Communication and the Voice of Other

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Increased recognition of the many issues surrounding multiculturalism has brought with it an underscoring of the importance of otherness, the otherness of alien cultures, the otherness of one's next-door neighbor, the otherness that exists as an untapped resource potential of one's own being. In encountering otherness we are provided with an occasion to think about the limitations and potentials of our personal lives as well as the cultures to which we belong in ways that might not otherwise be available. Indeed, without encountering the strange and potentially transgressive existence of other, we run the risk of shrinking into a complacent knowledge of self, as well as other, which undergoes little or no challenge and which, consequently, may prove resistant to genuinely critical self-reflection and growth.

As important as each encounter with otherness is, each is susceptible to violations that may occur when one or another party seeks to impose unilaterally his or her will upon the other. Such can be accomplished in many different ways: by means of aborting prematurely the interaction; by partaking of it in a prejudiced, that is, prejudgmental manner; or by disingenuously insisting that other communicate with one's own authoritatively backed, predefined terms. When such occurs, much may be lost for such closing off of oneself to a genuine engagement is likely to prevent both oneself and other from gaining essential knowledge and understanding that are the basis for both critical self-reflection and mutual growth. Through a genuinely open engagement the strangeness of other promises to shake us out of our self-certainty, indicating limits where we thought previously there were none, and potentiality where there previously had been limits that defied transgression.

An essential theme running throughout this volume is the idea that our efforts to engage other, as well as other's efforts to engage us, have been seriously impaired because of problems that are fundamentally

communicative in nature. More specifically, there is general agreement among the contributors to this volume that the voice of other has not been sufficiently heard, on account of how discourses of the human sciences, as well as other dominant discourses (e.g., law), have structured our interaction with other. Each of the essays in this volume in fact may be read as an attempt to clarify the nature of the communicative failing and to develop an appropriate corrective.

Beyond this core theme, however, there is considerable disagreement as to the scope and significance of the problem. One group of contributors acknowledges that a degree of problematicity is built into the relation between scientific discourse and otherness but suggests that the problem is essentially one of limited communication which, in turn, produces limited knowledge of other. This group, which includes, for example, Kovačić, Cushman, and MacDougall, as well as Harrison, suggests that science has been limited in its ability to confidently know other but that this problem may be overcome through developing and implementing more rigorous methods which enhance the overall communicative effort. Such improvements might consist of the ongoing development of increasingly refined techniques for culling truths where there previously existed either ignorance or error. Current methods such as the survey research questionnaire, the experimental design, or the scientist's interview schedule, as well as strategic combinations of such, can all be improved so as to elicit more information and thus to gain greater knowledge of other. Just as natural scientists have come to better know the workings of nature, so too can human scientists come to better know the workings of human beings. Thus, as Cushman and associates maintain in this volume, human scientists can come to better predict the durability of marriages based upon the administration of elaborate tests to the marriage partners, or as Harrison also asserts, human scientists can come to better explain the prospects for cooperation and compliance in workplace institutions by attending more conscientiously to such issues as employee trust and predictability. Where such methods come up short, the call is for the deployment of supplementary methods such as ethnography, as Harrison recommends, which might be used as a communicative means for eliciting more information from other, or strategically deployed rhetorical devices, as offered by Cushman and associates, which may be used to enhance scientists' ability to convey the significance or palatability of their knowledge of otherness either to themselves or to nonscientific speech communities.

A second group of contributors also argues that the nature of the communicative relationship between science and other is problematic. However, in opposition to the first group, these contributors argue that the problem with the relationship is not simply one of limited com-

