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SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF 'YOU'.

John Shotter
Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht

"The thou is older than the I." Friedrich Nietzsche.

Central to all that follows below is a certain vision of the world and of our knowledge of it: that both consist in activities of various kinds (Shotter, 1984; Wertsch, 1981). And also, a certain stance towards the conduct of research into such activity: that of investigating its nature from a position of active involvement in it, rather than contemplative withdrawal from it. Such a stance immediately raises questions about how the nature of the involvements in which one finds oneself placed should be best characterized. I shall claim that they are best characterized, not by reference to one's own characteristics, those of first-person actors, of 'I's', but by reference to the nature of 'you's', the second-person recipients or addressees of actor's or speaker's activities. And that a central feature of any such characterization must articulate the nature of the moral proprieties, the 'ethical logistics' of the exchanges between 'I's' and 'you's' - to do with who has responsibility for what activity in the social construction of the meanings of any communications between them.

Person and voice.

Ordinary language marks a number of important distinctions, to do with articulating the character of the situation in which an actual utterance is produced, in both the voice and the person of verbs. In the simple active voice, the subject of the verb, the agent, does something to someone or something other than or separate from themselves. In the passive voice, the agent is de-emphasized and often goes unmentioned, so that an outcome can be described without it being necessary to indicate explicitly who or what was responsible for it. In other words, to talk in a different voice, is not merely to say the same thing in a different manner or style; it is to represent in one's way of speaking, the way in which the subject of the verb [end 133] in one's utterance (which might of course be oneself), is actually involved in the process depicted by that verb - for instance, to do with whether the subject is morally committed (or not) by their actions to those to whom their actions or statements are addressed. For it may be that later, those others will appeal to the character and situation of the utterance in justifying their sanctions against the subject for failures to honour such commitments. Thus, quite different practical-moral consequences flow from one's speaking in different voices.

The device of voice, and that of person, functions both to 'locate' the subject in relation to a process, and to define what might be called the positional field of the subject (Benveniste, 1971, p.150), i.e., whether the subject is involved in a personal or a non-personal relationship, and the character of that involvement. And this notion of voice may be extended to encompass more than just the voice in which a verb is uttered, but to characterize the whole style of an utterance upon a much more large scale, in which one speaks in, or 'through', a particular "speech genre" (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986; Volosninov, 1973) - where to speak in a different voice is to posit a certain form of life in which, among other things, there is a certain apportionment of the 'managerial' and 'administrative' tasks and responsibilities amongst the communicative participants in constructing the meaning of utterances, i.e., the different rights and duties as to who must do what in constituting communicative activity as effective. Wertsch (in press), for example, mentions the different expectations engendered in the addressee, about how the speakers utterances should be related to one another, by questions asked in (or through) a voice of knowledgeable authority, compared with those asked in a voice of genuine ignorance (see also Gergen, this volume, as well as Gilligan, 1982). Most importantly, the voice in which one speaks influences where authority is to be located when matters of definition are involved.

But let me turn now to the person of the verb. In situations of ordinary language use at least, to address a person in a particular person grammatically, is straightaway to say something about what you take their status to be - and to address them wrongly has serious practical consequences. Grammatically, at least, to be related as a second-person rather than as a third-person to a first-person, is both to be situated quite differently and to be assigned a quite different set of privileges and obligations (Lyons, 1968). Indeed, as Harre' (this volume) points out, a whole set of subtly different statuses are marked out in pronoun systems more complex than our present Indo-European forms. First- and second-persons (plural or singular) are, even if in fact non-personal or

inanimate always personified (with all that that implies for the 'personal' nature of their relation), [end 134] and are thus, so to speak, 'present' to one another, in a 'situation'. By contrast, third-persons need not be personified (they can be 'its'); nor are they present as such to other beings or entities; nor are they necessarily 'in a situation'. Indeed, the category is so non-specific that it may be used to refer to absolutely anything, so long as it is outside of, or external to, the immediate situation jointly created in the communicative activities between first- and second-persons. While second-persons have a duty to attend only to what in their activities first-person performers intend them to attend to - and to be continually responding to a speaker's hesitations, uncertainties, and failures rather than to their intended meaning, is not only to be thought rude, but to run the risk of their sanction - third-persons, however, have no such responsibilities. Hence one's unease, as a first-person, in attempting a tricky interpersonal encounter, to notice oneself observed by a third-person, 'outside' observer (Goffman, 1959; Sartre, 1958).

