Disabled people experience profound discrimination and social disadvantage, but this has not generated substantial interest among mainstream sociologists. Barnes, Mercer and Shakespeare attempt to move the discipline of sociology forward by locating the concerns of disabled people within a sociological framework. The authors aim to generate a sociology of disability which is explicitly committed to the political emancipation of disabled people.

Drawing upon the pioneering work of C. Wright Mills, Chapter 2 stresses the importance of applying the ‘sociological imagination’ to the circumstances of disabled people in modern society. In this spirit, the authors develop a conceptual distinction that has been central to disability studies – the distinction between the ‘individual’ and ‘social’ models of disability. Traditionally, social perceptions of disability have been informed by the ‘individual’ model which has explained social disadvantage in terms of individual impairment. In contrast, the ‘social’ model locates the problem within contemporary social organisation – family circumstances, income and financial support, education, employment, housing, transport and the built environment. Chapter 3 provides a broad overview of the medical sociology literature on chronic illness and disability, focusing particularly on structural functionalism, interactionism and social constructionism. All are criticised for accepting disability as an individual health or medical matter. However, the authors recognise areas where it is possible for medical sociologists and disability theorists to engage in a constructive dialogue. Chapter 4 examines the development of a range of theoretical perspectives that have been inspired by the ‘social’ model. ‘Disability theory’ seeks to explain the social marginalisation of disabled people in terms of broader social processes, but, in the view of the authors, some approaches within this tradition do this more effectively than others. Focusing on capitalist industrialisation, the materialist approach articulated by disabled political activists and academics is judged to be one of the better approaches, although it is also seen to have shortcomings. In particular, it has failed to articulate the needs of distinct groups of disabled people and, because of its emphasis on social barriers, has not given due consideration to the personal experience of impairment.

Drawing upon a range of secondary sources, Chapter 5 examines how disabled people have been systematically disadvantaged by society’s main institutions. Although the family is a central institution in the lives of most people, many disabled people are denied a ‘normal’ family life. Many children with impairments continue to be educated in segregated ‘special’ schools and only a small percentage progress to achieve qualifications in further and higher education on a par with their non-disabled peers. Work is perhaps the single most important institution in contemporary capitalist societies, yet a majority of working-age disabled people are excluded from the labour market. On the whole, public buildings have been designed for non-disabled people meaning that many disabled people are excluded from routine activities such as shopping, banking and leisure pursuits. Chapter 6 looks at the position of disabled people in relation to the welfare state, with particular reference to the social security benefit system and community care. It finds that the social policy has contributed to the social marginalisation of disabled people. Social security benefits are often insufficient to lift disabled people out of poverty and the failure to provide ‘user-led’ services has reinforced their dependence on bureaucratic and professional decision making. In
contrast, it is argued, the welfare state should aim to promote ‘independent living’. Chapter 7 develops an analysis of political participation among disabled people. In addition to describing the barriers that prevent disabled people from taking part in the formal political process, it examines the emergence and significance of a new terrain of political struggle. The activities and organisations of the Disabled People’s Movement have made a profound impact on contemporary social life. In particular, they have successfully challenged traditional negative stereotypes; empowered disabled people, both individually and collectively, and prompted the introduction of more appropriate welfare policies and services. In view of the pervasiveness of prejudice and discrimination, it is not surprising that social research has often disempowered disabled people, reinforcing disadvantage. Indeed, social research has itself been a part of the discriminatory process. Barnes, Mercer and Shakespeare conclude by arguing for a new paradigm of disability research that is explicitly committed to securing social justice for disabled people, which endorses a symmetrical relationship between the researched and researcher, and which is geared towards informing political struggle.

Exploring Disability provides a comprehensive introduction to the sociology of disability suggesting areas of enquiry that could be explored in greater depth. These include: labour market dynamics and the employment circumstances of disabled people (see Hyde 2000); the role of the welfare professions in the development of suitable services for disabled people; welfare restructuring and the development of new social policy initiatives for disabled people; the relationship between disability and other forms of social inequality, particularly social class, which is not looked at in any detail in the book; the relationship between structure and agency, or, to put a finer point on it, the relationship between disabled people and their organisations, which, as the authors note, may often be asymmetrical.

This book provides a necessary foundation for developing a fuller understanding of these and other areas within a sociological framework. In consequence, it makes a significant contribution to the discipline of sociology.

