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On the Otherness That Theory Creates

Abstract
The urge to theorize has been a driving force of Western intellectual tradition. It underlies academic discourse, giving the scientific enterprise its vitality. Without systematic theorizing much of contemporary culture, particularly technology, would be virtually unthinkable.

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CHAPTER 1

On the Otherness That Theory Creates

KLAUS KRIPPENDORFF

INTRODUCTION

The urge to theorize has been a driving force of Western intellectual tradition. It underlies academic discourse, giving the scientific enterprise its vitality. Without systematic theorizing much of contemporary culture, particularly technology, would be virtually unthinkable.

Naturally, theorizing has not been without critics. The skeptics have raised their voices against the ability of theory to describe anything at all. Radical empiricists, such as Francis Bacon, and even some logical positivists, have had stories to tell of the "blindness of abstraction." Now, postmodernists, poststructuralists, constructionists, deconstructionists, and many others, are questioning the intelligibility of master narratives and querying the ability of unifying theories or logical/mathematical systems to represent reality. From their perspective, science, literature, and law are just three of many literary genres, each cultivating its own reading of texts.

The most recent critique comes from feminist scholars. Although feminism is not a unified perspective, feminist thought has grown far beyond its early advocacy of equal rights, be it by conceptualizing patriarchal society, exploring gender differences, or even contributing scathing critiques of male rationality, of technological world constructions, and of the oppressive consequences of theory. Along its path, feminism has emphasized the embodied nature of knowledge, for example, by accounting for voices instead of texts. Feminism has also advocated relational epistemologies, insisted on the participation of emotions, and discovered validation in practical actions that could lead to personal liberation.

Narrower in scope, but no less important, is the opposition to theory by

philosophers concerned with ethics. Dwight Furrow (1995), for instance, influenced by a rereading of Aristotle, questions the capacity of normative ethical theory to provide guidance on normative questions and challenges its relevance to the lived experience of moral agents. Such critiques are fueled by a need to understand the Holocaust, and other atrocities committed since World War II, by people with theories to live by.

Within literary scholarship, writers continue to reexamine their own foundations by questioning the intelligibility of texts in terms of the theory-driven distinction between meanings and an author's intentions. To them there is nothing in a text that could point to the difference between the two and no method that could shed light on what this distinction creates. For Knapp and Michaels (1985: 30): "[theory] is the name for all the ways people have tried to stand outside [the] practice [of reading and interpretation] in order to govern [that] practice from without. . . . [N]o one can reach [such] a position." This leads them to propose that "the theoretical enterprise should therefore come to an end."

The foregoing critiques have very different histories and little in common with each other except for their opposition to systematic theorizing. Often they even oppose each other. For example, feminists have been criticized for essentializing the very gender differences that they oppose; and proponents of postmodernism, for being silent on moral questions that undermine the intelligibility of moral experiences.

Many of these critiques rely on what I would call deficiency arguments—a rhetorical strategy that seeks to show the failure of a theory by pointing to what it blatantly omits or to what it surreptitiously distorts without recognizing that such critiques are based on another theory—usually one closer to these critics' heart and therefore more "real" to them. Critiques of ideology, Marxists, for example, excel in this. They argue against theories of knowledge from a perspective that is assumed to be "free" of ideological biases, more encompassing in scope, capturing a broader territory, or offering a greater number of distinctions. Yet, using one theory to criticize another remains entirely within the practice of theorizing and cannot therefore reveal the blind spots of theorizing. Worse, unable to recognize these blind spots makes theorists blind to their own blindness.

The following examines the social role of theory and the particular relation that theorizing entails between theorists and the theorized others who are the natural focus of social scientific inquiries.

