation is not adequate for the conceptual domain we mean to circumscribe, taken together they form a new construct that occupies an important and unique theoretical space. Cultural identity is not synonymous with the culturally constituted self, the latter being much more inclusive of aspects of the self neither conscious nor readily accessible to the individual (e.g. embodied proprioception is often phenomenologically transparent). In addition, cultural identity is conceptually distinct from identity more broadly, the latter being once again much more inclusive of aspects of the known self which often lack explicit and primary awareness of or attention to participation in broadly shared cultural practice (e.g. age

and gender identities are often taken for granted as fixed universals instead of cultural artifacts). Lastly, cultural identity is not merely synonymous with cultural norm or practice, in that these latter concepts need not necessarily involve the self-relevant ideas of each and every member of a cultural community (e.g. certain kinds of community childbirth rituals may never afford males the opportunity for first-hand participation). Thus, whereas some members of a cultural community may be excluded from a given cultural practice or reject a given cultural norm, *every* individual constructs a cultural identity.

Finally, cultural identity as a proposed construct was developed primarily to circumscribe a unique phenomenon of interest without reifying the conceptual dualism between the active individual agent and the culturally determined organism. Instead, this conceptualization of cultural identity is presented in the context of a creative self, situated within a pre-existing and durable moral order. Thus, conceptually suffused within the construct of cultural identity is the co-constituting 'local moral world'—it is simply impossible to fully appreciate cultural identity without explicit analytic attention to this accompanying moral order. As a result, a brief aside concerning this moral order is warranted.

The Local Moral World

The description of Hallowell's (1955) Normative Orientation provided above accentuated its ability to supply the self with an understanding of the moral order of things, a basic 'outlook' of the self within a particular behavioral environment. This moral order which constitutes the perspective of any given individual acting in the world alludes to what has been described by Shweder (1990) as an 'intentional world':

> A sociocultural environment is an intentional world. It is an intentional world because its existence is real, factual and forceful, but only as long as there exists a community of persons whose beliefs, desires, emotions, purposes and other mental representations are directed at it, and are thereby influenced by it. . . . What makes their existence intentional is that such things would not exist independent of our involvements with them and reactions to them; and they exercise their influence in our lives because of our conceptions of them. (p. 2)

Thus, the concept of an intentional world requires the recognition that people's involvement in everyday activity spheres is shaped (constructed or constituted) by their ongoing evaluation of actors, objects and events vis-à-vis their Conceptual Selves as Normatively Oriented—their cultural identities. For example, the activity of pulling

weeds is determined by the (often implicit) evaluation of some species of plants as noxious and undesirable in gardening. These 'intentional worlds' become relevant to understanding cultural identities because inferences about the latter depend upon the evaluative framework used by individuals when describing their worlds (their 'behavioral environments', in Hallowell's [1955] terms). As a result, the investigation of cultural identities depends heavily upon the explication of intentional worlds. Shweder (1991) has also used the term 'moral universe' to describe an intentional world. We will use the term 'local moral world' to refer to this implicit evaluation of actors, objects and events which occurs routinely in the practices of people's everyday lives.

With a systematic conceptualization of cultural identity now in place, together with a brief characterization of its accompanying local moral world, we will now turn to a brief discussion of past personal narrative as a privileged mode of access to the investigation of cultural identity.

Past Personal Narrative and Cultural Identity

The theoretical merger of Neisser's (1988) Conceptual Self and Hallowell's (1955) Normative Orientation provides solid analytical ground for the investigation of cultural identity and its constituent local moral world within cultural psychology. One important piece of the puzzle remains. Owing to Hallowell's focus upon the *normative expectations* provided to the self by culture, our cultural identity construct retains a fairly static notion of the co-constitution of self and world—the precise processes through which these conceptual abstractions are woven together in the fabric of individual lives remain unaddressed. In order to remedy this conceptual blind spot, we must venture beyond both Hallowell and Neisser to assert that the active co-construction of self and world chiefly occurs through communicative practice. That is, people come to appropriate, inhabit or own cultural ideals and values through their individual participation in shared cultural practices, especially communicative practices such as narrative.