REFERENCES

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MARK HYDE

The Cybercultures Reader
David Bell and Barbara Kennedy (eds.)

This imposing tome provides an impressive selection of the key writings in the rapidly growing interdisciplinary field of cyberculture. The volume contains two introductory essays from the editors followed by forty-eight papers divided into nine sections devoted to the following themes: conceptualisations of cyberspace; popular cybercultures; cybersubcultures; cyberfeminisms; the cybersexual; cyberbodies; post-(cyber)bodies; cybercommunities; and cybercolonisation. It covers a wide range of issues and there are few obvious gaps in the editors’ choice of topics and contributors (though I was slightly disappointed that the computer underground only received one paper’s worth of attention in the cybersubcultures section).
The material the editors have chosen includes a good sprinkling of cyberculture’s ‘usual suspects’ including the Krokers, Michael Benedikt, Kevin Robins and Sadie Plant. There is the usual bias towards North American contributors but the editors manage to strike a nice balance between such influential pieces as Donna Haraway’s *Cyborg Manifesto* and a healthy range of less well known and more up-to-date essays. It is also extremely well stocked with feminist perspectives in both a dedicated section and additionally within those sections devoted to the body, virtual communities and cybersex. It thus provides a useful countervailing force to the widely held perception that cyberculture is predominantly a male preserve.

The book’s ostensible aim of providing a systematic and comprehensive overview of cybercultural themes is to be warmly applauded in an area where theoretical coherence is more often honoured in the breach than the observance. My main criticism of the book relates not to its selected content, but rather to the extent to which its editors tend to undermine their own project. For example, in both the main introductory essays they perversely encourage the reader to disregard the structure of the book as constructed by their editorship. This struck me as too uncritically buying into the iconoclastic hyperbole of cyberculture. Bell, for example, despite his otherwise lucid tone succumbs to the ‘cyber-hip’ with his advice to the reader to ‘flick and flit, to find and chase your own hot links, to trace each rhizome, each thread, and to make the connections that work for you — to construct your own hypertextual web.’ (p. 2, original emphasis) My only other criticism of Bell would be a point of information. He repeats the well-worn myth that the internet’s origins lie in military attempts to develop a network capable of surviving nuclear attack, a canard refuted in detail by Tim Jordan (1999).

Kennedy’s much more excitable approach, however, is more consistently discouraging to those expecting editorial guidance regarding the book’s content and themes. The ‘undeconstructed’ reader is forewarned that ‘Endings and beginnings mingle in an assemblage of deterritorialized subjectivities’ (p. 13) but the persistent use of such language is unfortunately resonant of the ‘cyberdrool’ one of the subsequent contributors, Judith Squires, warns against. Kennedy provides an entertainingly idiosyncratic blend of impressionistic and academic writing styles, but her style tends to jar against the much more conventional (and helpful) one adopted by Bell. To use another of Squire’s phrases, Kennedy exhibits excessive ‘boyish pleasure’ neatly encapsulated by her pre-emptive but unconvincing claim that those who do not share her enthusiasm are suffering from a ‘loss of jouissance’ (p. 16).

In conclusion, whilst ultimately the strength of this book resides in the quality and suitability of the editors’ choices, I could not help feeling that a chance had been missed to sell cyberculture to the wider constituencies of more traditional sociology and cultural studies. This feeling was reinforced by the mis-match between the editors’ choice of generally accessible essays and their more specialised bias. They both seem unduly beholden to Deleuze and Guattari. Kennedy is once again the worst offender, repetitiously using the concepts of the ‘rhizome’ and the ‘machinic’. Having brought together such a good range and depth of material I was disappointed that the editors needlessly hedged their theoretical bets by underplaying the thematic and intellectual coherence of their selection. This book will prove useful and an extremely valuable and convenient theoretical resource for both researchers and students alike, ironically, despite the equivocations of its own editors.

Reference
Racism

Martin Bulmer and John Solomos (eds.)

