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# The Return of Phantom Subjects?

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Traveling in tandem, this essay and Betty Bayer's study of phantoms that directly precedes it, examine what appear to be distinct qualities ascribed to the observer and the subject. The experimenter/observer is conventionally (and even epistemologically) exempted from a host of common assumptions otherwise made about humans. In contrast, the subject/participant is routinely vested with characteristics that are acknowledged, both implicitly and explicitly, as being made (constructed) or found (natural). While exploring the connectedness of these two types of experimental actors, I want to take the analysis one step further to confront some worrisome problems in constructionist theories.

The most obvious connection between these two predominant but dubitable types of experimental entities – the experimenter and the subject/participant – is the splitting of subjectivity entailed in presuming them. In her chapter, Bayer excavates related splits, notably those occurring with the character of the experimental confederate who is at once the knower and the ignorant, the visible and the invisible, the rational and the not entirely so. In its binary configuration, that "phantom" reconfirms the original splitting of the knowing, agentic observer and the naive, passive subject. Starting with such evidence of multiple splittings, we need to ascertain how they are sustained. More to the point of this essay, we need to comprehend how and why modern psychology configures and upholds certain notions of subjectivity and certain subjectivities.

These main research characters, the experimenter and the subject so called, have been the topic of various social constructionist analyses of experimentation. However revealing of the structure of investigative practices, such studies are largely incomplete for they often rely on antiquated notions of subjectivity and stop short of (or circumvent) producing any viable reconceptualizations. Most constructionist accounts in psychology fail to posit an alternative conception of the observer and his or her acts of objectivity, articulate the (social) relations of research encounters, and/or consider the reflexive or looping effects of research and theorizing. A psychological science beyond positivism and naive empiricism, I will propose, requires workable solutions to these unfinished tasks. In addressing these projects, I draw upon recent endeavors in science studies as instructive models for reimagining the subjectivities of observers and participants alike.

## Undoing Subjectivities

In a recent novel about academic life, *Moo*, Jane Smiley (1995) describes deconstruction as the pastime intellectuals took up when Marxism declined. Deconstruction stands, at least for some people outside the labyrinth of academe, as a weapon purportedly being readied for use in the next assault on culture. Although distinct from deconstruction, social construction in psychology shares the appearance and sometimes the reality of serving primarily as criticism, albeit an internal criticism of intellectual thought. To make such a comparison is not to assert that constructionism has furnished only critique for it also has introduced new visions. For instance, dismantling central psychological constructs, whether they be child abuse, cognition, aggression, the family, or statistical reasoning, at once demonstrates the insolvency or unreality of these constructs and also points to other phenomena or effects at work. Nor is making such a comparison with deconstruction meant to condemn constructionist theory as errant or unusable but, rather, to suggest its current partiality: beyond its function as critique (in itself not a fault), constructionism is incomplete. It is wanting, first, of a self-acknowledged contemplation of its epistemic place and, second, of a workable notion of subjectivity.

In their seemingly earnest regard for subjectivity, constructionists are in good company. Conventional psychology has been reminded repeatedly of its impoverished image of the subject. Just as constructionists have unpacked the faults of dominant paradigms, so humanist psychologists have written cogently of the elision of values and moral agency in mainstream psychology's confection of the subject, and critical theorists have recorded psychology's failure to consider the subject and subjectivity in terms of institutional structures, power, and ideology. These problems of subjectivity are not unique to psychology. In diverse disciplinary niches, from history to feminist studies, scholars are acknowledging their own failures to theorize subjectivity adequately. In his synoptic appraisal of cultural studies, Richard Johnson wrote:

> Above all, *there is no account of what I would call the subjective aspects of struggle*, no account of how there is a moment in subjective flux when social subjects (individual or collective) produce accounts of how they are conscious political agents, that is, constitute themselves politically. To ask for such a theory is not to deny the major structuralist or poststructuralist insights: subjects are contradictory, in process, fragmented, produced. But human beings and social movements also strive to produce some coherence and continuity, and through this, exercise some control over feeling, conditions and destinies. (1986: 69)

Such ambitions to reconceptualize subjectivity sometimes are driven by the desire for theory correctness. Sometimes, however, they are motivated by necessity. As bell hooks warned, "should we not be suspicious of postmodern critiques of the 'subject' when they surfaced at a historical moment when many subjugated people feel themselves coming to power for the first time" (1990: 28)? Our critiques of essentialism "should not be made

synonymous with a dismissal of the struggle of oppressed and exploited peoples to make ourselves subjects;" we need to "find ways to construct self and identify that are oppositional and liberatory" (1990: 28–9).