SOME ENTAILMENTS OF THEORIZING

Etymologically, theory comes from the Greek *theoria*, the meaning of which comprises not only the process of "looking at," "viewing," "contemplating," or "speculating," but also the very object perceived, "a sight," "a tableau," or "a spectacle." These meanings imply a distinct attitude vis-à-

vis what is theorized. Spectacles are created to be seen and discussed, not to be altered. Spectacles are in front of the viewer"s eye. In such accounts of theorizing, the use of ocular metaphors entails a tacit *preference for sight* over sound, touch, and feelings, and it assigns secondary importance to voices, stories, oral traditions, and practical knowledge. It is no accident that we speak of scientific "observers," not of scientific listeners. There is no auditory or tactile analogue to "observation," and, although reading and writing would be difficult without sight, we tend to exclude them when we speak of observing things.

As spectators, *theorists observe but do not allow themselves to enter their domain of observation.* Consequently, theorists endow facts, naively conceptualized as residing outside of us, with the power to determine which theories are valid. It is the belief in this ontology, and nothing but that, which ultimately justifies claims of being able to theorize facts for what they are, without preconceptions and without accountability to those who may be affected by these theories.

Since the seventeenth century, science has become increasingly "successful" in disconnecting theory from facts and observation from practice, notwithstanding that etymology links "fact" to manufacture. Perhaps with the exception of hermeneutics and constructivism, all scientific methods somehow operationalize the derivation of theories from observational data. Aside from the rare admission that data depend on theory, I know of no formalization of this reverse dependency or of any interactions between the two (see Woolgar, 1993: 36, 53–66).

Ethnographic analyses of scientific practices reveal the cherished uni-directionality in proceeding from observations to theories to be a myth (see Garfinkle, 1967; Garfinkle, Lynch, and Livingstone, 1982). But overcoming this uni-directional conception would seem quite impossible as long as theories are stated in terms of an extensional logic, such as the logic of propositions, or modeled by computers, which are sequential machines that embody the very same logic. To preserve this uni-directionality of scientific discourse against the threat of vicious paradoxes, Bertrand Russell invented his famous Theory of Logical Types, which has the effect of outlawing self-reference. It is this restricted notion of logic and of language that places scientific observers at the top of logical hierarchies, that thereby conceptualizes description top-downwards, that thus leads theorists to believe *they could observe their world without being observed by the objects of their observation.*

The ocular metaphor is so prevalent within the scientific community that theorists are encouraged to keep their distance not just to the observed but to their theories as well. A case in point is the very distinction between theories and beliefs. In scientific texts, theories appear as more or less confirmed hypotheses—each having a calculable probability, however small, of being invalid. Not so for beliefs: When we theorize, we theorize *about* something; but when we believe, we believe *in* something. In beliefs, the emo-

tional detachment that theorists claim to have vis-à-vis their theories is erased in favor of the virtual certainty that things are the way they are *seen and spoken of*. In the words of Stanley Fish (1985: 116),

> [A] theory is a special achievement of consciousness; a belief is a prerequisite of being conscious at all. Beliefs are not what you think *about* but what you think *with* . . . it is within the space provided by their articulations that mental activity—including the activity of theorizing—goes on. Theories are something you can have—you can wield them and hold them at a distance; beliefs have *you*, in the sense that there can be no distance between them and the acts they enable. (emphasis added)

The truths of theories may be pondered, but the truths of beliefs are held.

Contrary to popular conceptions of theories as accurate representations, theories are attractive because they exceed their domain of observation in at least five ways: (1) Theories *generalize* to cases claimed to be similar to those observed. Yet, without further observations, no assurance is available that the unobserved cases would support a theory's claim. Therefore, generalizations rely on a good deal of belief. (2) Theories *predict* under the assumption that the patterns observed in the past will persist into the future. Belief in such continuities have much practical value, but, as Francis Bacon already noted, they are ascertainable only in retrospect. (3) Theories *integrate* several propositions into a single coherent network, and (4) they *generate empirical hypotheses* from a very small number of quasi-axiomatic propositions. Note that (3) and (4) are predicated on the belief that the logic of propositions truly corresponds to the logic of the world. According to Carl Hempel (Mitchell, 1985: 7), (5) theory tends to be taken as "a complex spatial network [that] floats, as it were, above the plane of observation and is anchored to it by rules of interpretation." Yet rules of interpretation always are the rules of a theorist or of a community of theorists, not of an observed nature. They allow theorists to justify omitting details deemed irrelevant, accidental, unique, inconsistent, or subjective; filling in of the gaps of missed observations; or smoothing the rugged curves—none of which is derivable from observation and measurement.

