

## BOOK REVIEWS

Julian Henriques, Wendy Hollway, Cathy Urwin, Couze Venn and Valerie Walkerdine, *Changing the Subject: Psychology, Social Regulation and Subjectivity*. London and New York: Methuen, 1984. 350 pp. \$33.00 cloth, \$15.95 paper.

Despite the overwhelming dominance of positivistic social psychology, axiomatically committed to R methodology and the hypothetico-deductive method, there is, in Europe, a clearly identifiable tradition of emancipatory psychology with roots in critical-Marxist sociology, cultural analysis, post-structuralism and Continental phenomenology and existentialism: *Changing the Subject* is both a critique and a development of that tradition.

The critique is in part necessitated by the changing social and economic circumstances within which the psychologist lives and works: Instead of debating whether psychology is bourgeois, patriarchal and oppressive, the academics of the '80s are having to defend themselves against the impact of spending cuts which are in danger of dismantling those very apparatuses from which they would once have dropped out. The heady humanistic ideology of the late '60s to early '70s carried an individualistic pursuit of counter-cultures to the inevitable crunch of disillusionment in the face of monetarism and the New Right: Liberatory psychology today calls for new departures.

Central to their critique is the argument that the very subject of psychology--the unitary rational individual--is itself a social construction, a particular product of historically specific practices. They argue that the "individual" subject has been set in opposition to "society" and that a false "individual-society" polarity has permeated psychological theorizing, including liberal humanistic emancipatory psychology which sought to defend the rights of the "in-

dividual" against the oppression of the "system."

The first two chapters (Section One) concentrate on the impact of this false dualism using industrial psychology (Wendy Hollway) and the psychology of prejudice (Julian Henriques) as illustrations: Both research areas are described as technologies of the social which have nevertheless taken the *individual* as their object, thus obscuring political and economic practices--so that, for example, undesirable practices in organizations are seen as abuses which can be remedied by good interpersonal relations, or theories of racism based on the "rotten apple" approach whereby prejudice is constituted as an individualized, exceptional phenomenon. Section Two examines the processes through which psychology has constructed the subject, viewed first in general historical terms (Couze Venn) and then in educational psychology (Valerie Walkerdine). In the third and final section, the authors attempt to work towards a theory of subjectivity, based on Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, which might be of use to those concerned with the politics of social and personal transformation: This is explored through discussion of power relations and the emergence of language (Cathy Urwin) and the production of gendered subjectivity (Wendy Hollway).

The strength of the book lies, however, more in its critique than in its suggestions for an alternative. We would identify the theoretical critique of *Changing the Subject* as a social constructionist one, the underlying principles of which are not dissimilar to our own: That is, it argues that persons are not to be explained in terms of fixed essences or dispositions but as constructed in a specific cultural milieu, and that psychology is inevitably political because (as Berger and Luckmann's dialectical moment analysis summarizes succinctly) that which becomes objectivated is also internalized to become subjectivity. Within the context of this critique the authors veer maddeningly between a discussion of the individual subject per se as socially constructed, and a consideration of the content of the individual subject's subjectivity as socially constructed, with insufficient clarification of the differences (and

overlap) between the two. Such empirical work as is reported (primarily in the last two chapters which aim to describe the construction of subjectivities) relies on introspection, observation and interview ("conversations") to elicit the subjectivities they report, and as such shows all the unresolved problems (e.g., researchers' selectivity) of purely "qualitative" techniques. Q has no mention in *Changing the Subject* and most radical social constructionists are either ignorant of or antagonistic to Q, confusing it with psychometrics and other attempts to calibrate the human subject: Q is wrongly seen as reifying constructions, as pigeonholing or categorizing people, and as imposing the researcher's own understandings. This state of affairs can be understood with reference to the very different methodological histories of the two traditions. Radical social constructionism has its roots in hermeneutics and the axiom that there is no metric to understanding; operant subjectivism is a form of radical behaviorism in which actions of participants metricate their own accounts of meaning. This divide may be far from unbridgable if dialogue could overcome the misunderstanding of Q methodology by Verstehen theorists.