munication which may in principle be overcome by one means or another. Rather, drawing upon principles of hermeneutic philosophy, contributors such as Shotter, Krippendorff, and Langsdorf argue that communication between science and other is inherently flawed on account of a certain hubris that exemplifies the scientific quest for knowledge. The charge is that neither the human sciences nor any other institutionally based discourse can or ever will be able to know humans in ways that the natural sciences have come to know inanimate nature, and that to make any such claim is foolhardy at best. Moreover, to actually act upon such a belief through the development and deployment of increasingly sophisticated methods entails structuring communicative relationships designed ostensibly to elicit information from other but which, at the same time, must necessarily suppress those significant aspects of other's voice that are not amenable to rigorous scientific analysis. We see this tendency at work either where other's ostensibly verifiable behavior is valued as an object of scientific inquiry over the less easily ascertained subjective aspects of other's being or where the significances and meanings of other are converted into, say, causal terms that are codified to suit the requirements of the scientific discourse. In both instances, the hermeneutic charge is that symbolic violence is being inflicted upon subject-as-other, as aspects of each subject's being are either eclipsed or suppressed and that, as an outcome, domains of cultural meaning are effectively colonized by a dominant discourse.

Yet a third group of contributors to this volume, consisting of Cobb, Comerford, Gemin, Gross, Smith, and Taylor, focuses not so much on how the human sciences or other dominant discourses are either limited or inherenty flawed in their efforts to know other by communicative means but rather on what these institutionally based discourses *do* come to produce in the way of knowledge of the subjects of their inquiries. This includes the effects that such knowledge may come to have upon subjects. This is not a question of what aspects of other are neglected, eclipsed, or suppressed within a communicative relationship but instead how subjects get constituted, qua other, as a consequence of the dominant discourse's inscriptive efforts. This too is seen as an act of symbolic violence, but of a different type. Whereas violence of the type underscored by the hermeneuticist involves otherness of either another culture or of one's own being not being adequately expressed and/or heard within the relationship, the poststructuralist describes a violence of a "positive" type in the sense that other, having been so inscribed within the relationship, is now transformed into a quite different subject who comes to exist *for* the dominant discourse and whose agency is thereby both enabled and circumscribed in specific, traceable ways.

I

In assessing the positions sketched above, three questions call for consideration. First, how is the relationship structured communicatively between inquirer and other, and what is its bearing on the quality of communication between interactants? Second, is there a way of reconciling genuinely open communication—i.e., what provides other, as well as inquirer, with the means to voice his or her values, interests, and needs—with what is required for the production of legitimate understanding or knowledge? And third, in light of current failings, what might be called for specifically in the way of a corrective or alternative?

The above questions are linked to a tension between the human sciences and other who is both subject of scientific inquiry *as well as* a communicative being who is entitled to a genuine voice within the relationship. It has not been conclusively established that this tension has yet been sufficiently dissolved, nor indeed that it in principle can be, and this is because of the very aims and methods of the empirical sciences. The tension takes the following form: first, the primary aim of science is that of acquiring knowledge founded on the pre-eminence of truth. Thus, in describing the significance of the Copernican Revolution and all that has followed, Gellner (1974) states:

> Without truth, all else is worthless. We must assess the truth of cognitive claims contained in, or presupposed by, anything that lays claims to our respect; and if it fails this first and crucial test, all subsequent ones become irrelevant. No other charms can ever make up, in the very last degree, for the failure to possess this first and pre-eminent virtue. (27)

What bears stressing here is the pre-eminence of truth. As Gellner continues:

> This point may now seem obvious or even trite. Yet its sustained and ruthless application is anything but innocuous. It is radical, revolutionary, and deeply disturbing. It requires that we look not to things, not to the world, but instead to the validity of what we *know* about things or the world. Before anything, or indeed any person, can be revered, we must first examine, without any undue and inhibiting reverence, the standing and validity of the putative knowledge concerning that thing or person. (28)

Gellner's depiction emphasizes how science prioritizes knowledge based on validated truth claims over any principle of reverence of persons or things. What science values most about persons, therefore,

is that which can be known by means of formulating valid truth claims, and this involves excluding that which does not admit of such claims. In this latter respect, an essential requirement of modern science is that it seal itself off from ethical or other domains which might espouse values that differ from or oppose those of legitimate scientific knowledge. This requirement is enforced within a normative framework, upheld by and constitutive of the community of scientists, which ensures that the validity of all truth claims be based upon careful testing of theory and fact. This involves distinguishing lawlike statements from mere conjectures or opinions, reliable from unreliable methods, appropriate from inappropriate interpretations of methodologically produced results.

