

This is the html version of the file [http://people.bath.ac.uk/ssxlw/Holland%20and%20Lachicotte%20chapter%20on%20Vygotsky%20and%20Identity%20\(2\).doc](http://people.bath.ac.uk/ssxlw/Holland%20and%20Lachicotte%20chapter%20on%20Vygotsky%20and%20Identity%20(2).doc).

Google automatically generates html versions of documents as we crawl the web.

To link to or bookmark this page, use the following url: [http://www.google.com/search?q=cache:EOjMBQdPY1cJ:people.bath.ac.uk/ssxlw/Holland%2520and%2520Lachicotte%2520chapter%2520on%2520Vygotsky%2520and%2520Identity%2520\(2\).doc+vygotsky,+Mead,+and+the+n](http://www.google.com/search?q=cache:EOjMBQdPY1cJ:people.bath.ac.uk/ssxlw/Holland%2520and%2520Lachicotte%2520chapter%2520on%2520Vygotsky%2520and%2520Identity%2520(2).doc+vygotsky,+Mead,+and+the+n)

q=cache:EOjMBQdPY1cJ:people.bath.ac.uk/ssxlw/Holland%2520and%2520Lachicotte%2520chapter%2520on%2520Vygotsky%2520and%2520Identity%2520(2).doc+vygotsky,+Mead,+and+the+n

Google is neither affiliated with the authors of this page nor responsible for its content.

These search terms have been highlighted: **vygotsky mead new**

Vygotsky, Mead, and the New Sociocultural Studies of Identity

Dorothy Holland and William Lachicotte, Jr.

Introduction¹

Identity is a key concept in many different fields including psychology, anthropology, sociology, linguistic, and cultural studies. At the intersection of these fields, sociocultural research has a recent name for the interdisciplinary approach inspired by the cultural historical work of L.S. **Vygotsky** and others, is developing its own integrated perspective on identity. In his brief life, **Vygotsky** wrote down only rudimentary ideas about personality or self. Still, those he offered, when combined with his general notions of semiotic mediation and higher order psychological functions, formulate an important nascent understanding of identity formation and its significance for people's lives and processes of social and cultural change. This chapter examines developments in relevant research and theory that have appeared for the most part since the key article by William Penuel and James Wertsch in 1995. By adopting an expanded definition of identity, we include a wide range of research, from case studies of individual identity development to analyses of the centrality of identities in mediating response to state projects and to social movements.

Concepts of identity are often (though not in Penuel and Wertsch) promiscuously mingled, producing a good bit of confusion and ambiguity. Since we concentrate on the approach to identity associated with George Herbert **Mead**, rather than following Penuel and Wertsch's focus on Erik Erikson's better-known concepts, our first task is to clarify the differences between these two major conceptualizations. Those who are tempted to move directly to the review of empirical studies in the third section should consider first reading the clarification of the two concepts of identity that follows.

Two Lines of Theorizing Identity: Erikson and Mead

Despite its current ubiquity in the social sciences, the humanities, and in everyday talk, the concept of identity is relatively recent. Gleason's (1983) *Semantic History* dates its appearance as a popular social science term to the 1950s, when Erik Erikson put it into circulation. Thanks to his choice of topics and to the coincidental rise of the social sciences to prestige, Erikson won a Pulitzer and several other notable prizes, received extensive journalistic coverage and saw his ideas reach wide audiences. His and others' writings, such as David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*, resonated with the disquiet many postwar Americans felt, living through the vast expansion of mass-produced consumer goods in the 1950s and then the turmoil of the sixties. Many were troubled by questions Erikson associated with identity formation: Who am I? Where do I belong in today's society? Summarizing the interpretations engendered by Erikson's writing, Penuel and Wertsch (1995:83) defined identity as, "a sense, felt by individuals within themselves, and as an experience of continuity, oriented toward a self-chosen and positively anticipated future." Another frequently cited conception, inspired by Erikson, sees identity as a process "located in the core of the individual and yet also in the core of his communal culture" (Erikson 1968:22 quoted in Gleason 1983:914; see also Erikson 1980 and Sankfeld 1999) that answers questions of who one is and what one stands for.

Although Erikson saw identity as profoundly shaped by historical circumstances, his emphases have made his concept of identity most attractive to those interested in psychological well-being and in the psychodynamics that achieve or impede it. Interpretations of Erikson have proliferated and his concerns have been extended to ethnicity, the consequences of disrespect for ethnic groups, and many other topics, some that Erikson considered and others that he was not as ready to recognize. Still, questions of belonging and of locating oneself in society continue to be core aspects of the concept. Because Erikson considered achieving a *stable, consistent and enduring* answer to the core questions to be an important psychodynamic task, "identity" continues to invoke coherence and continuity of self as fundamental to mental health.

Other trends in early 20th century social science resulted in other concepts of identity that lacked the core Eriksonian elements and were more clearly oriented to sociological and anthropological topics. Perhaps the best known of these variant notions of identity developed in the American school of social psychology that claims G. H. **Mead** (1910, 1912, 1913, 1925, 1934) as its founder. Mead's conception of the "dynamic grounded self formation in the social coordination of activity through symbolic communication. It highlighted the importance of everyday encounters with people generalized as social types. Although the Meadian concept has been expanded to include master statuses (such as race and gender) and culturally defined persona (such as an aggressive person or, along the Southwest Border of the United States and Mexico, the narcotrafficker, Edberg 2004) (Stryker (19xx) and McCall (19xx)), it originally developed to account for self formation by relation to the linguistically recognized social positions and roles crucial to the conduct of social activities and relationships. Today, the idea is that people form senses of themselves--identities--in relation to ways of inhabiting roles, positions and cultural imaginaries that matter to them, e.g., as a skater, a punk, a radical environmentalist, a theoretically sophisticated anthropologist, a stylish dresser, a good father, a third wave feminist, a moderate Republican.

The theoretical school, which became identified as symbolic interactionism in the 1940s, did not at first use the term "identity". Mead and Charles Horton Cooley, the founders of the approach, used "self" instead. During the 1960s their usage shifted from "self" to "identity" and Erving Goffman's popular books, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, published in 1959, and *Stigma*, in 1963, gave this alternative meaning of identity widespread circulation.

Gleason (1983:917-918) helps explain how the emergence of this distinctive sense of identity managed only to complicate, or muddy, the more casual use of "identity". Strands of the Meadian or "symbolic interactionist" usage became conflated with the more dominant Eriksonian senses of the term. Though there are clear ways that studies of Eriksonian "identity" can be brought into conversation with studies of Meadian "identities",² the two notions are oriented to different phenomena. An Eriksonian "identity" is overarching, weaving together an individual's answers to questions about who (s)he is as a member of the cultural group(s) that make up his or her society. It interrelates one's stances toward the major dimensions of life. A Meadian identity, on the other hand, is a sense of oneself as a participant in the social roles and positions defined by a specific, historically constituted set of social activities. Meadian identities are understood to be multiple--one's important identities can include "radical environmentalist" and "good father" and they may reflect contradictory moral (for example) stances. Eriksonian approaches, in contrast, attribute psychodynamic significance to achieving a coherent and consistent identity that continues over the course of one's adulthood. Thus, to the extent that one emphasizes consistency and continuity (a declining emphasis, see below), the two definitions can be in tension with one another. Penuel and Wertsch (1995) use the term "analytic primacy" to describe how theorists give priority to one aspect of phenomena over others. At the very least, the analytic primacy of Eriksonian orientations differ from Meadian ones. The questions of the former have to do with processes of and obstacles to achieving an identity, that is the integration of an enduring and consistent self in social life; those of the latter have to do with the means by which individuals form senses of self--identities--in relation to roles, statuses, and cultural persona that organize knowledge, affect, motivation, action, and agency.

In the next section, we discuss how Vygotskian concepts contribute to the study of what we call "Meadian" identities and present research that develops this theoretical formulation. In the final sections, we return to Eriksonian approaches. For now, "identity" refers to the Meadian sort, which we define as a self understanding to which one is emotionally attached that informs one's behavior and interpretations: "People tell others who they are, but even more important, they tell themselves who they are and then try to act as though they are who they say they are. These self-understandings are what we refer to as identities (Holland et al.

Conceptualizing Identity Formation: Mead and Vygotsky

L.S. **Vygotsky**, to the limited extent he wrote about personality, was like **Mead** in viewing self as a complex emergent phenomenon continually produced in and by individuals in their interchanges with others and with the culturally transformed material world. The two theorists shared ideas about this sociogenetic formation of self. They were similarly interested in the ways in which social interaction, mediated by symbolic forms, provided crucial resources and ever present constraints for self-making. They emphasized *active internalization*, internalized *self-other dialogues*, and, in their respective ways, paid attention to the *semiotics of behavior*. On the other hand, Valsiner and van der Veer (1988:127-128) point out an important difference between the two. **Mead** gave analytic primacy to the *outcomes* of sociogenesis, the resulting linkages formed between self and society through the dynamic *self-other system*, while **Vygotsky** emphasized how mind and personality, as sociogenetic products, *developed*.

