The Narrative Method of Inquiry

Second candidacy essay

Richard Giovannoli, M.A.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to lead the reader to a fuller understanding of the narrative inquiry approach to research—what it is; what unique perspectives it provides; and how it is carried out. This essay will explore some of the controversies surrounding this and other forms of qualitative research methodology—especially in the areas of significance, validity and reliability—and present justification for the use of narrative methodology in specific inquiry situations.

My primary interest is in psychotherapy. I came to discover the narrative method out of an interest in how and why we make meaning in our lives. I am interested in personality psychology and in the formation and understanding of the self. I have come to believe that narrative is essentially more than the telling of stories. I believe that narrative is the way we create and recreate our realities and ourselves. I believe that a therapist is a narrative researcher, and I hope to demonstrate in this essay that, because we create ourselves in narrative, narrative methodology is a most appropriate means for the study of human beings.

Although a fuller understanding of what is meant by narrative and narrative research will hopefully develop during the course of this

essay, it would be helpful to the reader to have a working definition at the outset. While the terms *narrative* and *narrative research* appear often in qualitative studies, it is rare to find these terms defined (Lieblich, 1998; Riessman, 1993).

According to Webster's Dictionary (1966), a narrative is defined as a "discourse, or an example of it, designed to represent a connected succession of happenings" (p. 1503). Perhaps the most concise definition is that proposed by Smith (1981): Narratives are "verbal acts consisting of someone telling someone else that something happened"(Smith, 1981). Polkinghorne (1988), while acknowledging that the term narrative generally can refer to any spoken or written presentation, confines his usage to the kind of organizational scheme that is expressed in story form. He uses the term to describe the process of creating a story, the internal logic of the story (its plot and theme), and also the product—the story, tale, or poem as a unit. Sarbin (1986) also stresses the organizational aspect of narrative.

> The narrative is a way of organizing episodes, actions, and accounts of actions; it is an achievement that brings together mundane facts and fantastic creations; time and place are incorporated. The narrative allows for the inclusion of actors' reasons for their acts, as well as the causes of happening. (p. 9)

In *Poetics*, Aristotle wrote that a narrative has a beginning, middle, and an end. Following his lead, Western thinkers have seen sequence as a necessary, if not sufficient, quality of narrative. The order of a story's events moves in a linear way through time, and a disruption of that order essentially modifies the original semantic meaning of the story. Young (1987) argued that one event causes another, and it is that causality that is more essential than the mere chronological telling of the story. Still others have argued for sequencing in thematic terms, although studies have shown that white, western, middle-class interviewers have trouble hearing stories that are episodically organized. (Reissman, 1987)

Not all narratives found in interviews, letters, or conversations are confined to linguistic forms. Reissman (1987) distinguished several genres in interviews that do not follow the expected (Aristotelian) form of protagonist, inciting conditions, and culminating events. Among these, she includes habitual narratives (events happen over and over, and consequently, there is no peak in the action); hypothetical narratives (which depict events that did not happen); and topic-centered narratives (snapshots of past events that are linked thematically).

Various researchers also define narrative research somewhat differently, and, as I will show under the section on methodology, these slightly differing views are represented in different

methodological emphases. Lieblich (1998) and her colleagues offer the following definition:

> Narrative research...refers to any study that uses or analyses narrative materials. The data can be collected as a story (a life story provided in an interview or a literary work) or in a different manner (field notes of an anthropologist who writes up his or her observations as a narrative or in personal letters). It can be the object of the research or a means for the study of another question. It may be used for comparison among groups, to learn about a social phenomenon or historical period, or to explore a personality. (p. 2)

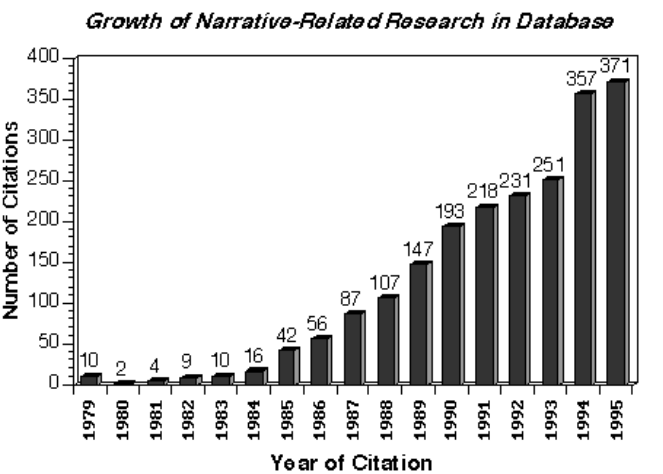
Bruner (1990) relates narrative analysis to "how protagonists interpret things" (p. 51), and Reissman (1993) adds that we can then go about systematically interpreting their interpretations (p. 5). Education researchers Clandinen and Connelly (2000) emphasize the dynamic and dialogical nature of narrative research in their definition.

> Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience. It is collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses in this same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experience that

> make up people's lives, both individual and social. Simply stated...narrative inquiry is stories lived and told. (p. 20)

Mishler (1995) has organized narrative studies according to three types of central research issues. *Reference and temporal order* refers to the relationship between the order in which events actually happened and the order in which they are told in narration; *textual coherence and structure* concerns the linguistic and narrative strategies on which the story is constructed; and *narrative functions* deals with the broader place of the story within the greater society or culture.

Table 1 (used with permission of its copyright holder, Vincent W. Hevern)



Since 1979, the published literature and electronic sites, reports, and databases point to the conclusion that the use of narratives in research has grown tremendously. Vincent Hevern, S.J., of Lemoyne College**,** has developed an immense interdisciplinary website chronicling this development in annotated bibliographies and hypertext links. Table 1, which has been reproduced from that site (http://maple.lemoyne.edu/~hevern/nrintro.html), demonstrates the dramatic rise in the number of publications in the field. Lieblich (1998) has classified these data into three main domains according to their contributions to the field.

The most common and varied category in Lieblich's (1998) classification system is entitled, "*Studies in Which the Narrative is Used for the Investigation of Any Research Questions*" (p. 3). Narrative research can be used to pilot a study and gather information that will help to design the most appropriate objective research tools; it can be used to gain greater depth into a small sample within the larger context of a population that has been surveyed with objective measures; or it can be used as the sole evaluation of a real-life problem (Greene, 1994).

Narrative inquiry is used in both basic and applied research. Published studies using narrative approaches are represented within all of the social sciences and medicine (Lieblich, 1998).

