

Re: Literalism

Mark A. Foster | Sat, 27 Sep 2003 01:02:25 -0700

Khazeh,

You wrote:

>>Please can you give working definitions of each of these: in your post below
>>Plus whether you agree with each of these four.<<

I am primarily using these terms in their ****sociological****, not theological, senses.

1. Social nominalism is the view that groups and societies are merely names that we use for collections of individuals. From a nominalist standpoint, individuals are real. Groups and societies are not real. By extension, the Word of God might be regarded as a convenient fiction to nominate texts written in different times and places by specific persons.

I agree with social nominalism to a point, but it depends on how one defines "reality." Whereas individuals have an ontological reality, groups and societies have a socially constructed, not an ontological, reality. However, since, like most sociologists, I regard the group, not the individual, as the basic unit of theory and research, I would not call myself a social nominalist. In fact, there are only a few social nominalists in sociology, and most of them (Burgess, Bushell, Homans, etc.) can be found in what is called the "social behaviorist" school (based on behavioral psychology).

2. Social constructionism is a complex perspective which reduces, or deconstructs, reality into acts of subjective social construction. The radical perspective in gender studies, which includes psychological androgyny (the position that children of both sexes should be socialized identically), is basically constructionist. Gender is regarded as a subjective human creation. The texts of the Bible were social constructions and can be reconstructed by each new generation and society.

The **Mail** Archive



Search bahai-st



🏠 [The Mail Archive home](#)

📄 [bahai-st - all messages](#)

📄 [bahai-st - about the list](#)

🔍 [Expand](#)

⏪ [Previous message](#)

⏩ [Next message](#)

I see some merit in social constructionism and use the perspective a bit. However, I reject its extreme ontological relativism. Although some sociologists *claim* to be social constructionists, the subjectivist (even solipsistic) assumptions of constructionism, a bit like Dilthey's hermeneutic circle, make it untenable, in my view, for a sociologist to be a complete constructionist.

3. Postmodernism is a somewhat vague term which can refer to any number of different subjectivist perspectives, including constructionism and deconstructionism. Postmodernists tend to be suspicious of the scientific method. However, if each scientist, including each social scientist, is bound to see empirical phenomena differently from her or his colleagues, what is the point of science? The so-called "Enlightenment project" is largely abandoned.

I find a moderate social deconstruction to be useful in deconstructing various social and cultural traits. However, I do not find the generalizing assumptions of postmodernism to be particularly useful in sociology.

4. Critical realism in sociology refers to the work of philosopher, Roy Bhaskar. It is a highly complex framework and much too complex to do justice to in a paragraph summary. That said, critical realism thoroughly rejects the essentialism of the Platonists and neo-Platonists. All essences are individual, not universal. What is universal, or creates an identity of type, is the **real**. To Bhaskar, at least prior to 1998, that universal (or reality), social structure, is not a constant, but is a dialectical product of history (hence the "critical" element). Society and its groups are constantly being restructured as people react to their own histories.

Critical realism comes closest to the approach I use (restructurational realism) in sociology.

Mark A. Foster * <http://MarkFoster.net>
<http://CompuServe.m.foster.name>

You are subscribed to Baha'i Studies as: [mailto:\[EMAIL PROTECTED\]](mailto:)

To unsubscribe send a blank email to [mailto:\[EMAIL\] PROTECTED](mailto:[EMAIL] PROTECTED)
Baha'i Studies is available through the following:
[mailto:\[EMAIL\] PROTECTED](mailto:[EMAIL] PROTECTED)
<http://list.jccc.net/cgi-bin/lyris.pl?enter=bahai-st>
<news://list.jccc.net/bahai-st>
<http://www.escribe.com/religion/bahaist> (public)
[http://www.mail-archive.com/\[EMAIL\] PROTECTED](http://www.mail-archive.com/[EMAIL] PROTECTED) (public)