Even granting that constructionism is not special in its abeyance of the subject and subjectivity, it nevertheless is important to ascertain how constructionism falls short in this regard. Within psychology, versions of constructionism at present constitute the only viable and articulated alternative to essentialist or naive positivist conceptions of human kinds. Constructionists certainly have not ignored the subject of the subject; as noted, they have produced some of the most revealing expositions of psychology's reigning models of subjectivity. As it happens, these expositions also illustrate some limitations of constructionists' renditions of subjectivity. Taken together, constructionist studies of the beings in psychological research deftly disassemble the mythic, canonical histories of psychology which merely record abstracted ideas and crystallized discoveries. From these revisionist studies, for instance, we now know some of the ways in which subject identities were created within experimental settings to fit aggregate statistical models and the practical needs of bureaucratic, commercialized society (Danziger, 1990). The psychology of subjects was crafted through elaborate experimental tactics, including substitutions of human by non-human subjects (Morawski, 1988), coercion and silencing of subjects' reports (Gillespie, 1988), and fashioning research practices, like debriefing, to strengthen the authority of voice in the experiment (Harris, 1988). Investigations such as these make some connections between experimental practices and the resultant psychology of subjective experience; most notable, they reveal how research techniques construct psychological subjectivity. Such historical reappraisals also include analyses of written discourse which show how the actors, analysts, and subjects alike are represented and produced in and through texts. They reveal, for instance, how the rhetoric of expertise endows the experimenter–author with power, rationality, and masculinity (Lopes, 1991; Morawski and Steele, 1991). Discourse studies detail how the psychologist can move between author, observer, and "plain old guy" while the subjects are, indeed, subject to the imposition of (culturally specific) identities (Billig, 1990; Lamb, 1991; Stringer, 1990). Studies of publication rules uncover a lingering behavioral rhetoric which, through the elimination of first person accounting and the insistence of technical, operational descriptions, sometimes yields texts without mental processes or actors. Through scientific rhetoric "[t]he individual author is replaced by his method: the individual subject is replaced by the statistical patterns of behavior that are reported" (Brown, 1992: 58).

These and related studies constitute a literature from which is emerging a clearer sense of how the specific practices of experimentation, from subject selection to the final explanatory claims derived from the data, function to sustain methodological canons as well as to describe and inscribe subjectivity. Other investigations, too numerous to enumerate here, further examine the invention of subjectivity by analysing particular psychological

theories or constructs; they explore psychological concepts in their entirety. Such analyses have unpacked the prescriptive language, philosophical presuppositions, political motivations, and methodological devices constituting scientific studies of battering (Lamb, 1991), field dependence (Haaken, 1988), the self (Cushman, 1990), sexuality (Fine, 1988; Tiefer, 1994), infancy (Bradley, 1989), and so on. The present focus is on the studies of experimental practices. They are sufficient to identify three troubling shortcomings in constructionist appraisals of subjectivities and subjects, be they the subject status of observers or the observed.

First, constructionist accounts (like the experimental studies they analyse and replace) ignore or discount the expanse of subjective experiences; they do not represent the full dynamics of subjectivities. Absent from these analytic interrogations are the fractionalizings, phantomizings, and holy and unholy alliances that transpire in research events. Yet, the multiplicity of the confederate's subjectivity (as documented in Bayer's chapter) indicates how subjectivities need not be, and probably are not, singular or monochromatic. Likewise absent from most constructionist inquiries is the mobilizing of agency, resistance, subversion, resentment, or rebellion. These complexities and other apparently bothersome qualities of experimental actors hardly receive attention, despite the fact that many aspects of experimental routines have been established precisely as guards against such unwelcome features of agency on the part of experimenters and subjects alike. In fact, the techniques and texts of experiments literally document researchers' realizations that experimental situations are sites of potential rebellions and complicitous play, and that all participants hold such potentials – from experimenters and subjects to phantoms/confederates. Even experiments that assess the unfaithful actions of subjects are produced through a modicum of unfaithful acts of experimenters (and sometimes confederates). Set against these absences in constructionists' renditions of subjectivities is plentiful evidence of the mobility, fluidity, and resistance of subjectivity. In fact, in searching for subjects' own reports of experimentation (records of subjects' voices that were not mediated or translated by experimenters), I found *only* accounts by subjects who refused, resisted, or otherwise contended the experimental experience (Morawski, 1994). To some considerable degree, therefore, studies of the construction of subjects and subjectivities in experiments have read what *transpires at the surface* more or less as what *is* reality. Even as committed nominalists, constructionists apparently work like empiricists: they take what is immediately seen and named as what exists and ignore possibilities of deeper meanings, symbolism, and the indeterminacy of actions.