The inattention to the second-person.

Thus the use in a behaviouristic and/or positivistic social science of third-person, passive voice talk means, not only the failure to capture the character of important relations between those whom one studies (and hence, the misrepresentation of their social life), but it also hides the nature of the ethical (and political) relations between them and the science studying them. As a corrective to the concern with only third-persons, with what in fact are grammatical non-persons, the recent history of social and developmental psychology has been marked by an increasing concern with personhood, with persons, agency, and action (rather than with causes, behaviour, and objects) (Harre' and Secord, 1972; Harre', 1979, 1983; Shotter, 1975; Gergen, 1982). That concern, however, has been directed mostly towards the analysis of grammatical first-persons, towards what it is to be an active agent, an 'I', a subject doing something to something or someone else. Little attention has been paid to people's existence as the persons "addressed" by first-persons, to whom or what it is one is embedded in when one is rooted or embedded in communicative activity. And thus the nature of the grammatical second-person has been ignored.

In what follows, I want to redress that balance: I want both to render the 'I' problematic, and to show how little of substance can be said about it; but also, perhaps surprisingly, to show how much of importance can be said about 'you', about the 'medium' in which one is embedded as an 'I' and how its nature and workings make us what we are. Thus, rather than attempting to account for ourselves [end 135] and our world in terms of how we at present experience them, I shall be much more concerned to account for why, seemingly, we experience them as we do, for why at this moment in history, we experience ourselves - or at least, why we account for our experience of ourselves - in such an individualistic way: as if we all existed from birth as separate, isolated individuals already containing 'minds' or 'mentalities' wholly within ourselves, set over against a material world itself devoid of any mental processes.

The repudiation of "possessive individualism" and the Cartesian starting-point.

Indeed, I want to say that we talk in this way about ourselves because we are entrapped within what can be thought of as a 'text', a culturally developed textual resource - the text of "possessive individualism" - to which we seemingly must (morally) turn, when faced with the task of describing the nature of our experiences of our relations to each other and to ourselves. In that 'text', the individual is seen as

"essentially the proprietor of his own person or capacities, owing nothing to society for them. The individual [is seen neither as a moral whole, nor as part of a much larger social whole, but as the owner of himself. The relation of ownership, having become for more and more men the critically important relation determining their actual freedom and actual prospect of realizing their full potentialities, was read back into the nature of the individual. The individual, it was thought, is free inasmuch as he is proprietor of his person and capacities" (Macpherson, 1962, p.3).

Indeed, Macpherson's account could very well figure as one of the major texts of identity explored in this book, for he shows how the notion of "possession", although clearly not the source of other important concepts - such as freedom, rights, obligations, justice, etc. - has none the less powerfully shaped their interpretations, and hence our notions of how we are (or should be) related to one another, and hence what and who are.

However, it is not my purpose here to explore the extent to which we have been (and of course, in these

Thatcher/Reagan years, still are) entrapped within the image of society as a market, and of individuals as all living in psychological isolation from one another, engaging only in commercial relations with one another. My purpose is merely to explore the general point that different ways of accounting (still a commercial metaphor?) for ourselves to ourselves cannot be assessed as being simply true or false. They are constitutive of our actual relations to one another, and to the extent that we constitute our selves in our relations to others, constitutive [end 136] of ourselves, and must be studied as such. And below, I want, to account for our entrapment in this text. Not so much by examining the particular nature and historical background of possessive individualism itself, as by examining the general nature of what it is for us, in our social and psychological being, to be 'shaped' by the textual nature of our involvements with one another. I want to do this, essentially, by the formulation of what might be called a counter-text (i.e., counter to possessive individualism), a text which tells a quite different story about the nature of our individuality and psychological capacities, and about the nature of our relations to the others around us. A story in which it is 'you' rather than 'I', which assumes the leading role - which entails a shift from an individualistic to a communitarian perspective.

In other words, I want to repudiate the traditional Cartesian starting point for psychological research located in the 'I' of the individual - which assumes that all psychological problems are to do solely with the acquisition and utilization of objective knowledge - and to replace it by taking, not the inner subjectivity of the individual as basic, but the practical social processes going on 'between' people. In other words, I want to replace a starting point in a supposed 'thing', geometrically or geographically located within individuals, with one located (if 'located' is now at all the right word) within the general communicative commotion of everyday life at large - the stance I mentioned above.

The disappearance of the 'I'.