But while it is relatively easy to suggest that the authors can learn from Q methodologists in the elicitation of subjectivities, it can also be argued that Henriques et al. offer an approach for the politically engaged Q methodologist that goes beyond the mere anthologizing of subjectivities. The subjectivities they describe are located in their social, political and economic contexts, and the socially constructed discourses associated with their production are analyzed and discussed: Subjective reports of heterosexual sex, for example, are related to socially pervasive discourses (the male sexual drive discourse, the have/hold discourse, the permissive discourse) that make available positions for subjects to take up.

Radical social constructionism is new and lacks clear expositions. *Changing the Subject* is no easy introduction to the paradigm, nor is it an erudite, well-argued and researched rationale. It comes over much more as a working document--indeed, this is how

the authors themselves see it, as a beginning, and one that aims to provoke because debate and discussion transform not only the argument but also the arguer. To those of us who are both radical social constructionists and Q methodologists, the core of that debate must center on the pursuit of intersubjectivity.

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George E. Atwood and Robert D. Stolorow, *Structures of Subjectivity: Explorations in Psychoanalytic Phenomenology*. Hillsdale NJ: The Analytic Press, 1984. 132 pp. \$19.95.

It is appropriate that this should be reviewed in the context of interbehavioral principles, such as we adopt in Q methodology, and by someone who, versed in psychoanalytic thinking, is nevertheless more broadly a "pure" psychologist, much as are the two authors of this book.

The book is brief, cogent, and said to be the result of ten years of collaboration, focused upon "psychoanalytical phenomenology." It provides excellent summaries of phenomenology in the Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre framework, along with principles of structuralism as found in studies of personality, motivation and the like. The central topic is then pursued, that of *intersubjectivity*. The transference and countertransference situations of psychoanalysis are so embraced (section 2 of the book), as well as development and pathogenesis (section 3). The final pages deal with neurotic symptoms, enactments, and dreams, considered as "self-concretizations." The explanatory nexus, indeed, is *self theory*, owing much to the writings of the late Heinz Kohut (1971, 1977).

The authors, in my judgment, are approaching an

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important development. It is that, at the last logic of matters, the structuring of a self-hood has to be left to the subject, to his or her own designing.

Let me develop the point in terms of my recent "Perspectives in Psychology: Integration in Clinical Psychology" (Stephenson, 1985), in which the reminder is given that, according to Freud, psychoanalysis could proceed hopefully with "internal" conditions of the patient, but not with "external," because the latter are subject to effects outside psychoanalytic influences. Thus, Freud could treat Dora's hysteria (Freud, 1949), but not her attempt to gain her father's support. The paper indicated that a study of Dora's dream along Q-methodological lines agreed with Freud; but I added that this "would not preclude efforts to deal systematically with difficulties in social adjustment, self-awareness and the like, at overt levels of everyday life--there can be objective infrastructure there, too" (as suggested by some *factors* in my study of Dora's dream).

This addition is what Atwood and Stolorow seek to cover, and of course it has one's interest. According to the two authors, psychoanalysis is unique amongst the sciences in that the observer is also observed, which of course is in error: Subjective science, as developed in Q methodology, has for fifty years always had the observer as the observed. But they do make a change in the psychoanalytic situation, away from an observer *interpreting* the free associations of a patient, to that of an *empathizer*, experiencing *intersubjectivity*, and this is the core of matters for them.

We should have an example before us to simplify explication, and their case of Amy, who underwent "many years" of analysis, serves well. The thesis was from Kohut, to the effect that Amy's parents did not recognize her yearnings as a child because their own (archaic) needs were in conflict with hers; consequently she experienced a disturbance of self. She became what her mother required, resulting in an undeveloped "selfobject" (a coined term to indicate the undeveloped self), blocking any self of her own designing, as an "authentic" self. The analysis was a

slow unraveling of this theme. Amy was 33, married, with three children, wealthy, not knowing why she wanted analysis. She was a devoted mother, wife, socialite--yet selfless in any structured sense. The analysis was focused upon the formation of a self for herself. And Amy would not allow any intrusion by analysis into this newly-forming self, "the reality and solidity of which she needed desperately to have strengthened." Any effort to explain it was threatening: She was creating her own "self-boundaries," and was fearful of interruptions introduced by the analyst.

The latter observation is critical for phenomenology, I shall submit (as I have done elsewhere), as it is for self psychology.