Politically, the more territory a theory covers, the more it is preferred, the better it will be remembered, and the more likely it will be applied. Thus, theorizing supports a *conceptual imperialism*; the urge to oversee, predict, control, and govern ever-growing territories (Krippendorff, 1993)—an inkling that science shares with other forms of government in national, spiritual, or commercial spheres of life. True, theories by themselves neither reign nor rule. Once institutionalized, however, they do encourage their users to "survey," "capture," "represent," "monitor," and ultimately "manage," where they do not even "discipline" what they claim to describe. The underlying logic of propositions, especially its Theory of Logical Types, encourages the construction of logical hierarchies of ever-increasing levels of abstractions,

from objects to language, to meta-language, to meta-meta-language, and so forth, with theorists finding comfort only at the top.

Foucault's (1977) famous metaphorical use of the *panopticon* to give an account of how knowledge works in society is telling. The panopticon is an ideal prison design that enables centrally located guards to monitor the behavior of all inmates, who in turn can see only the guards observing them but not each other. Here discipline is assured by the efficiency of observation. In taking this design as a metaphor to explore power relations in society, Foucault equates knowledge and theory and carries the built-in ocularity to its ultimate sociological conclusion: government of one view at the expense of all others.

Theories are also expected to be rational and consistent, ideally in the form of mathematical expressions, as systems of equations, for example. Formalizations of this kind have the double advantage of being computable in principle and of sparing one the complications of context and meaning. Mathematical theories provide the backbone of the natural sciences but have made inroads also in efforts to explain social phenomena, in economics, linguistics, psychology, and systems science, for instance. While rationality and consistency are considered twin values of scientific explorations, they are also two different aspects of the monologism that theory implies. Being "rational" is tantamount to speaking in the voice of one's community, a voice that is assumed common to all of its members and sanctioned as such. Rationality defers one's own voice to a fictional authority. Being "consistent," on the other hand, is tantamount to avoiding contradictions among the propositions of a theory. Consistency entails the belief that a single overarching logic could govern the phenomena that a theory claims to be about. The requirement that theories be both rational and consistent thus reduces them to *monological* constructions in the dual sense of being the product of a single *voice* and of being cast in terms of *one (coherent) logic.* This has considerable implications for social theorizing.

THE LANGUAGING OF THEORIES

Consider the following rather typical propositions, which could be found in any social science writing:

(a) *Institutions have four functions.*

(b) *Nationalism is an outgrowth of modernism.*

(c) *Terrorism is caused by a breakdown in political structures.*

(d) *Unemployment feeds crime.*

In the context of the foregoing, these four propositions should be troublesome: None of them indicates whose truths they state, attesting to their

complete disembodiment. All hide the fact that they are fundamentally about what people do. Institutions, nationalism, terrorism, unemployment and crime do not exist without their performers. Yet, their voices are silenced in each of these generalizations. There is no indication of how their behaviors end up being so categorized. Even the voice of the theorist remains hidden, perhaps deliberately, behind an objectivist language.