The Cartesian starting point is deeply entrenched; it is implicit in many of the practices of current psychological research (as well as in the philosophical discourses concerned with their justification). Central to it is the apparently self-evident experience that one's own self (one's 'I' or ego, or whatever else it may be called) exists somewhere 'inside' one, as something unique and distinct from all else that there is - and it is that, its substantial existence, which guarantees one's personal identity (rather than it being a social or discursive construction, as I would like to argue). In this Cartesian sense, it is 'the self' as a 'thing' which becomes the ultimate, unconditioned source of thought, meaning and - strangely, of language and speech also. It appears on the philosophical scene as the epistemological subject, as the knower distinct from what there is to be known, able to gain knowledge from the world (said to be objective and 'external' to the subject) in a wholly individual and autonomous way - that is, such a subject is said to be able to gain knowledge without, in principle at least, needing to learn anything from other people. Thus the fact [end 137] that one comes into the world as a child and develops only slowly to adulthood - which in any case is a morally tenuous status in which one is continually corrigible by others - is neglected as immaterial in this individualistic image of personhood. Indeed, in this view, what took humankind many thousands of years to understand and to develop, i.e., how to be self-conscious agent distinct from the activities in which one is rooted, is treated, either (1) as something one learns as an individual in one's early years, mostly, merely by opening one's eyes to what is around in one's external world for one to observe, or (2) as something one is born already knowing innately - a third possibility, that one ontologically learns how to be this or that kind of person, how to be a self-determining thinker, perceiver, rememberer, imaginer, listener, spectator, speaker, actor etc., is not even considered.

This is because, I think, the Cartesian starting point seems to accord so well with what many of us now regard as 'our experience' - at least, those of us who, after the appropriate schooling or instruction, know how to respond intelligibly to the request to explain our sense of personal identity. Witness, for instance, Nick Humphrey (1983, p.33) who, in expounding his theory that we understand others on analogy with ourselves, writes:

"When I reflect on my own behaviour I become aware not only of external facts about my actions but of a conscious presence, 'I', which 'wills' those actions. This 'I' has reasons for the things it wills. The reasons are various kinds of 'feeling' - 'sensations', 'memories', 'desires'. "'I' want to eat because 'I' am hungry," "'I' intend to go to bed because 'I' am tired," "'I' refuse to move because 'I' am in pain'."

And he goes on to claim (p.33) that we only understand another because as 'I's' because: "I naturally assume that he (or she) operates on the same principles as I do".

But here, is the 'I' which refuses to move in the same logical category as the 'I' which finds itself in

pain? Is there any thing as such at all to which the word 'I' refers, or for which it stands - an entity, substance, or principle of unity? Consider, for instance, the claim that "I think my thoughts." Rather than implying that 'I' can exist separately from my thoughts, and that I possess them as I possess other objects external to myself - as indeed cognitive psychologists do seem to imply - the implication of such a statement must be, as William James (1890, p.401) put it, that the "thought is the thinker." For, as he argued, if my thinking is confused, I am confused, if my thought is blocked, I am blocked, and so on. While my 'me' - an empirical identity, a "loosely construed thing" which I construct for myself - may consist in an aggregate of things objectively known, but "the I which knows them cannot be an aggregate..." (pp.400-401). But [end 138] if we are to accept James's claims here, another image of our relation to our own mental capacities is required, other than that of the proprietorial or possessive self, to guide us in making sense of his claims. We must imagine ourselves to be, not an object-like thing as such, but a mobile region of continually self-reproducing activity. Then it might seem sensible to say of ourselves that "the kind of activity that I am at the moment is thinking activity". But currently, this way of talking about ourselves lacks currency. Whether we can recognize our experience of ourselves in James's kind of description or not, like Nicholas Humphrey, most of us feel that there must be something, some 'thing', within us which functions as the causal centre of all our activities, the 'I' which wills our actions. But must there be?

In his analysis of his own experience, James refused in formulating his description of it, to talk in this way, to say that what he must be experiencing is the experience of a central 'I', the transcendental thinker. Indeed, for James, the 'I' as any kind of substantial entity disappears. And his very final conclusion to his chapter on "the consciousness of self" he says:

"The only pathway that I can discover for bringing in a more transcendental thinker would be to deny that we have any direct knowledge of the thought as such. The latter's existence would then be reduced to a postulate, an assertion that there must be a knower correlative to all this known: and the problem who that knower is would have become a metaphysical problem ... [and that carries us beyond the psychological or naturalistic point of view" (p.401).