> Because research methods should be always selected to best fit the research question, when researchers are asked by various social agencies to address real-life problems, to contribute their expertise to public debates or decisions, it may be advisable to approach people whose lives are relevant to the issue in an open manner, exploring their subjective, inner experience on the matter at hand. Narrative methods can be considered "real world measures" that are appropriate when "real life problems" are investigated. (p. 5)

A growing psychotherapeutic movement uses narrative research to help clients to rewrite or to better understand their life stories. (Doan, 1994; Friedman, 1996; Hermans-Jansen, 1995; Parry, 1994; White, 1990)

The second domain in Lieblich's (1998) system of classifying narrative research studies is comprised of those that "*investigate the narrative (itself) as their research object*" (p. 5). In this category are studies, prevalent in literary analyses, communication, and linguistics, which analyze the form of the story itself, rather than the content of the narrative.

The third and last domain concerns "*studies on the philosophy and methodology of... narrative research*" (Lieblich, 1998).

> Emphasis on the subject of narrative methodology as a primary concern, comprehensive models for analysis or reading of narratives, and work on the classification of methods is relatively rare in narrative research.... Our review of the literature...located almost no comprehensive models systematically mapping the variety of existing methods of reading narratives. (p. 6)

Some examples of ways various researchers have described narrative for research purposes will be presented and analyzed in the section on methodology.

In an attempt to establish a forum for the discussion of the various forms of narrative research in different fields--psychology, psychiatry, psychoanalysis, anthropology, sociology, literature, and philosophy--Ruthellen Josselson and Amia Lieblich edited the first publication of *The Narrative Study of Lives* in 1993. Six volumes have since been published, and it has become an international and cross-disciplinary hub for the ongoing discussion of narrative research.

Because the context in which narrative makes sense is not the positivist world-view that began in the Enlightenment, and which has been the standard, mainstream outlook for much of the history of psychology (Bateson, 1972; Bruner, 1986; Ricoeur, 1991), it is not surprising that, while so little has been published on the specific methodological processes of narrative, so much has been written on

the underlying philosophy. It is almost impossible to develop a convincing argument for the use of narrative in research without first presenting some of the important developments in the history of ideas—developments which have led to a new way of understanding reality generally, and the self in particular.

2. Background in the history of Ideas: the context of narrative research

From the earliest days, humans have marked their time in stories. Marshack (1972), seeking to describe the agricultural significance of scratches in bone fragments, which had been dated to the Mesolithic period, refers to these bone notations as "storied." Cave paintings in Spain and France further attest to the storied nature of prehistoric humankind. A review of the earliest writings verifies that people seem to have used stories to answer the important questions, such as "Why are we here?" "Why do we have to die?" "Why is there pain?" (Doan, 1994)

Stories framed cultures and made life meaningful within cultures. It was the quality of meaningfulness, rather than factual truthfulness that gave the story credibility. "The hearers of the story believed that it was true because it was meaningful, rather than it was meaningful because it was true" (Doan, 1994, p.2)

It wasn't until Plato that the search for "essences"—universally true principles apart from the subjective individual—over meaning began in the history of western ideas. Jerome Bruner (1986) has called this emerging stream "paradigmatic"—as opposed to "narrative"—cognition. Bruner (1986) defines these as "two modes of cognitive functioning, two modes of thought. Each provides distinct ways of ordering experience, of constructing reality" (p. 11). Each has its own particular function, and each is irreducible to the other. The paradigmatic realm establishes universal truth conditions; it is concerned with abstract and general theories and with empirical verification. Its proper venue is the objective world. The narrative mode of thought is characterized by good stories that gain credence through their lifelikeness; it is concerned with the particulars of experience; it chronicles events over time. The proper venue of the narrative mode is within the subjective world of meaning.

Following the paradigmatic stream begun with Plato, Descartes set out to doubt what he could not "prove," and thus heralded in the rise of modernism. Western consciousness began to credit only the scientifically verifiable objective world as real. Paradigmatic thought has created a worldview and a language of its own, a language that has become indispensable for describing what Gregory Bateson (1972) has called the world of the "non-living".

Although the voices of narrative may not have been credited with the development of the technology that has sent human beings into space and human voices instantaneously throughout much of the universe, still it may have been the dreams and aspirations, embodied in stories, that first spawned that very technology. The voices of narrative have not been silent. The Romantic Movement emphasized the individual and sought to free the unconscious mind (Schneider, 1998). Existentialism reacted against universal systems and ethical absolutes that would place a principle above an individual. Rollo May's (1961) summary of Existentialism emphasizes this contrast with paradigmatic thought.

> Existentialism means centering upon the *existing* person; it is the emphasis on the human being as he is *emerging, becoming.* The word "existence" comes from the root *ex-istere,* meaning literally "to stand out, emerge." Traditionally in Western culture, existence has been set over against essence, the latter being the emphasis upon immutable principles, truth, logical laws, etc, that are supposed to stand above any given existence. (p. 16)

The voices of narrative within the discipline of psychology have historically echoed the inability of formal science methods to deal with the problem of human individuality. Recognizing this inadequacy, several of the early proponents of the application of formal science to the study of psychology actually advocated a split in the discipline, one

side of which would study character and the individual, the other would be concerned with the larger group (Polkinghorne, 1988). In 1911 William Stern proposed a system which split "Individual Psychology" from "Differential Psychology"—a discrimination much like that of personality psychology and sociology today. He proposed two types of approaches to individual psychology: "1) a nomothetic concentration on the distribution and correlation of characteristics across a population and (2) an ideographic concentration on one or more individuals in whom various characteristics jointly occurred" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 102). Stern later felt the need to add the study of personal biographies, however, because he found statistical analyses to be inadequate to the understanding of the whole personality.

Even prior to Stern, Freud had written case histories in which the "struggles, battles, and maneuvers of the allegorical figures—id, ego, and superego" (Sarbin, 1986, p. 10) were portrayed in narratives. After Alfred Adler broke with Freud's Vienna Circle, he named his theory "Individual Psychology." Writing of the basic propositions of Individual Psychology, Ansbacher and Ansbacher (1956) note,

> All psychological processes form a self-consistent organization from the point of view of the goal, like a drama, which is constructed from the beginning with the finale in view. This self-

> consistent personality structure is what Adler calls the *style of life*. (p. 1)

In 1938, Henry Murray, who had been trained as a physician, advocated the use of individual narrative case studies—which had been central in the history of medical science—as a necessary augmentation to the then prevalent group studies in psychology. He was convinced that living beings must be studied as living wholes.

> In his own research, Murray has followed the plan proposed in 1938 in his *Explorations in Personality*. This plan calls for stating a series of specific research problems, designing experimental situations to explore them, and using a relatively small number of subjects, whose life histories become known through other tests, interviews, and imaginative productions. Whatever the focus of interest...the specific findings can then be seen as aspects of lives. (White, 1963, p. xviii)

Murray's Thematic Apperception Test has recently been used to lend support to Herman's (1999) Self-Confrontation Method of narrative therapy. (p. 207)

Gordon Allport was also concerned that the individual not be lost in "nomothetic" or group studies. He advocated the development of methods that would ensure the integrity of the individual. "As part of his efforts to develop such methods, he proposed the importance of personal documents as information for understanding individuals"

(Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 103).