Current debates in sociological journals demonstrate the contested nature of race in sociological explanations. Contemporary news reports commonly remind us of the historical legacies and recent effects of racism. This collection provides strong foundations for bringing sociological analysis to bear upon these debates and events, which show racism in old and new forms. Martin Bulmer and John Solomos have gathered fifty-one readings, dating from 1903 (Du Bois) to 1998, with an emphasis upon recent writing (almost half of the extracts are from the 1990s). Editorial contributions provide coherence to each section with summaries and commentaries. Also, there are suggestions for further reading, notes on the contributors and an index. There is a strong sense of narrative and connected discussion, while many of the pieces have such individual strengths and independence of voice that they are likely to encourage further reading. The result is a substantial collection which can be used for teaching or research. This wide-ranging and interesting book will serve as an excellent resource for courses which cover racism and will be a stimulus to further work.

The emphasis of the first section is upon racialisation in the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries in European and American contexts. Chapters by Curtin, Banton and others support the opening remarks of Mosse’s contribution: ‘Eighteenth-century Europe was the cradle of modern racism’ (p. 40). Slavery is at the core of the second section. As the editors state ‘understanding this long historical past is essential for grasping racism in the contemporary world’ (p. 57). Discussion of Arab enslavement of Africans and representations of Africans in the Muslim world is followed by papers on the development of slavery, the inter-relationship of class and race, emerging pluralism and colonial systems of domination. An extract from Fanon’s writing perceptively analyses decolonisation. Section III concentrates on the twentieth century, with extracts concerning America, China and the United Kingdom. Aboriginal peoples and African-Americans in the United States, and Irish and Jewish people in the United Kingdom are covered by these papers. Continuities and contrasts are revealed, for example, through comparison of Du Bois, writing of his and others’ childhood experiences in the United States, and Troyna and Hatcher, writing in the 1990s, about racism in primary schools in Britain. Racist movements are covered in Section IV. A brief extract from Tuttle’s discussion of racial violence in Chicago in 1919 is followed by five case studies of white racism in the United States and Europe. Ezekial’s account of a Klan rally in the American South is chilling and raises questions about research in challenging circumstances. Anti-racism is the focus of Section V which spans Marcus Garvey’s activities and contemporary debates from within the United States, South Africa and Britain. The role of the state, in constructing, establishing and reproducing racism is covered by Section VI. Burleigh and Wuppperman’s analysis of Nazi legislation, research and policy from 1933 in Germany is followed by a discussion by Omi and Winant of the racial state in the United States. Accounts of Australia and Brazil provide complex counterpoints to the themes of the first two papers. A historical overview of theoretical debates is provided by Section VII, showing the diversity of theoretical perspectives in the field. These papers include discussions of race and racism in broad sociological contexts and an appreciation of black feminism and its contributions. In the last section, questions are raised about the future of racism. Personal reflections and analyses from Britain, elsewhere in Europe and America are included, supporting the editors’ forecast that ‘there is a reality to racism which means that it will necessarily remain a major preoccupation’ (p. 390).
This collection affirms the breadth of scholarship and strength of continuing debates about racism within sociology. It also prompts thoughts about gaps in our understanding, agendas for future research and issues to raise with our students. These might include the role of contemporary scientific understanding in the discourses of anti-racist and racist groups, methodological considerations of racism in relation to other explanatory factors in structuring social divisions, and challenges to racism in those global cities where power relations are rapidly changing. These comments are not intended to detract from the accomplishments of the editors in bringing together and integrating this valuable collection but rather to look forward to future debates prompted by the overview it gives.

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Risk Revisited
Pat Caplan (ed.)

Decade of Disaster
Ann Larabee
Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000, $42.00 ($15.95 pbk), ix+194 pp. (ISBN 0-252-02483-4)

Pat Caplan's Risk Revisited is an edited collection of accounts of risk in various contemporary societies written by anthropologists. As Caplan herself notes in the book's introduction, although the cultural anthropologist Mary Douglas was a pre-eminent theorist on risk, her analyses predating those of the sociologists Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens, other anthropologists have largely failed to take up the gauntlet she threw down. The book is an attempt partly to redress this lacuna, as well as engage with recent and influential sociological writings on risk.

Caplan's introduction provides a brief but clear account of the positions on risk put forward by Douglas, Beck and Giddens. However she neglects discussion of a third major theoretical perspective, that offered by scholars using Foucauldian understandings of risk and government of the body/self, despite the fact that at least one of her contributors, Sophie Day, uses this perspective in her analysis of the politics of risk among London prostitutes.

