7
Theoretical Conclusions

A curious similarity among New Agers, parapsychologists, and skeptics is that they are all divided by internal discursive boundaries: "neutral" skepticism versus debunking, experimental parapsychology versus spontaneous case research, and the relatively scientific and erudite writing of Marilyn Ferguson versus the mystical discourse of channelers, goddess worshippers, and crystal healers. Consideration of these internal boundaries makes it possible to extend somewhat the concept of "boundary-work" as developed by the sociologist Thomas Gieryn (1983a, 1983b, Gieryn and Figert 1990).[1] Gieryn argues that "'science' is no single thing" and that the "boundaries of science are ambiguous, flexible, historically changing, contextually variable, internally inconsistent, and sometimes disputed" (1983a: 781, 792). Moreover, he argues that boundary-work should be situated in specific historical and cultural contexts in which communities of scientists distinguish science from other discourses or cultural domains. Boundary-work, he also argues, is not a mere rhetorical exercise or a purely intellectual activity; instead, it is rooted in the "interests" of or social conflicts between science and other institutions, such as religion, that also seek to have a special legitimacy in society.

I see one of the main theoretical contributions of *Science in the New Age* to be an expansion of the concept of boundary-work by examining how in a concrete case study it can operate in complex and multiple ways. My analysis shows not only how scientists engage in boundary-work to distinguish science from nonscience, but also how a variety of other groups construct boundaries not only with respect to more orthodox scientists and skeptics but with respect to each other. In short, scientific boundaries are recursive and nested, plural and multiple; there are layers of scientificity that become clearer as one unfolds levels of skepticism and "pseudoscientificity" both within and across discursive boundaries. Boundary-work therefore is going on in all directions, not just in the direction of orthodox science toward religion and "pseudoscience."[2]

To be able to see these multiple and recursive boundaries, it is necessary to adopt a cultural perspective, that is, to understand the world from the viewpoint of the communities and writers in question. The cultural perspective makes it possible to see how the science/nonscience boundary usually becomes equated with a distinction between the Self and the Other (although the polarities sometimes shift and consequently the discourse of the Other may become equated with the "scientific"). Thus, I also extend and develop the study of boundary-work in a second way by treating it as meaningful "social drama" (to invoke the old phrase of Victor Turner, 1974), or, perhaps better, as meaningful cultural dialogue. More than a cognitive activity,

boundary-work takes place in a group of related idioms that are themselves part of the surrounding cultural context.

The question of boundary-work becomes considerably more complex when one's own discourse and disciplinary frameworks are included as part of the analysis. In other words, one of the boundaries in the ideological arena of debate and dialogue on skeptical and paranormal belief is the one with my own discourse of the human sciences. In the remainder of the chapter I will consider some of the implications of boundary-work with respect to this issue of reflexivity.

Boundary-Work and Reflexivity

Readers of this book may themselves end up occupying a spectrum of positions from skepticism to belief about the thesis that I have defended. As appears to be the pattern from the reactions of some of the people who have read earlier drafts of the book, the closer readers are to one of the three communities, the more likely they are to question my argument that the community to whom they have allegiances is similar to the other two and that the three (or more) cultures of borderland science are in many ways one paraculture. Their reaction is not surprising, for I have put into question the boundaries that representatives of these different communities have frequently invested substantial time and resources to defend. To a certain extent, then, I am questioning their legitimacy, first by showing how each community has some similarities to the others and then by arguing that these similarities are made possible by their shared cultural context. In the process, I have also set up an alternative discourse, that of the human sciences, which encompasses the other discourses within its own framework.

Thus, while the contested cultural space of the paraculture is a crowded one, there is yet one other community that is an active and important contestant in that space: the human sciences, specifically anthropology, history, sociology, literary/cultural studies, feminist theory, and science and technology studies. To consider our role in this arena implies adding a small chapter to the sociology of sociology, the anthropology of anthropology, and the criticism of criticism.