> Between approximately 1920 and 1945, there was significant growth in the study of individual lives. In addition to Murray and Allport, Charlotte Bühler and John Dollard made important contributions to the theory of life history as a method of psychological investigation. (p. 104)

Support for the narrative principle (Sarbin, 1986) even came from the laboratory. In 1946 Michotte constructed an apparatus that allowed an observer to see two or more colored rectangles in motion. The experimenter moved these rectangles around at random, alternating speed, direction, and distance traveled. Observers were found to attribute causality to these random movements of the rectangles and to describe the movements in storied form. Michotte comments:

> Some very amusing descriptions are given: "It is as if (rectangle) A's approach frightened (rectangle) B and B ran away." "It is as if A, in touching B induced an electric current which set B going." "The arrival of A by the side of B acts as a sort of signal to B...." "It is as if A touched off a mechanism inside B and thus set it going" and so on. Also this experiment often produces a comical effect and makes the observers laugh (in Sarbin, 1986, p. 13).

In another 1940s laboratory experiment reported by Sarbin (1986), support is given to the notion that people are ready to describe non-human actions by making up a story. Experimenters Heider and Simmel (1944) made a short movie starring three geometrical figures moving in various directions at various speeds. Observers personified these three geometrical figures and gave their actions plots and subplots. Although some of the observers were instructed to regard the geometric figures as human and some were not, the resulting reports were the same! It is also of interest that there was considerable agreement regarding both the qualities of the "characters" and the content of the plots and subplots (Sarbin, 1986).

In the period following World War Two and continuing through the 1960s, the methods of quantitative science dominated psychology almost exclusively. The voice of narrative—the voice of the individual—had become a whisper. One reviewer, after reviewing 226 articles published in the 1968 volumes of two major journals in personality research, reported that not one article either noted or utilized information pertaining to an individual (Polkinghorne, 1988). Polkinghorne (1988) reviewed *Psychological Abstracts* for the years 1960 to 1978 and found that "only about one per cent of the published reports were devoted to the investigation of single persons, and even in these a biography or other such study was rarely a goal in itself." (p. 104)

In recent years the voices of narrative have become ever louder. Scholars from a number of disciplines have noticed "the significant attention paid to language in this century, following from 19th-and early 20th century philosophy (e.g. pragmatism, hermeneutics, and phenomenology) and linguistics (e.g. pragmatism and semiotics)" (O'Connor, 1998, p. 2). Howard (1991) places this work in the context of a struggle between Romanticism and the Enlightenment. Parry and Doan (1994) and Gergen (1990) locate it in the move from modernism to postmodernism. One strain, beginning with Nietzsche (in O'Connor, 1998, p. 2) explained all human action in such literary terminology as metaphor and trope.

Describing the "interpretive turn" of the twentieth century as a reaction to positivism and the effort "to integrate the sciences of man within a natural scientific paradigm," Rabinow and Sullivan (1979) characterize the focus of the narrative strain as one of "human commitment, subjectivity, and intention" (p. 12). They describe this "interpretive turn" as having the following characteristics: (1) a focus on human agency as opposed to determinism, (2) a theme of human complexity and variety as opposed to simplicity, and (3) an emphasis on the role of context and world in human activity and especially in the human interpretation of such activity.

Sarbin (1986) argues that only a world-view based on contextualism is sufficient to account adequately for human action.

His argument relies on the seminal work of Stephen Pepper, *World Hypotheses* (1942), in which he describes the human use of metaphor to understand the world and traces six worldviews that follow from historically prevalent metaphors.

> The root metaphor constrains the kinds of philosophical or scientific models to be applied either to the task of observing and classifying or to the task of interpreting and explaining. The categories of analysis and the sorts of questions asked are similarly constrained by the choice of root metaphor. (Sarbin, 1986, p. 4)

The six worldviews identified by Pepper were the following: animism, mysticism, formism, mechanism, organicism, and contextualism. The first two lack sufficient scope to account for the modern world, and so, were immediately rejected. The other four provide interesting background to Sarbin's final conclusion that only a worldview based on contextualism is sufficient to account for human behavior.

Formism stresses the organization of the world on the basis of the form of objects, that is, on the basis of their perceivable similarities and differences. Personality trait theories and classifications of disorders provide such classifications on the basis of similarity and difference. Some examples of statements that reflect organization based upon the metaphor of Formism are the following: "I'm a very open person;" "I'm a depressive type; "I'm an alcoholic."

The root metaphor of *mechanism* is a familiar dominant narrative in Western civilization. This worldview considers events as the products of the transmittal of forces. The relationship between events is determined by an efficient causality. The *stimulus-response* basis of behaviorism is an example of this metaphor in psychology. In the self-narratives of people with this worldview, we would hear such statements as, "My problems were caused by the early death of my mother" or "As the child of an alcoholic, I never trust anyone."

Organicism considers the world as an organism, rather than as a machine or set of forms. Organicism locates parts within organic wholes, like organs in a functioning body. The fully developed organic structure is the end product of a developmental sequence. Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Kohlberg's stages of moral development are two psychological perspectives based on this metaphor. Likewise, such statements as, "When she grows up, she will understand" indicate thinking based on this metaphor.

The root metaphor for *contextualism* is the historical event, and it is the basic metaphor of story or narrative. The central element is the historical event that can only be understood when it is located in the context of time and space. Examples of contextualism in psychology can be found in such diverse thinkers as James, Mead, and Freud—all of whom had an interest in the distinction between the meanings of the pronouns *I* and *me*—the former representing the

narrator or author of the narrative in which the latter, *me*, represents the protagonist—the central character in the story. McAdams (1996), in an attempt to clarify the confusion that he attributes to James' labeling of two facets of the same self as "I" and "me," notes that "a clearer way to think about the self is to identify the I as a process and the me as a product" (p. 302). Within this metaphor, the person is able to not only imagine him- or herself traveling to a place or visiting somebody, but as an author, to describe him- or herself as an actor. In this way, the *I* is able to describe the *me* as the agent or agents in various roles and situations. Such narrative construction is possible because the *I* can imagine the *me* in the future and can reconstruct the *me* in the past. Contextualism is found in statements like, "It is the first time in my life that I have found the courage to discuss this issue" or "When my teacher's opinion differs from my own, I find it difficult to keep my footing."