Language is implicated here in even more fundamental ways, however. Of the four propositions: (a) asserts that a concept "has" or is "in possession of" properties, which lends an almost physical existence to this concept, to institutions as it were. (b) applies an agricultural metaphor to two rather high-level abstractions from a complex nexus of human behaviors without referring to any particular group of people or locale; but metaphors reside in language, not in nature. (c) claims two abstractions—a category of human behavior and a stable pattern abstracted from a process—to be causally related. But how could that be? Next, (d) accounts for what probably is a statistical correlation in terms of nutrition between two variables, of which one is an agent and the other its target. A casual reading of these propositions gives the impression that they state facts. However, such a reading overlooks their metaphorical nature. How could concepts cause anything analogous to how billiard balls bounce against each other? And measurement variables "act," let alone interact? In what sense could non-material structures break? The failure to recognize the metaphorical nature of language, even in the most rigorous scientific discourses, attests to a remarkable unawareness of how language directs the world we theorize.

Clearly, theories are formed in language, but they also must be languaged into being and be fit to survive in processes of human communication. In the context of their communication, the notion of theory suffers from *two illusions*:

1. The first stems from the belief that the form of theory could be separated from what language makes available and that, by the same token, human communication has no influence on how and where theories come into being. Theories are not merely found. They are constructed, proposed, promoted, published, discussed, and either adopted or rejected. Their reality lies in stating them, in understanding them as such, and in enacting them into actual practices (see Chapters 2, 7, 9, and 11 in this volume). These are the acts of real people, actors who see some virtue in promulgating what they speak of. It follows that theorizing cannot be understood from a notion of language as a neutral medium of representation (as a formalization in pure propositional logic) or from the corollary that theories can be justifiable by observations (of objects outside language) only. The notion of languaging as a dialogical process permits us to recognize theories as mediating between their stakeholders and residing as such in processes of communication (see Chapters 3, 6, and 10). From this perspective, theories cannot be found in the contents of statements or inside individual minds; rather,

they are discovered in processes of their continuous rearticulations. Theories that fail to compel people to reproduce, to recirculate them within their community, simply fade away.

As communications, theories serve a variety of social functions. They can define a theorist's identity. They can form the basis of particular research programs or schools of thought. They can become institutionalized in disciplines that require adherence to or belief in them from its practitioners. Linguists, psychologists, biologists, indeed all academic disciplines, distinguish themselves by the theories they believe in. Sometimes theories take the form of abstract paradigms that privilege particular scientific explorations. At other times, they certify practitioners and protect them against criticisms from other disciplines. In either case, theories are political phenomena.

2. The second illusion arises from the conviction that social theories have invariant and single meanings. But unlike natural scientific theories, social theories, once published, can reenter and touch the lives of the very people about whom they speak (Krippendorff, 1996). When such a reentry occurs, theories and those theorized in them begin to interact and modify each other in ways that violate the idea of theory as a descriptive account of stable facts, as a representation of an unintelligent world. Those who discover themselves to be theorized might use the publicity in ways to enhance their status. They can also see it as a threat to their identity. When known, a theory can thus affect the behavior of the theorized in ways that can strengthen or invalidate it. At the time, Black Power and feminist movements effectively countered prevailing theories about them by circulating theories of their own. Theories may also be adopted by people who find new meanings in living through their propositions, by enacting their stereotypes, preserving their distinctions—thus making a theory truer simply through its practice.

The mass media, by catering to audiences conceptualized in terms of size and attractiveness, "mainstream" the public. They cause more people to become similar to each other, thereby also enhancing their attractiveness to advertisers. Taking theories, especially predictive ones, as prescriptions for action can turn them into self-fulfilling prophecies. In social reality, which depends on the knowledge people have of it, this is the norm, not the exception.

Thus, *theories* of social phenomena do not simply represent but, rather, also *transform their objects in the process of their communication.* Positivists have reasons to worry that the reentry of theories into their domain of observation could undermine the validity of those theories. This is why they take considerable methodological precautions to protect their ontology from such challenges.