There is no record that the younger **Vygotsky** (1896-1934) crossed paths with **Mead** (1863-1931), or that either read the other's work. Nonetheless, they drew upon several of the same intellectual sources and their ideas are sufficiently compatible to augment one another. **Vygotsky's** importance for the line of research spawned by **Mead** is, if anything, even greater than his significance for Eriksonian studies of identities. Semiotic mediation is crucial to the formation of Meadian identities. In turn, Meadian identities, as we argue below, can be considered to constitute higher order functions of personality. Conceived as such, these identities influence behavior and, very importantly, enable a modest form of agency. A brief sketch of **Vygotsky** and **Mead's** commonalities helps to explain the value of convening their separate interests.

Active Internalization

The two scholars developed their respective sociogenetic accounts of self and mind partly in relation to the writings of the psychologist, James Mark Baldwin, and the moral philosopher, Josiah Royce. One influence was Baldwin's rendering of the proclivity of humans to imitate the behavior of others in ways that produce individually distinctive behavioral formations. Baldwin provided this nuanced and consequential conceptualization of the ontogeny of imitation: Embedded in a context of ongoing social suggestions, the child, as she becomes able, imitates the behavior of others. At first, her *own* performance serves as a stimulus for her subsequent behavior. She reiterates her own behavior regardless of its mistakes as judged against the model. Then, at some point as the child matures, she stops focusing on her own original imitation, attends instead to the model, and produces novel variations on it, including even oppositions to it.³ Neither the model nor the novel variant excite her. Instead, her focus shifts to *the relationship between the two*.

For Baldwin, individuals are attracted to collective activities, forms, and patterns, and copy them, but much more goes on than straightforward copying. Rather they learn to assemble their own, novel patterns of personality, still within the frame that is provided for them by society. In response to ongoing social demands, the individual becomes a law unto himself, exercises his private judgment, fights his own battles for truth, shows the virtue of independence and the vice of obstinacy. (Baldwin 1898, pp. 19-20, quoted in Valsiner and van der Veer, 1988:122). This productive pattern of imitation, makes the person an active agent in the internalization process (Valsiner and van der Veer, 1988:121).

Today, many scholars would want to elaborate Baldwin's idea that development takes place amidst ongoing social suggestions by emphasizing power asymmetries. Power relations, in particular, are thought to shape a person's self (or a group's identity) by positioning by distinguishing and treating a person or group as gendered, raced, classed, or other type of subject. Regimes of power shape knowledge to the form of normative categories: the disabled, the troubled youth, or attractive women. A person or group is offered a social position when a powerful body, such as a governmental agency, proposes a particular sort of subject--a felon, a sexual harasser, or at-risk student--and calls on an individual to occupy the position (Bourdieu 1977; Davies and Harr   1990; Foucault 1975, 1988; Harr   and Van Langenhove 1991). Baldwin's conceptualization of imitation, however, fosters the idea of active internalization even in the face of social power. Acts of positioning must be answered, even if studiously ignored, but there is still self-authoring (Holland, et al. 1998: 272, Holland and Leander 2004).

Dialogic Selves: Self Authoring in Relation to Others

It is key to active internalization for both **Vygotsky** and **Mead** that one's behaviors elicit reactions from others, so that, over time, one develops an inner sense of the collective meanings and social judgments that may meet one's behavior. A self-other split, with associated tensions, is a feature of both of their sociogenetic views. **Vygotsky** (and Luria) developed this theme in their accounts of word meaning, which contrast the *meaning* attributed to the word by (official) others to personal *senses* of the terms (REFS). For **Mead**, who was especially inspired by Royce, an internalized self-other relationship was clearly personified. Royce accepted Baldwin's general thesis about imitation, but stressed that social judgment is internalized in *association* with others (Royce REF). He saw a dramatic relationship, an affectively flavored internal dialogue between the Ego and non-Ego, that played out in behavior: the dialectical relationship of which leads to one or another act that the person performs! (ibid, p.123). **Mead's** central conception of the self-other system developed during the period that he was citing Baldwin and Royce. His conception of the self (as agent) and the other (as [social] object) bears similarities to Royce's ideas.

Thus, **Mead**, whose interests inclined to what we now associate with sociology's version of social psychology, gave a more central place to the internalization of others as integral to one's inhabitation of the *positions and roles afforded us by society* than **Vygotsky**, who was more interested in cognitive and affective development. We actively internalize a sense of our own behavior in comparison to the behavior of others acting in the roles and positions and making claims to the cultural persona that we are. We develop an inner sense of the collective regard society is likely to have for our performances, and craft our own way of being in roles and positions by relationship to this generalized other, the collective sense that we gradually develop from those who evaluate us. In **Mead's** terms, the self is simultaneously the actor and the observer in the ongoing flow of practice. The self as an observer evaluates and infers the other's from the acts in the image of its own behavior cast on the model of others' responses. The self, as actor, with less than total control of the mind/body, responds to manifold stimuli, including memories of past behavior. Contemporary notions of identity in identity theory owe much to **Mead's** conceptions of the self and the other's dynamic.

Recent anthropological works that develop Meadian identity concepts, especially those inspired by Bakhtin's dialogic approach⁴, rely heavily on the decentralized view of the self introduced by this core idea of a self-other relation carried out through inner dialogue over difference about how one is occupying a position or validating a claim to a valued cultural persona (Holland, et al. 1998; Holland and Lave 2001; and Satterfield 2002). (Approaches of a more Eriksonian bent also emphasize the importance of the self-other dialogue, e.g. Tappan 1999, 2000; Sardin 2004).

The Semiotics of Behavior: Signs of the Other, Signs of the Self

A third important element shared by **Mead** and **Vygotsky** is their focus on the semiotics of behavior. Both stress the transitivity of signs for self and other. In **Vygotsky's** version, words, gestures, artifacts and acts are initially signs in interaction, directed by the self toward the other or received by the self from the other. At some point, however, the self takes itself as the object of the gesture. *The self comes to use the signs, once directed to others or received from others, in relation to the self.*⁵ **Vygotsky** credits Baldwin for his recognition that self is understood through applying one's understanding of others to oneself. We are conscious of ourselves because we cognize others, and in the same way which we use to cognize others since we are the same in relation to us that others are in relation to us. We are *aware* of our self only to the extent that we are *the other for* our self, i.e. in so far as we can perceive our own reflexes again as stimuli. (Vygotsky, 1982, p. 52, quoted in Valsiner and van der Veer, 1988:129).

In Mead's version of the transitivity of symbolic behavior, one's own behavior comes to call out the same meaning for, and thus be a stimulant for, self, as it is for the other. Mead, who emphasized coordination of behavior even more than imitation in shaping the social self, placed great stress on this transitivity (Mead 1912, 1913, 1934). As we develop maturity in society's activity systems, we *individuals* begin to experience our own behavior as signs of who we are. We become objects of our own gaze and experience our own behavior "and by association ourselves" *in relation to the meanings of the group* and so deserving admiration and respect, or disapproval and condemnation, according to *the values practiced by the group*.

These foundations—active internationalization, dialogic selves, and the semiotics of behavior—underlie the configurations of the self-in-social-activities that identity theorists such as Goffman (1959, 1963) McCall and Simmons (1978), Stryker (1968, 1980) refer to as "identities" and understand as the means by which individuals infuse self and subjective meaning into roles and develop desire for being in society: "[W]hen an individual is committed, he gambles his regard for himself on living up to this self conception" (Burke and Reitzes 1991: 241). One pursues opportunities to enact one's claims to an identity and thereby validates it for themselves and for others (McCall and Simmons 1978). Thus, identities motivate action.⁶ In our words, a person becomes emotionally attached to her understanding of herself in the worlds of meaning into which she is drawn. This attachment grows as she invests herself in her sense of self in the social position and feels responsible for living up to claims entailed by the way she represents herself. She builds and invests herself in these identities and is sensitive to assuring herself of her claim to the identity through appropriate performances and to receiving treatment from others that validates these senses of herself. Burke and Reitzes (1991:242, see also Burke and Reitzes 1981) sum up five aspects that theorists following in the line of Mead attribute to identities. (Here we amend Burke and Reitzes's list, to bring it in line with an integrated sociocultural approach to identity.) Identities are 1) *social products*, i.e., collectively developed and imagined social categories, 2) *self-meanings*, developed through a sociogenetic process that entails active internalization, 3) *symbolic*, when performed they call up the same responses in one person as they do in others, 4) *reflexive*, providing a vantage point from which persons can assess the implications of their own behavior as well as of other people's behaviors [p. 242] and 5) a *source of motivation for action*, especially actions that result in the social confirmation of the identity!