> Contextualism presupposes an ongoing texture of elaborated events, with each being influenced by preceding episodes and influencing following ones and with each being affected by multiple agents who engage in actions. There is a constant change in the structure of situations and in the positions occupied by actors who are oriented to the world and toward one another as intentional beings. Often these actors have opposite positions, as if functioning on a stage as protagonists and

> antagonists, as they enter relationships of love, hate, agreement, or disagreement. The thoughts, feelings, and actions of the protagonists can only be understood as emerging from their relationships with antagonists, who are co-construing reality in often unpredictable ways. (Hermans-Jansen, 1995, p. 7)

Contextualism is the only one of the metaphors that is broad enough to allow for the human experience, and that is why it is the metaphor of the historian and the novelist. While formism classifies events in such a way that they result in general traits, types, or characteristics, thereby limiting the human experience to flat and unrealistic characters, contextualism is sensitive to the particulars of time and space and considers characters in relationship to other characters and to the unfolding "plot" of the experience. The oversimplified relationship of cause and effect that is at the root of the mechanistic metaphor is insufficient to account for the multiplicity of events (referring to the past, present, and future and to the relationships with other actors) that together form an interconnected totality. "The person as a storyteller does not react to stimuli but is oriented to the realization of purposes and goals and is involved in a continuous process of meaning construction" (Hermans-Jansen, 1995,

p. 9). While contextualism acknowledges the developmental sequences of organicism, it also makes room for the unpredictable. The meaning that an individual gives to life events, such as a job change, relocation, an encounter with a significant other, the sudden loss of a friend, divorce of parents, a life-threatening operation, may have unpredictable consequences that cannot be accounted for in the organicistic metaphor. The structure of narrative and the metaphor of contextualism provide the principle frame of intelligibility for people in their day-to-day lives. It is through this frame that people link together the events of life in sequences that unfold through time according to specific themes. It is only through a contextual window that the thick realm of human existence can be adequately described and researched. Thus, history—both of an individual and of the group—is a story, a narrative, constructed through a contextual framework.

Gergen (1973) makes a convincing argument that theories of social behavior are essentially reflections of the historical context in which they are developed. In one example, he cites the relationship between the scientific examination of the authoritarian personality in the 1950s and the historically generated interest in the characteristics of fascists. As scientific findings are published, people become aware

of their conclusions; that awareness changes the behavior of some, who either act to confirm or deny the new information.

> Making public the results of psychological research thus introduces change and novelty, conditions that cannot be assimilated by subscribers to worldviews other than contextualism. Gergen's conclusions are powerful: social psychology is history, and the use of the root metaphor of the historical act is likely to lead to a more profound understanding of the human condition than the prevailing mechanistic perspective. (Sarbin, 1986, p. 8)

Sarbin (1986) continues with an intriguing syllogism. If social psychology is history, as Gergen concludes, and history is narrative, then the conclusion follows that social psychology is narrative. And since, except for that part of psychology that deals with physiology and the senses, social psychology and psychology can be regarded as equivalent (both are concerned with the lived worlds of individuals), then psychology is narrative.

Not surprisingly, the voices of narrative are beginning to be heard loudly in the area of personality psychology, evidenced in part by an increase in studies of life span development that focus on individual psychohistories. The new awareness of the processes of narrative knowing that has come about through studies in philosophy

and linguistics gives methodological support to these studies (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 105). This surge in the study of the individual has also provided support for a growing concept of the self that is radically different from the traditional one, and which is intrinsic to an understanding of the context of narrative methodology. Within this area, a number of researchers have begun to focus, not on traits and characteristics that people "have," but rather on the purposive nature of human experience (Cantor, 1990). Rather than basing their research on the traditional self-report scales and questionnaires, these researchers are more likely to

> ...ask their participants to provide direct personal accounts about the past and anticipated future, to relate autobiographical happenings and expectations, and to tell stories, of various kinds, about their lives. As psychologists have become more interested in personal accounts and stories as methods for collecting data on the social-cognitive-motivational aspects of personality, they also have begun to formulate new personality constructs and models that are explicitly couched in story terms.... (McAdams, 1996, p. 300)

Daniel P. McAdams of Northwestern University has been a leading figure in narrative research. Following James (1890/1950), McAdams (1996) proposes that an adequate description of the person

requires a clear distinction between the I and the Me features of personality. He further delineates three levels on which the person can be described. He views the I as "the **process** of 'selfing,' of narrating experience to create a self (p. 301)," and the Me as the **product**, the self which the I narrates. The first level of the self is the level of traits. Level 2, which he calls "personal concerns" is the level of personal goals, life tasks, coping strategies, values, and various strategic constructs that are contextualized in time, place, or role. At level 3 are the constructions that form identity. "In the modern world, such constructions assume the form of stories of the self—internalized and evolving life stories that integrate the reconstructed past, perceived present, and anticipated future" (p. 301). This life story, then, represents the characteristic way in which each individual I arranges the elements of the Me in a temporal sequence complete with setting, scenes, characters, plots, and themes (p. 307). Level 3 represents the realm of meaning.

The life story is psychosocially constructed. It is not only the creation of the I, but is jointly authored by the culture and social interactions of the individual. Because they are socially constructed, life stories are based on empirical fact (e.g. "I got polio when I was very young."). However, the life story goes beyond empirical fact. Through the life story, we select and render episodes of the past,

present, and anticipated future into a meaningful and coherent narrative (“My father always said that I was lucky to survive that polio; I beat the odds once, and now I feel compelled to make my life count in a big way.”).

> As imaginative stories of one’s real life, functioning to give life a meaningful ordering, life stories may be judged by such aesthetic standards as coherence and richness and by such pragmatic standards as credibility. Lying somewhere between pure fantasy and slavish chronicle, life stories are psychosocial constructions that aim to spell out personal truths—narrative explanations for life-in-time that are believable, followable, even compelling. (McAdams, 1996, p. 307)

Human identity is a story, and, like any story, there are certain recognizable features of structure and content. Besides the standard features that define narrative, which were described in the introductory section of this essay, life stories in the modern Western world are expected “to originate within the family, to involve growth and expansion in the early years, to locate later problems in early dynamics, to incorporate “turning point” moments or “epiphanies” that leave their mark on subsequent events, and to couch narrative movement in terms of progress or decline” (McAdams, 1996, p. 308).

In an analysis of over 200 life story interviews, McAdams (1985, 1987, 1993) proposed the following features for the understanding of life stories:

1. *Narrative tone*. The overall tone of the life story may range from "hopeless pessimism" to "boundless optimism." In Western literary tradition, the more optimistic narratives have been termed "comedy" or "romance," while the more pessimistic end of the scale have been called "tragedy" or "irony" (Frye, 1957).

2. *Imagery*. The word pictures and sensory expressions that the I chooses to convey the unique quality of the person's experience—an individual's favorite metaphors and symbols—create an important feature of the person's identity.