A second shortcoming of constructionist studies involves the analysts themselves. Few constructionists position themselves in any but one relation to their subject matter. Most display the well-rehearsed strategy of a detached, distant, and occasionally visionary observer – the figurehead of the experimenter. As such, most constructionist studies, like the positivist productions they are interrogating, are playgrounds of masquerade wherein

abstracted writings are produced by elusive, cloaked, or even phantom beings. The analyst roams everywhere around the experimental sites being excavated and yet is nowhere to be seen. Rarely do analysts contemplate even their tactical or theoretical positions, never mind their own subject statuses. Steve Woolgar (1988) has introduced the term "ontological gerrymandering" to refer to the investigative practices whereby analysts attempt to exonerate themselves from the assertions of relativism which they are making about the entities or ideas they are examining. One ready tactic for distinguishing the analyst from those others is to differentiate "between deconstructor and deconstructed" whereby "the former presents the argument as if s/he was immune from the structures applied to the target of the argument" (1988: 99).

These two problems in constructionist work are implicated in a third shortcoming. Through the theoretical flattening of subjectivities and the exoneration of analysts' own subject senses, most studies recurrently whisper or otherwise express longings for wholeness, unity, and stability in all participants, including the (temporally removed) analysts. The decision not to see beyond singular conceptions of subjectivity, conceptions that fundamentally accord with those held by positivist experimentalists, perpetuates, perhaps inadvertently, the dream of autonomous actors. Even when role playing their experimental parts, these actors appear to function as reasoning, (mostly) rational beings. Experimental psychology has been built upon this very conception of subjectivity, this ideal of the rational and autonomous self; it is a taken-for-granted ideal. As Ben Bradley has written of developmental psychology, "Neither the infant nor the psychologist needs to struggle with ambiguity or to develop its own unique meaning. The meaning is simply *there*, 'written on the rocks' " (1994: 89). Constructionists have unpacked some of the social enactments that are required to realize certain methodologies, data, or theories, but they leave untouched this taken-for-granted natural or "found" subjectivity, written on the rocks so to speak.

To highlight these three shortcomings is not to claim that the constructionist project fails us, but rather that as currently articulated and implemented, it is unfinished. Its incompleteness is understandable. After all, constructionism in psychology stands as a recent and audacious move to renounce several long-revered traditions: empiricism, realism, positivism. If we acknowledge the impressionable vestiges of our intellectual background and, perhaps, even its lingering seductiveness, then the aforementioned shortcoming of constructionism can be comprehended in broader terms. This intellectual background consists of multiple commitments. In an exploration of the current state of feminist theory, Kathy Ferguson (1993) named some underlying metatheoretical commitments that have guided feminist thought and constructionism as well. Ferguson contrasted a "genealogical metatheory" serving to interrogate and interrupt what are taken as natural categories and an "interpretive metatheory" aiming to privilege subjective experience as a source of insight. In feminist theory, it is the

play of these contending metatheories or, rather, the analysts's relative allegiance to one and the other, that gives form and meaning to her analysis. Yet, tensions produced by these different metatheories also can result in contradictions and inconsistencies.

Constructionists, then, can be seen as working not only *against* a deeply entrenched worldview but also *within* a field of metatheoretical tensions. Why would we not, in our analyses, clasp onto the comforts of a tradition that soothes and smoothes over anxieties of self as well as self–other relations? The splittings of subject positions and the isolated, privileged stance of the observer are comforting social customs; they are also tools of persuasion. This mode of operating guards our own vulnerabilities just as it empowers us as intellectual workers. It likewise enables a protective cognitive paranoia with its projections of undesirable attributes onto others, whether those others be the subjects of experiments or the subjects of our critical appraisals of experiments. Adopting the prevailing conceptions of subject positions and subjectivities comforts us by providing methodological neatness and moral order.