Hence, as James sees it, it is not our experience as such which forces the conclusion upon us that we possess an inner, central 'I', a unitary self; indeed, as a result of the particular forms of 'deconstructive' investigations he conducted, his experience denied it.

And indeed, such a conclusion accords well with Benveniste's (1971, p.219) claim: that I is a sign that is nonreferential with respect to reality; that it does not denominate any lexical entry; that it is, as he puts it, an 'empty' sign which becomes 'full' in different ways according to its use by speakers in their utterances. And it refers then, each time, only to the instance of discourse in which it is used. While, as he says, each instance of the use of a noun may be referred to a fixed an 'objective' notion, capable of remaining potential or of being actualized in a particular object and always identical with the mental image it awakens. Instances of the use of 'I' do not constitute a class of reference since, like James, he claims that there is no 'object' definable as I to which these instances can refer in identical fashion. Each I has its own reference and corresponds each time to a unique being who is set up as such. [end 139]

"What then is the reality to which I and you refer? It is solely a 'reality of discourse', and this is a strange thing. I cannot be defined except in terms of 'locution', not in terms of objects as a nominal sign is... I can only be identified by the instance of discourse in which it is produced. But in the same way it is also as an instance of form that I must be taken... There is thus a combined double instance in this process: the instance of I as referent and the instance of discourse containing I as the referee. The definition [of I] can now be stated precisely as: I is 'the individual who utters the present instance of the discourse containing the linguistic instance I.' Consequently, by introducing the situation of 'address', we obtain a symmetrical definition for you as 'the individual spoken to in the present instance of discourse containing the linguistic instance you' (Benveniste, 1971, p.218)."

Thus, in Benveniste's account, pronominal forms do not work by referring to an extra-discursive reality, nor to an already existing set of objective statuses or places in space or time, but function within an intralinguistically constructed 'positional field', a field which is constructed and reconstructed, moment by moment, in and through one's utterances.

By their use, we can distinguish between, not only whose activity is whose, distinguish, for instance, what I am saying from what you are saying, and what was said by others, or, that you did this, while I did that,

and so on, but we can do more. Because they function to provide in their use what Benveniste calls a "combined double instance," or, to put it another way, because they possess what others have called "duality of structure" (Bhaskar, 1979; Giddens, 1979; Shotter, 1983) and appear both as structuring and as a structure, they can function to indicate not only who one is but also what one is at the same time. Thus problem of representing both the relative 'location' of different 'places' and their changing character, in a shifting and developing discursive 'space', is solved by the use of these 'mobile' signs which each speaker can appropriate to themselves and relate to their person. So, although we may say, "I feel this," and "I desire that," and claim that in so saying I experience a certain conscious presence, my 'I', which accompanies such claims, if Benveniste and James are right (and I think they are), then those different uses of I do not in any unitary or total way refer to what we are. So why do we feel so strongly that there must be somewhere such an entity?

Social accountability and rational visibility.

We feel so strongly, I want to claim, because of what elsewhere (Shotter, 1984), I have called "social accountability:" the fact that we must only talk in certain already established ways, in order to [end 140] meet the demands placed upon us by our need to sustain our status as responsible members of our society - where the must involved is a moral must. For even as adults, our status is a morally tenuous one, and if we fail to perform in both an intelligible and legitimate manner, we will be sanctioned by those around us. I suggest that it is because of this - the moral (or perhaps better, the moralistic) requirement that we express ourselves only in ways approved by others - that we feel that our reality must be of a certain kind. It is not our actual experience which demands it, but our ways of talking which make themselves felt when we attempt to reflect upon our experience, and to account for it. In other words, what we talk of as our experience of our reality, is constituted for us very largely by the already established ways in which we must talk in our attempts to account for ourselves - and for it - to the others around us. In other words, what we think of and talk of as our 'intuitions' about ourselves, are 'forced' upon us by the ways of talking which we must use in justifying our conduct to others (and in criticizing theirs). And only certain ways of talking are deemed legitimate. Why?