Vygotsky and Identity Development

Where Mead explored how persons creatively inhabit and are motivated by the roles, positions and cultural personae that are ubiquitous features of human societies, Vygotsky's interests led him to the general developmental processes affecting human cognition, emotion, and motivation. He was more interested in the general, but related, process in which collective signs deployed in social activities become the means for complex, volitional behavior on the part of the individual. His developmental perspective is provocative for theorizing how persons construct the identities that mediate their behavior and interpretation of the world. Vygotsky's ideas about semiotic mediation clarify the role of culture in the formation of identities and envision how actively internalized identities enable one to control one's behavior and thus have agency.

Vygotsky's key to human existence was the capacity to escape enslavement to whatever stimuli humans happened to encounter whether from within or without. The way that they accomplished this was (broadly) linguistic, that is, through the active construction and use of symbols. Just as humans can modify the environment physically--thanks to their production of, and facility with, tools and symbols--humans can also modify the environment's stimulus value for their own mental states.

A typical mediating device is constructed by assigning meaning to an object or a behavior. This symbolic object or behavior is then placed in the environment (so as to affect mental events. It is important, however, to remember that Vygotsky saw these tools for the self control of cognition and affect as, above all, social and cultural. "Assigning meaning" and "placing in the environment" are not just individual acts. Rather, mediating devices are part of collectively formed systems of meaning, products of social history. As simple examples, he cited techniques drawn from cross-cultural accounts--from the elaborate mnemonic objects used by messengers in traditional cultures, to the contemporary Westerner's knot in her handkerchief (1960:102)--to show that mediating devices signal a turning point in human cultural history: the transition from the use of one's memory to active control over it (Vygotsky 1930:83). Vygotsky referred to these complexes, which extend natural abilities through cultural means, as "higher order mental functions".

Identities as a Higher Order Mental Function

Although Vygotsky himself exemplified the construction of "higher psychological functions" in experimental situations of recall or problem solving, he and his associates considered mediating devices to be important to human activities beyond control over memory, problem-solving and inferencing. Luria (cited in Cole 1985:149), for example, gives a case of the mediation of will, and Vygotsky (1984:379) discussed the development of a "logic of emotion." Children learn, through signs and words, to talk about, compare, classify, and thus manage their own emotions. These ideas (popularly expressed as self-control) inform recent studies of human artifices for modulating emotion.

Arlie Hochschild's book, *The Managed Heart*, for instance, describes the training of flight attendants and the devices that these women were taught to control their anger at obnoxious passengers. They learned to imagine, for example, that something traumatic had happened in the passenger's life, or to remind themselves that the irritating passenger was behaving childishly because of his fear of flying (1983:24-27). Hochschild shows how these devices were carefully inculcated and continually reproduced in practice, under a regimen of training that was instituted and maintained by the corporation and supported as well by a popular tradition of such means to self-control. So successful was this training that flight attendants often began to lose any sense of their own anger, on and even off the job.

Most of Vygotsky's suggestions about the development of personality concern self-management. These abilities are important in the self-regulation of emotion and behavior called for in the performance of roles such as flight attendant, and especially roles that have become elaborated into identities. Vygotsky also hints, in other writings, at processes of self organization for the purpose of carrying out socially recognized acts. In Vygotsky 1984c, he describes a self reorganization that emerges as the child matures and becomes capable of occupying a **new** role or position in an activity. Vygotsky writes about a child trying to solve a problem put to him in an experiment. The child could not solve the problem on his own, but he could solve it by directing speech about the solution to an adult. Vygotsky thought that the child had not yet transfigured the necessary references into inner speech and so could not organize his own behavior:

The big change in the child's development takes place when the speech becomes socialized, when, instead of turning to the experimenter with a plan for a solution, the child turns to himself. In the latter case, the speech that takes part in the problem-solving process, turns from being in the category of the inter-psychical into that of an intra-psychical function. The child, *organizing his own behaviour along the lines of the social type*, applies to himself that means of behaviour that he previously applied to others. Consequently, the source of the intellectual activity and control over one's own behaviour in the process of practical problem-solving lies *not in the invention of a purely logical act*, but in the *application to one's self of a social relationship, in the transfer of a social form of behaviour into one's own psychic organization* (Vygotsky, 1984c, pp. 33-34; quotes in (Valsiner and van der Veer, 1988:130-131, our italics).

In a later paper Vygotsky (1930(or 33?)/1978) described processes reminiscent of self-organization in the name of an identity. In that paper one sees Vygotsky's usual fascination with humans' ability to manipulate their imaginative worlds and themselves by means of symbols. The paper analyzed young children's play and their later abilities with games.

Early in their lives children begin a type of play in which the everyday meaning of objects is suspended and **new** meaning is assigned to objects, others and self. Behind the couch becomes the bad guy's hideout, under the table becomes the jail. One's playmate becomes the sheriff; oneself, the outlaw. Or perhaps a certain set of everyday meanings is retained and highlighted, and other features drop away. Vygotsky, for instance, describes two sisters playing at being sisters. In either type of play, meanings are manipulated to point to another (absent or distilled) social setting and one's motivations and feelings are geared to participation in the imagined scene. A piece of candy is used to represent something else--a jewel that robbers have stolen, perhaps--and is treated as a jewel. The temptation to eat it is resisted. Likewise, one is treated and treats oneself as acting out of a position in the play scene. The words of one's playmates are heard as words toward one's character in the play. Being called a "bad guy" is not carried away the heart when the play is finished. Immediate sensations of pain and fatigue may also be ignored for the purpose of continuing play. When a race is run, the goal of winning the race, or at least reaching the finish line, overcomes any desire to stop, to sit down from fatigue. Of course, children sometimes do stop

before the race is over; eat the candy, take personal offense, or tire of playing sister, wandering away to watch TV. The remarkable point is how often they do not. They learn to detach themselves from their reactions to immediate surroundings, to enter a play world--a conceptual world that differs from the everyday--and come to react to the imagined actors, objects and events of that world.⁷

Games with more explicit rules and less concrete fantasy become more prominent as the child grows older. Still the child must shift herself to a conceptual world beyond her immediate surroundings in order to become an actor who submits to the premises of the game and treats events of the game as real. Her desires and motivations become related to "a fictitious 'I,' to her role in the game and its rules" (Vygotsky (1933/1978: 100). It is this competence which makes culturally constituted or what Holland et al 1998 call "figured worlds" possible and, consequently, the range of human institutions. Lee (1985) points out the definite link between play worlds and institutional life. Fantasy and gamesâ€™ play serve as precursors to participation in institutional life, where individuals are treated as scholars, bosses, or "at-risk" children--whatever the institutional role--and events such as the granting of tenure, a corporate raid, or the "self esteem" of at-risk children are taken in all seriousness and the identities one develops in those worlds (e.g., "activist scholar", "incompetent boss", "top student") become selves that one can evoke.

Identity Development and Semiotic Mediation

The ability to organize oneself in the name of an identity, according to a Vygotskian perspective, develops as one transacts cultural artifacts with others and then at some point applies the cultural resource to oneself. Holland et al. (1998, chapter 4; see also Cain 1991) provide examples of mediation devices explicitly related to the development of an identity "that of a non-drinking alcoholic. It is an identity one develops in activities sponsored by Alcoholics Anonymous. In AA meetings, participants are drawn into telling stories about their lives before joining the organization and interacting other symbols of their journey to sobriety, e.g., collecting tokens to mark periods of time spent sober. They are drawn into a world of cultural meaning where these devices have particular symbolic value and emotional valence. Cain's research identified these stories and tokens as mediational devices that were important in the formation of members' personal identities as non-drinking alcoholics. They came to name themselves, and often to see themselves, as "alcoholics" and not just social drinkers. These elements of AA were meaningful in, relevant to, and valued in relation to a frame of meaning, a virtual world, a world that had been figured. When Cain did her research, the chips used in AA meetings to mark length of sobriety were the same plastic chips sold for playing poker. In the world of AA, these chips were not won by holding a straight flush. Rather, the chips were meaningfully revalued to a world where the stake, the thing at wager, was staying sober; the chip became an emblem of a different achievement, another kind of success. On the store's shelf, a poker chip is worth little, but within the world of AA, the significance of a chip, color-coded for length of time without a drink, is great. The difference between being able to pick up a chip and having to forgo the act becomes, for some, the difference between a self that is recovering and desired and one that is not.

The stories that AA participants learned to tell of their former lives and current temptations signified an experience and place in a world that signally differs from that of the non-alcoholic. Cain followed newcomers through their participation in AA activities. She recorded stories and noted a gradually developing ability on the part of some, not all, newcomers to recount the various segments of their lives in the genre of AA stories. The stories became, Holland et al. (1998) argue, the primary cultural resource that semiotically mediated members' senses of self and their abilities to organize themselves as "non-drinking alcoholics" even in the face of powerful urges to continue patterns of drinking and drinking activities.