Caplan goes on to distinguish between anthropological and sociological approaches to risk. She notes that Douglas, as an anthropologist, is interested in the cultural aspects of risk and uses evidence from ethnographic empirical work to support her generalisations. In contrast, argues Caplan, the sociologists Beck and Giddens make more universalising statements about risk, with no recourse to empirical data. While this is indeed an important difference between Douglas and the two sociologists, it is inaccurate then to assume that all sociological writing about risk tends to conform to the grand theorising of Beck and Giddens rather than the close empirical work of Douglas. Sociologists have, of course, conducted qualitative research work, including ethnographies, into risk behaviours and perceptions which consider ‘risk in particular times and places and through the voices of particular informants’ (p. 25), as Caplan champions. There are many accounts by sociologists, for example, similar to that given by Day, which use ethnographic techniques to investigate risk-taking and risk perceptions associated with sexual behaviour. And many sociologists influenced by poststructuralism are just as critically reflexive in their
approach to empirical research as are anthropologists, despite the claims of Caplan to the contrary.

The major difference that still remains between anthropology and sociology is that the former includes more studies of foreign cultures and emphasises fieldwork more than does the latter. The ‘exoticness’ of the cultures chosen by anthropologists is evident in the book, which includes chapters by British anthropologists on cultures in India, Amazonia and the West Indian island of Monserrat. It is in applying the sociological and Western-oriented theories of Beck and Giddens to these non-Western cultures that the book offers a different perspective from more mainstream sociological accounts of the social and cultural aspects of risk. Writers such as Janet Bujra on HIV/AIDS in Tanzania and Stephen Nugent on risk in Amazonia are able to show how ethnocentric and limited are Beck’s and Giddens’s pronouncements on the move towards ‘risk society’ and how sweeping their generalisations, particularly those that insist on the ‘democratising’ of risk (the argument that the hidden and globalised risks of late modernity affect everyone in similar ways).

Similarly, Alison Shaw’s account of the ways in which British Pakistanis think about risk in relation to genetic defects shows that Beck’s and Giddens’s assumptions about ‘late modern’ notions of risk are inapplicable. The Pakistanis in Shaw’s study held pre-modern notions of risk based on their strong religious faith rather than the ‘rational’, science-based risk assessment that these sociologists claim is the foundation of people’s responses to risk. As Shaw points out, white Westerners may also draw upon pre-modern nations to deal with risk, such as that of fate or God’s will. Even within the same country, there may be clear differences in risk perceptions between those living in different localities, as demonstrated by Caplan’s chapter on the responses of Londoners and Welsh villagers to the ‘mad cow’ (BSE) crisis.

These insights are all important but, beyond this, the book does not really offer much that is new in terms of empirical findings on risk perceptions or in advancing theoretical perspectives on risk. One problem with most of the chapters is that the authors, who were specifically requested by the editor to respond to the writings of Beck and Giddens on risk, bowdlerise these sociologists’ contributions to some extent. This is perhaps inevitable, given the short length of the chapters and the universal structure therein of starting with a few generalising statements about risk theory as propounded by Beck, Giddens and in some cases Douglas, and then go on to support or (as is more the case) refute it with examples from their own ethnographic work. This results in many chapters in a degree of over-simplification of the theories.

Further, many of the contributors are not entirely clear in stating how they are using the term ‘risk’: that is, where on the continuum of realist to relativist perspectives on risk they position themselves. Indeed a wide range along this continuum is represented in the contributions, with some writers presenting a frankly realist approach (for example, Killworth in his discussion of British infantry soldiers in Northern Ireland) and others preferring the more cultural approach of Douglas (for example, Vera-Sanso’s discussion of the politics of risk talk among men and women in India). Some of the critical reflexivity of the new anthropology championed by Caplan might have been put to good use in this context.