The reflexive venture opens up new and welcome complexities, but it is fraught with difficulties, perhaps the most outstanding being the following reflexive paradox: not only is the knowledge of the observed scientist, usually a natural scientist, socially constructed, but so is that of the observing human scientist. The question then emerges of how to examine the socially constructed nature of one's own discourse. I shall begin by reviewing some strategies already under development in the STS literature, and then I shall consider an alternative way of discussing the place of the human sciences in this broader ideological arena.

Previous discussions of the reflexivity question within the social studies of science and technology have tended to focus on epistemological issues and the inscription of knowledge paradoxes in the human scientists' texts. The result has been some occasionally ingenious, occasionally bothersome, and always unusual tinkerings with the genre conventions of humanities and social science writing.[3] One example of this version of reflexivity would be to turn my analysis back on my own text by deconstructing the metaphors in *Science in the New Age*. The project, however, would be somewhat disingenuous since I could easily add or delete metaphors to fit whatever argument I wished to make. Furthermore, if I were to take the task more seriously, I

would give it up as impossible because it would be so difficult to recognize my own moments of blindness and insight.

An alternative would be to develop a chapter on the metaphors and symbolic language of human scientists who have written on the paranormal. Rather than approach the reflexivity discussion at the individualistic level of my own text, it would involve a more sociological and cultural analysis of a discursive community. However, the social sciences literature waxes on erudition and wanes on metaphors, as does the erudite literature by skeptics and parapsychologists on experimental and philosophical issues. Without the concomitant popular literature that would explain the social studies of the paranormal to a mass market, there is little room to apply to human scientists' discourse the kind of analysis developed here for the popular scrivenings of New Agers, parapsychologists, and skeptics.[4]

Yet another alternative, one also used by the reflexivists (and sometimes to the annoyance of their readers), would be to include secondary voices, generally in the form of an imaginary dialogue with an imagined Other who interrupts the text and utters ostensibly disquieting critical comments. The strategy provides a way of "reflecting" on one's own text and discourse, albeit in a way that readers may find bothersome. However, the secondary voice remains that of the author, and as a result the technique does not fully recognize the dialogical nature of the social scientist's text. (Nor does it recognize that secondary voices are always already "present" in the text, particularly in footnotes.) Anthropologists have come up with a parallel but more "realistic" solution: to open up part of the text to the voices of one's informants or Others (as, for example, I have done here to a small extent by making room for the Others' voices via quotations, although of course within legal limitations). However, as the historian and ethnography critic James Clifford (1988) has pointed out, despite the advantage of letting the Other's voice into the text, the anthropologists' solution can be manipulated almost as easily as the secondary voice device.

Despite the evident shortcomings of the anthropologists' approach, it begins to broach the question of reflexivity from a somewhat different perspective than that of the STS reflexivists. Consequently, the anthropologists' approach may help move forward the discussions on reflexivity in science and technology studies. In anthropology, discussions of reflexivity and textual construction have been much more explicit about the connection with issues of power. More than intellectual exercises that inscribe the paradoxes of constructivism, experimentation at its best is part of a move toward the critique of institutional arrangements that have led to asymmetries of power. For example, the program of anthropology as cultural critique requires culture critics to pose alternatives to the institutions and discourse that they are questioning, and consequently their perspective is critical and transformative rather than merely reflexive.[5]

Regarding the relations between human scientists and our paranormal Others (skeptics, parapsychologists, and New Agers), a critical, reflexive perspective begins with the assumption that the human scientists are part of the same ideological arena of debate and dialogue as their Others. The perspective is still reflexive, but it is recast in the more critical space of institutional and power/knowledge relations. A double question emerges: to what extent do human scientists legitimate the positions of their Others, and if so, who and under what circumstances? and to what extent do human

scientists stake out their own, independent position in this arena?   I shall begin with the first question, for which the answer, as I shall demonstrate here in a brief way, is far from evident. My discussion will focus on sociologists and anthropologists, who are in this area the most prominent of the human scientists and the most easily identified.