Many have charged that the tendency of science to valorize an empirically based knowledge over other knowledge forms has had a highly adverse effect upon persons and how they might potentially be valued within a range of alternative domains of meaning and practice. The thrust of this charge is that when persons come to be valued by science only to the extent that they can be known in scientific terms, other important aspects of being may be underemphasized, overlooked, perhaps even forgotten. One of the most patent examples of this type of valorization is evident in the way science structures its communicative relationships with the subjects of its inquiry. As both Shotter and Krippendorff in this volume assert, the relationship often tends to be monological. This is not to say that scientists monopolize all talk in their relations with the subjects of their inquiry, but rather that the relationship is structured so as to privilege the scientist's truth claims over any competing claims that might be offered by the subjects themselves.

Consider again the significance of the normative framework that functions as the scientific community's ultimate court of appeal. It is with reference to this framework that scientists test the validity of their truth claims. This involves not simply establishing an isomorphic relation between truth claim and empirical phenomenon but also relating that claim to all nomological or theoretically generated propositions that have previously been endorsed by the community. Making sense with one's own truth claims—uttering a scientifically meaningful utterance—is thus contingent upon the scientist's ability to establish a coherent relation between his or her claims and those that have found prior legitimation within the scientific community. In this respect, the generation of scientific truths must be seen as a rule-governed and linguistically mediated practice: in order to do science one must learn the language of the scientific speech community, its meanings and significances, as well as the rules that regulate combinations of meaning and significance. This all as a condition of producing a meaningful utterance, i.e., a scientifically legitimated truth. As Langsdorf contends, science on this view must be understood as a hermeneutically constituted,

regulative system that installs its own (culturally distinctive) version of truth within the world. As such, when scientifically produced accounts collide with rival accounts provided by the subjects whose actions or beliefs are the focus of inquiry, this may be not simply a manifestation of scientifically validated truth confronting myth, superstition, or error but also, and perhaps no less importantly, a collision of disparate meaning systems, each of which representing and constituting the world in quite distinct and variable ways.

Such collisions between science and other emphasize the extent to which cultures may differ and how the truths of one culture may therefore be internally related to other meanings within that culture in distinct and culturally specific ways. When science declares, for example, that witchcraft is a set of beliefs and practices founded on untruths, it is not simply and exclusively what is true or untrue that is at stake, as strict supporters of the scientific method might have us believe; rather, a culture's entire meaning system may hang in the balance inasmuch as belief, identity, and practice are *all* integrally bound up with culturally specific truth claims. Yet science, indefatigably attached to the pre-eminence of truth in its quest for knowledge, has shown a tendency to be oblivious to this crucial fact of cultural being. Nor has it sufficiently concerned itself with the ways in which the purported truths of the culture of other are ranked according to a culture-specific set of values so that the propositional content of all statements regarding witchcraft, for example, may be viewed by some cultures as being fundamentally different in kind from those truths used for purposes of planting and harvesting crops. In fact, as supporters of the scientific method have argued, nor *should* the culturally variable shadings of truth and related meanings be of great concern to the scientist for the task of science is neither to partake in such fancy nor to humor or mollify those who fall under its spell. Rather, the goal of science is to expose fallacies of conventional or commonsense understanding by means of showing how prescientific truth claims are either inconsistent, false, or in need of further scientific confirmation.

With this collision of meaning systems, truth becomes both site and stake of a struggle between science and the otherness of culture or self. It is truth that is being explicitly contested, more so than value or belief or other less empirically verifiable aspects of culture or being. This is not to say that these other aspects of culture or being are irrelevant to the struggle for truth, but rather that their status according to the human scientist must be highly reduced inasmuch as the struggle is defined in terms of truth and truth alone. It is only after the struggle has been waged, and won, that these other aspects of culture or being become salient once again. But what shape they are accorded may vary from what they had been in the past. For whoever prevails in the contest over truth is then in a position to define those remaining orders of