There are several reasons why the study of past personal narrative inheres in the investigation of cultural identity. Many researchers have observed that narrative affords people unique opportunities to represent the self in the construction of meaning. More specifically, researchers have noted the singular ability of narrative to represent the temporal nature of unfolding human experience and, thus, its resultant

capacity to capture the continuous but evolving self. As a result, scholars such as Linde (1993), McAdams (1990) and Peacock and Holland (1993) have all described the centrality of the 'life story' for the construction of individual identity. Many others (see Peacock, 1984; Schiffrin, 1996; Shaw, 1994; Somers, 1994) have also explicitly linked narrative and identity. For these reasons as well as others, Miller, Potts, Fung, Hoogstra and Mintz (1990) have argued that there is 'a special affinity between narrative and self such that narrative can be said to play a privileged role in the process of self-construction' (p. 292; see also Miller, 1994; Miller, Fung, & Mintz, 1996; Miller, Mintz, Hoogstra, Fung, & Potts, 1992). It follows from these several observations that past personal narratives will likely play an important role in the construction, representation and expression of cultural identity as well.

It has also been observed (Gergen & Gergen, 1988; McAdams, 1990; Wertsch, 1997) that people routinely engage in narrative constructions of a personal nature in a wide variety of social interactions. Thus, narratives may be properly characterized as products of social interchange (i.e. social constructions) in which self-relevant events are linked in temporal sequence in an effort to establish meaningful coherence for any number of instrumental purposes in interaction. Furthermore, these narratives may undergo continuous alteration in the context of social interaction in which they are employed to impede, enhance or sustain any variety of endeavor. Thus, even in the context of interpersonal interaction, past personal narratives become resources available for a wide range of meaning-making activities. As a result of this routine and instrumental use of past personal narrative in everyday discourse practices, it follows that a sophisticated appreciation of someone's cultural identity may be especially accessible through the analysis of past personal narrative offered in response to interview questions or other provocations employed by the researcher.

A final, essential characteristic of past personal narrative that renders it especially suitable for the study of cultural identity is its ability to capture the co-constitution of individual agency and cultural durability. That is, in a subset of past personal narratives which we have designated cultural identity narratives, the convergence of the individual actor engaged in meaningful activity and the constituent practices embraced by a cultural community is explicit in the narrative events themselves. As a result, such cultural identity narratives are ideal sites for the examination of Conceptual Selves as Normatively Oriented, since the narrators of such accounts intentionally preserve the irreducible tension between active agents and existing cultures. In so doing, they provide the researcher with a unique opportunity to

examine conscious, reflexive and evaluated self-construction by individuals with explicit reference to their collective cultural worlds which are indeed durable, yet not determining. It remains for us to illustrate our contention that past personal narrative can become a privileged site for the analysis of cultural identity and its implicit local moral world.

'Kissing the Flat Pipe': A Cultural Identity Narrative

In the summer of 1994, the first author initiated a journey into the homes of many tribal elders on the Fort Belknap Indian reservation in north-central Montana in an effort to better understand how contemporary Gros Ventres of this generation make sense of being Gros Ventre (for ethnographic descriptions of Gros Ventre life, both historical and contemporary, see Cooper, 1957; Flannery, 1953; Fowler, 1987; Kroeber, 1908). In one particular conversation with a respected elder known in the community for his oratory skills, this gifted narrator alleged that 'being Indian' was 'nothing but a story'. By the end of the summer, following interview upon interview in which a number of elders consistently discussed their cultural identity with routine recourse to narrative, his assertion about 'being Indian' seemed self-evident: narrative of all forms—but especially past personal narrative—played a privileged role in the construction of cultural identity for these elders. It is our purpose in this section of the article to illustrate in concrete terms the agentive construction of cultural identity (as outlined above) via narrative performance. It is hoped that this illustration will demonstrate the analytic viability of narrative analysis in the study of cultural identity and its construction.

Introduction to the 'Kissing the Pipe' Narrative
The Narrative Context
We shall commence this discussion by considering an important narrative elicited from Gros Ventre elder Bertha Snow in the context of an interview with the first author concerning cultural identity in June of 1994. This past personal narrative recounts a seminal experience she had with the Gros Ventre's most sacred ritual object, the Flat Pipe (Cooper, 1957; Fowler, 1987). This sacred Pipe is believed to have been given to the Gros Ventres by the One Above at their inception as a people, while a second important Pipe, the Feathered Pipe, was given to the Gros Ventres by the Thunder Being as an additional resource for meeting sacred responsibilities and obtaining supernatural assistance in time of need. Together these Pipes represent the Gros Ventre's

unique link to the Creator and once afforded sacred opportunities through a variety of rituals to fulfill spiritual responsibilities and obtain supernatural favor (evoked through 'pity') during the exigencies of life.