## A Return to Our Problems

The continued dependence on classic notions of subjectivity is not solely about psychic comforts but also, to some extent, arises from our yearning to embrace genealogical and interpretive metatheories alike. Many of us have a desire to claim simultaneously the indeterminacy and intermediacy of subjectivities *and* subjectivities that are as moral and as personal as the political can become. Instead of sliding back and forth between these aspirations, or seeking solace by retaining the dominant conception of the subject, it is worth considering how both might be retained: how subjectivities might be found just as they are made. This move, however, ultimately requires abandonment of the older splittings of subjects and an acknowledgment that the observer is not removed or isolated, but that she must stand somewhere – in the world.

Desires for workable conceptions of subjectivities and a place for the observer may not, in fact, be had by all investigators who work within a constructionist framework. Not all constructionists share a commitment that is as ambitious as an aspiration to forge a better science – a distinctly moral, political, and personal science at that. Rouse (1996) has described what is possibly a parallel condition in science studies: while some progressive science studies scholars perceive their project as disinterested analysis, aiming for nonpolitical examinations of the totality of scientific practice, other scholars, notably but not solely those who are feminist in orientation, see their work as a moral and political project that ultimately aims to realize a better science. Although the lines demarcating these two groups might be fuzzier than Rouse suggests, we need to consider the possibility that constructionists also differ among one another in their

objectives. The existence of such differences would help explain why some researchers are bothered, while others are not, about matters of subjectivity, research relations, the observers' stance, and the reflexive dynamics of social processes. For those of us who see these matters as problems requiring attention, our cousins in science studies are helpful allies: their conceptual explorations of new forms of scientific practices offer constructive guidance.

## Toward an Observing Objectivity

For twentieth-century psychology, the signature quality of the objective observer has been defined as absence: the absence of biases or subjectivity. Subjectivity is defined as a set of regrettable but alterable attributes, beliefs, values, or interests that leak from the untrained or poorly trained observer into the investigative process. Objective observers are cleansed of these properties: they are transported from commitments and space, abstractly standing nowhere. Championed originally in experimental inquiry, this ideal observer sometimes reappears as the author of constructionist analyses.

Studies in the history, philosophy, and sociology of science have demonstrated how this objectivity (as ascribed to the ideal observer) is neither a philosophical absolute nor an abstract ideal. Rather, it is invoked and practiced as a means of managing the subjectivity of observers. As Daston and Galison found in their examination of nineteenth-century notions of objectivity, "It is an ethos of restraint, both external restraints of method and quantification and internal restraints of self-denial and self-criticism. Otherwise put, objectivity is a morality of prohibitions rather than exhortations, but no less a morality for that" (1992: 122).

Other scholars have similarly identified scientific conceptions of objectivity with the internal governance, or politics, of science, on the one hand, and with morality, on the other hand. Considerable research has shown how objectivity is an accomplishment of routine investigative practices. It is not that some abstract concept of objectivity is deployed in scientific work, but rather that scientific practices function to manufacture and operationalize it. Ideals of value-neutrality or objectivity thus are a form of power that is "exercised less visibly, less consciously, and not on but through the dominant institutional structures, priorities, practices, and languages of the sciences" (Harding, 1992: 567).

Objectivity relays not just power but also morality. Scientific practices (and the representations of the world produced through them), depend, in Woolgar's words, on "a moral order" of representation (1988: 109). Although the role of the observer is assumed to be neutral and detached, in actuality the self or agent who observes is crucial to this moral order – he or she is a "disregarded agent of representation" (1988: 109). Recognizing moral agency in science does not necessarily have the same implications as

detecting scientists' personal biases; the search for scientists' biases generally proceeds with the assumption that such conditions, once detected, can be removed, thus ultimately enabling the realization of objective science. By contrast, heeding the presence of moral agency disturbs the very premises of scientific work. Some science studies scholars are now calling for acknowledgment of an overarching agency – moral agency – of observers, including science studies investigators themselves (Fuller, 1988; Gooding, 1992; Rouse, 1992). Rouse has suggested that researchers in the cultural studies of science find "normative issues inevitably at stake in both science and cultural studies of science, but see them as arising both locally and reflexively. One cannot but be politically and epistemologically engaged" (1992: 20).

If observers cannot but be politically involved, and if objectivity is power and morality, then what is to be done next? The question, of course, makes sense only to those analysts who take the study of science to include the project of improving science. This project has gone by various names including "successor" science (Harding, 1986), a "rehabilitation of the scientists' sense of agency" (Fuller, 1988: 423), or a genuine "cultural studies of science" (Rouse, 1992). What I have been intimating is that these aims should have a more certain place within the constructionist agenda.

