Response to Vogel and Roberts

JOSEPH ROUSE

It is always a pleasure to get such careful and thoughtful assessments of one's work as I have received from Steven Vogel and Lisa Roberts. While I appreciated Lisa Roberts' paper very much, and learned from it, I have little to say in response. My book is not the target of her criticism, and while I am in no position to assess the adequacy of her objections to Schumacher's *The Human Future*, I see no difficulties in the uses she has made of my work.

Steven Vogel, while offering a sensitive and careful exposition of many of my most important positions and arguments in *Knowledge and Power*, has also put forward some very important criticisms. Vogel develops five principal objections to views he attributes to me, but there is a common theme to all five. Despite our shared goal of opening scientific and technological practices to informed political reflection and criticism, he believes that some aspects of my argument diminish or close off political reflections in unnecessary and undesirable ways. These interlocking criticisms thus go to the heart of my project in the book. Vogel is not mistaken in noting my 'tentativeness' in advancing particular political convictions or defenses of scientific practices. But this tentativeness is strategic: the aim of the book is to make an argument about the role of political reflection in the context of practices within that domain. Hence, the insistence that I foreclose important aspects of adequate political reflection on the sciences would be especially troubling if accurate.

I shall briefly summarize Vogel's specific concerns before responding to them in turn.

(1) Vogel endorses the claim that all practices (including scientific ones) acquire intelligibility and significance only within a larger context or background of correlative practices. Nevertheless, he believes that I overstate the difficulty of articulating the background against which particular practices are situated, and thereby foreclose adequate political reflection and transformation of those practices. In particular, at the end of his paper, he returns to this issue in arguing that I cannot account for the ideological aspect of science's (and scientifically influenced societies') self-misunderstanding and its possible correction.

(2) Vogel argues that I equate all discourse with theoretical representation, and therefore that I take the turn from rhetoric to puzzle too far; 'failing to take sufficient

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