Previous message

View by thread

View by date

Next message

 **Literalism** *Mark A. Foster*

-  **Re: Literalism** *Khazeh Fananapazir*
-  **Re: Literalism** *Mark A. Foster*
-  **Re: Literalism** *Khazeh Fananapazir*
-  **Re: Literalism** *Mark A. Foster*
-  **Re: Literalism** *William Michael*
-  **Re: Literalism** *Mark A. Foster*
-  **Re: Literalism** *Sandra Chamberlain*
-  **Re: Literalism** *Dean Betts*
-  **Re: Literalism** *Mark A. Foster*
-  **Re: Literalism** *Don Calkins*
-  **Re: Literalism** *Mark A. Foster*
-  **Re: Literalism** *David Friedman*

Reply via email to

Mark A. Foster

Re: Critical realism

2003-09-27 | Thread | Sandra Chamberlain

Society and its groups are constantly being restructured as people react to their own histories.

Dear Mark,

With this conclusion in mind; In your opinion please describe a scenario that would require society to become pro-active vs. reactive ?

Thanks for the free consultation ~

Lovingly, Sandra

--

You are subscribed to Baha'i Studies as: [mailto:\[EMAIL PROTECTED\]](mailto:)

To unsubscribe send a blank email to [mailto:\[EMAIL PROTECTED\]](mailto:)

Baha'i Studies is available through the following:

[mailto:\[EMAIL PROTECTED\]](mailto:)

<http://list.jccc.net/cgi-bin/lyris.pl?enter=bahai-st>

<news://list.jccc.net/bahai-st>

<http://www.escribe.com/religion/bahaist> (public)

[http://www.mail-archive.com/\[EMAIL PROTECTED\]](http://www.mail-archive.com/) (public)

Re: Critical realism

2003-09-27 | Thread | Mark A. Foster

Sandra,

At 12:32 AM 9/27/03 -0800, you wrote:

With this conclusion in mind; In your opinion please describe a scenario that would require society to become pro-active vs. reactive ?

I think that Bhaskar would say that both require restructuration.

The term structuration was coined by sociologist Anthony Giddens. His idea is that each generation can entirely create new social structures (sets of rules governing human social behavior).

Structuration theory and critical realism are nearly identical, but, on one point, Bhaskar disagrees with Giddens and correctly accuses him of being ahistorical, i.e.,

neglecting the fact that structuration always takes place in the context of existing, historical social structures. Therefore, Bhaskar refers to his critical realism as restructuration theory.

From that standpoint, it doesn't matter whether a particular social action is proactive or reactive. Even proactive behavior takes place in a historical context.

Mark A. Foster * <http://MarkFoster.net>
<http://CompuServe.m.foster.name>

--

You are subscribed to Baha'i Studies as: [mailto:\[EMAIL PROTECTED\]](mailto:)

To unsubscribe send a blank email to [mailto:\[EMAIL PROTECTED\]](mailto:)

Baha'i Studies is available through the following:

[mailto:\[EMAIL PROTECTED\]](mailto:)

<http://list.jccc.net/cgi-bin/lyris.pl?enter=bahai-st>

<news://list.jccc.net/bahai-st>

<http://www.escribe.com/religion/bahaist> (public)

[http://www.mail-archive.com/\[EMAIL PROTECTED\]](http://www.mail-archive.com/) (public)

The **Mail** Archive



2 matches

[Advanced search](#)

subject:"Re\: Critical realism"



[!\[\]\(b538fe54c1f3a7343e37e85cc2d00497_img.jpg\) The Mail Archive home](#)

[!\[\]\(5abce1a84a655b073239ab33e1199487_img.jpg\) bahai-st - all messages](#)

[!\[\]\(21226b58c700e5231ab98d27101bac58_img.jpg\) bahai-st - about the list](#)

 [Expand](#)

[The Mail Archive home](#)

[Add your mailing list](#)

[FAQ](#)

[Support](#)

[Privacy](#)