Prior to the disappearance of the buffalo, the Keepers (priests) of these Pipes (which were considered spiritual entities in themselves) led arduous lives with many ritual constraints on their behavior and relationships with others. Violation of these constraints was believed to lead to supernatural retribution for the neglect of one's sacred duties. The Pipes also provided their Keepers with supernatural abilities necessary to fulfill their role as intermediaries with the One Above (and the Thunder Being, who was also accountable to the One Above). Since the onset of a sweeping cultural transformation following the demise of the buffalo, Gros Ventres have continued to revere these Pipes largely in the absence of formal ritual—there are ritual Keepers no longer, merely 'caretakers' who 'watch over them'. It is generally understood among today's elder generation (Fowler, 1987) that these Pipes, wrapped in separate blimp-shaped bundles with their associated ceremonial objects, are not to be exposed or removed from their wrappings upon penalty of supernatural retribution since the accompanying rites have not been properly performed in their entirety for nearly a century. As a result, the Pipes retain their immensely powerful symbolic nature largely in the absence of contemporary ritual practice, while simultaneously fostering sharply contested meanings within the Gros Ventre community (see Fowler, 1987). As the sacred Pipes generally played an important role in the experience and expression of Mrs Snow's cultural identity, it seems fitting to illustrate the special affinity of past personal narrative with cultural identity via this Gros Ventre 'Pipe story' (see also Gone, in press).

Mrs Snow is a Gros Ventre elder who recently celebrated her 80th birthday. Both of her parents were of Gros Ventre ancestry and spoke fluent Gros Ventre as their first language. In addition, both were fluent speakers of English, which they were forced to learn as children in boarding school. Bertha does not speak Gros Ventre herself, but years of hearing her parents and grandparents have granted her a substantial comprehension of the language. She has identified as Catholic for most of her life and continues to maintain strong ties to Catholic belief and ritual. She understands her Catholicism to be an important part of her Indian culture.

Theoretical Significance of the Narrative
We have characterized cultural identity as the Conceptual Self as

Normatively Oriented, a form of conscious, reflexive and evaluative self-understanding relevant to one's explicit commitment to shared cultural values and practices. The 'Kissing the Pipe' narrative offered by Bertha Snow is clearly an expression of this kind of self-understanding. First, Bertha presented the narrative in the context of an interview that was explicitly oriented towards understanding how contemporary Gros Ventres conceptualize (i.e. 'make sense of') being Gros Ventre. That is, the interview was explained as a forum to discuss modern Gros Ventre identity and included such questions as: (a) What is it like to be Gros Ventre in the White Man's world?; (b) In your mind, what does it mean to follow Gros Ventre ways?; and (c) What proportion of modern-day Gros Ventres do you think of as true Gros Ventres? Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that Bertha's responses to interview questions were careful and deliberate expressions of at least some facets of her Conceptual Self, including precisely those facets circumscribed by Hallowell's Normative Orientation because they pertain explicitly to participation in the Gros Ventre cultural community. In fact, Bertha's unexpected (but routine) assertions in multiple contexts that 'There are no Gros Ventres left today' and 'Gros Ventre ways are gone' are the most direct expressions of the cognitive network of reflexively grounded theories and assumptions (which Neisser describes as the Conceptual Self) concerned with her commitment as a modern Gros Ventre woman to the shared values and practices of a besieged cultural community.

Given the explicit focus of the interview, then, we infer that the majority of Bertha's responses are expressions of cultural identity as we have conceptualized it above—indeed, analysis of the interview by the first author revealed that most of the give and take during the interview was devoted (either directly or indirectly) to the topic. Moreover, even the interview material that addresses these concerns in less direct fashion (such as the 'Kissing the Pipe' narrative) were *selectively recounted* because they reveal something significant about Bertha's understanding of what it means to be Gros Ventre. Such understanding is *conscious* because her remarks during the interview demonstrate that she routinely assesses the contemporary meaning of Gros Ventre life. Such understanding is *reflexive* because her interview responses reveal that she consistently portrays her own lived experience in response to an assessment of the contemporary meaning of Gros Ventre life. Such understanding is *evaluative* because her interview comments confirm that her participation in Gros Ventre life vis-à-vis the participation of other members of the community is hotly contested.