Even more than Wittgenstein (1953, 1980), it was C. Wright Mills (1940) who much earlier emphasized that the main function of language is not the representation of things in the world, nor the giving of 'outer' expression to already well-formed 'inner' thoughts, but consists in its use in creating and sustaining social orders. It is not so much how 'I' can use language in itself that matters, as the way in which I must take 'you' into account in my use of it. "We must approach linguistic behaviour", Mills (1940, p.904) says, to quote him, "... by observing its social function of co-ordinating diverse actions. Rather than expressing something which is prior and in the person, language is taken by other persons as an indicator of future actions" (my emphasis). Although events and states of affairs in the world are always open to further specification linguistically, and may be further specified this way and that within a particular medium of communication, we cannot just talk as we please. We must talk in accord not only with what the facts will permit, but also in accord with the requirements of the medium of communication used - which often, in the case of our everyday public communications, is the reproduction of a certain dominant social ordering. But it follows from this, that if our ways of talking are constrained in any way - if, for instance, only certain ways of talking are considered legitimate and not others - then our understanding and apparently our experience of ourselves, will be constrained also.

To reverse a phrase of Garfinkel's (1967), aspects of our experience will be rendered "rationally-invisible" to us; we will not only be incapable of accounting for them, but incapable of perceiving and registering [end 141] them as intelligible, i.e., as being one or another kind of commonplace event. And this, I maintain, is our position at the present time: We are all embedded within a dominant social order which we must, to some extent at least, continually reproduce in all of the mundane activities we perform from our place, 'position', or status within it - and it is an order which is at the moment both individualistic and scientific. This induces in us, not only a feeling of necessity - that we must account for all our experiences in terms which are intelligible and legitimate within this order - but also, paradoxically, a kind of rational blindness to the fact of our involvement in such an activity, i.e., we fail to register the fact of our involvement with others, and that in taking them into account in all we do, we continually reproduce a certain way of structuring all the social relations in which we are involved.

What I now want to argue is that such communally shared ways of, or means for making-sense, are constitutive of people's social and psychological being in quite a deep way. Among other things, they enable the members of a social order, not only to account for themselves to themselves and others when required to do so, but also to act routinely in an accountable manner - their actions informed in the course of their performance by

such procedures. In other words, they enable the performance of activities for which individual persons can be held responsible, which can be related to their 'selves', i.e., to their appreciation of how they are placed in relation to the others around them (Shotter, 1984). Besides enabling accountable action, however, such methods or ways also work to constrain it, to limit members in what they feel they can say or do - for people, as mentioned above, if they are to avoid sanctions by powerful others, must talk and act only in ways appropriate to their momentary 'position', or status in relation to the others around them. In other words, in developing within a particular region of one's society, from a child to an adult, one learns from the other adults there, how to be the kind of person required in that region of one's social order, in order to reproduce it; one learns how to act taking 'one's relations to others' into account in the performance of one's actions. That is, one learns the nature of other people as 'you's', as certain kinds of 'you', who afford one different kinds of opportunities for one's action - who 'motivate' or 'invite' one to act in some ways rather than others.

But the paradoxical result of all this for us, is that our established modes of discourse 'invite' us to treat people as the 'text' of possessive individualism suggests, as possessing all their psychological characteristics within themselves, owing nothing to society for them. And thus, in our researches, we have concentrated all our attention [end 142] upon what is supposed to occur 'inside' isolated individuals studied 'externally', from the point of view of third-person observers, socially uninvolved with them. We have failed to study what goes on 'between' people as first- and second-persons, the sense-making practices, procedures or methods made available to us as resources within the social orders into which we have been socialized - procedures which have their provenance, neither in people's experience, nor their genes, but in the history of our culture. We have also completely ignored the nature and importance of second-persons.

Addressivity: the constructing and the construction of 'you'.

This is yet another aspect of the rational blindness our current modes of accountability have induced in us: not only have we ignored the resources made available to us by our social context, but we have also ignored the standpoint, available only within discourse, from which people's meanings (not their movements) are perceived and understood as such. To compensate for this neglect, the remainder of my paper will concentrate upon 'you', upon what it is to for someone to address their communications to 'you' specifically as their proper recipient - or to observe you as someone to whom later they might properly address a communication, perhaps in criticism or correction of what has seemingly been said or done by one in one's actions or utterances. And indeed, the notion of 'addressivity' will be one of my central concerns below (see Clark and Holquist's (1984) account of Bakhtin's views on this most important issue). From our beginning as children, and continuing on into our lives as adults, we are dependent upon being addressed by others for whatever form of autonomy we may achieve; thus in this sense, we can say that as persons, we are always 'you's', always essentially second-persons. The 'thou' is older than the 'I' in the sense that the capacity to be addressed as a 'you' by others, is a preliminary to the ultimate capacity of being able to say 'I' of oneself, of being able to understand the uniqueness of one's own 'position' in relation to others, and to take responsibility for one's own actions.

