Contents

Preface *page* xiii
Acknowledgements xv

1 Introduction 1
What is social constructionism? 6

2 Giambattista Vico 12
The essentials of Vico's ideas 17
1. Vico, origins and communication 19
A Viconian fable 20
2. The idea of construction 21
3. Providence and the unintended consequences of joint action 22
Vico in practice 23
Coda 26

3 Phenomenology 29
Early Husserl 30
Consciousness and intentionality 33
The Lebenswelt 34
Alfred Schutz 35
Acting in the life-world: cognition 36
Acting in the life-world: action and work 39
Acting in the life-world: sociality 41
The later Husserl: towards Heidegger, existentialism and Maurice Merleau-Ponty 44
Maurice Merleau-Ponty: phenomenology and the body 47
The body 48

4 Hermeneutics 53
Early hermeneutics 54
Martin Heidegger 57
Being 59
Understanding, 'tools' and meaning 60

Heidegger in hermeneutic context 62
Hans-Georg Gadamer 64
Rehabilitating prejudices 65
Language 68
Dialogue: understanding as collaboratively articulating the 'in-between' 70
Ethics and rationality 71
Gadamer's hermeneutic horizon 72
Paul Ricoeur 73
Jürgen Habermas 77
Emmanuel Levinas 79
Our hermeneutic project retraced 80

5 Marxism and language 85
Mikhail Bakhtin 88
Meaning: heteroglossia and chronotopes 90
Dialogue and polyphony 93
Peopling language in dialogue and creative understanding 96
Self, creative understanding, and authorship 97
Valentin Volosinov 100
Some 'final' words on Bakhtin 102

6 Lev Vygotsky 104
Vygotsky's main themes 107
Higher vs elementary/natural psychological functions 108
Intermental vs intramental abilities 109
The Zone of Proximal Development 110
Psychological tools and mediation 112
Semiotic potential and the decontextualization of mediational means 113
Thought and Language /Thinking and Speech/ 'Thinking and speaking'/ 'Meaning-making – language-making' 115
Applying Vygotsky 117

7 Meanings and perspectives: George Herbert Mead and Jakob von Uexküll 121
George Herbert Mead 121
Communication, gesture and mind 122
Self, other, I and me 126
The self and the other 126

The 'I' and the 'me' 129
Time and perspective 131
Time 131
Perspective and 'reality' 134
Jakob von Uexküll 135

8 Ludwig Wittgenstein: 'Shewing the fly out of the bottle' 141
Biography 142
'Early' Wittgenstein 145
Segue 147
Verification and Criteria 149
Meaning: from pictures to use 151
Language games 156
Thought, private language and 'double description' 161
Private language 162
Wittgenstein's philosophies and what they offer to relational practice 167

9 Gregory Bateson: A Cybernetic View of Communication and Human Interaction 170
Patterns and processes of relationship 172
Cybernetic epistemologies 173
Pathologies of communication 179
An ecological/interactional view of mind 183
Bateson and relational practice 185

10 Sociologies – Micro and Macro: Garfinkel, Goffman and Giddens 187
Harold Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology 188
Garfinkel the iconoclast 189
Garfinkel's radical empiricism 190
Indexicality 192
Reflexivity 195
Documentary methods 196
Morality 197
Contexts or 'institutional realities' 200
Erving Goffman 203
'Performing' our social lives 204
'Frames' 207
'Talk' 210
Goffman and practice 212

Anthony Giddens 214
Structuration 215
Coda 219

11 Sources of the self 221
The roles of technology and urbanization in establishing our discourses 223
Charles Taylor: the construction of moral selves 228
Respect 229
The meaning of 'the good life' 230
Dignity 230
Civility: Norbert Elias's account of the 'civilizing process' 233
Becoming polite 234
Interaction, discourse and cognition 237
Other indicators 240
Representing individuality 240
Privacy 241
Music, gardening and leisure 241

12 Michel Foucault and his challenges 244
Distinctions and their consequences 246
Dividing practices 247
Scientific classification 249
Subjectification 250
Foucault's discursive self 253
Foucault and helping practice 256
Relativism 258
A. Irving Hallowell 260
Hallowell: the necessity of selves in human life 262
Hallowell: orientations of the self 265
1. Self-orientation 265
2. Object-orientation 265
3. Spatio-temporal orientation 266
4. Motivational orientation 266
5. Normative orientation 266
Hallowell and therapy 267

13 Discourse analysis 269
William Labov 270
Critical Discourse Analysis 274

Conversational Analysis 280
The Discursive Psychology Project 284
Socio-linguistics, CDA, CA and DP – what do they offer a discursive approach to relational practice? 289
Coda 293

14 Ken and Mary Gergen 295
Psychological knowledge and practice 296
The socially constructed and saturated self 300
Mary Gergen's feminist social constructionism 303
Social constructionism and relational practice 305
Coda 307

15 Rom Harré 308
Harré and postmodernism 310
Positioning, sedimentation, social obligations and language 313
The grammars of 'domains' 316
Positioning 319

16 John Shotter 324
Grasping Shotter 333

17 Concluding remarks 343
Theory and explanation 345
Practice 347

Bibliography 355
Index 379