Culture and Identity Formation

Penuel and Wertsch (1995:83) advise researchers "to study identity in local activity settings where participants are actively engaged in forming their identities; to examine the cultural and historical resources for identity formation as empowering and constraining tools for identity formation; [and] to take mediated action as a unit of analysis". Though they found their notion of identity in Erikson's work, their list is also a good start for researchers interested in Meadian concepts of identity. Accommodating Meadian "identities", however, requires making additional features explicit: Identities are social and cultural products through which a person identifies self-in-activity and learns, through the mediation of cultural resources, to manage and organize him- or herself to act in the name of an identity. Identities are personally significant, actively internalized, self-meanings, but first and foremost, pace Erikson, they are formed in relation to pre-existing social identities.

Culture is vital for Meadian identities in two respects. First, cultural genres (e.g., the stories told in Alcoholic Anonymous meetings) and cultural artifacts (e.g., the poker-chips-turned-into-markers-of-sobriety) are the means to the semiotic mediation of self as a recognized social type (e.g., a non-drinking alcoholic). Second, and even more significant, identities themselves are part of more encompassing cultural constructions.

Wertsch (19xx) and Holland et al (1998), among others, have pointed out that identities are associated with activities understood against a horizon of cultural meaning. Social types gain sense only within richly developed imaginings of the worlds in which they exist. Holland et al. (1998:52) use "figured worlds" or "cultural worlds" interchangeably to refer to socially and culturally constructed realms of interpretation and performance in which particular characters and actors (e.g., non-drinking alcoholics, gifted and talented student, radical environmentalist) are recognized, significance is assigned to certain activities (e.g., AA meetings, field trips, direct actions) and the acts that compose them (e.g., picking up a chip, scoring in the top 10%, engaging in a lock down) and particular outcomes (e.g., staying sober, being accepted at Harvard, realizing the "wild within") are valued over others.⁸ People develop selves in relation to social identities and cultural persona and in their name perform and (re)create the activities meaningful to those worlds. The acts and artifacts become evocative, to participants, of the meanings relevant to those worlds. The genre of the worlds, e.g., AA stories, become personalized. Once unorganized sentiments come to be orchestrated in relation to tools of self authoring--names for social types in the world, poker chips or other tangible signs, to the point that the person is able to organize him- or herself as a non-drinking alcoholic, say and, in the process, contribute to the performance of the worlds.

Vygotsky's Concept of Agency and Its Significance

We need to reiterate one of the more important implications of Vygotsky's theory before turning to particular lines of research. Vygotsky argued that, without semiotic mediation, people would be buffeted about by the environmental stimuli they encountered as they went about in the world. Instead, semiotic mediation provides the means for humans to control, organize and resignify their own behavior. As Hochschild observed for Delta flight attendants, by first relying upon "training wheels" of a symbolic sort, one can learn to ignore aspects of situations to which one would have previously responded. One of the convincing points about this tool of agency is its appropriate modesty. It is an indirect means--one modifies one's environment with the aim, but not the certainty, of affecting one's own behavior--and it requires a sustained effort. Self control and self organization are enabled by semiotic mediation but by no means entailed. Mead's "unruly character, whose identity process is always uncertain and always unfinished. Newly employed cultural resources, because they usually permit many meanings, may elicit unanticipated behavior. Hence, a Vygotskian approach to identity formation appropriately recognizes that culture is integral to self formation and agency: no cultural resources, no cultural worlds, no identities. It also values the cultural production of new cultural resources as a means, albeit a contingent one, of bringing about social and cultural change. People, banded in communities of practice, can author, intentionally or unintentionally, new selves and new cultural worlds and try to realize them.

As a higher order psychological function, identities constitute a relatively organized complex of thoughts, feelings, memories and experience that a person can more or less durably evoke as a platform for action and response. A person who has developed an identity through Alcoholics Anonymous as a "non-drinking alcoholic", for example, can narrate and otherwise project himself as a recovering alcoholic. He can evaluate actions through the lens of AA and care about how he appears through those lenses. He predicts and takes responsibility for the outcome of his actions in the world of AA. He has identified with the cultural world of Alcoholics Anonymous and developed a self sensitive to that world. He observes, interprets, and values himself and others in terms of that world and especially important, interprets the past and plans future action in those terms. An identity is a key means of escape from the tyranny of environmental stimuli. Just because one is offered a drink, one doesn't have to take it as long as one can imagine otherwise.

These possibilities for agency make identity and identity processes important not only in the lives of individuals, but in the course of social change.

Sociocultural Studies of Identity Formation

We searched publications since 1995 for sociocultural studies of identity formation that draw upon a Vygotskian approach. The empirical studies that we found included Eriksonian and Meadian approaches to identity and most were directed to the ethnographic study of identity processes in practice. The studies favor cases of identity (re)formation in response to social and cultural change and other life-altering events (hence mimicking Vygotsky's genetic method). Despite the relatively recent emergence of a sociocultural perspective on identity, these studies help illuminate how identities form and the role they play in mediating personal experience and motivating personal action and in shaping social life and its transformations. We briefly describe examples of the more suggestive research along five different lines.⁹ The last line addresses issues of the universality of identity and so returns the focus from Meadian identities to Eriksonian identity.

Identity Formation and Its Complications

The brief account of identity development in Alcoholics Anonymous emphasized the importance of several things: interacting artifacts of the cultural world, directing the meaning of the markers of sobriety toward oneself and learning to narrate oneself as a non-drinking alcoholic. Several studies make clear that the tasks of identity formation—participation in cultural activities, mastering cultural artifacts, identifying with and figuring oneself in the cultural world—are often joined by complications. From the AA research, for example (Holland et al 1998 and Cain 1991), we learned that newcomers to AA meetings typically resisted the idea that they had a problem with alcohol consumption. In the popular imagination of the time, the "space of the imaginary drunk" was filled by images of skid row bums. To the ears of newcomers, AA's insistence that they were alcoholics appeared as attempts to position them as inebriated derelicts. Part of their process of identity development in AA involved re-imagining what a person with a drinking problem might be like.

Studies of people who had recently come to the environmental movement revealed a similar complication in the development of their identities as environmentalists. Many outside the movement tended to have a negative image of environmentalists. For "outsiders" the space of the imaginary environmentalist was filled by young, "hippy looking" wild-eyed, tree-huggers or the more sinister tree-spiker. Embracing these images affiliated outsiders with the imagined community of reasonable, middle-class folks who favor compromise and avoid conflict. They disdained environmentalists, thinking of them as immature people who carry their environmental sentiments too far or as privileged whites: somewhat wealthy, well-educated people who belong to the Sierra Club. The latter sort has the wealth and the leisure time to engage in activities like flying off somewhere to save whales. Both the hunters our research team followed and (especially) our African-American consultants found this class-marked image off-putting. Becoming environmentalists in the face of these widespread popular images meant coming to peace with the fact that other sorts of folks and types of people could become environmentalists despite these popular images (Holland 2004, Allen et al. in press).

Another complication flows from the nature of self-authoring as a social, dialogical process. Identity is an achievement of the person's activity—but only within the contexts and events of social interaction. One's identities are social products drawn from social history, actively internalized, and redrawn as one's expressions of it enter into new circumstances and new activities. They are complicated by the ongoing dialogue of many actors in many activities, and the continual interplay of personal and interpersonal negotiations of their meaning and effects. At times, identity development becomes intermeshed in the strategic involvement of self-authoring, as a means to organize activity and gain a better footing with specific audiences. William Lachicotte (2002) provides an account of Roger, a person with mental disorders caught up in the kind of interpersonal politics familiar to us all. Roger is remarkable, Lachicotte argues, not just because he forges different senses of himself—different identities—through the behavioral profiles of the two differing psychiatric diagnoses given him (manic-depressive and borderline), but also because he improvises these identifications (and the scenes which evoke them) in order to create a legitimate place for himself as a son, husband, and worker—as well as a patient.

Roger calls upon the authoritative medical discourse of psychiatry to give force to his own actions and does so through different figures, according to his partners or audience. With his parents and coworkers, who charge him as "lazy" and lacking will power, he forefronts his identity as a manic-depressive; with his wife and psychiatrist, who believe in his illness, he organizes himself as the willful figure of the "borderline." In both cases, these different identities respond to the specific history of interaction, perceived personally and interpersonally. They answer different problems by organizing Roger's acts toward different goals.¹⁰

Another study hints at the complicated processes that occur in response to striking events that invite the articulation of new identities. Cheryl Mattingly and her colleagues in the Collective Narrative Group (Mattingly, et al. 2003) had been facilitating group meetings of African American, primarily working class, women caring for children with disabilities when the events of September 11th occurred. The article describes how this group of women understood and narrated the events of September 11 in group meetings, as the event became "experience" both in African American communities, and personally for African Americans. The authors observed that the women's identities as African-Americans, as Americans, and as working-class people affected how they interpreted the events of September 11.