meaning that stand in an internal relationship with truth. In this way the triumph of a scientific conception of truth readily converts into a triumph of scientific meaning and the concomitant eclipse of those meanings that cannot be shown to hinge upon truth in scientifically validated ways. Meanings that do not measure up to objective truth criteria are selected out and relegated to the status of fantasy or error. This is accomplished first through the legitimation of the "truth eliciting" techniques of science then secondly through the conversion of subjects' meanings into a conceptual order that houses (scientifically) legitimate meaning. So relegated, that which is now defined as "mythical" or "fanciful" fares poorly when measured against the truth-based, authoritative, legitimating criteria of science. What for the subjects of scientific inquiry may have possessed elevated status as a conventional meaning of great significance, now having been converted into a meaning that exists for science, can be said to be held only perhaps as a figment of one's imagination or as a collectively held superstition.

II

Hermeneutically influenced critics of science have argued that the triumph of scientific knowledge and its tendency to convert and so reduce nonscientifically grounded meanings to the status of truth or falsity amounts to a structuring of a communicative relationship which effectively silences the otherness of culture or being. This is said to be detrimental to all: to the functioning otherness of alternative meaning systems; to those who might learn from other, either directly or through stimulated reflection; and to those who might confront otherness as a part of their own being. It is with a conscientious rejection of the scientific mode of engaging and analyzing other that hermeneutically influenced critics have endeavored to develop an alternative.

Against the scientific project, hermeneutically sensitive theorists have forwarded a number of quite distinctly varied alternatives. Despite their respective differences, however, all may be said to have understanding as its principle aim—an aim that stands in staunch opposition to the quest for scientific knowledge. Whereas the latter proceeds on the belief that humans are knowable insofar as their behaviors can be explained in terms of causal determinants and predicted effects, the hermeneutically sensitive theorist is likely to argue that such a belief is either (1) logically wrong-headed or (2) susceptible to serious moral objection.

Both arguments hinge on the following distinction: what natural scientists do is different in kind from what can (logically) or should (morally) be done by those who endeavor to study human society. Against those who would seek to apply methods of the natural sciences to human subjects, the hermeneutically sensitive theorist argues that

human behavior is not reducible to a causal response to determining stimuli; nor, therefore, is human behavior predictable in ways that lend itself to nomological statements. Rather, humans engage in action distinguished by purpose and meaning. Human action is purposeful in that it is intended: one acts *in order to* achieve some end. There may indeed be externally motivating influences upon the actor, but when the actor acts, it is done with an end in mind (e.g., Skinner, 1988). Thus, a combination of a sudden rain storm and my belief that I need some form of protection from the downpour might motivate me to use my umbrella. Yet, such a combination does not function as, say, the combination of rain and wind might to cause hazardous driving conditions. When I open my umbrella, I do so in order to protect myself from the rain. Correlatively: when asked why I opened my umbrella I do not say the rain caused my action, but rather that I chose to open my umbrella. I could have chosen otherwise, deciding to seek shelter at a bus stop or to run the brief distance to my workplace without going to the bother of opening the umbrella.

The idea that human action is purposeful is inextricably bound up with the idea that human action is meaningful. Both sides of the relation rely upon the importance of language as a rule-governed system which enables us to act in ways that make sense to ourselves and others. The game metaphor, utilized most deftly by Ludwig Wittgenstein (1958), has often been used to explain how language enables us to act in meaningful ways. Learning a language is akin to learning a game or set of games. We come to know how to apply concepts in the context of learning various language games, such as describing, predicting, or arguing. These games are rule-governed: to utter a specific speech act counts as offering a specific meaning within a specific language game distinguished by its game-specific rules. Following the rules of the game, using concepts in ways that are consistent with the rules, counts as a meaningful act within the game. Or, again, knowing the meaning of a concept is akin to knowing how to go on in the game in which it is being used. One is able to act, with purpose, because one knows the rules of the game: this is what I must do in order to achieve an end intended to have meaning for myself and other.