In other words, in this view, people are not eternal, unchanging entities in themselves (like isolated, indistinguishable atoms), but owe what stability and constancy, and uniqueness, they may appear to have - their identity - to the stability and constancy of certain aspects of the activities, practices, and procedures in which they can make their differences from those around them known and accountable. Where the aspects in question are those in which, like the authoring of a text, we shape, pattern and develop, in moment by moment changes, as new contingencies arise, the differing relations between [end 143] our own 'position' or 'place' (who we are), and the positions of those around us. But the title of this chapter is purposely ambiguous: in allowing, as well as for this passive concern with "addressivity," and with the way in which we are created as the individuals we are by the others around us, it allows for a rather more active interpretation also: a concern with the way in which an audience (either a singular or a plural 'you') affords, permits, motivates, allows, or invites only a limited performance upon the part of first-persons. I do not just simply act 'out of' my own plans and desires, unrestricted by the social circumstances of my performances, but in some sense 'in to' the opportunities offered me to act, or else my attempts to communicate will fail, or be sanctioned in some way. And my action in being thus 'situated' takes on an ethical or moral quality; I cannot just relate myself to the others around me as I myself please: the relationship is ours, not just mine, and in performing within it, I must proceed with the expectation that you will intervene in some way if I go 'wrong' - only with a highly developed skill at anticipating and pre-empting such interventions, can I proceed as I please.

The second-person: 'you'.

There are thus a number of reasons why the second-person role is important: 1) Most obviously - but perhaps not the most important reason - is that, to put the matter quite personally, I need if not your actual presence then an imagined surrogate now (at each moment in my writing), as an audience to evaluate my attempts to write. And if this writing were talk: then I would need 'you' as a context 'into' which to address my remarks, and into which I feel I must fit what I say (if I am to avoid at least embarrassment) - without your attention, without your smiles and occasional nods of approval, I would find it very difficult to continue my speech. It is necessary continuously to coordinate the management of our sense-making practices as our communicative activities proceed. But more than the avoidance of embarrassment is at stake. 'You' constitute for me (or the surrogate I constitute in place of you) - someone who is like myself, able to be a member of the (dominant?) social order - someone to whom it makes sense to address my remarks here, and whom I can reasonably expect to be moved by them in some way, i.e., you provide the motivation for my remarks. For genuine human communication is not (as depicted in the "information theory" model of it), a simple matter of transferring information from point A to point B. 'I's' in addressing themselves to second-person 'you's' (either actual or implied), rather than to third-person 'it's', or even to 'him's', 'she's' or 'they's', always speak or act with an understanding of what a [end 144] 'you's' anticipated response might be. It is a part of what it is for someone to attempt to mean something to someone else: they are addressed as beings capable of responding to such an address in some way. And an understanding of how they might respond is a part of our understanding of who they are for us; and clearly, we compose ourselves differently according to whether we must address a child, a superior or inferior, an equal, a loved one, an academic critic, an enemy, or so on. Indeed, "the anticipated response" - the way in which what one does or says indicates future action (Mills), whether one's own or of others - is a crucial part of what is for a person to be self-consciousness: they must understand what socially they are trying to achieve, in what individually they actually do.

This leads me to my next, slightly more important point: 2) That you might respond, not to what I am saying or doing, but to what I might have said or done but didn't. In other words, you are expecting me to perform (to write) with certain standards 'in mind' (to use a figure of speech), to answer to certain responsibilities in my conduct, and if I do not, you have a right to correct me. You are not just a source or sink of information but a judge of it too (and thus there is a degree of apprehension in me addressing you). I treat you as operating according to standards - as being able to evaluate my performance critically and to sanction it if it should fall short in any way (particularly in its intelligibility less so, perhaps, for its legitimacy - though that is, as I see it, the major hurdle work of this kind has to overcome if it is to gain acceptance).