Ann Larabee is an academic in the interdisciplinary Department of American Thought and Language at Michigan State University. In the preface to her Decade of Disaster she explains that her purpose is ‘to explore how [the technological disasters of the 1980s] evoked a language of violent disruption, containment, and survival in many venues, contributing to the apocalyptic tone of postmodern cultural formations’ (p. x). She is also interested in exploring the ‘cultural formations of disaster narratives and their contesting and negotiation’ (p. xi). In doing so, Larabee addresses how the disasters of the Exxon Valdez oil spill, the Chernobyl meltdown, the Challenger space shuttle explosions, the Bhopal chemical plant release and the HIV/AIDS pandemic were represented in the American official and popular culture.
Apart from brief references in footnotes to these literatures, Larabee is not very explicit about the theoretical provenance of her analysis. Although her discussion is overtly about risk and its cultural reception and reproduction, and many of her statements about the ways in which risk and hazards are dealt with in contemporary America resonate with the writings of the Beck, Giddens and Douglas troika, none of these theorists gets a mention in her book. Instead Larabee chooses to engage with and critique the work of what she terms the ‘disaster theorists’ who appear to be a hotch-potch of writers from fields such as psychology, risk management, organisational and public policy studies and the sociology of communities as well as media and cultural studies. She also more usefully draws upon writers in the field of science and technology studies and upon the theories of narrative, rhetoric, symbol, discourse and the creation and reproduction of meaning that are prominent in cultural studies.

Larabee’s neglect of the sociological and anthropological risk literature is not at all unusual for a cultural studies scholar. Most other writers in this field, even when specifically discussing risk, completely ignore the writings of Beck, Giddens and Douglas. This is evidence of the clear gap that continues to exist between sociology and cultural studies in terms of their use of theory.

Larabee’s conclusion is that technological disasters such as those she analyses in the book receive so much attention and angst because they are focal points for questioning aspects of contemporary life concerning our dependence on and dominance by technologies. She notes how the mass media used these events to both present images of apocalypse and then show how these were contained, inciting fear and anxiety and then relieving them in endless emotional cycles. These are important points in relation to the ways in which risk events act as objects for the projection of wider fears, and have been little addressed by the sociological risk theorists. As noted above, Beck in particular, and to some extent Giddens too, are more concerned with what they see as rationalistic behaviour, and their accounts of the reflexive subject in late modernity therefore focus on conscious, considered reactions to perceived risk. Douglas’s interest in the symbolic ways in which risk is used by communities in relation to the threatening Other is closer to Larabee’s account of the ways in which risk ideas and practices operate. It is a pity, therefore, that Larabee did not engage with Douglas in her discussion.

To conclude, a reading of these two books demonstrates several things. First, that sociocultural analyses of risk offer some intriguing insights into modern subjectivity and social relations. And, second, that although some steps have been made towards integration and critique of the various accounts of risk advanced in the different social science disciplines, both empirical and theoretical, much work remains to be done in this direction.

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DEBORAH LUPTON

Introducing Narrative Psychology: Self, Trauma and the Construction of Meaning
Michele Crossley

When people are telling of themselves, what are we to hear? Are we hearing first-hand experience or second-hand parrotings? In daily interaction we are actively concerned with this question, formulating responses to it on the hoof, responses that comprise our assessment of others. If we
hear the second-hand, for example, we might hear a lie, a spin, an orthodoxy, or a received version. Hearing this, our trust in the speaker, or even our faith in their self-knowledge might be diminished. The same issue of credibility remains alive throughout the research process. It lies, unsettled, at the heart of the production of authoritative qualitative research. Researchers conduct interviews, analyse transcripts and, in writing up results, seek links between what interviewees say and what research and wider communities have already made public. At interview ‘rapport’ — a meeting of two first-hand experiences — is prized. In analysis, the precious disconfirming instance — a token of first-hand experience with the power to rebut public orthodoxy — can let the researcher know that their interview got somewhere. In dissemination, as private woes are converted into public issues, first-hand and second-hand accounts must meet and be brought, despite their sometimes inconsistent moral standing, into some agreement. In research, than, as in daily life, it is always hard to be sure that one has hold of the first-hand rather than the second-hand.