The Position of Social Scientists in the Ideological Arena

Beginning with the skeptics, inspection of the partial list of about fifty of the CSICOP fellows that appeared in the winter 1991 issue of the *Skeptical Inquirer* reveals three anthropologists (John R. Cole, Eugenie Scott, and Thomas A. Sebeok) and one sociologist (Dorothy Nelkin).   Three other anthropologists (Robert E. Funk, Laurie Godfrey, and Stuart D. Scott, Jr.) and one sociologist (William Sims Bainbridge) were listed as scientific and technical consultants.[6] In addition to lending their names to the CSICOP cause, sociologists and anthropologists occasionally contribute an article to the *Skeptical Inquirer*, such as pieces on archeology (Feder 1980, see also 1990; and McKusick 1981).

Regarding parapsychology, there seems to be more support from anthropologists than sociologists, probably because anthropologists are more likely to be exposed to ostensibly anomalous phenomena during their fieldwork experiences. Consequently, anthropologists have shown an interest in psychical research since at least the nineteenth century, as in the case of Edward B. Tylor, one of the founders of anthropology, who observed Spiritualist mediums.[7]   In the twentieth century, perhaps the most prominent anthropologist to have supported psychical research was Margaret Mead, who in the 1940s was a trustee of the American Society for Psychical Research. Later in life she is said to have been instrumental in winning acceptance for the Parapsychological Association as a member unit of the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences in 1969.[8] In addition, a number of anthropologists, some of them prominent, have at different points in their careers shown some interest in psychical research or the utility of parapsychology as an analytical framework for interpreting shamanism and related phenomena.[9]

In two of the member units of the American Anthropological Association, anthropologists occasionally express interest in parapsychology or belief in psychic phenomena. The Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness lists "psychic (psi) phenomena and [its] possible role in traditional cultural practices" as one of its research interests, along with a variety of psychological phenomena having to do with shamanism and altered states of consciousness. Likewise, in the informal, first-person accounts of field experiences that are often published in *Anthropology and Humanism Quarterly*, anthropologists occasionally narrate accounts of anomalous phenomena that they believe they have encountered in the field setting.[10]

There are also some cases of sociologists and anthropologists whose writings and statements might be interpreted as more aligned with the New Age movement than with either parapsychologists or skeptics. For example, the anthropologist Michael Harner, who distinguished himself as an ethnographer of the Jívaro and a student of hallucinogens and shamanism, subsequently resigned his post at the New School for Social Research and began a foundation dedicated to the study and sponsorship of shamanic voyages.[11]   Likewise, in *The Aquarian Conspiracy* Marilyn Ferguson frequently mentions the work of the social scientist Willis Harman, and she calls the

book *The Changing Image of Man*, which Harman helped write, a "remarkable document" that helped lay the "groundwork" for the paradigm shift she was advocating (Ferguson 1987: 61; see Markley and Harman 1982).

In short, there are instances where sociologists and anthropologists side with each of their three Others, but because they do not do so in a monolithic way, it is not possible to argue that as communities they legitimate one of the three positions at the expense of the other two. Furthermore, there is a substantial body of sociological and anthropological work that does not fit into one of the three explicitly aligned positions. That observation leads to the second and more complicated question: is it possible for human scientists to be staking out their own position in the ideological arena, and if so, what is its nature and how does it interact with the Others?

Many human scientists do not openly advocate the validity of the positions of skeptics, parapsychologists, or New Agers. Drawing on the Durkheimian tradition of "social facts" or the Boasian counterpart of "cultural relativism," they bracket the question of whether the beliefs and practices under study are in some sense true or false. I would put into this group most of the survey approaches to paranormal beliefs (e.g., Emmons 1982, Greeley 1975) as well as most anthropological and sociological accounts of New Age beliefs (e.g., Danforth 1989, Tipton 1982, and this study) and most sociological studies of parapsychology. Perhaps the most sophisticated example of the latter group is the work of the sociologists Harry Collins and Trevor Pinch. A more detailed consideration of their "relativist" position will make it possible to discuss some broader theoretical issues.