3. *Theme*. "Themes are the goal-directed sequences that characters pursue in narrative"(McAdams, 1996, p. 308). McAdams, Mansfield, and Day (1996) have studied life stories predicated on a comparison and contrast of the themes of agency (autonomy) and communion (affiliation). Hermans (1993), likewise, has conducted several studies using what he calls Valuation Theory. Life story themes of "S" ("self-enhancement motive") and "O" ("the longing for contact and union with the other") form the basis for comparison and contrast in his work.

4. *Ideological setting.* This "backdrop of fundamental belief and value that situates the plot in an ethico-religious location" (McAdams, 1996, p. 308) also generally includes an early incident that tells the story of how these values came to be.

5. *Nuclear episodes.* These are particular scenes that stand out in bold print in the life story.... Of most importance are high points, low points, beginning points, ending points, and turning points in the story. These constructed themes typically affirm self-perceived continuity or change in the Me over time (McAdams, 1996).

McAdams (1996) notes that what may be of primary importance is not so much the actual happening portrayed in a nuclear episode, but rather what the memory of that key event symbolizes in the context of the overall life story. (The final section of this essay discusses the issue of factual accuracy of narratives in research as well as other issues of validity.)

6. *Imagoes.* McAdams (1996) defines these as idealized personifications of the self that function as main characters in narrative. Often stock characters like the "good friend," "the intellectual," "the clown," etc, they personify aspects of the Me. Research suggests that between about two and five main imagoes can often be identified in an adult's life story (McAdams, Mansfield & Day, 1996).

7. *Endings*. Through what he calls the "generativity script," McAdams (1996) suggests that the ending of the life story is not necessarily death, but that we gain a sort of immortality through the generativity, creation, nurturance, or development of a possible legacy of the self for future generations. "The generativity script provides a narrative mechanism whereby the I can create a Me that 'outlives the self'" (p. 309).

The purpose of the life story is to give meaning to experience. We do this in narrative form. If we are to study the realm of meaning, we must study narrative; If we are to study the meaning level—the subjectivity—of a person's life, we must study his or her stories. Since the life story is constructed in narrative form, it is appropriate to consider methodologies that have been used in various disciplines for the study and deconstruction of narrative texts.

3. Narrative Methods of Inquiry

While some types of qualitative analysis have a standard set of procedures, narrative research does not (Riessman, 1993, p. 54). Following Riessman (1993), the discussion that follows will divide the narrative method into three stages: "Telling," "Transcribing," and "Analyzing."

Telling.

In his book, *InterViews,* Kvale (1996) describes two classifications of interviewers metaphorically as "miners" and "travelers" (p. 3). The interviewer as miner is seeking to unearth some knowledge buried within the subject of the interview. The traveler, on the other hand, is journeying through the other's landscape gathering stories to retell when he or she arrives back home.

> The two metaphors—of the interviewer as a miner or as a traveler—represent different concepts of knowledge formation. Each metaphor stands for alternative genres and has different rules of the game. In a broad sense, the miner metaphor pictures a common understanding in modern social sciences of knowledge as "given." The traveler metaphor refers to a postmodern constructive understanding that involves a conversational approach to social research. The miner metaphor brings interviews into the vicinity of human engineering; the traveler metaphor into the vicinity of the humanities and art. (p. 5)

Whether traveler or miner, it is essential for the researcher to provide a facilitating context to encourage those who are interviewed to tell complete stories about important moments in their lives. Open-ended questions, which allow respondents to construct answers

collaboratively with the listener in ways that they find meaningful are suggested by Mishler (1986). Even questions that could be answered “yes” or “no,” however, will often elicit a complete narrative as long as the interviewer is open to that kind of response (Riessman, 1993). Riessman (1993) advises a mixture of open-ended questions (to elicit narratives) and closed-ended questions or self-administered questionnaires (for later quantification).

Ira Progoff (1975) has developed a methodology for personal growth, the *Intensive Journal* method, which fosters personal psychological and spiritual growth by providing a process ("Process Meditation") through which the individual assumes the functions of both interviewer and interviewee. Through this process, the individual becomes aware of the themes that comprise the grand narrative in his or her own life. Subsequent research has confirmed the value of such a broad perspective on one's life story in such realms as the making of intelligent life decisions and healthy functioning in crisis situations (p. 5). The method "acts as a self-adjusting compass, seeking the true north, the special meaning and direction of each individual life" (p. 7).

In an attempt to strike a balance between the need to obtain a complete and rich life story, on the one hand, and the practical limitations of time and data, on the other, Lieblich et al. (1998) introduced the task with the following “stage outline:”

> Every person's life can be written as a book. I would like you to think about your life now as if you were writing a book. First, think about the chapters of the book. I have here a page to help you in this task. Write down the years on the first column—from zero, form the day you were born. When did the first stage end? Write it here. Then go on to the next chapters, and put down the age that each one begins and ends for you. Go on till you reach your present age. You can use any number of chapters or stages that you find suitable to your own life. (p. 25)

After the respondent had completed the page, he or she was asked to consider a title for each of the chapters and to write it in the next column. The following four questions structured the interview at each of the respondent's stages:

1. "Tell me about a significant episode or a memory that you remember from this stage."
2. "What kind of a person were you during this stage?"
3. "Who were significant people for you during this stage, and why?
4. "What is your reason for choosing to terminate this stage when you did?" (p. 26)

Transcribing

Taping and transcribing, with close attention to the truest representation possible, is absolutely essential in narrative research. Riessman (1993) advises that the researcher begin by getting the entire interview, including both words and selected features (crying, long pauses, laughter), on paper in a first draft. Then portions can be selected for retranscription. The specific content that is selected for later analysis may actually emerge or change as a result of the researcher's close attention to the whole transcription. This phenomenon exemplifies the dialogical nature of the narrative interview.

Where a specific narrative segment begins and ends is not always clear. Jefferson (1979) advises the interviewer to listen for "entrance and exit talk." A person may make a statement in an interview and then offer to give an example. That offer may signal the beginning of a narrative. Likewise, when the story is concluded, some signal, for example a summary, might signal closure to that story.

After narratives are identified, most researchers advise some coding or "parsing" of the retranscription. This coding may be based on any of a number of proposed story structures, although that of Labov (1972, 1982) is considered paradigmatic (Riessman, 1987). Labov argues that every well formed story has a common set of elements, and that each individual clause of a story serves a definite

function—to orient the listener, to carry the complicative action, to evaluate meaning, or to resolve the action. Thus, each clause of the narrative can be coded to indicate which of these four functions it fulfills. Although Labov "makes strong claims from his limited materials" (Riessman, 1987, p. 59), cross-cultural studies suggest a greater variation in story grammar than Labov assumes (Riessman, 1987).