Michele Crossley introduces a method for studying accounts of self. She is well aware of the unsettled relation between the first-hand and second-hand, and offers Narrative Psychology as a means for researchers to engage with, but not to resolve, that unsettling relation. Section I is a fair and balanced assessment of structuralist, phenomenological, psychodynamic and standpoint usages of self-narratives. She charts the variously theoretical, political and therapeutic purposes to which the human capacity for self-narration has been yoked. So a clear picture of the academic and practitioner contexts in which narrative psychology is being developed emerges. Crossley distances herself from those contemporary theories and methods that either prioritise the first-hand (humanism/phenomenology), or prioritise the second-hand (structuralist discourse analysis) or attend only to correspondences between the personal and the political, the private and the public (standpoint). Thus, Crossley’s Narrative Psychology acknowledges the urgency of the problem of the first-hand and second-hand, but, unlike many other approaches, refuses the temptation to solve that problem by theoretical fiat. In Section II she invites us to practice Narrative Psychology by producing a self-narrative, either by telling a ‘listener’ or by telling ourselves to ourselves, with the aid of an open-ended interview protocol. The preferred manner of analysing this self-narrative, in terms of ‘narrative tone’, ‘imagery’, and ‘themes’ is then described through Crossley’s own analysis of a research participant’s narrative. This section provides clear instruction on how to do Narrative Psychology. In Section III, Crossley illustrates the application of Narrative Psychology to the study of the contemporary conditions of personal dignity and integrity, reporting on her own research on child sexual abuse survival narratives and the self-narratives of people living with HIV+ status. These locations are well chosen — issues of truth (narrative and factual) and fidelity (to oneself, to partners or to community) loom particularly large for those whose lives have been broken. It is in Section III that the benefits of Crossley’s nuanced approach to the (in)authenticity of self-narrative become clear. Her failure to decide whether she should hear self-narratives as first-hand or the second-hand allows her to study how those who are reflecting on their own ‘trauma’ address the first-hand and second-hand problem for themselves, in order to make sense of their lives. The ‘constructing of meaning’, turns out to mean the attempts of those traumatised to create publically communicable accounts of their lives that also feel true. So Crossley examines how a person’s words become their own, how, through narrative, people try to return themselves to themselves. In other words, Crossley studies, and invites us to study, the means by which the first-hand is produced. In sum, this book provides a clear introduction to a particular method, suitable for undergraduate level onwards. But further, it will be a stimulating and profitable read for any who want their research practice to be humane, even though they can see why the figure of the ‘human’ and the qualities of ‘integrity’, ‘dignity’, ‘experience’ and ‘self-possession’ have been placed under erasure.

Keele University

NICK LEE
The latest contribution to the ASA Research Methods Series, *Reflexive Ethnography* is a timely intervention into debates surrounding the appropriate status of ethnographic knowledge. The once-orthodox view of the positivists has been eclipsed, in recent times, by the emerging orthodoxy of the postmodernists, and, here, Davies’s project is to rescue the ethnographic enterprise from the clutches of both the old and the new school.

On the one hand Davies argues that ethnographic research ought to recognise the inevitability of reflexivity in social research, and ought positively to welcome its incorporation into the ethnographic process. For reflexively informed research produces better, not worse, accounts of the cultural worlds under examination. The ethnographer is part of the picture, and the myriad ways in which her or his presence impacts on the research needs to be recognised, reflected upon, assessed and made available to the reader. On the other hand, however, Davies cautions against the adoption of that radical reflexivity that places the experiences of the ethnographer, rather than those of the participants within the social world purportedly under investigation, at centre stage.

Davies’s argument, then, is for a reflexivity that recognises the need for, and possibility of, increased understanding of the social world which is the proper goal of ethnographic work. For Davies, ethnographies can and should produce valid and generalisable knowledge of social realities. The book moves through the stages of ethnographic research in a familiar fashion, devoting a chapter to each of the main areas of ethnography. However, unlike the bulk of previous guides to conducting ethnographic fieldwork, a consideration of reflexivity permeates each of these chapters. Hence the approach is faithful to the author’s contention that ‘reflexivity must be acknowledged and employed at all stages of the research process. Thus, a critical self-consciousness must be developed and incorporated into the research from the initial stage of selecting research topics through the interactions with others in the field to the final analytical and compositional processes’ (p. 213).

The first section of the book, ‘Preparations’, comprises chapters on selecting a topic and the ethics and politics of research. The second section, ‘In the field’, considers the various methods for gathering data at the ethnographer’s disposal. It covers the usual mix of interviews and participant observation, as well as the use of visual media, more quantitative methods (such as surveys and social network analysis) and the use of life histories. After a brief consideration of the possibilities for the ethnographer to herself become a key informant of her study, the final section, ‘Mediations’, consists of two chapters, the first on analysing data and the last on writing and presenting ethnography.