If theorizing is, indeed, a political process and if the dissemination of social theories does change their validity, one might think that political sci-

ence would have much to say about the politics of theorizing; that the theories created in the *social sciences* would, at least, *account for their own social consequences.* This, however, seems not to be the case. Inspired by the successes of the natural sciences and convinced that the social sciences, too, could discover and accumulate a body of theories, social theorists have effectively succeeded in making social theory "unsocial," political theory "a-political," and so forth. The widespread practice of theorizing the social conceals its communicative and political nature. *Theorizing the social seems to work only where theorists, the institutions using their theories, and the theorized others collude—in holding the theorized reality constant, while collectively denying that alone or together any one of them had anything to do with it.*

This grand self-deception correlates well with the myth that theorists could stay outside of the language they use to explain the world—a world portrayed as if inhabited by people devoid of any linguistic intelligence of their own, if only because the theorists themselves take a "God's eye view" (Putnam, 1981) of the universe they try to explain.

Scholars daring to question such monological views can be seriously sanctioned. This has happened to several philosophers of science—Popper, Lakatos, and Kuhn, for instance—among whom the late Paul Feyerabend was to be singled out by phycisists as "*The Worst Enemy of Science*" (Horgan, 1993).

It would seem that the foregoing offers us a choice. We can continue practicing natural science methods of theorizing our domain of observation, hiding ourselves behind an objectivist language, and losing touch with the social world we unwittingly transform. Or we can deliberately and responsibly involve ourselves in the very politics that our inquiries set in motion. To underscore the urgency of this choice, let me explore how fellow humans fare in the theories of social science about them.

THEORIZING THE OTHER

1. *Theorizing gives birth to distant otherness.* As ideated generalizations, theories classify observations and theorize people in terms of third-person plural. "They" are the subjects of experiments, the interviewees of surveys, and the respondents to mail questionnaires. "They" also are the conservatives, the unemployed, the Catholics, and the terrorists. All of "them" are neatly labeled and assigned to particular classes on account of characteristics that all members of such classes are assumed to share. Classification already begins at the data-generating stage of social research. In interviewing, for example, neither the identity of the interviewee nor that of the interviewer becomes data. For fear of biasing the data, personal knowledge, which could emerge when experimenters come too close to their subjects, is systematically repressed.

In the theater, spectators have no problem in distinguishing between actors and the characters they impersonate on stage. But in social research, individuals are the very categories that a theory provides for. Where individuals identify with a group, belief, or trait, theorists are not prohibited from dismissing such declarations as subjective, as lacking abstraction, or as irrelevant to their theory. And when quoted, individual voices are taken to exemplify the voice of a class. This is accomplished by channeling a plurality of voices into a single, artificially constructed voice—one for each class, one for each category, of the theorist's choosing. But classes never speak; individuals do, usually always to others, even when they are virtual in nature. In the reality of everyday life, collective monologues, choruses, for example, are extremely rare. To take such exceptions as a norm for social scientific insights attests to the artificial and unsocial nature of theorizing.

In everyday languaging, third-person pronouns refer to those absent. Theorizing makes this absence a seeming virtue that gives theorists the freedom to characterize others in ways radically different and inferior to themselves. Whether one calls this a professional disability (a deafness to individual voices or an institutionalized disrespect for otherness), theorizing is responsible for estranging others from us.

2. *Theorizing trivializes others by reducing them to obedient mechanisms.* As spectators, social theorists observe human behaviors, including verbal interactions, from outside the spectacle. From this perspective, behaviors appear as linear sequences, temporally ordered chains of events, or trajectories in a Cartesian space within predefined coordinates. To understand the trajectories, natural scientists would seek to discover their regularities. However, the very mention of "regularities" assumes that trajectories are followed without much choice in the matter. And talk of their "discovery" tends to suggest that they existed prior to their observation and measurement. Such assumptions are not only built into mathematical theories of behavior, but also inscribed into computational techniques for analyzing behavioral data. They can also enter less formalized conversations on social causation. For example, plays are usually scripted; and scripts explain much of what theater audiences end up seeing. But for the strict determinacy of machines, scripts are to performances much as computer programs are to computations. They are in control of the plot. Describing human behavior in terms of scripts, rules, and grammars, or even as being reactive to messages, conjures the determinism of obedient mechanisms. Since spectators can never be sure whether, when, and to what extent an observed behavior is an act or a response—minutely scripted or improvised—to unobserved conditions, deterministic accounts have no observational basis. They are the fruit of preferences—unless theorists step out of their observer's role and ask pertinent questions. However, even the Turing Test, designed to distinguish machine from human intelligence, is never quite conclusive. Its use has taught us that interaction is a necessary but not a sufficient condition