Neither of these two points, however, seem to me to be so important as the third one that I now want to mention: 3) That when small children are addressed as 'you', rather than merely having information reported to them upon which to base (or not) their individual actions, they are being "in-structed" in how to be - this is another sense in which human communication cannot be seen simply as a matter of information transfer from one location to another. It must be seen as ontologically formative, as a process by which people can, in communication with one another, literally, in-form one another's being, i.e., help to make each other, person's of this or that kind. For instance, one is addressed in discourse as 'you' and in such discourse in-formed as to the use of all the other pronouns. Hence the child, who can understand its mother's admonition, "Stop making so much noise, you're shouting", and can respond by saying (as they usually do) "No I wasn't," knows, among other things, that just as he or she is annoyed or distracted by noise, and have a right to object to it, so have others - that they try to deny that right to others is, of course, all a part of the microsocial power politics of growing up. In responding thus the child knows that the 'you' spoken by others [end 145] addressing it, refers to itself, yet also, it refers to those others when the child addresses them. And in learning the 'architecture' of address, children learn not only a set of ideal, reciprocal rights and duties to do with an equality of access to communicative opportunities, but also the actual distribution of such opportunities in the region of their development, and hence the nature of the social structure there - that some people are more difficult of access than others.

This suggests a fourth point: 4) To the extent that people are essentially beings produced by other such beings - and especially by their predecessors, who form and care for them until such time as we can be accounted independent - there are certain developmental facts about us which are essential to us being persons at all. I mean the fact that we grow up; that we go through recognizable phases from, for example, infancy to maturity, from dependency to relative independency, from ignorance to wisdom; that we find life a task, and that whatever achievements of our predecessors we inherit, we have have to reject (or rebel against) a portion of their learning - as history moves on; that the media of communication we live in are suffused with claims to authority which are not easily contested. Indeed, people not only have a life history, they are expected to be knowledgeable about it in some way, and for that knowledge to be influential in their actions - that they have had (and are still susceptible to) traumas and triumphs, joys and regrets, delights and disasters, and what has

happened to them in the past makes a difference to how they act now. They cannot just exist as ahistorical, atemporal beings. So, although Dennett (1979, p.267), to mention one of the many who ignore these 'developmental' conditions on the attribution of personhood, may be right in saying that one's dignity as a person "does not depend upon one's parentage," he is wrong to claim (with computers in mind), that it does not depend upon "having been born of woman or born at all," it clearly does. A human life devoid of any relations of dependency upon, and responsibilities for, as well as tensions with those around one, both older and younger, and with those from different regions of social life than one's own, would (although conceivable) would not qualify as a (ordinary) human life at all. The possession of a developmentally susceptible identity - in other words, the possibility of living of a life susceptible to a biographical account - is an essential part of what it is to be an ordinary person, and to play one's part in the history of ordinary person's.

Putting the matter of one's identity in this way suggests a fifth and final point: 5) The fact that individual development is not a matter (as I must admit, I myself once thought - Shotter, 1973) [end 146] of children being merely helped by adults around them to bring the "natural powers" innately in them in virtue of their birth as human beings, under their own control, thus to transform them into "personal powers." In my earlier views I was clearly still in the thrall of the classic 'text' of identity, possessive individualism, enshrined in our more everyday forms of talk. The activity between first- and second-persons - elsewhere I have called it "joint action" (Shotter, 1984) - is, however, activity of a very special kind, for at least the following two reasons: i) That as human activity it has an intentional quality to it; it 'points to', or 'indicates', or 'makes a relation to' something other than or beyond itself. In other words, it works to relate 'things' (whether objects, events, states of affairs, procedures, methods, or other activities) in some way to the situation between the participants; as 'things', they are given an intelligible 'place' within it and thus made available as resources, as means. And it is in this way that the continual activity constituting the general commotion of everyday social life at large, makes available a body of cultural resources for general use - at least, to the extent that one can gain access to the communicative activities in which they have their being. ii) But not only are otherwise alien entities transformed in joint action between different individuals into resources for general use, they are also transformed into 'shared' resources, in the following sense: that whether the joint activity producing them is a matter of agreements or disagreements, when one person acts 'into' a jointly constructed setting rather than 'out of' their own plans or desires, an outcome is produced which is independent of any of the individuals involved and 'belongs' only to the collectivity they constitute. An argumentative exchange involving justifications produced in response to criticism is just as productive of joint, and hence individual-independent outcomes, an activity involving only agreements - the disagreements we have are just as much 'ours' as the love we find ourselves in.

So it is in this sense that the even among quite different people, who may maintain their differences in their involvements with one another, that shared 'entities' held in common can be formed. Indeed, certain of these, whatever their origins in conflicts, coercions, negotiations, or agreements, must serve as stable and basic standards in terms of which all our other communications have their sense and significance: I mean the rights and powers, the duties and enablements, the basic communicative ethics which regulate our ways of making sense. While not incorrigible or indubitable (in a Cartesian sense), such (ethical) standards cannot in any practical sense be rationally denied. For, rationally, in any context, one should [end 147] not deny the 'foundations' in terms of which one's actions have their force in that context.