Once behavior is understood as purposeful and meaningful, efforts to "know" behavior in the sense that scientists come to know the physical properties and causal relations of natural objects appear to be wrong-headed. For what induces a person to act in a certain manner can only be understood in terms of how that act is assigned meaning within a specific language game. And since cultures vary, each having its own culture-specific language games and rules for engaging in meaningful action, the task of the researcher is not to "know" the person's act, as we might come to know the nature of a stick, but rather to learn the possible meanings that might be assigned to the act within that actor's

own culture. This requires that we extend our understanding of other by making room for his or her own cultural categories of significance and meaning. In so doing we are apt to discover new possibilities of truth and falsity, good and evil, which are not and never could be reducible to the terms that modern science applies to the natural world (Winch, 1972).

With modern science having pushed forward in seeming cavalier disregard for the logical shortcoming involved in reducing meaningful action to causally determined behavior, some hermeneutically sensitive theorists have charged that this constitutes a moral failing as well as a logical one. Extolling the virtue of understanding and the need to be open to the meanings of other, hermeneuticists have chastised modern empirical sciences for stubbornly adhering to a singular framework in which to claim to "know" other not only amounts to a failure to *understand* other in any sense consistent with other's own understanding, but also involves supplanting the meanings of other and the imposing of restrictive meanings upon us all under the guise of the scientifically legitimate accumulation of knowledge. This constitutes an injustice against self and other; for failing to hear other in other's own terms not only amounts to a failure to give other sufficient voice but also seals the inquiring self off from forms of self-understanding that might be prompted in and through communicative forms where both self and other are genuinely attentive to each other's meanings and significances (e.g., Gadamer, 1993).

As a corrective, hermeneutically sensitive theorists such as Shotter and Krippendorff have recommended a dialogical approach that is intended to promote a genuine exchange of meanings between self and other. This entails both a recognition of one's own limits on account of being enmeshed within one's own culture and an acceptance of the idea that an understanding within the dialogue is built on the proposition that other should be engaged in other's own terms. Both propositions are fundamental to the hermeneutic approach, and both are what distinguishes genuine dialogue from the more "monological" approach central to modern scientific methods. The aim is not to "know" or explain other in scientific terms but rather to understand other in ways that avoid either suppressing other's voice or reducing other's meanings. This aim carries with it at least two critical requisites, both of which are adumbrated by Langsdorf. One is that the hermeneutically sensitive inquirer always be willing to suspend the authority of his or her own cultural meanings, and this in deference to the meanings of other that might well function to transgress one's own cultural rules. The second requisite is that the hermeneutically sensitive inquirer always be willing to use the transgressive meanings of other as an occasion to reflect upon one's personal and cultural prejudices—those tendencies to prejudge—that may often have been taken for granted prior to the dialogue.

Much may be gained if these hermeneutic principles are taken seriously and acted upon consistently within the interaction with other. The reservoir of cultural and personal meanings may be expanded and deepened; we may have more personal and cultural meaning options as a result; we may be better situated to communicate across both inter-cultural and interpersonal boundaries, and we may have a better arsenal of concepts by which to engage both in critical self-reflection and the critique of one's own society's deeply sedimented beliefs.

The hermeneutic alternative has generated much appeal both for its trenchant criticisms of attempts by the human sciences to emulate the natural sciences and its own attempts to cultivate the grounds for reaching a dialogical understanding with other. At the same time, how-ever, the practice of hermeneutics has given rise to a number of critical questions. To begin, the rejection of knowledge and the concomitant move to understanding invites the most obvious of responses: What then do we do with knowledge as we have come to conceptualize it in scientific terms? Without scientific knowledge as a basis, what alterna-tive grounds are available upon which to form critical judgments of human action? Recalling Gellner's earlier remarks, can it not be said that the hermeneutic tendency to elevate understanding to a higher plane than that of truth must incite the critical charge that understanding is being revered in the absence of any knowledge-based truth? Without science and its methods of legitimating knowledge claims, we may well be left slipping and sliding atop an ooze of hermeneutic understanding without any discernible truth criteria to provide us with suitable traction for critical judgment and action. By the same token, with hermeneutic understanding as our primary (and perhaps only) guide, we may indeed prove ourselves to be more tolerant and critically self-reflective regard-ing the personal and cultural horizons of ourselves and other, but with-out having the sufficient grounds for acting either against or in concert with other.