Analyzing

Sutton-Smith (1986) asserts that there are two emerging perspectives for story analysis, and that they follow Bruner's (1986) two modes of cognition described earlier, paradigmatic and narrative. The first, within the paradigmatic stream, is a textual or structural analysis. In this perspective stories are analyzed for criteria that would place them in one or the other category and thus reinforce a hypothesis.

> The second perspective, derived ultimately from various hermeneutic traditions... but found comfortably also in much humanistic scholarship, is the view that if we are to understand the meaning of stories to those who use them, rather than some truth they tell us...we must study them in their contexts of use. (Sutton-Smith, 1986, p. 68)

Lieblich et al. (1998) recognize these two perspectives, labeling the first “categorical” and the second “holistic.”

> Upon looking at different possibilities for reading, interpreting, and analyzing life stories and other narrative materials, two main independent dimensions emerge—those of (a) *holistic versus categorical* approaches and (b) *content versus form*. (p. 12)

The polarities on the first dimension (holistic vs. categorical) are equivalent to Sutton-Smith’s (1986) two perspectives. They are also closely related to Allport’s (1962) distinction between “idiographic” and “nomothetic” types of research, with the former more often used to study individuals and the latter to study groups. The second dimension, content versus form, refers to the traditional dichotomy in reading texts: reading for what the story is about (content), at one polarity, and reading for the structure, grammar, style, sequence, etc. of the story (form), at the other. Lieblich et al. (p. 13) emphasize that these are to be seen as intersecting dimensions, and that possibilities for reading a text can represent middle points within the matrix of four cells created by the intersecting model. The four cells are the following:

holistic-content	*holistic-form*
categorical-content	*categorical-form*

The *holistic-content* mode of reading text is familiar to clinicians as the "case study." It uses the complete life story of the individual and focuses on the content of the story.

In contrast, the *holistic-form* based mode looks for the plot or structure of complete life stories. McAdams' (1985, 1987, 1993, 1995) studies of life stories and the seven classifications that he derived from them, which were described in the previous section, could form the basis for a *holistic-form* based mode of analysis.

The *categorical-content* approach, or content analysis, places portions of the content of the text into previously defined categories, usually for the purpose of quantitative analysis. An example would be to categorize each incident in which the subject expresses a need for autonomy and each time the subject expresses an affiliation need.

The final mode, *categorical-form*, focuses on discrete stylistic or linguistic characteristics of defined units of the narrative. For example, what kind of imagery does the subject use or does he or she use the passive or active voice?

Labov's (1972, 1982) structural categories, which were discussed in the section on transcription, present one method to organize the analyses of narratives.

> A "fully formed" (narrative) includes six common elements: an abstract (summary of the substance of the narrative), orientation (time, place, situation, participants), complicating

> action (sequence of events), evaluation (significance and meaning of the action, attitude of the narrator), resolution (what finally happened), and coda (returns the perspective to the present). With these structures a teller constructs a story from a primary experience and interprets the significance of events in clauses and embedded evaluation (Reissman, 1987, p. 19).

Another set of categories is suggested by Burke's (1945) classic method of language analysis. "Any complete statement about motives will offer *some kind of* answer to these five questions: What was done (act), when or where it was done (scene), who did it (agent), how he or she did it (agency), and why (purpose)" (p. xv).

Still another set of categories is based not on what is said, but on how it is said. Gee (1986) analyzes changes in pitch, pauses, and other features that separate units of meaning. In one study (Gee, 1991), he used such linguistic units to analyze the speech of a schizophrenic and obtain coherent meaning.

"The identification of a narrative as a member of a category does not identify its effect and its relationship to other narratives in the same way the categorical identification of a physical object does" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 167). In the linguistic realm of meaning—Bruner's narrative mode—elements are primarily related according to comparison and contrast, rather than by inclusion into or exclusion from specific categories (paradigmatic). Consequently,

typologies and categorizations are only useful to make comparative analyses, not to establish firm and typical categories.

Because of our immersion in the paradigmatic stream, it is difficult to refrain from applying paradigmatic, positivistic, natural science-like criteria to elements that are properly understood within the narrative realm of human meaning. Methodological issues, such as significance, validity, and reliability have been given technical meanings by the logical positivist revisions of formal science.

> Concepts such as “cause,” “validity,” “justification,” and “explanation” were redefined as part of the effort to limit knowledge to whatever could pass the test of certainty. If investigative criteria are to be effective for research aimed at understanding aspects of the realm of meaning and its linguistic structures, the basic definitions of the concepts concerning the generation of knowledge must be reclaimed. One of the tasks of a more inclusive human science is to point out how the reclaimed concepts apply in a more open research model. Human science can no longer only seek mathematical and logical certainty. Instead, it should also aim at producing results that are believable and verisimilar. (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 160)

The concluding section of this essay will examine some of these methodological issues.

4. Methodological Issues in Narrative Inquiry

The essential question to be addressed in this section is, "How can we tell a good narrative study from a poor one?" How do we determine the quality of a narrative study? As previously noted, the positivist tradition has already defined the traditional terms for evaluating a scientific study, and those definitions predictably favor the quantitative methods and, at best, marginalize the qualitative. It is consequently essential to redefine terms that have already been usurped by the traditions of formal science. It is also essential to remain mindful of the purposes for which narrative study is appropriate.

The purpose of narrative research is to study personal experience and meaning-making in a systematic manner. Narrative research can provide effective argument for how events have been constructed by active subjects. Polkinghorne (1988) divides narrative investigations into two categories, according to their purpose: 1) research to describe narratives already held by individuals and groups (descriptive), and 2) research that explains through narrative why something happened (explanatory).

> In the first, the descriptive investigation,
>
> the thesis of the research report is that the offered description accurately represents the operating stories that people or groups

> use to understand the temporal connections between the events they have experienced and to account for their own and others' motives, reasons, expectations, and memories. The report also recognizes how these stories have functioned (or failed to function) to order the events under consideration into a coherent and unified experience. (p. 170)

The second category of narrative research, which Polkinghorne has labeled explanatory, more closely resembles the traditional paradigmatic social science inquiry method, and is, consequently, most often criticized in positivistic terms (see, for example, Phillips, 1994). Narrative research provides a narrative explanation, as opposed to one established by law or correlation. An example that Polkinghorne (1988, p. 170) offers is illustrative. Research to explain why the Challenger exploded can be presented in terms of the physical properties of the o-rings that were found to be defective, the probabilities of a launch failing, or the statistical probabilities of equipment failure. This type of research can offer background information, and it is certainly best carried out with traditional scientific methodology. However, to answer satisfactorily the question of why the Challenger, in this particular instance and in this context, exploded, the realm of meaning must be entered, and that is most appropriately accomplished through narrative.