Boundary-Work, Reflexivity, and Capturing

Stated briefly, the relativist position brackets the discussion of whether or not paranormal phenomena exist; as Collins and Pinch put it, they remain "neutral" regarding this question (Collins and Pinch 1979: 263; 1982). Instead of attempting to settle truth claims, they view and represent their work as "that of the participant observer building up the background for good sociological fieldwork" (1979: 239), a methodological position that they elaborate further in their book, *Frames of Meaning* (1982). Thus, their approach is more or less the same as that adopted by hundreds of anthropologists in studies of non-Western religion, magic, and medicine. The work of Collins and Pinch, however, has suffered from some criticism within the science and technology studies community. These criticisms warrant discussion because they involve general theoretical issues to which, I believe, the approach to boundary-work that I have outlined above may make a contribution.

In a footnote to their 1979 article, Collins and Pinch note how one skeptic criticized their paper, whereas parapsychologists were more "complimentary" (1979: 263). The STS researchers Michael Mulkay, Jonathan Potter, and Steven Yearly develop this point by arguing that the two sociologists' relativist position caused them to develop an analysis "from the point of view of (some) parapsychologists" (1983: 187).[12] The result, according to the three critics, is that Collins and Pinch privilege the parapsychologists' account over that of their critics, and in turn the sociologists fail to maintain their own goal of "relativism," a term which appears to mean "neutrality" on the issue of the validity of paranormal claims.

However, if one takes seriously Collins's and Pinch's methodological stance of doing participant observation and fieldwork, then as good ethnographers they should be expected to tell the story "from the native's point of view" (Geertz 1983). Indeed, relativism in the sense of "cultural relativism" may be taken to mean merely that one tells the story *relative* to the culture of one's informants. Thus, from an anthropological viewpoint, to some extent the criticisms raised by Mulkay, Potter, and Yearly may be taken as compliments: if their argument is right (cf. Collins 1983: 106-107), then Collins and Pinch did their job as good cultural anthropologists or interpretive sociologists. As Collins comments, "In general, using actors' categories does not necessarily lead to bias unless actors' epistemological evaluations are also taken over" (Collins 1983: 106).

Whatever one's view about who is "right" in the debate, Mulkay, Potter, and Yearly do raise a problem of general theoretical importance, a problem that the STS researchers Pam Scott, Evelleen Richards, and Brian Martin (1990) have called "capturing." Reviewing several other cases similar to that of Collins and Pinch, Scott and colleagues argue more generally that scholars who attempt a symmetrical analysis of both sides of a controversy will almost always be "more useful to the side with less scientific credibility or cognitive authority" (1990: 490).[13] Given this dilemma, the constructivist may be tempted by the positivist option and side with scientific orthodoxy rather than pursue a balanced and symmetrical analysis. Scott, Richards, and Martin describe the situation by invoking a sustained set of martial metaphors, complete with underdog heroics that should by now be familiar to the reader: "The analyst is at the front lines of the battle. It is so easy to be caught in the cross fire that many prefer to don positivist camouflage and seek shelter in the best-fortified trench, rather than venture out into the no-man's-land (which is even more a no-woman's land) of sustained symmetry. The combatants have a good deal at stake in the sociologist's interpretation and presentation of news from the war zone. Both sides to a dispute have opposing and unshakable convictions as to who are the heroes and the villains involved and where truth and justice lie" (1990: 490).[14]

I have little disagreement with the general lines of their argument against the myth of the neutral observer and the probability that ostensibly "neutral" accounts by social scientists will be captured.[15] However, there are some ways in which the argument of Scott, Richards, and Martin might be extended and amplified, especially when taking into account the cultural perspective that I have been defending and employing. To begin, it is likely that at least in some cases the options for the human scientist are not restricted to siding with the orthodox position or being captured by the heterodox one. To make the point by example, let us return to the Collins and Pinch case, this time to the reception of their book *Frames of Meaning* (1982). Unlike the article published in 1979, the book focuses on claims of psychokinetic metal-bending, which both skeptics and many parapsychologists have rejected as fraudulent. Nevertheless, Collins and Pinch maintain their relativist position. Does this imply that they will be captured by the parapsychologists?