Feminist science studies has moved to answer this question, particularly in regard to rethinking and redoing objectivity. In this vein, Haraway has described "situated knowledges" which begin with the premise that "[t]here is no unmediated photograph or camera obscura in scientific accounts of bodies and machines; there are only highly specific visual possibilities, each with a wonderfully detailed, active, partial way of organizing the world" (1988: 583). Rather than reclaim an identity of analysts, Haraway has proposed a "critical positioning" that takes the observer's stance as mutable, partial, moral, and political. Feminist embodiment, then, is not about a new identity; it "is not about fixed location in a refined body, female or otherwise, but about modes in fields, inflections in orientations, and responsibility for difference in material-semiotic fields of meanings" (1988: 588). Sandra Harding (1991) has called for "traitorous identities," selves built through solidarity with oppressed others who enact "strong reflectivity," a researchers' continual gazing back on his/her cultural situation, recognizing all the while how the object of inquiry also gazes back.

These reconfigurings of the objective observer bear some resemblance to the practices of confederacy and phantomizing described in Bayer's chapter in that both sorts of entities defy classic subject–object divisions. Yet these newer conceptions also explicate a remaking of the politics and morality of objective observers. Rather than obscuring the power and morality of objective practices, they call for the redistribution of power and elucidation of moral ambitions. In these models of scientific action, the objective observer stands somewhere, and that place is in a specific, identifiable relation to the objects of inquiry – the so-called subjects.

## Research Relations

The proposals for remaking objective practices acknowledge that the object also is active, whether that activity is seen as agency, reactivity, or resistance. In other words, conceptions of objectivity as political, moral, and situated knowledges usually involve radical reformulations of the world to be known as well as the knowing subject. As Jane Flax warned, "if we do our work well, 'reality' will appear even more unstable, complex, and disorderly than it does now" (1990: 183). In advocating observers' need to engage reflexively in analysing their own cultural situations, Harding (1991) called for awareness of how the object of inquiry gazes back. Haraway (1988, 1994) too has argued that instead of being taken as an inert or passive thingness, objects in the world be perceived as active agents. The purpose of taking these objects as agentic or active is not to anthropomorphize them but to become cognizant of their generative capacities in scientific production and realize that their possibilities, as well as their limitations, actually materialize in research interactions.

Many constructionists have described how the subject (object in the world) is made in and through research enterprises. Little work has emphasized the active, productive features of these subjects. As noted earlier, constructionists (including myself) who do suggest active subjects often have leaned on humanist notions of autonomous actors. Feminist revisions of science are not greatly helpful in this regard, for their primary focus usually is on nonhuman objects in the natural world, not on humans participating in complex interactions. Largely missing from both programs are acting subjects and their participation in research.

Investigation of subject qualities and the relations of research can begin with a clearer sense of what is missing from most critical inquiries as well as from the scientific studies themselves. The case of premenstrual syndrome (PMS) illustrates what goes unnoticed, but it is by no means an exceptional case. PMS, some constructionists have proposed, is an invention, one that makes and delineates the experiences of women during their reproductive years (ages 12–50). It has been demonstrated that the concept of PMS is a recent one, appearing in the research literature only in the 1930s and gaining visibility only after the 1960s. Also acknowledged are the negative and damaging dimensions of PMS: defined as a mental health deficiency, PMS alters women's emotional and functional states mostly in detrimental ways. Despite these critiques and despite the fact that empirical evidence of the existence of PMS is wanting, even after hundreds of studies have been conducted, many researchers continue to subscribe to the syndrome. They, along with many clinicians and ordinary people, believe that PMS exists and that it warrants serious attention. PMS, it would seem, is a manufactured psychological condition, produced through sexist values and even some good intentions of researchers, including feminists, who seek to understand women's nature better. Ordinary beings and researchers alike apparently assimilate these manufactured psychological ideas and states. Although this

example flattens somewhat the constructionist explanation and blurs the different positions about what is invented and what is not, it nevertheless illustrates the working assumption of passive (although reasonable) actors who are the recipients of the designation PMS. What critical and constructionist analyses omit are the dynamic psychological processes that lead to the acceptance and internalization of psychological classifications like PMS. Likewise elided is any consideration of subjects or subjectivities whose qualities extend beyond a passive acceptance and reasoned assimilation of scientifically produced knowledge. Subjects are recipients of classifications; they are simply the material of invention.