Finally, this form of conscious, reflexive and evaluative self-under-

standing as expressed here in the 'Kissing the Pipe' narrative is explicitly concerned with Bertha's commitment to shared values and practices precisely because the narrative events recount culturally salient actions involving the central ritual object of the community, the sacred Flat Pipe. Thus, the special importance of such actions can be seen to emerge from a context in which interpretations of the Pipe's contemporary significance within the community is sharply contested, owing to its especially powerful symbolic force (see Fowler, 1987). It is the narrative meaning attributed to these actions by Bertha—including the interpretation of her unexpected and inexplicable response to such actions—which forcefully constructs her Conceptual Self as Normatively Oriented, her cultural identity.

Presentation of the 'Kissing the Pipe' Narrative

In the 'Kissing the Pipe' narrative, Mrs Snow recounts an experience she had as a young woman in which she observed the 'caretaker' of the Flat Pipe removing it from its wrappings in order to display it for some white 'dignitaries' visiting the reservation shortly after World War II. These events were the focus of some controversy among the Gros Ventres since the caretaker who opened the Pipe was not an official Keeper and yet retained much of the requisite ritual knowledge and was esteemed by the people as a great leader of his era. The narrative comprised Bertha's longest discussion in the interview of any ceremonial event in which she personally participated. In addition, her telling of this past personal narrative was one of the most emotion-laden parts of the interview. Finally, a version of the 'Kissing the Pipe' narrative was related to the first author on a previous occasion—he can recall no other personal story which upset Bertha as much in the telling as this initial 'event of narration' (Bauman, 1986). The version presented here from the interview account, however, while still emotionally charged, is much more affectively restrained in its delivery than her initial telling.

The 'Kissing the Pipe' narrative begins with a careful orientation to the setting in which the incident occurred. The caretaker prepared to open the bundle within an old building in the presence of the visiting dignitaries and small crowd of Gros Ventres in attendance. This opening was historic since it was one of only three such openings since the early 1920s. Bertha, who along with many in her generation was too young to have witnessed previous openings, was in attendance on that fateful day:

> They opened [the Flat Pipe bundle] for some dignitaries that came, some white guys that came. They opened it at that old school building. There was

an old school building, that was during the war it seems like. Because I was already an adult. I don't know whatever possessed me to go. I never did go to anything like that before in my life. I don't know why I went. But this was just a small building, about this big, I guess. Yeah, about this big. And I remember us sitting right about over there. And [the caretaker] was in the middle of the floor here and there was people all around, like this, you know. And he was sitting right there and he was kind of facing that wall. And I was a little further over that way.

Bertha emphasizes that her attendance at the proceedings was unusual and she cannot account for her decision to participate in the gathering.

The orientation quickly gives way to action, however, as she engages in unexpected and inexplicable behavior:

I did a real funny thing. Nobody else- I don't know what ever- I don't know. To this day I don't know what happened. Honest to God, I don't. But he opened that- that bundle up and there lay that pipe. The most beautiful piece of carved wood, just smooth and worn, you know. . . . He had it like that and he was sitting in front of it there. And he was talking- talking for the- for the sake of these people that were there, I guess. And I think somebody was interpreting for them, I don't know. I really- I can't- I can't tell you anything else. I don't know what else went on. But before I knew it, I got up from where I was sitting. I went over there and I knelt in front of this thing and I bent over and I kissed it. And I cried. I don't know why. I don't know what possessed me to do that. Never been in front of- in- in- I'd never been exposed to anything like that before in my life. I never saw the- the Feathered Pipe bundle. I never was there when it was unwrapped or nothing. Never. The other one, you know. Just this one time. In all of my life. It just- It just- I felt- I felt as if you would feel like that was a dead person. I hurt for that person. That's the way I felt. I just hurt in here. Made me cry. I don't know why. [*Pause*]

So, Bertha suddenly succumbs to a mysterious compulsion to move to the center of the gathering, kneel beside the Pipe, and kiss it. It should be noted that kissing the Pipe is unknown as a cultural practice among the Gros Ventres—this instance may be the only occasion of such an occurrence in tribal memory. Furthermore, as a relatively young Gros Ventre woman, Bertha almost certainly breached a host of cultural conventions in her disruption of sacred proceedings—proceedings that were typically governed at the discretion of older Gros Ventre men. Bertha wept for the Pipe as if it were 'a dead person'.