Initially, the women responded as Americans in a figured world of international politics whose dangers had been made all too clear: as the targets of "terrorism." Mattingly et al., however, insisting upon the "incomplete" and "multiple" quality of identities, paid attention to the continuing process of storytelling through which women in the group recast their positions in the "9/11 world." Participants in the media and in other sites of discussion, continued to elaborate the social identities of terrorists, and of Americans as victims of 9/11 and as potential victims of future attacks. The participants of the Collective Narratives Group inflected these common identifications through the lens of their own histories. Together, through their dialogue, they turned "9/11" toward the activities and contexts of more immediate concern to them (and to the focus of their Group on the problems of caring with children with disabilities). In these discussions, "9/11" came to be less imposing, less a transfiguring rupture in "reality" than yet another life-threatening "challenge" in a social world already dangerous, already stressful. From their standpoints—as poor women, as African-American women, as mothers of children with "multiple challenges," as Americans long lacking the privileges which had protected others from a sense of endangerment—the events of 9/11 took on the cast of the everyday. During group discussions, the authors noted, "[the women's] position as blacks became the most salient characteristic of their cultural identity" (2003:748/5). Their "active internalization" of the discourse about 9/11 recast the meanings and possible identities framed there. (For additional cases of challenges to identity formation, see Blackburn 2003, XXXX).

Identity Formation in Trajectories of Participation Across Activities

Another exciting line of research highlights the importance of longitudinal studies that attend to identity formation in and across cultural activities over time. These studies capture the importance of sequencing and of points of engagement and withdrawal.

One field—studies of schooling, education and literacy—has produced several longitudinal studies of the formation of Meadian identities. Boaler and Greeno (19xx), for example, draw on the ideas of situated cognition and situated learning (Lave 1988, 1993; and Lave and Wenger 1991) to analyze identity formation in the activity systems organized in math classrooms—understood as a figured world—as an integral part of mathematical knowing. They argue that the senses of self that students fashion in relationship to mathematics strongly affect their continuing engagement with its learning (Boaler and Greeno, 19xx:173). That is, these identities shape students subsequent orientation and choices regarding math activities and math careers.

Boaler and her research assistant interviewed members of math AP classes in a number of northern California high schools. They discovered that the roles of students and their relationship to math learning were figured in two different ways. One group of classrooms was organized around collaborative discussion; the remaining ("traditional") group around the teaching of procedures and individual mastering of math problems. Most of the students described themselves as (being positioned as) active learners in the first case; as passive learners in the second. "In discussion-oriented figured worlds, [for example], connections between learners are emphasized as students are positioned as relational agents who are mutually committed and accountable to each other for constructing understanding in their discourse" (Boaler and Greeno 19xx:178). The article shows that the students' experiences of math were different especially in their possibilities for identities as math learners. These differences correlated with students' desires to continue the study of math. Students in the traditional classroom tended to dislike being positioned as passive learners. They were less likely than students in the discussion-oriented classrooms to want to continue in math activities. Boaler and Greeno (19xx:172) refer to a "trajectory of participation in the

practices of mathematical discourse and thinking.â€ Studentsâ€™ trajectories through math learning activities resulted (or not) in identities as â€œmath students,â€ and for the few who went on, as â€œmathematicians.â€ [For other studies that trace the formation of social identities in classroom activities over time, see Leander (20xx, 20xx) and Wortham (20xx).]

Another study, based on in-depth interviews, revealed an interesting longitudinal relationship between participation and identification in schooling activities. Urrieta (2003, 20xx) presents the histories of twenty-four individuals, self identified as Chicanas/os, drawn from intensive interviews about their lives and their â€œtrajectories of participationâ€ across educational activities. He sampled undergraduate and graduate students, primary and secondary school teachers, and university professors. Although they differed in truly striking ways, the detailed narratives of these Chicano/Chicana activists describe their social identification as â€œgood studentsâ€ in their early school careers. Their anecdotes told of being positioned as **good students**, often in invidious comparison to other Latina/Latino students. During this early period, their identities as â€œgood studentsâ€ were salient to them; their sentiments as Latina/Latino students were less well orchestrated.

Urrietaâ€™s analysis found another and linked commonality in his participantsâ€™ life histories. Their stories told of becoming, usually at college, more conscious of the negative positions â€œofferedâ€ Latino/Latina people, including themselves, in the past and the present. They were gradually drawn, via informal and formal groupsâ€™ communities of practice, into activities figured against the cultural world of Chicana/o activism. In these groups, they developed senses of themselves as activists.¹¹ The pervasiveness of this common path of participation in cultural activities that first identified them as good student and then cultivated identities as activists raises questions about how histories and qualities of participation become interlinked through common trajectories of participation.

Peter Demarathâ€™s (2003) research on Manus Island, Papua New Guinea, underscores the potency of the relationship between trajectories of participation across cultural activities and identity formation. His research depicts a point in history when the identity of â€œvillagerâ€ became resignified for many students, providing them a basis of action quite different from their predecessor villagers. In the article, Demarath analyzes the role of peer culture among high school studentsâ€™ and of the identities crafted thereâ€™ in mediating the changes affecting local Papuan communities. In a time of extended economic â€œdownturn,â€ when the opportunities supposedly afforded by the â€œmodernizingâ€ projects of the Papuan government and transnational corporations had diminished, Manus Islanders were coming to doubt the benefits of (Westernized) education. There was a â€œrevivalâ€ of traditional, communal lifeways, spurred by the return of people to villages and subsistence economies that the â€œrecessionâ€ in the monetized sector had necessitated.

Students of the local high schools shared doubts about the economic value of their educational programs. They too identified themselves as villagers, even at school, revalorizing the communal relationships and egalitarian ethos through which that social order is imagined and enactedâ€™ and yet as students who valued the experience of high school. Their identification as â€œvillager,â€ as it evoked a traditional (unwesternized) cultural world, signified disengagement with the mission of the school and the content of its curricula. Yet this identity and the relationships it mediated did not have the obligatory character of the â€œtraditionalâ€ community. They were instead posed as a choice against a framework of â€œmodernityâ€ â€œinstituted in the schoolâ€ and organized an alternative stance in that world. In their trajectory though historically shifting activities they had transformed and were transformed by their sense (as **Vygotsky** uses the term) of â€œvillager.â€

In fact students valued the elective character of friendships at school, relationships with other â€œvillagersâ€ that would either never have happened or have been formalized (and routinized) in traditional society. Hence the studentsâ€™ identification as â€œvillagerâ€ engaged them in the **novelty** and â€œmodernismâ€ of peer culture even as it resisted attachment to official school life. Behind its aggressively egalitarian ethos, where teasing and gossip policed any action that smelt of the school (and its counterpart, the town), students expressed, only to their intimates, personal goals: â€œprivateâ€ dreams that escaped the bounds of the village. Even as â€œvillagerâ€ signaled solidarity with an old world, its resignification by peer culture brought the **new** world within the old. Through their active internalization of â€œvillagerâ€ across their trajectories of participation in school and village activities, Manus youth developed **new** textures of the identity. [For other relevant studies that highlight the relationship between identities and trajectories of participation, see XXXXX.

Identities and the Fortunes of State and Institutional Projects

A third line of research explicitly considers the importance of identities in mediating responses to state and institutional projects even though these programs often represent a powerful force for self-fashioning. Lesley Bartlett (2005), a contributor to the field of literacy studies, approaches the problem from a Vygotskian angle. Bartlett employs the concepts of figured world and identity to analyze adult literacy programs that she studied in Brazil. Here identification as an â€œeducated personâ€ or its complement, the uneducated or illiterate, mediates oneâ€™s activity even beyond the field of education. She found the figured world of the â€œeducated personâ€ to be virtually coterminous with the space of public activity and discourse. The educated person was more than learned. (S)he was also marked as the emblem of well-mannered sociability. To be â€œeducacaoâ€ was to know how to converse, how to make entrances, how to depart with grace, and generally how to deal with the civil and political world. To lack â€œeducacaoâ€ was to feel socially inept, crude, ill-spoken, invisible and ashamed in the public world. Illiterate â€œdonkeysâ€ learned a kind of linguistic habitus, in Bourdieuâ€™s term (1977) which Bartlett borrows, that disposed them to silence and withdrawal: to disengage from the public world that exposed them to contact with members of other classes.

This stigmatized sense of self was enforced by practices of linguistic and literacy shamingâ€ a kind of symbolic violence in which dialectical patterns differing from â€œstandardâ€ (Brazilian) Portuguese were denigrated, and the inability to read and write marked one as like an animal. Maria, a rural immigrant to the provincial capital, told Bartlett:

â€œIâ€™m ashamed to talk to people who have studied, because I donâ€™t speak Portuguese correctly. There are words whose meaning I donâ€™t know, and I â€œswallow lettersâ€ when Iâ€™m speaking. Some people pay no attention. But others like to show off and correct you. Wherever thereâ€™s a group of people, I always avoid speaking. I have a complex, a trauma, from this thing of people correcting each other. Iâ€™ve heard people do it since I was little and it stayed with me. They do it to undermine others, to show their defects.â€ (Bartlett & Holland, 2002)

The practice of literacy or linguistic shaming positioned one as inferior and literally â€œof no accountâ€ in company. Maria, through her participation in literacy training, learned to articulate explicitly this positional form of identity. Overcoming its behavioral and affective consequences was another issue.