This case, along with our previous discussions, points to several problems in explicating research relations and the involved subjects who are the objects of that research. The idea that the psychological is made is not all that many constructionists rely upon: they also depend upon certain questionable givens about subjectivity. Proceeding with the basic assumption that we can know what is going on socially and intrapsychically merely by analysing the psychology produced in the research literature is unwise. In its very form, research already represents a construal of the (passive) subject. By taking such a partial view, even the committed, critical constructionist risks slipping into the misconception that they are rescuing the subject. bell hooks has warned about such rescues of the "other," the purportedly disadvantaged or disenfranchized:

> This "we" is that "us" in the margins, that "we" who inhabit marginal space that is not a site of domination but a place of resistance. Enter that space. Often this speech about the "Other" annihilates, erases: "No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you, I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. I am still the colonizer, the speaking subject, and you are not at the center of my talk." (1990: 151–2)



Related to these problems in analysing the subject is another: the tendency to overlook how the psychological processes in scientific manufacturing of the subject are themselves complex, multidynamic, and sometimes contradictory. Conventional PMS researchers regularly and earnestly labor with the complications of research relations, ever adjusting their research methodology, for instance, to guard against subject compliance, duplicity, complicity, and sometimes even resistance. In fact, the entire history of psychology's methodology can be read as an ongoing chronicle of facing the horrors of complex research relations and subjectivities. Despite these heroic research efforts, critical interrogations of the scientific making of phenomena such as PMS rarely attend to them.

If resolution of these problems is added to the project of creating new conceptions of objectivity, then an additional issue arises. If we embrace the commitment to better science, specifically to a science that knows itself better, then it is logical to expect that we also be committed to enhancing the lives of our subjects. The enhancement of subjects' lives entails creating

more veridical representations of them but extends further to making them more aware of their experiences, actions, and interpretations. Thus, explanations of PMS must proceed beyond demonstrating that psychological constructs are imposed on women's lives: explanatory accounts also should show how these impositions transpire and how women do and can accept, rebel, or even condemn them.

In the standard form in which it is utilized, constructionist theory cannot take these steps. Wavering between genealogical and interpretive metatheories, most constructionists have sought the safety – the distance, abstraction, and political security – of the former while minimizing the latter. A solution, I suggest, rests first with accepting both metatheories. This solution requires embracing dualities. It also necessitates an envisioning of the full dynamics of scientific life, one that incorporates not just the reflective feedback of individual actors but their connection to cultural processes as well.



## Dualities and Feedbacks

Up to this point I have entertained ways to move beyond the inadequate conceptions of the observer/analyst, to remove the vestiges of positivist ideas of objectivity. I also have argued for making related changes in our conceptions of subjects and research relations. These suggestions for inquiry intimate what now needs to be made explicit: the genealogical orientation invariably risks a slippage into antiquated conceptions of science and personhood. The interpretive agenda thus needs to be brought back to the foreground. The interpretive project is woven into my suggestions. Its threads loop through the very notions of a political and moral life of analysts. It also winds through the assertions that subjects of our analyses sometimes balk, push, or at least gaze back, and even when they comply it is often with lament. Grounding this project is the commitment to enhancing self-understanding in both science and personhood. Constructionist inquiry often evades these features of interpretive metatheories because they appear to violate the pledge to nominalism, to representing (objects in) the world as invented and not discovered. However, underriding my analysis is a conviction that it is possible to have it both ways. One can follow both genealogical and interpretive traditions, comprehend human nature as both made and found, and accept the indeterminacy as well as the experienced knowing of the world and self.



This arch conviction depends upon a willingness to imagine that we can retain two kinds of subjects, one capable of positioning, vigilance, and reflexive monitoring and the other one susceptible to the effects of the winds of time and serious whimsies of the sciences which describe and inscribe it. One approach and, I think, the only feasible one, is to enter in the space between these two big conceptions of subjects, deferring neither to the absolutism of realism nor the epistemological relativism of social

constructionism. Following Ian Hacking's proposal, we might adopt a "dynamic nominalism" claiming "not that there was a kind of person who came increasingly to be recognized by bureaucrats or by students of human nature, but rather that a kind of person came into being at the same time as the kind itself was being invented" (1986: 228). Accordingly, the actuality of persons and their psychological states need not be questioned, but the matter of origins becomes more complex. The analyst is not prior to or privileged over the analysed persons; both have bounded possibilities for personhood that are circumscribed by social and material conditions. And both sorts of persons can seize their possibilities such that sometimes "our classifications and our classes conspire to emerge hand in hand, each egging the other on" (1986: 228).

