

10-9-2009

The Terminological Problem in Africana Studies

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Recommended Citation

Imani, Nikitah O., "The Terminological Problem in Africana Studies" (2009). *Black Studies Faculty Proceedings & Presentations*. 9.
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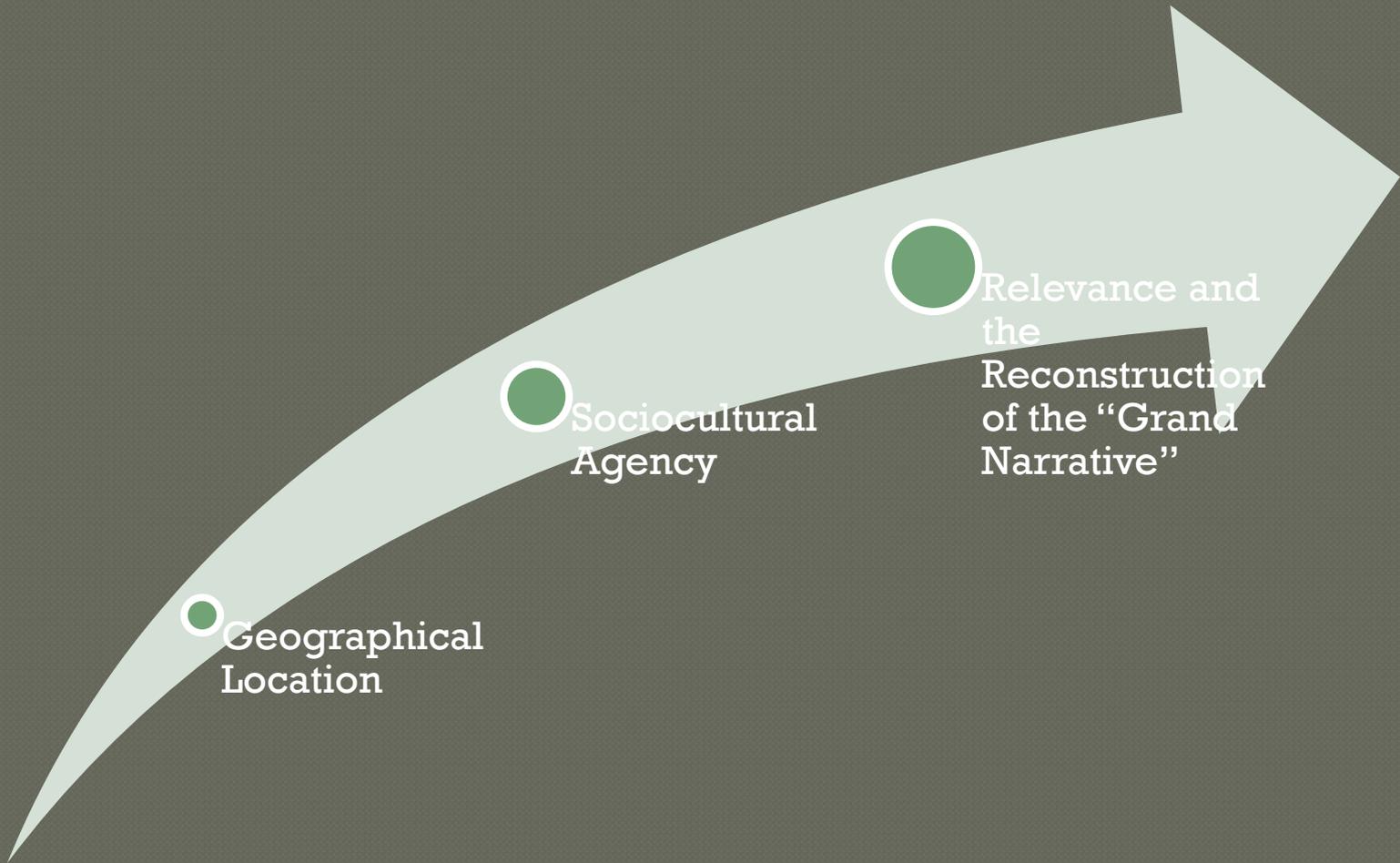
The terminological problem in *Africana* studies

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Great struggles of Africana analysis that have moved forward

- ◉ To assert the existence of Africana phenomena worthy of scientific examination
- ◉ To assert the relevance of African people themselves as repositories of knowledge and as analysts concerning these objects and phenomena
- ◉ The critique of Eurocentric narratives and methodologies of analysis