to determine the presence of human intelligence or agency. Commonly, theorists cannot afford this interaction—because it would shift the authority for theorizing to the subjects being observed and thus erode the theorist's objective observer status. Hence, theorizing remains stuck in causal and mechanistic explanations of human behavior, from which that of the theorists is excluded.

Without even engaging theorized others in conversations on the theories being developed about them, social theorists remain remarkably free to explore any theory that would be of interest to their own community. Although novel conceptualizations may not come easy, from the convenient position of an outside observer it is all right for sociologists like Goffman (1959, 1963) to describe social interactions in dramaturgical categories; for psychologists like Schank and Abelson (1977) to interpret the same behavior in terms of individuals following rules and scripts; for literary scholars like Hirsch (1967) to extract intentions from an author's writings; for cognitive scientists to develop algorithms that are presumed to govern individual actors' processing and exchange of information; or for economists and political scientists to measure the efficacy with which actors apply available resources. Without consulting the constituents of the social phenomenon of interest, almost anything goes.

3. *Theorizing creates the very unsocial conditions in which theories can survive, if only by inscribing its monologism into its observational data.* At moments of contact between theorist and theorized, social research greatly depends on collaboration and dialogue. Human subjects are used in scientific experiments only on the basis of informed consent. Yet, after signing the consent form, their ability to understand the nature of their involvement and to say "no" to practices they might consider unconscionable is rarely ever called upon again, does not enter the data, and has therefore little chance to inform a theory that speaks to these subjects' capabilities. To uphold the notion that theory is responsive to observations only, the dialogical nature of the actual contact must be hidden; the very collaboration needed to conclude an experiment, concealed.

Or consider interviewing. In this asymmetrical interaction, the interviewer asks questions and the interviewee is expected to answer them. Interviewees are allowed to speak only within the narrow confines of what is relevant. In effect, interviewees are being *used* to support the point that researchers intend to make, and in the course of this exploitation, the inbuilt asymmetrical power relations are necessarily and irretrievably inscribed in the data on which theories are constructed.

The deception of informants with regard to the purpose of their participation in a research project, the expectation of answers to questions that are irrelevant to an interviewees' life, and the contrived stimulus conditions to which subjects are asked to respond affirm the essential asymmetry, artificiality, and unsocial character of the experimental conditions that spawn the

data for social and psychological theories. It is these power relations that creep into the data-generating process in evident violation of the idea of theory as observer-independent. In fact, *theorizing subjects its subjects.* It renders them *serviceable* (Sampson, 1993) *to theories that end up demonstrating little more than how well theorists have managed to disable the social nature of human beings.* True, submitting to authorities and following instructions are part of what we can do. But replicating these less than desirable human conditions at the expense of human agency, for the sake of theorizing, amounts to political suicide for the social sciences.

4. *Theorizing nurtures a culture of blindness to the political nature of theory—for theorist and theorized alike.* The social sciences are concerned with the ways human beings *can* live together (see Chapters 4, 5, and 8): Sociology, with how people organize themselves into larger wholes and coordinate their actions in ways that sustain these wholes (see Chapter 7); Political Science, with how people create publics (see Chapters 6, 9, and 10), arrive at consensus on agendas (see the Introduction), and mandate their leaders to form governments (Chapter 11); International Relations, with how peoples perceive each other across national boundaries (see Chapter 2), seek to resolve international conflicts and regulate the myriad of interactions (see Chapter 3) between diverse constituencies of nation-states; Communication Research, with how people construct, sustain, and transform their social realities by communicating with each other. But none of these social phenomena can be understood by straightjacketing people into mechanistic preconceptions or by taking away from them the spaces in which they interact with one another. The celebration of theory, the use of ocular metaphors for knowing, the reliance on extensional logic for understanding, and the naturalness with which people accept confinements during data-making processes, all have become part of a culture that suppresses the awareness of the political nature of theories—not only for theorists but also for all those who see each other in these terms. The culture of theorizing makes it difficult for the social sciences to reflect on its social nature.