Why, then, the phenomenology? In the minds of its giants, Husserl, Heidegger, and Sartre, the concern was with the fundamental nature of *consciousness* as such. Our two authors provide excellent summary accounts of these philosophies, but fail to draw an important conclusion from them, which Amy and her self development illuminates. Instead, they acknowledge that their concern is with lived experience, and not with ontological considerations. What they adopt from phenomenology is, first, the attitude of re-experiencing an event by empathy, seeking to re-enact it, and then trying to *understand* it, not to interpret it in the manner of causal explanation, but to arrive at meanings intrinsic to an event, as well as to a wider context. Secondly, there is an assumption in phenomenology that if we could free ourselves from the trappings of everyday experience, from all the cultural and social constraints we have to suffer, there is the possibility of different, *authentic* selves, captured by Husserl as the transcendental ego, by Heidegger as anguish for "individuality and grounded authenticity" in a world "where one is in perpetual danger of absorption in the pressures and influences of the social milieu" (Atwood & Stolorow, p. 23), and by Sartre as an authentic self, but fraught with so much anguish that we accept, with scarce a whimper, the self imposed upon us by society. In each there is the notion that all is not well with

selves as they are, and that something much better is possible.

I hope that I have not done injustice to what is at issue. But it happens that I am knowledgeable about phenomenology, especially as it influenced gestalt psychology. David Katz was my colleague at Oxford in the 1930s, whose *The World of Colour* (1935) is a classic: I studied with Katz, and we published a joint paper on the phenomenology of elasticity (Katz & Stephenson, 1937). Physicists of my time thought that *black* would be what we perceived in a dark room with our eyes closed; actually, we see a foggy something, "visual grey," with testable properties (e.g., anisotropy, constancy, etc.). What is important is that Katz did not stop with mere narrative, to report that we see "visual grey," or that "the sensory experience of elasticity is very different from that of a 'dead' weight." He went on, to provide some proof of what he narrated. Thus, he designed brilliant experiments to qualify "visual grey"; and it was easy for me to show that most of us pull 2 pounds on a spring to match 1 pound of "dead" weight.

Science cannot rest with mere narrative: It asks for proof. How, then, to offer proof that Amy's understanding and self-hood are what she says of them? And how can the analyst be sure that his re-enactment by empathy is Amy's too? And what proof is there for intersubjectivity, as distinct from isolated subjectivity? Moreover, if there is a way to provide answers to these questions, why should we take the narratives seriously without such proof?

The two authors, who express a wish to be "pure" psychologists, have no such tests to offer, and have to rely upon the interpretative (hermeneutic) tradition of Wilhelm Dilthey. They are engaged in a dialogue with the patient; beginning with simple examples of the patient's behavior, they arrive at *meanings*. In a while (weeks, months?) they reach a "whole," which they place at the intersection of two subjectivities, those of analyst and patient, in the given context, in what is described as an "analytic frame," in which transference and countertransference phenom-

ena are experienced, and within which, the two authors conclude, the "truth-value" of the final understanding is determined. And I quote:

An appreciation of the interdependence of psychoanalytic insight on a particular intersubjective interaction helps us to understand why the results of a certain case study may vary as a function of the person conducting it. Such variation, an anathema to the natural scientist, occurs because of the diverse perspectives of different investigators on material displaying an inherent plurality of meanings. (Atwood & Stolorow, p. 6)

Thus, they are left with narrative, to convey to others what evolved, so that others can relate it to their own "personal worlds" in empathetic dialogue. Or, they may fall back upon Dilthey's "critique of historical reason," by which analysis can "make conscious and explicit the finite existential perspectives associated with all inquiry into the human sciences" (by which is meant the phenomenological so-called sciences). They all yearn, it seems, for universals, found by introspective concentration, Guru-like, upon the belly-button of the psychoanalytical situation.

Readers of *Operant Subjectivity* must have felt on familiar ground as they have followed the above explication, since much of the thinking parallels that of Q methodology. When I performed "theoretical" Q sorts to represent Freud's Dora, or Virginia Wolff's Orlando (Stephenson, 1953, 1982), what is this but empathizing? And what, in *The Study of Behavior* could be more to the point than my theory of "attainable selves" (Stephenson, 1953: 269-270), where it was assumed that a patient could develop self-reference hidden from them by repressive influences?