Some hermeneutically sensitive theorists, conceding the relativist implications of a dialogically based idea of understanding, are content to fall back upon the security of the conventional. This reliance begins early on with the need for some degree of translation of other's words and meanings, for to advocate listening to other in other's own voice runs up against the practical obstacle of somehow converting other's symbolic offerings into the hermeneutic inquirer's own terms that are necessary for even the most minimal degree of understanding. Of course, this practical difficulty has been met by the scientific community through a conversion process by which the meanings of other are scrutinized in light of scientifically validated standards of what is true or false, and as mentioned above, this necessarily requires a degree of reduction of the meanings produced by clearly evident that the hermeneutically sensitive theorist can avoid the necessity of having to

perform a similar operation. If there is a difference, it hinges on the scientist requiring (scientific) truthfulness as a condition of being meaningful, while the hermeneuticist holds up no such conditions but instead is willing to alter his or her standards of meaning in light of what is produced in the interaction with other. This said, however, there still appears to be a reductionist component built into the hermeneutic endeavor, and this as a condition of basic sense-making.

Along similar lines, it is not readily apparent how the hermeneuticist can judge other, let alone act against or in concert with other, without introducing some set of standards into the equation. This is particularly true in situations where conflict is evident. In such situations, one must opt in favor of one meaning over possible alternative meanings. Yet it is not clear that every culture's conventions provide a clear, reasonable, and uncontested means of critically assessing and implementing interpretive or evaluative standards. Many traditionalist cultures, for example, which previously had offered a clear (authoritative) set of means have given way to a culture of science. On occasions of conceptual or moral conflict such judgments would seem to admit of some degree of either blind cultural supposition or scientific reasoning. It is not clear either (1) how the hermeneuticist escapes the authoritative edicts of culture, many of which being blind and uncritical, or (2) how the tendency to think scientifically—using experimental methods of trial and error, thinking in causal terms, relying upon rules of evidence in one's explanations—either fits with or is by fiat excluded from the hermeneutically based processes of judgment and action.

All of the above questions may be said to be linked to and in significant ways to follow from basic questions that continue to dog every hermeneutic alternative: What is the status of empirical knowledge within the hermeneutic domain? Must every truth be subordinate to the flux of meanings that emerge in one's interactions with other? Or must truth be abandoned altogether as a working principle within the world of human interaction? Unable to come sufficiently to grips with such questions, the hermeneutic alternative appears to succeed better as a nettlesome challenger to modern science than as a full-fledged alternative.

III

Poststructuralists, wary of the pitfalls that have hindered development of the hermeneutic tradition, have developed another alternative to the modern scientific approach as a means of further facilitating the voice of other. A basic tenet of the poststructuralist alternative is that the voice of other has not been granted an adequate hearing, and this because other has been either silenced or forced to speak according to the

restrictive dictates of dominant discourses, including those of the human sciences. Accompanying this tenet, however, and perhaps being the single most significant plank of the poststructuralist project, is the expressed belief that the silencing or mandating of the voice of other is an inevitable effect of any prolonged encounter between other and the discursive apparatuses constitutive of science or any other institution which, in the interests of its own maintenance, must develop and enforce discourse-specific criteria for sense-making. Such criteria include the conditions for truth-telling as well as for advancing any other knowledge claims (e.g., normative or value-expressive utterances). In this sense, according to the poststructuralists, knowledge functions as a power inasmuch as the conditions for advancing, say, an empirical or normative claim are materialized within discourse and accorded institutional backing. All subjects, therefore, must be expected to bow to the rule-dictates of specific institutionalized discourses as a requisite for being understood. This might entail having to accept for oneself a discourse-specific role category as a condition for raising or addressing certain topics or having to adopt discourse-specific rules as a condition for speaking "the true."