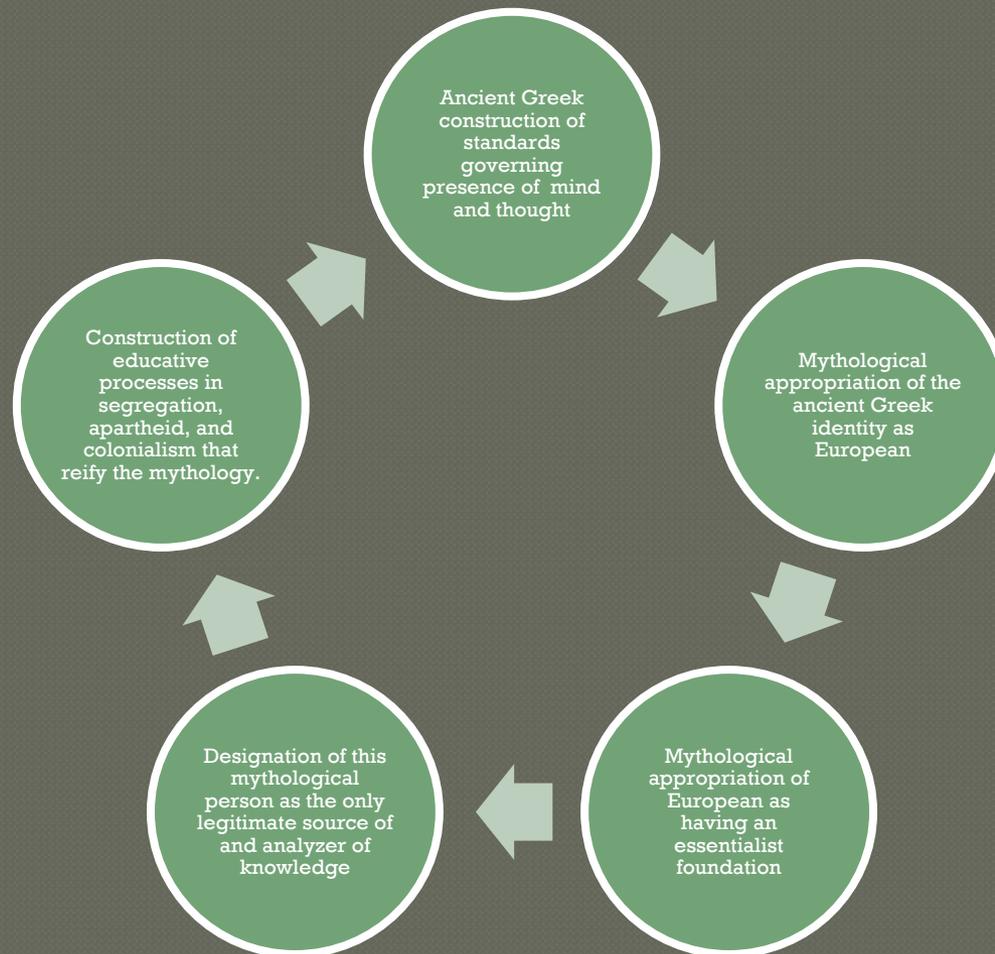
Asserting Existence



Asserting Active Agency

- Ancient Greeks “invented thought.”
- The ancient Greeks were “Europeans.” (nationalism)
- Europeans are “white” (white supremacy ideology)
- “ I think therefore I am” Enlightenment (humanity as a problematic)
- Africans were not connected to the ancient Greeks either biologically or culturally.
- Africans could not acquire full citizenship in the European and later US context
- Africans were sociologically classified as “black.”
- Thus Africans cannot consciously create existence and certainly are not capable of analyzing it or being repositories of knowledge about it.

The Woodsonian Vise



Critiquing Eurocentrism

- ◉ Classicism
- ◉ Rationality
- ◉ Normality
- ◉ Objectivity
- ◉ Individualism (Ideology)
- ◉ Commodification
- ◉ Evolutionism (Ideology)

The Terminological Problem

- Naming and classificatory scientific activity seen as a merely semantic issue.
- Reference to Africana phenomena is made by analogy or metaphor to the Eurocentric forms of similar phenomena, leading to the reification of those forms as “standards.”
- In this standardizing reference schema, the evolutionism ideology is imposed and the analysis proceeds with reference to the standardized forms, leading to mis-analyses
- The terminological problem may be most acute among reclamation scholars, due to their “noble mission.”
- Translational accuracy is insufficient to address the analytical and practical consequences of Nommo and Husia and may contribute to the recolonization of African phenomena within the discipline, in the name of valuab