As stated here, Hacking's proposal is a rather general one. However, his recent history of multiple personality elaborates on the basic thesis (Hacking, 1995). Multiple personality is neither a determinate or fixed mental condition, nor is it a categorization laid upon and in the heads of certain people. Rather, multiple personality, like other human kinds, is the result of a looping effect:

> A new or modified mode of classification may systematically affect the people who are so classified, or the people themselves may rebel against the knowers, the classifiers, the science that classified them. Such interactions may lead to changes in the people who are classified, and hence in what is known about them. . . . Inventing or molding a new kind, a new classification, of people or of behavior may create new ways to be a person, new choices to make, for good or evil. (1995: 239)

There is indeterminacy in such feedbacks. Classifications entail the retroactive redescription and re-experiencing of actions, such that the "action-paced sense of what people did may be invested with different meanings at different times" (1995: 248). In turn, "if these are genuinely new descriptions, descriptions not available or perhaps nonexistent at the time of the episodes remembered, then something is experienced now, in memory, that in a certain sense did not exist before" (1995: 249).

Also elaborated through the case of multiple personality is the place of agency and morality: choice and self-knowledge are both attributes and virtues of humans. Persons make decisions about the constitution of their selves, and in seeing themselves as constituted. With these characteristics lie possibilities for understanding the world in interpretive as well as genealogical terms, for having our constructionist cake and making and eating it too. Workable spaces actually exist between interpretation and genealogy and between nominalism and realism. Extended contemplation, rather than dismissal, of such dualisms resembles science studies projects that acknowledge both constructionist and realist features of scientific inquiry. Playing with, rather than refuting, these doubles may be just a starting point for yet unforseeable theoretical perspectives, but currently it enables generative and inclusive play.

We can learn from the lives of phantoms (alias confederates, accomplices) that places in between not are only real but productive. However, unlike

the experimentalists who engineered phantoms and confederates, we can comprehend places in between as generative; we can discern how phantoms are not just architected, technical specters, they are human kinds. In such reconfigurations, the deceit of phantoms, like the self-deceit of constructionists and realists alike, can be transformed through self-consciousness. Faithfulness to some extent then can be restored. Instead of fashioning theories and practices that make or sustain illusions, we can more self-consciously proceed in the creation of realities, remaining ever mindful of the differences as well as connections between performance and knowledge, experience, and expression.

## Coda

In this chapter I have asked much of the reader. To go patiently through a list of bald criticisms of constructionist practices. To use a phantom, a ghost, as a prototype for reimagining not only the actors of psychological research but also the kinds of theories we contrive. To shift back and forth between ostensibly disparate disciplinary works. To celebrate dualities and to do so against strong intellectual impulses to rid theory of any detectable binaries. These demands serve primarily to stretch our theoretical bodies and, more specifically, to show the connections between notions of objectivity, subjectivities, research relations, and larger reflexive processes (feedbacks).

What I have described, however, is also about refashioning specific practices in constructionist inquiry. Carried through sometimes broad sweeps of theorizing are realizable proposals for that refashioning. The suggestions begin and end with a reconsideration of subjectivities, everyone's subject statuses. A list of such realizable ambitions includes the following:

1 Our analyses are not and should not be about unified subjects. That myth need no longer constrain our examination of subjectivity.
2 Everyone participates. The practices of inquiry are collaborative and include participation *against* as well as *within* the research agenda.
3 Research practices are constituted through (and constitutive of) a moral order in which the analyst is an unequivocal member.
4 Reflexivity, as acts of self-consciousness, is routine. Such acts are constitutive of finding and making our human kinds.
5 Subjectivity is about movement – positioning and being positioned. Phantoms, allies, and confederates show how the researchers, as well as the subjects, move. Mobility is inevitable and can be desirable.
6 Subjectivity is about being controlled and being in control, about knowing and being unknown, and about not knowing and being known. The ironies of subject positions deserve appreciation. The open secret structures of social constructionist inquiry need to be probed.

As a brave beginning, our interrogations need to explore the specifics of the analysts' psychological dynamics: our own projections, strategies for

self-empowerment, and complicity in repressing as well as maintaining relations of power.

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