Such an achievement depended upon the creation of a world in which public spaces and public life could be refigured, as Bartlett analyzes it. This refiguring was in fact the objective of the adult literacy movement based upon the work of Paulo Freire. Freirean consciousness-raising involves this re-description/re-inscription of the public world in the egalitarian terms of relations among peers. Those who learn to identify with this figured world of public life, as they learn the literacy skills which open and authorize participation and reengagement with the public world, provide the nucleus for a **new** political culture and a democratic polity. It worked for some adult literacy students. Bartlett (2005) recounts a story told her by Eunisa, of registering to vote. The process required that one sign oneâ€™s name to the registration forms, though it did allow those who were illiterate to use a thumbprint as identification. The ink pad used to make the thumbprint was tellingly called the â€œfather of donkeysâ€ (pai de burros). It was an artifact that evoked for registrants the demeaning and silencing world of the â€œeducated personâ€ â€œeven as it facilitated their voting. Eunisa talked of her fear of shaming, that she would not be able to write out her nameâ€ despite her trainingâ€ and thus would be marked (again) with the ink stain of illiteracy. She called upon her faith, as a Protestant, a person of the Book, and feeling the familiarity of the pen in her hand, she succeededâ€ with the encouragement of even the registration official, who told her to take her time.

The casual violence of the inkpad, which subverted the obvious sympathy of the registration official as it challenged those he served, points to the power of such habitual practices. The inkpad showed the internalization, indeed the fossilization of an activity, literacy shaming, organized around the implicit identification of its targets as â€œilliteratesâ€ : donkeys. Such identities are not easily countered and this proved consequential for the literacy programs Bartlett studied. Consciousness-raising was not easily effected. Bartlett argues that the adult literacy training she observed failed to engage many students. Unlike Eunisa, such students could not identify with, find themselves in, the newly figured world in which they would be literate because the training program failed to produce the meaningful artifacts, semiotic devices, that would have â€œempowered,â€ given force and form to that identification (Bartlett & Holland, 2002).

Elizabeth Brumfiel (in press) provides another, though radically different, case in which identity formation and state projects are intertwined through artefactual media. Brumfiel is an archaeologist of Aztec Mexico who argues that coercion was the principal means of integration in the Aztec state. That is, populations were subjugated by conquest and maintained as subjects of the Aztecs by military force. The military, the body of warriors, was thus the indispensable tool of statecraft and it is the bonds which unite this social body that interest Brumfiel. State ideology or belief played little role in making civic order for the population at large, Brumfiel suggests, but it was essential to the state cadres. Warriors were bound to the rulers and to themselves by their identification within a cosmological system. Only through ritual sacrifice of captives (who were themselves warriors of conquered polities) were the sun, the life that it sustains, and the rulers who apportion bounty to the human world preserved from darkness, chaos and death. Warriors were implicated in the very preservation of the cosmos, and the everyday performances of military life were filled with commemorations of that central role.

Brumfiel draws upon the notion of the figured world, especially the place of artefactual material-semiotic mediators within figured worlds, to show the potency of this identification for warriors. Virtually every item of military life—even the ceramic dishes and bowls preserved for archaeological excavation—depicted and thus materialized and kept before their users the cosmic divisions of sun (life, order) and dark (death, chaos) which warriors served to mediate through conquest. Hence each activity performed through everyday implements draws warriors into the figured world of the Aztec political cosmos. They were, through common usage, continually replicated, drawn to each other as servants of sun and ruler and given personal value through that identification with the sources of human life. Brumfiel argues that it is the personal and interpersonal force of such identities which powers the bonds of institutional (here military) life. To call it ideology would be a misnomer if we were to conceive it without the material forms that draw meaning out to observable, literally figured, social/cultural worlds. These objectified and thus perceptible and meaningful fields of activity are what **Vygotsky** called *cultural worlds*. They are the landscapes that humans inhabit and that in turn inform us as social beings.

A strand of research related to the previous studies is characteristic of the interdisciplinary field of cultural studies; it regards the place of identity in what we might call popular consciousness. Popular consciousness refers to common modes of representing and accounting for the social world, expressed not only in popular media, but in everyday talk. Peter Hervik's work on Danish neo-racism (2004) shows how identities of popular consciousness can be retooled and extended to new situations. Hervik considers the ways Danes responded to the influx of Muslim refugees during the 1990s, first from Bosnia and then from Somalia. This immigration was the first substantial influx of peoples that Danes considered quite different from them in heritage and culture, and the Danes struggled to settle their position in society and polity. Hervik found that his interviewees drew upon a popular, domestic analogy to interpret their relations with Muslim refugees. They conceived the nation, Denmark, as their home and thus figured the refugees as guests within the home. This discourse of guest/host has precedents in Europe (c.f. the term *gastarbeiter*) and in the transnational discourse on immigration (which speaks, e.g., of *host societies*). Hervik found that *guest/host* was something more than a convenient analogy. The identification—of Muslim refugees as guests, and Danish nationals as hosts—was widespread, not only in all his interviews, but in the reports of popular media. As guests, Muslims were subjected to a domestic etiquette that denied them the standing of member even as it extended their hospitality (aid) which met their needs during the visit. Guests were expected to show gratitude, to interfere as little as possible with the conduct of (national) business, and to behave in accordance with household rules (Danish customs). And, as a matter of course, guests were expected to leave once the reason for their visit was fulfilled; else they would overstay their welcome. Once the crisis in their homelands was settled, refugees must return.

Of course, guests are sometimes taken in permanently. And a liberal home (as Danes have long perceived their nation to be) has room for many ways of life. So it was not clear to Hervik why Muslim refugees were considered to be such problematic guests that could not be assimilated. In order to explain this puzzle, Hervik described a second discourse, the second figured world noted in his title: the cultural world of unbridgeable differences. Here popular consciousness intersects with institutional projects. European scholars have noted the continent-wide revival, during the latter quarter of the 20th century, of racialized accounts of human difference in neoconservative discourse. However, the revival did not utilize the notion of race except in the (dis)guise of culture.¹² Parties and governments of the right, through their organs of publicity, have fostered an understanding of cultural difference, rather than non-European, non-modern, fundamentalist and (most common of all) Muslim cultural difference as inalterable. In this figuring, culture-become-temperament resists the liberal (rational) tolerance of civil societies and finds the interplay of democratic multiculturalism anathematic. In the public sphere of Denmark, this cultural world of unbridgeable difference dovetails with the domestic world of guest/host.

Here is the junction. People (refugees) raised to radically other manners of life cannot be adopted or naturalized. They do not recognize or respect the rights and lifeways of others. They remain religiously apart from the consensus of a liberal home. They, in effect, remain guests, and disliked ones at that, by their own choice. Hence (the cultural logic runs), any claim they make to civil and political rights is presumptuous, misbehavior which arrogates a position no guest should have. Instead of a history of cultural politics that gives rise to the current, ethnicized civil and political relations, neoconservatism finds only the exclusionary ground of unbridgeable differences. The power of this figured world in popular discourse perpetuates the identification of refugees as (misbehaving and arrogant) guests and of Danes as (foolish and wronged) hosts. It guarantees an enduring struggle based upon identities which only reproduce their opposition. (For other relevant articles in this line of research, see Fields 1995.)

Identities and Social Transformation

Identities, the cultural worlds that found these senses of self, and the discursive and practical activity of positioning which realize them pervade the social contests of politics and social change. A fourth line of research brings processes of identification onto the center stage of social transformation. Terre Satterfield's rich ethnographic study (2002) shows clearly how the controversy over logging in the forests of Oregon during the 1980s and 1990s was mediated through the articulation and deployment of identities. Here senses of self not only served as a touchstone for action (what would a logger or an environmentalist do?). They also united actors into solidarity (grassroots) groups that are as much imagined as bound by interchange and located them within histories and futures that projected activity and self into practical continuity and regenerated their durable value. Satterfield's work and the various studies collected in Holland and Lave (2001) also continue a theme raised by **Mead** as early as his article, *The Social Self* (1913)—the interplay of social change and sense of self. This theme has become an important part of contemporary social theories of political change, especially theories of so-called *new social movements* that insist upon the profoundly cultural character of political action.