> Narrative explanations are retrospective. They sort out the multitude of events and decisions that are connected to the launch, and they select those which are significant in light of the fatal conclusion. They draw together the various episodes and actions into a story that leads through a sequence of events to an ending. The story highlights the significance of particular decisions and events and their roles in the final outcome. ...The results draw on all the evidence that is relevant to the outcome, including individuals' interpretations of information, the personal and social forces operating in the context, the individual stories of ambition and pressure, the lack of procedures to insure that appropriate and timely information has reached decision makers, and so on. (pp. 170-171)

Notice that in neither descriptive nor explanatory narrative research is there an attempt to develop generalizable laws that are supposed to remain constant when the conditions are replicated. Polkinghorne (1988, p 171) calls the explanatory narrative report "retrodictive" as opposed to "predictive," denoting the narrative researcher's process of building a reasonable and believable account by piecing together past events so that "their parts in the whole story become clear" (p. 171).

A reasonable and believable account is a valid account by ordinary definition. The word valid does not have to pass a test of the

limited definition of formal science—a definition that would restrict validity to the paradigmatic stream of cognition, and consequently beg the question. We ordinarily use the term valid to mean "well grounded; having such force as to compel acceptance" (Webster, 1966). Given that definition, the question becomes, What criteria must a narrative study meet in order to be considered valid?

Some answer that narrative work should be judged by the criteria of art rather than science. Does the analysis move us? (Manning, 1987) Most researchers—including myself—are uncomfortable with this criterion, however, primarily because it so severely limits the scope and credibility that narrative methods potentially offer.

Four criteria for the evaluation of narrative studies have been offered by Lieblich et al. (1998, p. 173):

1. *Width: The Comprehensiveness of Evidence*. This refers to the amount of evidence that is provided to allow the reader to make an informed judgement on the evidence and its interpretation.
2. *Coherence: The Way Different Parts of the Interpretation Create a Complete and Meaningful Picture*. Lieblich and her colleagues distinguish between internal coherence (how the parts fit together) and external coherence (how the research compares to existing theories and previous research).

3. *Insightfulness: The Sense of Innovation or Originality in the Presentation of the Story and Its Analysis*. Does this research move the reader to greater insight into his or her own life?
4. *Parsimony*: *The Ability to Provide an Analysis Based on a Small Number of Concepts, and Elegance or Aesthetic Appeal.* This refers to the literary merits of oral or written presentation of the story.

Riessman (1993, pp. 65-68) also presents four ways of approaching validation in narrative work—*persuasiveness, correspondence, coherence, and pragmatic use*. *Persuasiveness* is much like Lieblich et al.'s first criterion of "Width," however, Riessman adds the elements of plausibility and style. *Correspondence* refers to the process of taking the analysis back to those studied for verification and/or further dialogs. Riessman identifies three types of *coherence*—local, global, and themal—and shows that they can be used to gain differing perspectives on the story. *Pragmatic Use* refers to the extent that a study will become the basis for further research by other investigators; it is future-oriented.

Both Riessman (1993) and Lieblich et al. (1998) propose a process of consensual validation, by which the "sharing of one's views and conclusions and making sense in the eyes of a community of researchers and interested, informed individuals" (p. 173) would be established as the major criteria for validation of narrative studies.

Narrative methodology does not lend itself to a standardized set of technical procedures. There is some evidence that such reductionism is insufficient even for quantitative research (Messick, 1987).

> The sciences have been enchanted by the myth that the assiduous application of rigorous method will yield sound fact—as if empirical methodology were some form of meat grinder from which truth could be turned out like so many sausages. (Gergen, 1985, p. 273)

Appropriate validation procedures must be selected according to the individual nature of the study, just as the choice to use narrative methodology depends on the nature of the data and the research question.

Another criterion that must be met in traditional research is that of reliability. In narrative studies, reliability usually refers to the dependability of the data, and careful, systematic procedures to insure the closest possible representation from the raw data stage through that of analysis and the written report are indeed necessary criteria for judging narrative work. A criticism that is launched against narrative studies on the issue of dependability, that of the truthfulness of the original narrative, however, deserves some attention.

Narrative researchers have approached this issue of truth differently. Structural analysts have considered the actual structures

of language to be the reality upon which the truth of the narrative is judged (Labov, 1967). Influenced by phenomenology, others have argued that the story in its telling is the construction of the reality: the phenomenon is formed out of the stream of consciousness (Young, 1987). Still others create fictions, which they later begin to live and make real (Langellier, 1989). One group, using feminist theory, writes of truth in narrative as follows:

> When talking about their lives, people lie sometimes, forget a lot, exaggerate, become confused, and get things wrong. Yet they *are* revealing truths. These truths don't reveal the past "as it actually was," aspiring to a standard of objectivity. They give us instead the truths of our experiences....Unlike the truth of the scientific ideal, the truths of personal narratives are neither open to proof nor self-evident. We come to understand them only through interpretation, paying careful attention to the contexts that shape their creation and to the worldviews, that inform them. Sometimes the truths we see in personal narratives jar us from our complacent security as interpreters "outside" the story and make us aware that our own place in the world plays a part in our interpretation and shapes the meanings we derive from them. (Personal Narrative Group, 1989, p. 261)

Truth implies an objective reality, and the realm of narrative is the realm of subjective meaning. Narratives must be seen as

interpretive, and the researcher as interpreting those interpretations. Narrative research does not aim at certitude, prediction, and control; it is about interpretation that is trustworthy and valid ("well grounded; having such force as to compel acceptance").

I have tried to show in this essay that narrative method is most appropriate for the study of the human realm of meaning. This realm is organized linguistically and narratively. The tools for working with data in this realm are not those of the natural scientist, but of the literary and historical researcher. The kind of knowledge that resides in this meaning realm is not the paradigmatic knowledge associated with laws and principles, but it is of the interpretive hue; its usefulness is not in the areas of prediction and control, but rather in ever deeper penetrative description and explanation of human existence.

References

Allport, G. (1962). The general and the unique in psychological science. *Jounal of Personality, 30*, 405-422.

Ansbacher, G. & Ansbacher, R., (1956). *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler*. New York: Basic Books.

Bateson, G. (1972). *Steps to an ecology of mind*. New York: Ballantine.

Bruner, J. (1986). *Actual minds, possible worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bruner, J. (1990). *Acts of meaning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Burke, K. (1945). Introduction: The five key terms of dramatism. In K. Burke (Ed.), *A grammar of motives* (pp. xv-xxiii). New York: Prentice-Hall.

Cantor, N. & Zirkel, S. (1990). Personality, cognition, and purposive behavior. In L. Pervin (Ed.), *Handbook of personality theory and research* (pp. 145-164). New York: Guilford.