But there is more to say: What of intersubjectivity? In my *Psychoanalysis and Q-Methodology* (1954) I report an experiment conducted at the University of Washington, Seattle, when I was Walker-Ames Professor there (early 1950s), of an analyst (An) and his patient (Pt), with the following factor result:



	Conditions of Instruction	Operant Factors		
		I	II	III
1	An: Best self	X		
2	An: Pt now	X	X	
3	An: An now	X		
4	Pt: Before analysis		X	
5	Pt: An now			X
6	Pt: Pt now		X	
7	Pt: Best self			X

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X = significant loading, all other values insignificant.

The analyst (Dr. Quinn) was in my professor's seminar; his patient had been under analysis for some time. Dr. Quinn performed Q sorts 1, 2, and 3, and his patient Q sorts 4, 5, 6, and 7 with the same Q sample of 96 statements concerning the analytical situation.

Factor I is restricted to An, and is *his* subjectivity. Factor III is restricted to the patient, and is *his* subjectivity.

Factor II, however, intersects both An and Pt, and is *their* intersubjectivity. This is because An's representation of his patient (Q sort 2) is on the same factor as the patient's account of himself *now* (Q sort 6) and before treatment (Q sort 4). Note, however, that this is one-way, from An to Pt--and is not this as it should be unless Pt is in the process of analyzing the analyst?

Or, is it possible that An is in a process of transference upon his patient? After all, it is An who puts his patient upon his own subjectivity, factor I.

*Whatever the explanation, it should be apparent that there is in factor structure some proof, or disproof, of narrative. Factors serve for testability, precisely as in experiments on "visual grey" or upon elasticity. And there is proof of intersubjectivity.*

Note, in passing, that factor III indicates strong transference on the patient's part: He feels that his analyst is like his own (Pt's) Best Self, i.e., an

idealized self (Q sort 7). The analyst presents himself as adjusted, according to Roger's law, since his Best Self (Q sort 1) and his self *now* (Q sort 3) are on the same factor.

Now we can return to Amy: We can ask, When can we be sure that she is now "standing on her own feet," in possession of her "true" self (Winnicott, 1951)? Freud asked the same question: Is there ever completion for an analysis, "is it terminable?" (Freud, 1937). He answered no. Rogers would accept self-ideal congruity; but men in prison for life as murderers may adjust in this manner--to make their own lives more tolerable. So it is for youths in "gangs." So it was for Amy. Social, environmental conditions are concretely involved, and Amy's new self must have been in relation to some concrete behavioral possibilities.

Even so, we can now leave faith aside, and provide proofs. A factor structure ("vital sign") measurement of Amy *now*, after her years of analysis, will show, one surmises, an "objective" self-hood, such as I have described for the poet Keats (Stephenson, 1972), a professor of engineering (Stephenson, 1980) and others.

However, there remains what I found missing in Atwood and Stolorow's thesis: It concerns Amy's insistence upon leaving her newly found selfhood intact, as if to safeguard it from deeper analysis into it. This, it seems to me, is the real phenomenology. In a recent paper (Stephenson, 1985) I point out that constructs of "self-regulation," "self-description," and "self-instruction" are introduced at a fundamental level in information-theoretical and cybernetical-biological theories, as in the work of Pritz and Mitterauer (1977), indicating a basic inductive process at the heart of the phenomena dealt with in psychoanalysis. So it is with Q methodology: Q sorts are self-referent, but so are its factors, each a theoretical Q sort, unbeknown to the Q sorter, and each self-referent (and recognized as such when the Q sorter sees the factor before him or her). So it was, it seems, with Amy: The basic induction, so-called hermeneutics, was self-created.

I conclude, then, that Atwood and Stolorow's psychoanalytic phenomenology and its empathy can be put to test along Q-methodological lines; proof of intersubjectivity is at hand; and the most important conclusion seems warranted, that self-reference is what psychoanalysis begins with, and should end with, as I proposed long ago and elsewhere (Stephenson, 1953, 1985). Clearly, *Structures of Subjectivity* is in the right direction, and will be on my own shelf, I hope, for a long time to come.

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