The question may be answered empirically by examining the way skeptics and parapsychologists reviewed the book. In a review titled "Fool's Paradigms," the skeptic Martin Gardner constructs Collins and Pinch as dupes of the parapsychologists; whereas on the parapsychology side, the psychologist Douglas Stokes questions the skeptical arguments raised by the two sociologists.[16] Furthermore, opponents Gardner

and Stokes appear to agree with each other when they both reject the sociologists' radical formulation of relativism that emerges out of Kuhn's argument for the incommensurability of paradigms (1962). These reviews confirm the main argument of Scott, Richards, and Martin (1990): that human scientists are drawn into the debate and that they cannot remain neutral in practice. However, regarding their subargument that symmetrical analysis tends to result in being captured by the heterodox position, the reception of *Frames of Meaning* suggests a different case from what they report: that in some situations human scientists may be perceived as opponents by *both* the more and the less orthodox scientists. In other words, the possibility emerges that human scientists may be perceived as playing, and may actually play, a role as an independent voice with its own agendas and interests.[17]

The second way in which the argument for capturing may be extended requires some cultural critique that problematizes the dyadic assumptions that may be built into the argument. American culture (and probably most of the other Protestant, Anglophone cultures, including those of Australia and Britain), tends to operate in terms of sharp dyadic categories. The cultural pattern is easily seen when the Protestant, Anglophone cultures are contrasted with their Mediterranean and Latin American siblings, where sharp dyadic categories are frequently blurred by interstitial, mediating categories (DaMatta 1991). The American racial classification system, for example, categorizes people as either black or white, rather than admitting a whole series of mediating and flexible categories such as mulattoes and mestizos, as is the case of Brazil and other Latin American countries (Degler 1986). Likewise, the Protestant religious heritage leaves a legacy of dualistic categories, such as God and the believer or heaven and hell, rather than a world of mediations constructed around the cult of the saints and the dogma of purgatory. Today, Hollywood movies tell and retell the same moralistic story of good guys versus bad guys, or, as they say in Brazil, the repetitive struggle between the "white hats" and "black hats" that sometimes has lead my Latin colleagues to comment that Americans can produce only an endless series of variants of the same basic movie. The question emerges, then, to what extent is the division of groups into the dyad of the capturing and the captured perhaps an oversimplification, or, at the minimum, just one of the possibilities?[18]

One of the theoretical implications of my argument in favor of a multiple and complex understanding of the boundaries between science and nonscience now becomes evident. In cases where there are multiple gradations of more or less cognitive authority (or orthodoxy) and multiple boundaries, both within and among groups, it is not easy to determine which social category is the one with less cognitive authority and therefore the one that is going to capture the discourse of the analyst. If, for example, spontaneous case researchers have less cognitive authority within parapsychology, but more than New Agers, then it may be possible for capturing to occur in multiple and contradictory ways.

Neutrality--or better, as the STS researcher Sal Restivo has pointed out to me, "bracketing strategies"--might also be rethought as similarly complex and multiple. Thus, while at one level I may, like Collins and Pinch, bracket claims on the paranormal and risk being captured by one or more of the social categories with "less" cognitive authority (ah, but according to whom?), at another level I may do some capturing of my own. As actors who are not just observing the ideological arena but who are a part of it,

we human scientists also have a perspective, a position, and a discourse. As a result it is possible to engage these other discourses in open and frank ways, particularly on issues for which as scholars we have a degree of expertise or as citizens we have a degree of authority. In other words, I may argue in favor of a critical sociocultural perspective *in contrast to* the discourses of parapsychologists, skeptics, *and* New Agers, or in favor of critical elements within each of their own discourses.