There is too much in Satterfield's work to summarize here. For purposes of this article, we will simply point out two aspects of her argument of importance to an understanding of identity formation. First, Satterfield's depiction of the struggle of environmentalists and loggers over the proper relationship of humans to forest lands explores the inevitably dialogic quality of the self that both **Vygotsky** and **Mead** posit. Loggers' actions, mental, verbal and practical, were posed with environmentalists in mind and responded to the actions of environmentalists that put loggers in question. Satterfield's transcripts and observations show, over and over, the active tie, imagined as the active voice, which directs one side to the other in speech and action. For either side to gain political capital—both in the state and in relation to federal authority, they had to figure themselves as representatives of environmental values. Loggers realized that they must somehow claim to provide a vision, a figured world of human interaction with the natural world, that placed—identified them—in a positive light and laid claim to environmental value through their stewardship of forests and forest inhabitants. Even environmentalists, who began with a closer public identification with widespread environmental value, with a literally nominal leg up, had to articulate a framework that concretely figured them, through their actions, as the promoters of environmental preservation. Both groups posed a vision which valued their ways of life and devalued their opponents', but these were two divergent paths over the same territory. It is the fact that neither loggers nor environmentalists could divorce themselves from the activities in which they were opposed, or resolve the divergent visions through which they construed the field which kept the dialogue alive and identifiable.

Satterfield's study exemplifies a second point. Contention and conflict are characteristic of contemporary notions of culture. Social movements construct figured worlds as strategic means of giving meaning and value to action and actors, as well as recruiting converts, in the interest of (broadly) political objectives. Identities are not byproducts of social change; they are the media of its working.¹³ Cultural worlds do not effuse; they are not transmitted person to person. Culture works by transforming who we are. **Vygotsky's** developmental, social psychology provides in semiotic devices the clearest model for this transformative notion of cultural life.

Meadian identities also offer a means to conceptualize seemingly rapid, radical shifts from which social movements and their adherents emerge. Marianne Gullestad has analyzed processes of identification among Muslims in Europe in a suggestive article (2003). She posits that Muslims in European societies are cast into cultural worlds so

contradictory that they are likely to develop multiple selves, some of which she calls "sleepers" identities. She points to the complicated social positioning of Muslims in European societies. By and large, these first and second generation immigrants have left their native societies behind, literally and figuratively. Either they have chosen the "modernism" of European societies, adopting the liberal ethos and politics of the E.U., or, in taking advantage of economic opportunity, they have performed assimilation to the cultural politics of "Europeanism." That is, they have been cast, as Peter Hervik (above) clearly shows for Denmark, into the role of perpetual guest among host societies. As guests Muslims are subject to a domestic etiquette that denies them the standing of member and invalidates their claims to civil and political rights even as it sanitizes [by transfiguring] the discrimination practiced upon them. This disguised racism is founded upon their "cultural identity": differences in linguistic, familial, and religious heritage somehow regarded as inalterable by European "hosts." Yet that is not the experience of European Muslims. They know that these features change, that they do not live as they were "accustomed" in the societies they left, and as they were supposed to live by their European consociates. They are left in a kind of limbo, a political-cultural state of misidentification: denied standing in both their "native" and "host" society.

Gullestad argues that it is in this displaced condition that "radical Islam" has appeal for some European Muslims. The continual turning back to "tradition" which European reaction forces upon them forges an hypostasized and exaggerated form of practice: a fantasy Islam that is necessarily the antithesis of "the West," as no actual Islamic practice is. This Islam is the counterpart of the simplified cultural world assigned them by European prejudice. Yet a personal identification with "radical Islam" is not ordinarily acknowledged to others. Drawing upon the writings of Nazneen Khan, a Norwegian Moslem of Afghan heritage, Gullestad defines this identity as a "sleeper." It is created within one's intimate repertory as sympathy, presentiment or possibility, as an unformed sense of self. Only the networks of activists provide the affirmation and the "project-world" that shapes and empowers this identification with the force that organizes action.

Once Mohammed Atta and his cohorts exist and become known, Khan realizes that she knows him intimately. He sleeps within her, just as he once slept within the city planning student who was Atta before Al Qaeda. Atta has become an emblem, a semiotic device, through which Khan recognizes the part of her self which disowns "the West" that disdains her. As Mead insists, we know ourselves "we identify ourselves" with others, and only with figures of otherness. Yet the preconditions for that self-awareness, the unorganized sentiments, the raw materials of its production, exist beforehand as a social history of positioning. (Interestingly, Gullestad also attributes to the "hosts," to the equally fantastic European counterpart, a sleeper identity "the presentiment of a new racism that she fears may be realized in the Europe produced by global neoliberalism.)

Are Identities Universal?

A final line of research concerns the debate over the universality of identity. It is important to stress that this line addresses Eriksonian conceptualizations of identity not Meadian ones. The occasional anthropologist asks us why we bother to pursue studies of identity when poststructuralist and postmodernist assaults have successfully debunked the modernist, Western assumptions that undergird the concept. These critics are referring to the normative aspects of an Eriksonian approach that construe stability, consistency and coherence of identity across contexts as the standard for psychological health. These interlocutors fail to realize that Meadian approaches to identity make no such normative claims. Identities, in the Meadian framework, are not only multiple and open, there is also no expectation that they will be well integrated. Nor are these critics aware that the emerging sociocultural perspective on Eriksonian identities, presented by Penuel and Wertsch (1995), Tappan (19xx and 19xx), and others, is moving away from the prescription of consistency and stability. Examination of developments in the dialogue about Eriksonian identities is useful in another respect: it suggests a conceptual bridge between Meadian notions of identity and the emerging sociocultural understanding of Eriksonian ones.

Over the last thirty years, poststructuralist and postmodernist scholars have recast anthropology's core concept of culture and refigured the significance of discourses and practices of the self. Notions of coherent, stable cultures equally embraced by all, regardless of social position, have been replaced by attention to plural cultural imaginaries and institutions shaped by relations of power that favor some social positions over others. Research has pursued the ways that gender, class, race and other social divisions refract day-to-day experiences and the selves that take shape in them. Heterogeneity, power, and struggle have gained visibility as the formative context of cultural resources and representations.¹⁴ To the extent that Eriksonian identity had been adopted by anthropology to conceptualize collective (and therefore the individual's¹⁵) stances on morality, social worth, and belonging, it, too, underwent a shift. "Self" and "identity" (and other aspects of subjectivity) were deconstructed alongside ideas of homogeneous "culture," "community," and "tradition/history" in post-structuralist and postmodern critiques. "Identity" became yet another "master narrative" to be discarded. Rather than finding the integration of difference (which modernist "identity" achieved) into self-persistence, postmodernists saw only the pastiche of multiple selves, multiply identified with multicultural others (e.g., Clifford 1988, van Meijl and Driessen 2003, Sankfeld 1999).

In response to these critiques, many of the articles reviewed here, both empirical and theoretical, explicitly recognized the existence of multiple, contradictory contexts of identity performance and explicitly rejected expectation of a fixed and coherent Eriksonian identity. Still, they expected the individual to be at work maintaining some level of integration of self across multiple contexts, or, at least, to be distressed by their contradictory demands (e.g., Marx 2002, van Meijl and Driessen 2003, Lowe 2002).

Nicole Marx (2002), for an example drawn from studies on second language acquisition, uses the device of "inflection" "accent" as a marker or index of the psychosocial process of "self-translation" that characterizes the second language learner's identity. Her own autobiography as an immigrant to Germany who later returned to her native Canada serves as her case. Marx describes six stages through which she shifted identities (and levels of membership) from first language/first culture (L1/C1) to second language/second culture (L2/C2) and then back. Although her account is valuable, we will not detail these stages. What is interesting for our argument is the kind of "postmodern" reading of Eriksonian identity that Marx exemplifies. She breaks up the integrity of identity as Erikson conceived it by accepting identity's relation to different communities and different frames of self-activity. "Because a person may affiliate himself with more than one culture or language, it is possible to hold multiple identities, and these dynamic identities must in some way be reconciled within one unified self in order to maintain this self across boundaries." (p. 266). If the first part of this quote marks her (post-structuralist) departure from Erikson, the second part "the problem" of multi-membership, as she calls it "points to her continuity with Erikson. Marx and others like her move the integrity of the social person from identity to self, but the impetus of that integrity is inherent and unavoidable, or at least recurrent. The unified self must be maintained across boundaries. The relation of person/society must be stabilized.

Van Meijl and Driessen (2003), in their introduction to a set of articles on multiple identities, draw on Kathy Ewing's (1990) well known argument that people's "actions" do not demonstrate continuity of the self across contexts, but that "wholeness" is a comforting "fable" that people tell themselves. Van Meijl and Driessen argue that the play of multiple identifications (multiple selves) is best understood as managed dialogically and in awareness that relations of power continue to forge authoritative forms of subjectivity, which give significance to the illusion of continuity. Selves are themselves composites of various "I/me's" drawn against various sets of "others," and all related practically "in activity, but still there is a sense of continuity that people find important. Elsewhere, van Meijl (2002), for example, describes the distress that Maori youth feel when confronted with alternative representations of Maoriness that clash with their own.

