

should also be said that at times the task of writing sociology overwhelms the project with jargon, leaving it somewhat disjointed and abstract. Yet Stivers does manage to show how our idols have left us stranded in the wilderness with enough detail to help us preach the judgment and grace of God with empathy and boldness.

□ Paul E. Koptak

30 Judith Roof and Robyn Wiegman (editors), *Who Can Speak?: Authority and Critical Identity*. University of Illinois Press, 1995. \$13.95.

Is it possible to speak for someone else? Can an African-American male be a feminist? Can a woman preacher speak for a gay man? Visibility, marginality, and authorized speech are disputed issues in feminist literature, studies of cultural identity, and literary criticism. In this anthology of well-known essays concerning the authorization of academic speech, editors Roof and Wiegman have fashioned a resource that both represents and surveys much of the current literature in these fields. Preachers and homileticians will want to read into this subject matter in order to better understand both the politics of identity and the current demise of experiential authority in American intellectual culture.

According to the authors included in this volume, problems arise when a speaker or writer (professor, preacher, politician, etc.) presumes to speak *as* someone, *for* someone, or *from* a particular subject position. Solving these problems, however, is far trickier than one might expect. In the first essay in the book, "Identification and Difference," Andrew Lakritz sets the stage for what is to come by demonstrating the problems that arise when an author or speaker assumes that he or she can *identify* with someone else. According to Lakritz, even gender identification—woman-to-woman or man-to-man—is problematic, because it privileges one socially-constructed perspective. On the other hand, he shows the limitations of retreating from any identification at all—in which case, one can only speak about oneself. In her essay, "The Problem of Speaking For Others," Linda Alcoff continues to explore the same ground. Surveying the literature on the subject, Alcoff argues against extreme "retreat" positions, in which speakers succumb to individualism by opting to qualify everything they say as "I only speak for myself." Such a position denies the reality that the self is "constituted by multiple intersecting discourses." (p. 109) On the other hand, the assumption that disempowerment can be overcome simply by "listening to" others may only be a "'self-abnegating intellectual' pose (Spivak) . . . that assumes that the oppressed can transparently represent their own true interests." (p. 110) Should one opt, then, for a qualified "speaking for" in order to represent the voices of the marginalized in our schools and congregations? Alcoff suggests another possibility: that we "strive to create wherever possible the conditions for dialogue and the practice of speaking with and to rather than speaking for others." (p. 111)

Dale M. Bauer, in "Personal Criticism and The Academic Personality," argues in favor of identification with others as a way to create more publics and to motivate more ideological commitment. Michael Awkward

("A Black Man's Place(s) in Black Feminist Criticism"), and Leslie Bow ("For Every Gesture of Loyalty, There Doesn't have to be a Betrayal: Asian American Criticism and the Politics of Loyalty") carefully limit and constrain identification so that group identity remains as critical, open-ended and heuristic as possible.

In the second part of the book, the authors explore problems that are created when experience is privileged as the grounds for authority to speak. Appeals to experience, for instance, can limit one's authority. When one speaks as a woman, or as someone marginalized, or as an African-American male, the next step is to say that women can only speak for women, the marginalized for the marginalized, and African-American men for African-American men. Sandra Harding, in "Subjectivity, Experience, and Knowledge: An Epistemology from/for Rainbow Coalition Politics," argues that speaking "as a woman" is both impossible and politically necessary. On the one hand, there is no such thing as a typical "woman's life," or "marginalized life." On the other hand, it is politically and socially important to publically articulate such generalized experience "as a necessary precondition for the creation of democracy-advancing knowledge. . . ." (p. 133) In an addendum to Alcoff and Harding's work, Rosemary Hennessy questions the actual relation between generalized "lives" and the actual, material stuff of "experience," especially the experience of "configurations of state and economy." ("Subjects, Knowledges, . . . and All the Rest: Speaking for What?" p. 144)

The remainder of the book looks at the academic structures of authority and distribution for "minor literatures and cultures-. . . postcolonial texts, African American texts, literature by lesbians and homosexuals, by Asians and Latino Americans, American Indian texts . . . and . . . the broadly alternative literary traditions." (p. 151) Included are essays with such provocative titles as: "Fetishism, Identity, Politics," by Thomas Yingling; "Speaking with the Dead" (Literature on AIDS), by David Roman; "Buckling Down or Knuckling Under: Discipline or Punish in Lesbian and Gay Studies," by Judith Roof; "The Vicar and Virago: Feminism and the Problem of Identity," by Dympna Callahan; "The Joke and the Hoax: (Not) Speaking as the Other," by Sabina Sawhney; "Bodies and Pleasures in Queer Theory," by Elizabeth Grosz; and "Speak for Yourself" by Diane Elam.

For those who have not kept up with the politics of identity on university campuses and in intellectual circles, or who need a refresher reader in the area of cultural studies, this is a very helpful volume. Be prepared to learn a new vocabulary: alterity, subaltern, political identifications, subject positions, hegemonic knowledges, self-difference, generative habitus, etc. At the very least, homileticians and preachers will both come away with a better understanding of one experience we are all likely to have had: finishing a lecture or sermon and hearing a young university graduate exclaim, "Thanks for sharing your opinions. They really help me to understand where you're coming from."

□ John S. McClure