She later consulted her father, a man she trusted as an authority on spiritual and cultural matters, as to the significance of her actions:

Odd. Afterwards I kind of felt ridiculous. I told my dad about it. And he said, 'There's no explanation why things like that take hold of you.' He said, 'There probably is- There probably is a reason, but we don't know what it is,'

he said. 'I don't think it's going to hurt you,' he said. 'I don't think you did a bad thing. But why you did it, we may never know,' he said. Well, to this day I still don't know.

Thus, while Bertha's father assured her that her actions were not 'bad' or worthy of supernatural retribution, he too could not account for her behavior. He observed simply that 'There probably is a reason, but we don't know what it is.'

Discussion of the 'Kissing the Pipe' Narrative

The implications of this single past personal narrative for the under-standing of the cultural identity of Mrs Bertha Snow, situated in the context of other information elicited in the interview, are substantial. We have already identified the 'Kissing the Pipe' narrative as an expression of Bertha's Conceptual Self as Normatively Oriented. We will now review two important contributions to the understanding of cultural identity which analysis of the 'Kissing the Pipe' narrative affords.

Evident Features of the Local Moral World

Given that this narrative construction depends so heavily upon Bertha's response to witnessed activities vis-à-vis the local meanings of spiritual phenomena (such as a ritual opening of the Pipe bundle), it should come as no surprise that careful analysis of her constructed (and co-constituting) local moral world is absolutely essential for an in-depth comprehension of her cultural identity. In a systematic examination of the interview with Bertha Snow, the first author deter-mined that several cultural ideals consistently ordered Bertha's evaluation of appropriate and admirable behavior within the Gros Ventre community (e.g. self-sufficiency, honesty, community-minded-ness, etc.). These cultural ideals could not exist in a sociocultural vacuum—they inhabit a local moral world of Bertha's construction (although this construction is neither idiosyncratic nor entirely of her own making). That is, the ideals themselves inhabit—and therefore depend upon—her evaluative conception of social reality which is illustrated in her many comments, descriptions and especially narra-tives regarding spiritual things. Thus, the local moral world that she repeatedly invokes in her descriptions of cultural ideals is in essence an arena for a richly textured spirituality. Given the centrality of the Flat Pipe to Gros Ventre sacred tradition, then, the narrative presented above furnishes a key site for examining important features of the local moral world instantiated in Bertha's cultural identity.

Several features of this local moral world that consistently character-

ized Bertha's discussion of the supernatural were identified by the first author. Three of these features are clearly evident in the relatively brief, past personal narrative presented above—more specifically, Bertha insists that contemporary Gros Ventre spirituality is marked by *historical discontinuity*, *passing authority* and *pervasive mystery*.

For Bertha, Gros Ventre spirituality is characterized by a radical historical discontinuity in which ancestral ceremonial tradition has been decisively and irreversibly superseded by Catholicism as a result of white domination and supernatural design. Thus, the first thing to notice about the 'Kissing the Pipe' narrative is the fundamental rupture in sacred tradition which Bertha affirms. She portrays her inexplicable actions in terms of the conventional Gros Ventre mourning practice for a 'dead person'. The complex meanings of her engagement in this symbolic practice for the Flat Pipe were more evident in the conclusion of her original version of the narrative, as paraphrased by the first author in December of 1991:

> I looked like a damn fool in front of all those white people, but I didn't have a choice in the matter. Maybe I was kissing it goodbye. [*She weeps freely for a short time and then regains her composure*.] But it's no use crying over spilled milk. The milk is spilled and there's nothing anyone can do about it. We have to move on. [Someone] visited me the other day, and he saw my Catholic shrine on top of the television and began to attack my beliefs. I asked him what right he thought he had to criticize my beliefs, seeing that I had never uttered a word against his attempts to follow Indian ways. I told him to get the hell out of my house! I won't allow that. We have to adapt to the world around us. God brings in the new to replace the old. My way is Catholic, now. Somehow, God must have wanted it this way.

Thus, in this earlier account of the incident, she more explicitly suggests that she was kissing the Pipe goodbye. She concludes this account by observing that it is no use 'crying over spilled milk'. Since the milk is spilled—the Pipes have conceded their primacy to Catholicism—God must be replacing the old with the new. This emphasis upon historical discontinuity pervades Bertha's understanding of Gros Ventre ceremonial tradition, leading her to declare in no uncertain terms that 'Gros Ventre ways are gone'.