Other researchers attend to the effects of contradictory expectations about ways of acting and comporting oneself. Lowe's (2003) research, for example, examines the relationship between identity formation and psychosocial stress (leading to destructive behaviors) among adolescents and young adults on Chuuk island in the Federated States of Micronesia. He is interested in how stress is socially produced as these young people try to negotiate multiple cultural worlds. Conflicts arise because the cultural worlds of young people on Chuuk are valued differently in wider society (the family world is more valued than the peer group world), and because behaviors and spaces important in the creation of one cultural world may damage a youth's place in another. These conflicts have increased over the past few decades since Western influences (economics, schooling, etc.) have become more prevalent, and young people are spending more time away from their families. For Lowe, identity construction is restitutive, "the ongoing project of forming an emotionally engaging self-concept and a valued social position both within and across the multiple settings of everyday activity." The process is impelled by "negative emotions," stress which Chuuk youth feel as they struggle to negotiate multiple identities that often come into conflict with one another.

These different studies recognize that people often face conflicting social demands and opportunities within and across social contexts, but they maintain Eriksonian concerns by presuming the stress of multiple identification "individuals are troubled by self-discrepancies" between contexts. One of us (Holland 2003) has suggested, in the analysis of a case, that contradictions experienced as stressful need not be inherently stressful. Contradictions may well pose problems in the minds of some actors, but dilemmas of multiple affiliation and identification become significant when they are socially problematized.¹⁶

Eriksonian approaches posit the universal importance of such questions as: Where, with whom, do I belong? Am I (are we) good? What is my (group's) place in society? Do I (do we) deserve respect? Am I acceptable as a person? Am I true to myself, whatever the situation? The research cited in this section suggests that these *are* questions which individuals often become embroiled in answering. And the answers people come up with affect their subsequent actions and understandings of the world around them. But, research is equivocal about the source of these questions: Do they come (unbidden) from within or from questions and challenges lodged by dialogic partners? Are they psychogenetic or sociogenetic or both?

Eriksonian perspectives give analytic primacy to the psychological origins and psychodynamic significance of identity formation; Meadian approaches, to the sociocultural origins and social psychological consequences. In Eriksonian conceptualizations, the individual strives to resolve questions that define one: affiliation and allegiance to a culturally identifiable group, claims to social worth, ideological commitments, and moral stance. In Meadian frameworks, makes and remakes one's selves in relation to figures in society, through processes of active internalization described originally by Baldwin. (S)he may be sensitive to charges that (s)he is not a "real American," for example, or to questions about the morality of the actions of American officials overseas, but her or his identities are centered around historically contingent collective imaginaries and actual examples of social types rather than around sets of answers to general questions about morality, belonging, and social worth. Or, to take another example, a person who has participated in a community of environmental practice and developed a sense of herself as an environmentalist in that community disdains owning a Sports Utility Vehicle, not because she has developed an Eriksonian moral identity whose generic principles dispose against excessive gasoline consumption, but because SUVs and SUV ownership have acquired distinctly negative values in the world of environmental action in which she has formed a self. As part of the struggle over the old-growth forests of Oregon, for yet another example, loggers were portrayed by environmentalists as acting with inappropriate anger. In the context and in Eriksonian terms, the loggers authored an emotional identity, but the impetus for the identity and for its consistency and stability clearly arose in the struggle. To the extent that (Eriksonian) questions of identity are socially posed, identifications are brought into conflict historically, through activities, and not universally by the nature of human psychology. Moreover, in a Meadian framework, consistency, coherence, and stability in and among one's multiple identities are not attributed the significance they are in the Eriksonian approach, and, *if they are found*, they are attributed to social demands and social stability first; individual achievement, second.

Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter we have furthered an integrated sociocultural perspective on identity formation by reviewing developments that postdate Penuel and Wertsch's (1995) stock-taking. A striking aspect of the newer literature is its incorporation of what we refer to as "Meadian" identities. We use the term to distinguish them from Eriksonian approaches to identity. In the Meadian scenario, identities are culturally constructed social types--social and cultural products--that are actively internalized as self-meanings (treating one's own behavior reflexively as symbolic) and serve as motivation for action. People identify themselves with (and against) actors in particular domains of their lives.

Vygotskian concepts are helpful in formulating the development of Eriksonian identities, but they are even more useful in formulating that of Meadian identities. The latter are social and cultural products that people transact in practice and at some point begin to direct to themselves. Vygotskian developmental concepts help us to understand how people come to be able to organize themselves in the name of an identity: Communities of practice identify, by correlating the usage of a variety of cultural artifacts--"emblems," sets of characters in interaction that participants learn as the organizational means for their own activity. They figure (and prefigure) their actions as "non-drinking alcoholics," "global justice activists," "progressive faculty members," "good mothers" or "rigorous scientists." That is, they develop a higher order psychological function--"an identity"--which personalizes a set of collectively developed discourses about a type and cultivates, in interaction with others, a set of embodied practices that signify the person. They creatively direct the sets of collective meanings to their selves and through this orchestration come to be able to organize themselves in practice in the name of an identity and thus achieve a modest form of agency.

The concepts **Mead** and **Vygotsky** share "active internalization (self authoring), dialogic selves (self-other dialogues), and the semiotics of behavior, coupled with **Vygotsky's** notions of semiotic mediation, higher psychological functions, and agency, constitute a powerful sociogenetic vision of how individuals come to be inhabited by, and yet co-construct, the social and cultural worlds through which they exist. At times, we take the observable behavior of others as models--acts emblematic of roles and positions of activity systems--for our own behavior. Yet we engage with the models as belonging to the other. By relating ourselves to, joining in dialogue with, or even opposing them, we produce personalized variants that are purposefully not the same as what we observed. We develop identities in the manner of jazz musicians rather than player pianos (c.f. Eisenhart 1995 for a slightly different metaphorization of this point). People have to create selves that (in the metaphor of residence) inhabit the (social) structures and spaces (cultural imaginaries) that collectivities create, but they produce selves that inhabit these structures and imaginaries in creative and variant, often oppositional, ways. **Mead's** "I," in fact, generates unexpected behavior. And, in the circuits of emerging communities of practice, innovation may play out and regularize the semiotic means for **new** identities and activities that lie beyond existing structures of power.

Vygotsky's notions of development and agency empower **Mead's** formulation of the relationship between self and society. They help us appreciate, not only the ways in which identities mediate individual behavior and interpretation, but the ways in which they inform the development of social movements and mediate popular responses to state and institutional projects. The research reviewed in the chapter explores various complications of identity formation and expands our ideas of how identities are of key importance in social change. **Vygotsky's** stamp upon this growing body of research is not always made explicit, but it is our conviction that his work is a crucial component of its foundations.

References (not complete or in proper format)

- Bartlett, Lesley. Identity Work and Cultural Artifacts in Literacy Learning and Use: A Sociocultural Analysis. *Language & Education* Vol 19: No 1, 2005.
- Bartlett, L. & Holland, D. (2002). Theorizing the space of literacy practice. *Ways of Knowing*, 2(1), 10-22.
- Clifford, J. (1988) *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Davies, Charlotte Aull (1999) *Reflexive Ethnography: A Guide to Researching Selves and Others*. London: Routledge.
- Eisenhart, M. (1995). The fax, the jazz player, and the self-story teller: How do people learn culture? *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 26(1), 3-26.
- Erikson, Erik H. (1968) *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. New York: Publisher??
- Erikson, Erik H. (1980) *Identity and Life Cycle*. New York: Norton
- Gleason, Philip (1983) "Identifying Identity: A Semantic History." *The Journal of American History* 69(4):910-931.
- McCall, G. J. (1987). In K. Yardley & T. Honess (Eds.), *Self and identity: Psychosocial perspectives* (pp. 89-103). Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
- McCall, George J. and J.L. Simmons (1978) *Identities and Interactions: An Examination of Human Associations in Everyday Life*. Rev. ed. New York: Free Press.
- Mead**, G. H. (1910). What social objects must psychology presuppose? *Journal of Philosophy*, 7, 174-180.
- Mead**, G. H. (1912). The mechanism of social consciousness. *Journal of Philosophy*, 9, 401-406.

Stryker, S. (1987). Identity theory: Developments and extensions. In K. Yardley & T. Honess (Eds.), Self and identity: Psychosocial perspectives (pp. 89-103). Chichester: John Wiley and Sons.

Mead, G. H. (1913). The social self. Journal of Philosophy. (N)

Mead, G. H. (1925). The genesis of the self and social control. International Journal of Ethics, 35, 251-277.

Mead, G. H. (1934). Mind, self and society. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Valsiner, Jaan and RenÅ© van der Veer (1988) On the Social Nature of Human Cognition: An Analysis of the Shared Intellectual Roots of George Herbert **Mead** and Lev **Vygotsky**. Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour. 18(1), March 1988.

Van Meijl, Toon. (2002). Multiple identities and the dialogical self: Maori youngsters and the cultural renaissance. Unpublished Ms.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological functions. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1997). Child psychology. In The Collected Works of L.S. Vygotsky, Volume 4. Marie Hall, trans., Robert Rieber, ed. New York: Plenum Press.

Wertsch, J. V. (1985). Vygotsky and the social formation of mind. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wertsch, J. V. (1991). Voices of the mind: A sociocultural approach to mediated action (1st ed.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.