Reflexive Critique

The sense of multiple and complex boundaries among discourses in a shared ideological arena has implications for the reflexive and critical examination of one's own disciplines and discourses. One example is the method developed in my essay "Disobsessing Disobsession: Religion, Ritual, and the Social Sciences in Brazil" (1989a), where I showed how debates among religious groups played themselves out as debates among social scientists, but transformed into the idiom of methodological and theoretical issues. I would suggest that we look for similar processes in the science and technology studies community. For example, at one level Mulkay, Potter, and Yearly (1983) present their critique of Collins and Pinch (1979) as a theoretical debate framed in terms of the superiority of the former's discourse analysis over the latter's program of relativism. Thus, the disagreement appears to take place on purely methodological grounds and with reference only to epistemological concerns within STS. Still, it is curious that the argument against Collins and Pinch hinges on the fact that they constructed their analysis "from the point of view of (some) parapsychologists" (1983: 187). If the discourse analysts had studied Collins and Pinch's *Frames of Meaning* (1982; see also Pamplin and Collins 1975), which exposes fraudulent metal bending, they might have had to argue that the sociologists had constructed their story from the point of view of the skeptics or orthodox scientists. Yet, that argument might not have carried the same weight as one that Collins and Pinch had been captured by parapsychologists. Even among the constructivists and post-Mertonians in the science and technology studies community, which is largely composed of white males who first studied the sciences, there is a widespread belief that orthodox science and existing technologies are "right."[19]

The horror, then, is that two colleagues in the human sciences might be seen as falling under the spell of "pseudoscience." Indeed, Collins and Pinch note that the taboo nature of parapsychology is so great that they "quickly discovered the importance of telling [their] sociologist colleagues" that they were doing participant-observation and fieldwork (1979: 239). In other words, the "boundary dispute between discourse analysts and Bath relativists" (Scott et al. 1990: 490)--that is, a debate within STS that is framed in methodological and theoretical terms--might reproduce the debate between orthodox scientists and parapsychologists, which in turn plays out the conflict between science and religion for legitimacy in society.[20]

The reproduction, within the domain of social studies of science and technology, of conflicts between orthodox scientists and parapsychologists may or may not have occurred in the case just described, and I give it here only as an example of how such an analysis might proceed. In more general terms, however, the disciplinary hierarchies of the world of science and technology *are* reproduced in the sociological, anthropological, historical, literary, and other studies of science and technology. Thus,

a human scientist who studies parapsychology may become polluted merely by having contact with the taboo science, and one way in which sanctions against this polluted status may operate may be through a critique of the polluted human scientist that is formulated in an ostensibly neutral or methodological idiom. At the other end of the spectrum, my "native informants" in the STS community tell me that the most prestigious and exciting areas of science and technology are also the most prestigious for science and technology studies. Causality is admittedly bidirectional. Science and technology studies legitimates the hot (or "sexy," to invoke the masculine metaphor, see Traweek 1990) areas of science and technology even as it follows them. However, the human scientists probably are doing more following, particularly those who belong to what Winner has called the "hooray for science and technology" school.

Thus, in order to extend critical perspectives in anthropology and STS, I am advocating a form of reflexivity that goes beyond textual experimentation to a critique of the social, cultural, and political assumptions of both the discourse of the Self and that of the Other. In a postmodern and postfoundationalist world, the critique of the Other will be accompanied by a return motion directed toward one's own discourse, but in a postconstructivist world there are no neutral positions and therefore one must eventually articulate a position lest someone else do it instead. (And, of course, even articulating a position does not prevent the Other from capturing it or making use of it.) In this chapter, I have outlined some ways in which a critical, sociocultural perspective might lead to changes in contemporary conceptualizations of reflexivity within the social and cultural studies of science and technology: to move reflexivity from questions restricted to epistemological and representational issues to a critique of the political and ideological assumptions of one's own discursive community. In the next chapter, I will direct this critical perspective toward skeptics, parapsychologists, and New Agers.