In addition to historical discontinuity, Bertha also understands contemporary Gros Ventre spirituality to suffer from a crisis of passing authority. That is, a local moral world saturated with spirituality also raises the issue of authority since the meanings of spiritual phenomena require considerable expertise and experience if they are to be discerned. Given the nature of her perplexing behavior at a performance of the most sacred of Gros Ventre ceremonies, it seems reasonable

to expect that she would turn to someone with greater authority in spiritual matters for guidance and clarification. Quite naturally, then, she turned to her father, whom she considered an authority on such matters: 'My dad was very- very learned, very smart, very knowledge-able. All that I know, I know from him. I don't think they gave him the credit that was due him. Very respectful for the Pipes and old people.' Thus, in this context, her father's response is remarkable. For one who spoke with authority on numerous other occasions, he can only offer here that 'There probably is a reason, but we don't know what it is.' Of course, during the time period in which the 'Kissing the Pipe' narrative is set, there was still an authority to consult. But with the more recent passing of her father, the predicament of a disappearing authority on spiritual and cultural matters is more salient for Bertha than ever. Thus, the passing of spiritual and cultural expertise in modern Gros Ventre life—given the abrupt discontinuation of Gros Ventre tradition—confronts Bertha with an existential crisis: she herself cannot conclusively evaluate either the potential for or the meaning of modern spiritual experiences among the Gros Ventres, but there is no other authority left to consult.

Even if seasoned spiritual leaders existed today, however, there would be no guarantee that an authoritative interpretation of spiritual occurrences was always possible. For it is the nature of the numinous, according to Bertha, to resist conclusive rational analysis—spiritual phenomena tend to retain their mystery. In short, Bertha suggests that Gros Ventres have consistently allowed for the distinct possibility that the meaning of any given supernatural occurrence might remain tentative and indefinite—even authoritative accounts of spiritual affairs may be ambiguous and incomplete. This seems quite apparent in the 'Kissing the Pipe' narrative. Throughout the account, she repeat-edly emphasizes that she is unaware of what moved her to attend the ceremony and eventually kiss the Pipe. As a result, one of the most salient aspects of this particular narrative that distinguishes it from most of the other narratives in the interview (besides the high level of affect mentioned previously) is the repeated expression of mystification that permeates it. In the course of just 550 words, Bertha verbalizes bewilderment almost 15 separate times. Her father explicitly ratifies this sense of mystery in his interpretation of her actions: 'There's no explanation why things like that take hold of you. . . .Why you did it, we may never know.' Bertha affirms this interpretation in the closing words of her narrative: 'Well, to this day I still don't know.'

Thus, several important features of the local moral world of Bertha

Snow are evident in this single narrative of past personal experience. Their rich availability in this relatively brief account signifies the immense empirical potential for the analysis of past personal narrative in the study of cultural identity.

Transcending Conceptual Dualism

In addition to privileged access to the construction of a local moral world by Bertha Snow, analysis of the 'Kissing the Pipe' narrative also affords significant insight into the co-constitution of individual agency and cultural durability. The preservation of this irreducible tension (Wertsch, 1995, 1997) in the narrative account—and, thus, the transcendence of a problematic conceptual dualism that typically opposes creative individual agency against durable social structure—is evident in several ways. First, we have already demonstrated that this account of past personal experience reveals much about the local moral world instantiated in Bertha's cultural identity. The manifest features of this constructed world themselves transcend the problematic dualism insofar as the local moral world is understood to dialectically comprise cultural identity. This constitution of cultural identity by the local moral world was described previously in some detail during our development of the cultural identity construct.

Second, the conceptual dualism that falsely opposes creative individual agency and durable social structure is transcended by the fact that the 'Kissing the Pipe' narrative portrays its protagonist as uniquely appropriating established cultural practices in the execution of creative action. More specifically, the narrative account depicts a young Bertha Snow confronted with a matrix of both established and evolving cultural practices surrounding the opening of the sacred Flat Pipe bundle. These meaningful practices are existentially charged for most members of the Gros Ventre community given the profound symbolic nature of the sacred Pipes. Established cultural practices alluded to in the narrative include the caretaker's initiation of the ceremony within the community; his observing at least some of the ritual constraints in opening the Pipe bundle; and his addressing the gathered crowd (Cooper, 1957). Evolving cultural practices alluded to in the narrative include the caretaker's decision to open the Pipe bundle for visiting non-Indian dignitaries; his apparent adaptation of the ceremonial practice for opening the bundle in a contemporary context (in which the assembled crowd was unfamiliar with the nuances of such a ceremony); his probable understanding that the necessity for such ritual practice had been superseded by Catholic ritual; and his tolerance for a young woman approaching the Pipe and