With this recognition of how discourses function, poststructuralist theorists have maintained that a central way in which discourses produce domains of other and otherness is by means of demarcating subjects and modes of subjectivity through specific rules and categories for sense-making (e.g., Huspek and Comerford, 1996). This endeavor often involves a historical dimension whereby the poststructuralist theorist, qua genealogist, traces out the ways in which discourses change in their techniques and the effects such changes may have had upon the subjects caught up in their constitutive workings (e.g., Foucault, 1973, 1978, 1979). Essential to this overall task is that of retrieving the voice of other or, if this is not possible (cf. Derrida, 1978, 31–63), at least showing how subjects were constitutively produced in and through the discourse as well as showing the range and seriousness of effects. In lieu of providing full genealogical accounts, Cobb, Comerford, and Gemin have each discussed how rape victims must adopt specific subject characteristics as a condition for making sense within the courtroom. Cobb does this through her treatment of the ways subjectivity is produced through law's narrative exigencies for rape victims; Comerford with her analysis of how rape victims are produced as subjects in response to the discursive requirements of televised courtroom proceedings; Gemin with his account of the difficulty encountered by a rape victim with multiple personality disorder whose subjectivity is made to hinge upon an ability to identify and make sense of each of her multiple personalities in terms of the law's expectations.

The poststructuralist project is predicated on the idea that the voice of other is neither "truer," more "culturally purified," nor "less

distorted" once it is reclaimed from its entanglements within a dominant discourse. In this sense, poststructuralists are neutral as to the varying truth values of different discourses and are unwilling to argue that statements generated within discourses of the human sciences, say, are any more true than statements of competing, nonscientific discourses. The poststructuralist project thus proceeds on the belief that a tracing out of the discursive effects upon subjects-as-other may better enable us all to recognize the extent to which we are discursive products, with our subjectivities being spoken by, as well as in and through, the prevailing discourses of the day. When, therefore, discourses of the human sciences are assessed, it is done with the following questions in mind: What are the effects of scientific knowledge claims upon subjects? How are subjects either historically or currently constituted within their relations with a science that generates knowledge claims purporting to know them? And what are the costs in terms of subjects being subjected to science's methodological and conceptual rigors? Such questions are at the heart of Gross's treatment of epidemiology and victims of occupational disease, and Taylor's account of epidemiology and victims of radiation fallout.

In addressing such questions, concerns are inevitably raised as to the particular grounds upon which the poststructuralist can claim any sort of discursive legitimacy that at the same time escapes the kinds of criticism leveled against either human scientist or hermeneuticist. The poststructuralist response has been to distance itself both from the kinds of authoritative backing claimed by either the human scientist or the hermeneuticist and the kinds of discursive operations that distinguish each camp. Thus, no appeal is made to the preeminence of empirical knowledge of the sort authoritatively garnered by the modern scientist nor to the authority of tradition that is clung to so adamantly by the hermeneuticist. Nor does the poststructuralist advance either the alleged monologism of modern science in its relation to other or the dialogism of the sort acclaimed by hermeneutically influenced scholars. The former is avoided not only for its disingenuity as to the sort of "dialogue" it embraces but also for its tendency to ignore the modes of resistance and opposition produced *as effects of* the relation between the human sciences and the subjects it purports to know; the latter is steered clear of by virtue of its naïveté as to the hidden powers of tradition that are structured into language and function to reproduce the authority of tradition without providing either of the dialogical partners with sufficient grounds for critiquing culture or ideology.

Rather than appealing to any higher authority, the poststructuralist effort seeks to show how power and authority are enacted within their discursive operations and to then show the effects of such enactments. In genealogical narratives the intent is to demonstrate how subjects are produced through rule and categorization within discourse, the range of

identities and communicative acts available to each discourse-based subjectivity, and the ways in which subjects utilize their symbolic and material resources as a means of resisting and ultimately disrupting the discourse that produces them. There is no authority contained in such revelations, nor any unique communicative strategem beyond that of telling a compelling tale. Indeed, the poststructuralist narrative is often distinguished by its faithfulness to the discourses it addresses, operating within the same terms of discourse as those deployed by the subjects under examination. The critical thrust of this project, therefore, is not to posit an alternative conceptual order but only to accept that conceptual order given within specific discourses and to delineate their effects upon subjects. By so doing, the critical question is not whether one or another dominant discourse measures up against some abstract idea (e.g., the scientist's ideal of truth or the hermeneuticists' ideal of being) but rather, in light of the posited ideals of this particular discourse, does it meet these ideals in terms of what it produces in the way of subjectivities?