In conclusion.

What then is involved in the social constructing and construction of 'you'? Well: Not the construction of a certain kind of object or entity - that's for sure. There ain't no such 'things' as 'I's' or 'you's'; at least, not with anything more than a fleeting existence, changing moment by moment. However, in being addressed as a particular 'you', in certain particular settings, by certain particular people, you come to know yourself as a particular kind of person among other such persons; as someone whom you can (in both a naturalistic and an ethical sense) address as they address you. In Hegel's phrase: people must live as "mutually recognizing themselves as mutually recognizing each other." And such a knowledge shows itself in the ability to use all the pronouns appropriately, for none of them have sense except in relation to one another. For that is their function: to indicate the momentary and changing relations between the 'places' or 'positions' constructed in a discursive reality, to locate the source and the address of communications, the rights and duties of the communicants in managing meaning, and the rights of access they might have to one another.

This implies an approach to language which perhaps should now be stated explicitly: that the primary function of language is formative or rhetorical, and only secondarily and in a derived way referential and representational. It works by people materially moving one another by its use to behave in certain ways (Silverman and Torode, 1980), it can 'instruct' them in their practical activities (Vygotsky, 1962) - where among

such activities and practices, along with many others, is the socially negotiated fashioning and use of modes of representation and ways of reference (see Lee, 1985). The formative nature of language seems to be such that primarily vague and only partially structured events and states of affairs in the world, can be specified further within a medium of communication, i.e., people can be 'moved' linguistically into treating their circumstances in certain socially recognized and recognizable ways (see Shotter, 1984, for an account of this 'specificatory' approach to the functioning of language). This enables the crafting, the social construction of certain devices, particular ways of speaking, for use by people in managing the nature of their social relations, i.e., people can construct within the activity of speaking itself (and once having done so, continually reproduce in their speaking), devices or procedures for use in coordinating and sequentially [end 148] ordering, complex and intricate activities (and their outcomes) amongst large numbers of people over large distances and long times. Such devices help in administrating and coordinating the logistical problems involved in managing different ways of meaning - who has responsibility for what.

Such devices or procedures, although of course structured (at least partially), are used not primarily as pictures, as copies or representations of one's surroundings to which to refer in one's actions *instead* of to one's actual circumstances - as if *all* of one's activity had to take place in relation to surroundings not actually present - but as a structured *means* through which to act or to communicate with one's actual surroundings, where its *structured* nature allows one to discriminate, in the relation between the outflow of activity from oneself and the resultant inflow of activity from one's surroundings, the active nature of one's surroundings. In other words, by acting *through* differently structured means, one discovers different aspects of one's surroundings in relation to one's 'Self - art approach to the acquisition of knowledge first put forward by Plato in *Theaetetus* (see Pred and Pred, 1985), but articulated recently by quite a number of writers (e.g. Bohm, 1965; Heidegger, 1967; Polanyi, 1958; Shotter, 1982; Vygotsky, 1962; Wertsch, 1985). In such a view of language as a means through which to act, the different ways in which it functions as such a means are just as important as the different meanings to which it gives rise; what one does linguistically determines the character of the results produced by one's utterances.

For us as social scientists, this means that our ways of talking (when used both as a means through which to co-ordinate our activities among ourselves as investigators, and as a means for relating ourselves to those whom we investigate) are not neutral in how we present our world and its problems to ourselves: as I have argued above, our different ways of talking work to 'propose' different forms of social relationship, different statuses, different ways of 'positioning' ourselves in relation to others, different patterns of rights and privileges, duties and obligations. And it is now possible to see how the claim - not just in psychology, but in the rest of science - that to be 'scientific' one must speak in a particular way, making use of only third-person, passive voice talk, is more than merely a matter of producing a self-effacing representation of oneself, as lacking interests, opinions and desires of one's own. It is also more than a matter of producing an account which (supposedly) allows states of affairs, as it were, to 'speak for themselves'. It also works to construct a particular ethical (and political) relation between oneself and the audience [end 149] one addresses in one's communications. The ignoring of 'you, the failure to provide a place or a function for the grammatical second-person, in the idioms or 'speech genres' (Bakhtin, 1986) we use in our scientific communications, thus has a number of serious consequences, and it has been my purpose here to explore some of those consequences - especially, how the shaping and crafting of the relations between ourselves and those around us is done linguistically, and the special part 'you' might play in such crafting.

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