[1] I also would argue that Barnes may have been premature when he made the announcement used as the epigraph for the introductory chapter. If one interprets the "sociological point of view" narrowly, then perhaps he is right that little remains to be said on this topic, but I would disagree if the sociological point of view is interpreted broadly to include the question of cultural meanings and politics. At least, from the anthropological/cultural point of view, much remains to be said.

[2] Gieryn read an earlier version of this formulation and said he agrees with this notion of multiple and recursive boundaries; indeed, there is nothing in his formulation that would prevent the way I am elaborating it here. He is also exploring similar ideas in his most recent work, which involves the study of "roving boundaries" and the interpretive flexibility of science (Gieryn and Figert 1990: 91).

[3] See, for example, the group of STS researchers I refer to as the "reflexivists": Ashmore (1989); Ashmore, Mulkay, and Pinch (1989); Mulkay (1991); and some of the essays in Woolgar (1988).

[4] Exceptions are few and far between, one of which is a point where the language of a Pinch and Collins article compares the *Skeptical Inquirer* to *Fate*. They describe the former as a magazine that, "sandwiched" between two covers, "feeds its readership a spicier fare than is normally served up in a technical journal," whereas *Fate* is a "pulp magazine sold at newsstands" (1984: 528, 538). Their metaphors shift from the culinary to the "bestiary key," as Lévi-Strauss might say, when they describe *Fate*

Magazine's exposé of a *Skeptical Inquirer* story: "But big fleas have little fleas upon their backs to bite them!" (538). One might argue that such earthy metaphors indicate that these sociologists--like many of their colleagues--construct the social sciences as encompassing their Others, and perhaps the journal *Social Studies of Science*--where the Collins and Pinch article was published--stands implicitly at the apex of a hierarchy that runs from *Fate* at the bottom to the *Skeptical Inquirer* and on to the *Zetetic Scholar*, which they also mention. Likewise, one could also argue that my attention in *Science in the New Age* to metaphors, imagery, and cultural values-- that is, to "literary" or "symbolic" dimensions rather than to referential or epistemological ones--implies that I have constructed my own discourse as encompassing the others by reducing them to the merely literary or symbolic. However, like Collins and Pinch I recognize the contingent and constructed nature of my own position, and thus any allegation that we are constructing "metadiscourses" may involve little more than the trivial observation that merely by writing about or studying other discourses one inevitably encompasses them with one's own framework. To use Bateson's term, everyone is constructing a "metalogue" with respect to everyone else (1972). Thus, to allege that someone has constructed a metadiscourse may amount to little more than recognizing that someone has constructed a discourse: a framework and body of statements for apprehending a piece of the world.

5 See Marcus and Fischer (1986: 115). Perhaps Taussig (1987) is the best example of a conscious and reflexive linkage between writing and political critique. See also Clifford (1988), Clifford and Marcus (1986), and the more explicit linkages between text and power in the important criticisms raised by feminists (e.g., Mascia-Lees, Sharpe, and Cohen 1989, Visweswaran 1988). My argument is not against reflexivism per se, as perhaps is the case of Latour (1988), who has called for "infrareflexivity." Rather, my call for a more critical type of reflexivism comes closer to the interpretation of reflexivity by Downey (in press a), who argues that whenever one makes a theoretical argument one is in a sense being reflexive, since the argument constitutes a reflection on the assumptions of one's discursive community and it may indeed contribute to the ongoing development of that community's thought.

6 The lists appear respectively on the inside front and back cover.

7 Tylor admitted the possibility of a psychic force but remained unconvinced by most of the Spiritualist mediums he observed (Stocking 1987: 191, 1971). However, he developed his theory of animism at least partly in response to his knowledge of the British Spiritualist movement (Stocking 1971: 90-91). The folklorist/anthropologist Andrew Lang was also very interested in psychical research.