The language of critique, at least as we have come to tradition-ally know it, is alien to the poststructuralist project; for any such language would imply some guiding standards for critical assessment that poststructuralists have been disinclined to embrace. Nevertheless, despite the espoused value neutrality of poststructuralist narratives, the narratives themselves can be said to often carry with them critical effects. With the genealogical narrative tending to underscore discursive rhetoric or ideal, on the one hand, and effects of the discursive operations upon subjects, on the other, one or more contradictions may tend to be evidenced through indication of where discursive ideal falls short of the reality that is effected by implementation of the ideal. The locus of critique, however, is not contained within the genealogical narrative itself but rather is said to be deferred to the reader who, in light of the contradiction, may opt either to evaluate, say, the range of possible explanations of the contradiction or to offer specific normative resolutions.

This positioning in relation to critique begs a number of questions regarding the concepts and methods used by poststructuralists, their bearing on authorial credibility, and the extent to which the author is truly extricated from the charge of forwarding value-laden statements. It is at this juncture that poststructuralists encounter a good deal of difficulty. Such questions hinge upon the issue of discourse itself: What discourse is it that poststructuralists are operating in and through with their accounts? How is it that they are able to transcend or sidestep being spoken by—that is, produced as subjects by—the discourse with which they are operating? Why should we find the poststructuralist's account, which *does* purport to provide a *truthful* story, more compel-ling than the scientific account, which in its pursuit of truth, provides

ways of critically interrogating its findings (through, for example, the replicability of its research design)? And finally, given the poststructuralist's indefatigable assertions that power is bound up with all discourse and that all speakers are thus necessarily always within power's province, why even bother to critically explicate one or another discourse domain (Habermas, 1990)? Does not subjects' critical assessment of the ways in which they are discursively produced lead at best only to entanglement within yet another field of discursive production?

IV

All of the essays in this volume, albeit to differing degrees, have acknowledged the problematicity of making any claim of knowledge or understanding of other and the potential harms that may be inflicted as a consequence of advancing such claims. In this regard, each of the essays may be read as an effort to provide better grounds for engaging other—both conceptually and methodologically—as a means of better eliciting and hearing other's voice. Further, although each essay is more or less identifiable in terms both of its own perspectival allegiances and its misgivings with other perspectives, each also should be credited for its attempt to step beyond—to transgress—the borders of their own perspectives. Thus we see Kovačić and associates inserting a more explicitly rhetorical dimension into the conversation among scientists as but one means of eliciting greater dialogue; we see Harrison attempting to graft a meaning-based ethnography onto an empirical science; we see Langsdorf engaging the empirical sciences with the aim of showing how empirical inquiry is unavoidably also a hermeneutic activity, and we see Cobb, Comerford, Gemin, Taylor and Gross offering narratives that rely upon the scientifically revered principle of truth as a means of articulating how subjects are produced as other within the discourses of science and law.

It is reasonable to infer from the above efforts that the adoption of any single theoretical perspective, however descriptively or analytically fruitful in its incipient stages, always carries with it the potential either to suppress or alter the voice of other in ways that amount to an injustice. Radford, in his contribution to this volume, appears to most clearly have recognized the need to integrate—albeit without collapsing—multiple perspectives if we are to pursue knowledge and understanding in ways that better steer us clear of the injustices to other that have inhered in prior efforts. The questions that are thereby prompted with this awareness are those that aim us toward varied reconciliation of empirical knowledge and hermeneutic meaning, as well as the means by which to gauge and critically assess the effects

of such reconciliation upon the subjects, who through our categories, propositions, and methods we purport to know and understand.

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