kissing it (Cooper, 1957; Fowler, 1987). Most importantly, however, the conceptual dualism is transcended by Bertha Snow's unique, agentive response while confronted with these established and evolving cultural practices. That is, in the face of this rare and powerful sacred context, Bertha creatively applies features of the established Gros Ventre mourning practice for the first time in tribal memory to the opening of a Pipe bundle. Thus, it seems clear that Bertha's construction of her 'Kissing the Pipe' narrative is ideally suited to the analysis of a cultural identity which recognizes and incorporates both the individual agent engaged in meaningful action and the durable (but not determining) cultural practices which constitute and are constituted by the individual activities of members of a cultural community.

Finally, if the transcendence of a problematic conceptual dualism is evident in certain narratives of past personal experience through their ability to represent individual variation within culture, then such transcendence is further indicated by the perhaps inevitable appearance of paradox within individual cultural identities. For example, the central paradox that characterizes the cultural identity of Bertha Snow is reflected in her insistence that 'Gros Ventre ways are gone', despite clear evidence that a host of distinctively Gros Ventre cultural ideals actually constitute her experience. It should be recognized, of course, that Bertha's contention that Gros Ventre ways are irretrievably lost refers primarily to ancestral Gros Ventre ceremonial practice and the attending supernatural encounters (Fowler, 1987).

It must be immediately added, however, that Bertha is neither consistent nor unambiguous in her assertion that Gros Ventre spirituality is irretrievably lost. For example, her emphasis upon a fundamental discontinuity in sacred experience yields some striking internal contradictions in her discussion of spiritual matters. If the power of the sacred Pipes is truly gone, then why during the cultural identity interview does she worry about their mistreatment bringing 'bad luck' on the Gros Ventre people? It is also clear that Bertha's poignant experience with the Flat Pipe as portrayed in the 'Kissing the Pipe' narrative drives her insistence that Gros Ventre ancestral ways have ended: she responded to the Pipe as if it were a 'dead person' and concludes that it is no use 'crying over spilled milk'.

And yet, this inexplicable experience which would seem to offer compelling evidence for the cessation of Gros Ventre sacred tradition is itself a powerful spiritual encounter. Thus, her own transformative experience with the sacred Flat Pipe is contemporary evidence of the continued progression of Gros Ventre sacred tradition. We maintain

that such paradoxes represent important ideological fault lines around which distinct cultural identities within a single cultural community are especially likely to emerge. This additional area for the exploration of individual variation within culture is uniquely evident in past personal narrative.

Conclusion

The goal of this article was to provide a distinct conceptualization of cultural identity that could successfully transcend the not unusual dichotomy evident in the social sciences between the person as active agent and the person as culturally determined. The theoretical forces that facilitate this conceptualization of cultural identity emerge from two classical taxonomies of the self derived from cultural anthropologist Irving Hallowell's (1955) five basic orientations which culture provides for the self, and cognitive psychologist Ulric Neisser's (1988) five distinct kinds of self-knowledge. We have argued that Neisser's Conceptual Self, situated within Hallowell's Normative Orientation, affords a unique and interesting confluence of theoretical tradition that successfully transcends the problematic dualism between individual agency and cultural determinism. This Conceptual Self as Normatively Oriented is designated cultural identity and defined as a form of conscious, reflexive and evaluative self-understanding pertaining to that facet of the self which knowingly commits itself to the shared values and practices of a particular cultural group. This construct occupies a new theoretical space that includes its co-constituting 'local moral world'—the constructed, intentional moral order which is necessary to any complete understanding of Conceptual Selves as Normatively Oriented. In addition, we have argued that past personal narrative is a privileged site for the investigation of cultural identity since it can (a) actively co-construct cultural ideal and local moral world, (b) uniquely portray active agents creatively engaged with durable cultural practices, and (c) enigmatically betray existential paradoxes through which cultural identity is especially likely to vary within single cultural communities. Finally, the unique suitability of the analysis of past personal narrative for the study of cultural identity is illustrated with an example from a Gros Ventre elder of the Fort Belknap Indian reservation in north-central Montana. It is our hope in presenting this article to stimulate the thinking, researching and writing of cultural psychologists of all persuasions as we collectively attempt to formulate and reformulate theoretically viable contributions to the analysis of culture in human activity.

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