Clandinen, D.J. & Connelly, F.M, (2000) *Narrative Inquiry*. San Francisco:Jossey-Bass

Webster, M. (1966). *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.

Doan, R. E. & Parry, A. (1994). *Story re-visions*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Friedman, J. & Combs, G. (1996). *Narrative therapy: The social construction of preferred realities*. New York: Norton.

Frye, N. (1957). *Anatomy of criticism*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Gee, J. P. (1986). Units in the production of narrative discourse. *Discourse Processes, 9,* 391-422.

Gee, J. P. (1991). A linguistic approach to narrative. *Journal of Narrative and Life History, I*(1), 15-39.

Gergen, K. (1985). The social constructionist movement inmodern Psychology. *American Psychologist, 40*, 266-275.

Gergen, K. (1990). Toward a postmodern psychology. The *Humanistic Psychologist, 18*, 23-34.

Gergen, K. J. (1973). Social Psychology as history. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 26*, 309-320.

Greene, J. C. (1994). Qualitative program evaluation: Practice and promise. In N. K. Denzin. a. Y. S. Lincoln (Ed.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 530-534). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hermans, H. (1999). The thematic apperception test and the multi-voiced nature of the self. In M. Gieser L and Stein (Eds.), *Evocative images*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Hermans, H. J. M. & Kempen, H.J.G. (1993). The dialogical self: beyond individualism and rationalism. *American Psychologist, 47*, 23-33.

Hermans-Jansen, H. a. (1995). *Self-narratives: The construction of meaning in psychotherapy*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Howard, G. S. (1991). Culture Tales: A narrative approach to thinking, cross-cultural psychology, and psychotherapy. *American Psychologist, 46*(3), 187-197.

James, W. (1890/1950). *Principles of psychology* (Vol. 1). New York: Dover.

Jefferson, G. (1979). Sequential aspects of storytelling in conversation. In Schenkein, J. (Ed.) *Studies in the organization of conversational interaction* (pp. 219-248). New York: Academic Press.

Josselson, R. & Lieblich, A. (Eds.) (1993). *The narrative study of lives*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Labov, W. (1972). The transformation of experience in narrative syntax. In W. Labov (Ed.), *Language in the inner-city: Studies in the Black English vernacular* (pp. 354-396). Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Labov, W. (1982). Speech actions and reactions in personal narrative. In D. Tannen (Ed.), *Analyzing discourse: Text and talk* (pp. 219-247). Washington, D.C.: Georgetown Press.

Labov, W. & Waletzky, J. (1967). Narrative analysis: Oral versions of personal experience. In J. Helm (Ed.), *Essays on the*

verbal and visual arts (pp. 12-44). Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Langellier, K. M. (1989). Personal narratives: Perspectives on theory and research. *Text and Performance Quarterly, 9*(4), 243-276.

Lieblich, A., Tuval-Mashiach, Rivka, and Zilber, Tamar. (1998). *Narrative Research: reading, analysis, and interpretation* (Vol. 47). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Manning, P. K. (1987). Semiotics and fieldwork. *Qualitative Research Methods, 7*.

Marshack, A. (1972). *Roots of civilization: The cognitive beginnings of mans' first art, symbol, and notation*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

May, R., Maslow, A, et al. (1961). *Existential Psychology*. New York: Random House.

McAdams, D. P. (1985). *Power, intimacy, and the life story: personological inquiries into identity*. New York: Guilford.

McAdams, D. P. (1987). A life story model of identity. In R. Hogan & W. Jones (Eds.), *Perspectives in personality* (Vol. 2, pp. 15-50). Greenwich, CT: JAI.

McAdams, D. P. (1993). *Stories we live by: Personal myths and the making of the self*. New York: Morrow.

McAdams, D. P. (1996). Personality, modernity, and the storied self: A contemporary framework for studying persons. *Psychological Inquiry, 7*(4), 295-321.

McAdams, D. P., Hoffman, B.J., Mansfield, E.D., & Day, R. (1996). Themes of agency and communion in significant autobiographical scenes. *Jounal of Personality, 64*(2), 339-377.

Messick, S. (1987). *Validity*. Princeton: Educational Testing Service.

Mishler, E. G. (1986). *Research interviewing: Context and narrative*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Mishler, E. G. (1995). Models of Narrative Analysis: a typology. *Journal of Narrative and Life History, 5*, 87-123.

O'Connor, E. S. (1998, December, 1998). *Pluralism in the field: Narrative studies as an interrdisciplinary inquiry*, [scholarly paper]. Scandinavian Consortium for Organizational Research at Stanford University. Available: http://www.bridgeportcentre.org/readings/articles/oconnor_paper/oconnor_paper.html# [2000, July 20].

Parry, A. & Doan, Robert E. (1994). *Story Re-visions: Narrative Therapy in a postmodern world*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Personal Narrative Group (1989). Truths. In Personal Narrative Group (Ed.), *Interpreting women's lives: Feminist*

theory and personal narratives (pp. 261-264). Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Pepper, S. (1942). *World hypotheses*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Phillips, D. C. (1994). Telling it straight: Issues in assessing narrative research. *Educational Psychologist, 29*(1), 13-22.

Polkinghorne, D. (1988). *Narrative knowing and the human sciences*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Progoff, I. (1975). *At a journal workshop*. New York: Putnam.

Rabinow, P. & Sullivan, W.M. (1979). *Interpretive social science: A reader*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ricoeur, P. (1991). Poetry and Possibility. In M. J. Valdes' (Ed.), *A Ricoeur reader: reflection and imagination*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Riessman, C. K. (1987). When gender is not enough: Women interviewing women. *Gender and Society, 1*(2), 172-207.

Riessman, C. K. (1993). *Narrative Analysis* (Vol. 30). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Sarbin, T. R. (1986). The narrative as a root metaphor in psychology. In T. R. Sarbin (Ed.), *Narrative psychology: The storied nature of human conduct*. New York: Praeger.

Schneider, K. (1998). Toward a science of the heart: Romanticism and the revival of psychology. *American Psychologist, 53*(3).

Smith, B. H. (1981). Narrative versions, narrative theories. In I. Konigsberg (Ed.), *American criticism in the poststructuralist age* (pp. pp. 162-186). Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

Sutton-Smith, B. (1986). Children's fiction making. In T. Sarbin (Ed.), *Narrative Psychology* (pp. 67-90). Westport, CT: Praeger.

White, M. & Epston, D. (1990). *Narrative means to therapeutic ends*. Adelaide, South Australia: Dulwich Center.

White, R. W. (1963). *The study of lives*. New York: Atherton Press

Young, K. G. (1987). *Taleworlds and storyrealms: The phenomenology of narrative*. Boston: Martinus Nijhoff.