8 For a skeptic's review of Mead's beliefs on the paranormal and religion, see Gardner (1988: 19-24).

9 Examples include Barnouw (1946); Elkin (1977); Locke, in Kelly and Locke (1981); Winkelman (1982); and contributors in Angoff and Barth (1974), Long (1977). I, too, was at one point interested in psychical research and parapsychology. However, after completing graduate school in anthropology, I have participated in only two parapsychology meetings: the first to present arguments and papers in favor of anthropological/cultural approaches (i.e., 1989b, 1989c, and 1988); and the second to serve on a panel where I was invited to discuss my research on parapsychology

and Spiritism in Brazil, and also to complete interviews for a sociological/anthropological study of the suppression of parapsychology in the academy. Unlike some anthropologists, I have not found parapsychology very compelling as an analytical framework for anthropological research, in part because my doctoral training was heavily influenced by the tradition of French and British social anthropology. Unlike the American cultural anthropology tradition, social anthropology has little room for psychological anthropology, be it orthodox or heterodox. As a result I tend to be more interested in social, cultural, and political questions than in psychological ones, and, as should be obvious by now, I tend to look at psychological discourses from a critical, sociocultural perspective. For this approach, some parapsychologists have called me a skeptic, although my own identification is with the human sciences rather than with skepticism, parapsychology, or, for that matter, with any of the schools of New Age thought.

[10] Examples from the 1980s include Lee (1987), Owen (1981), Romanucci-Ross (1980); see also Stoller and Olkes (1987). A well-known earlier account of an anthropologist's ostensibly anomalous experiences is Linton (1927).

[11] See Harner (1980) as well as the popular books on shamanism by Halifax (1979, 1982).

[12] See the reply by Collins and Pinch in Collins (1983: 106-107). Part of the debate hinges on the question of whether the term "orthodox" scientists is invented by the sociologists or is a native term used by the parapsychologists and then picked up uncritically by the sociologists. Collins and Pinch claim that the term is their own, but I have heard parapsychologists use the term--maybe they picked it up from the sociologists!

[13] Their essay also resulted in a reply from Collins (1991) and a rebuttal by Martin, Richards, and Scott (1991).

[14] They go on to argue that their critique of the neutral observer bears some similarities to the "weak program" of Chubin and Restivo (1983), who also argue that human scientists are always part of the controversies they study and therefore cannot maintain a "neutral" position. In subsequent work, Restivo has changed the term from the "weak program" to the "critical sociology of science" (see Restivo and Loughlin 1987).

[15] Anthropologists may recognize the similarities to our own questioning of the myth of the Lone Ranger anthropologist (Rosaldo 1989) and the objectivist ideology of the holistic ethnographic monograph (Clifford 1988, Clifford and Marcus 1986).

[16] Gardner (1988: 184-7) and Stokes (1983). See also Gardner (1988: 25-31) and Adelman (1983).

[17] Such may, arguably, also be the case in Pinch's commentary (1975) in the issue of *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* devoted to the parapsychology debate (e.g., Adamenko 1987, Alcock 1987, Blackmore 1987, Rao and Palmer 1987). Here, Pinch criticizes the skeptics' criticisms, but he also offers suggestions for and criticisms of parapsychologists. I suspect that his position, like mine, will be satisfactory to neither camp.

[18] Martin has pointed out to me that the cases he and his colleagues analyzed were all polarized, and in these cases capturing by the more heterodox position is likely. In contrast, the case of parapsychologists, skeptics, and New Agers reveals the

complexities of capturing when the boundaries are not so neatly polarized into two opposing camps.

[19] I owe this last insight to Restivo, who has proved a helpful sounding board for the discussion presented here. In comments on an earlier draft of this section, Brian Martin noted that ongoing structural factors may play an equally or more important role than the factor of socialization and life history.

[20] As Culler has phrased it, "[C]ritical disputes about a text can frequently be identified as a displaced reenactment of conflicts dramatized in the text" (1982: 215). Thus, my reading represents one form of "deconstruction," although a more cultural and political version than that found in most previous applications of deconstruction in STS.