But this self-defeating consequence of theorizing is not recognizable from within a representational notion of language—the one notion, which philosophers—Wittgenstein, Austin, Searle, Bakhtin, and Rorty among them—have systematically challenged in preference to less abstract and dialogical conceptions. Critiques here center largely on the fact that words are actions, too, and that languaging accomplishes things beyond describing actions. Reentry adds a cybernetic spin to these critiques, showing that languaging is recursive. Where language informs action, theories are likely to become self-validating. Under these conditions, generalizations of others, whether published in scientific journals or disseminated in the mass media, provide fertile ground for social prejudices to arise and to become truths that easily can subordinate, discipline, marginalize, and criminalize others for their otherness.

It is always possible to contest and reject a claim. But in view of the authority that scientific theories conjure in modern culture, contesting them would go against a whole complex array of deep-rooted cultural beliefs. Among them is the conviction that theories have but one legitimate interpretation and that theories are shaped by observations, not by theorists. The latter belief leaves no real target for challenges; the former makes political considerations seem irrelevant.

Whenever scientific accounts concern specific populations—be they the homeless, the followers of a particular religion, or women, homosexuals, Afro-Americans, teachers, consumers, Arabs—they can achieve two things: in the immediate, they can entice "us" to treat "them" in the categories these accounts employ. In the long run, this treatment can transform "them" into the neatly homogeneous groups which we claim "they" are. Self-validation or reification is typical in the social sciences. As Giddens (1984) observed, has not the mere metaphorical use of the term *market* in nineteenth-century academic writings about economic activities ended up materializing that reality in ways that, today, neither CEOs nor economists would dare to question? Has not our conception of "the public" shifted from what was discussed in salons and side street cafes to what scholars first theorized as public opinion, then encouraged pollsters to measure? And has not the use of hydraulic and archeological metaphors in Freud's writing of the human psyche produced a whole industry of psychotherapists and their clients for all of whom mental disorders have become as real as they can be? Have not the theories of consumer behavior and of mass media consumption, so avidly embraced by advertising agencies, brought forth the very consumerism that these theories needed in order to survive by creating the passive audiences that theories of mass communication are so good at describing? Do not correlations reported between intelligence, ethnicity, and crime, when supported by genetic explanations, inform our educational policies and hiring practices that keep such correlations real—well beyond published data? And do not statistics of cultural, racial, sexual, and national population characteristics inform and reify the very distinctions that statisticians build into their survey instruments and then naively "discover?" Is it then not likely that theories, which cannot but describe human nature in mechanistic terms, create the cultural dupes needed in order for television culture to work, abet the very behaviors necessary for certain institutions to persist, discourage some people from contesting scientific theories about them, and create obedient citizens who might well differ in whom they vote for, but not in how or how much they could be influenced in one way or another?

This is the reality we face. I am not suggesting that the project of the social sciences is doomed. Rather, what I submit here is that, in the sense and to the extent that theorizing does continue to dominate our understanding of other human beings, it unwittingly also installs an intellectual

imperialism in our social world that silences the voices of the theorized, prevents us from engaging in meaningful conversations with those who constitute the social phenomena that we wish to understand, and risks depriving us of the only source for understanding how social phenomena come to be. It is in this awareness that we can learn profitably to redefine our fears and foes, to remodel our security, to redirect our future, and to safeguard the individual and societal well-being and dignity of the generations yet to be born, in an increasingly crowded world.

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