Throughout this guide Davies demonstrates an impressive knowledge of both anthropological and sociological ethnographic works. This is used to good effect, a real strength of the book being its consistent and sophisticated use of a diverse array of empirical examples that are marshalled to illuminate key points being made in the text.

Charlotte Aull Davies has succeeded in writing a thorough and informative guide to preparing for, conducting and writing ethnography that deals explicitly with issues of reflexivity. As a postgraduate researcher currently engaged in ethnographic fieldwork, I found her book thought-provoking, useful and reassuring. It has enabled me to reflect more coherently on how best I might incorporate a reflexive orientation to the field, and my positionings within it, into my work. So I
would recommend this book both to other postgraduate students intending to undertake ethnographic research for the first time, as well as to more experienced researchers who might like to explore the implications of adopting a reflexive approach in their own work.

A discussion of the increasing relevance of communications technologies, and especially the internet, to many forms of ethnographic research would have been a useful addition to the section of the book devoted to potential sources of data. Otherwise, and despite an occasional tendency to slip into a slightly sloppy and obfuscatory writing style, and to construct overly long paragraphs, Davies has produced a valuable addition to the literature on conducting ethnographic research, and one which deserves a wide readership.

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DAVID HORTON

Reflective Authenticity: Rethinking the Project of Modernity
Alessandro Ferrara

Justice and Judgment: The Rise and the Prospect of the Judgment Model in Contemporary Political Philosophy
Alessandro Ferrara

In two consecutive books, focusing respectively on the modes and models of judgement to be found in contemporary moral and political philosophy, the Italian social philosopher Alessandro Ferrara has endeavoured to bring new life to the ‘project of modernity’. To that end Ferrara attempts to conceptualise rationality, validity, judgement and identity along (almost) aesthetic lines. Convinced with the postmodernists that the ‘linguistic turn’ and the collapse of the ‘grand narratives’ spells the end of all kinds of foundationalisms and generalising universalisms, the author, a former student of Habermas, nevertheless wants to salvage a semi-prescriptive and non-generalising notion of universalism which is in line with ‘our’ contemporary pluralist and contextual understanding of the ‘good life’. In order to combine our pluralist with our universalist intuitions, the author transposes the model of aesthetic judgements to the domain of moral and political philosophy and develops a contextualised notion of universal validity which breaks with generalising universalism of Kant’s first and second *Critique*. Reformulating Aristotle’s notion of ‘practical wisdom’ and Kant’s notion of ‘reflective judgement’, the author aims at nothing less than the completion of the ‘project of modernity’ by means of an alternative model of judgement. Overhauling the ‘generalizing, principle-based universalism that has largely prevailed in modern moral, political and legal theory’ with a ‘judgment view of normative validity which reconciles our pluralistic intuitions with a new kind of *exemplary*, judgment-based universalism’ (1999, p. 1), it is indeed the grand ambition which drives both books.

In *Reflective Authenticity* Ferrara outlines his conception of ‘exemplary universalism’ by means of a study of how ‘we’ judge authenticity. Replacing the central modern notion of autonomous subjectivity with the notion of authentic subjectivity, he not only advocates authenticity as a normative ideal, but also holds that authenticity, understood as ‘exemplary congruency of an individual, collective or symbolic identity with itself’, provides us with a ‘new ideal of universal validity’ that shifts the emphasis away from the generalisable towards the
exemplary and that is therefore better suited for pluralist societies like ours. This grand and intriguing thesis is argued by Ferrara in five steps:

(1) Applying Aristotle’s concept of phronesis or practical wisdom to the issue of identity, he redefines it as ‘the ability to choose courses of action and assign priority to values in a way that results in an authentic, as opposed to a shallow or fragmented, identity’ (p. 45). Ferrara argues that this redefinition of phronesis allows him also to redefine the ‘good life’ in terms of the authentic fulfilment of one’s unique identity.

(2) Searching for a way to judge unique identities, Ferrara next turns to Kant’s analysis of aesthetic judgement as a form of ‘reflective judgement’, over and against the ‘determinant judgements’ that Kant deems possible in the realms of knowledge and morality. Unlike ‘determinant judgements’ that are concerned with the subsumption of a particular case under a universal law, ‘reflective judgements’ do not imply the pre-existence of the universal law: ‘Only the particular is given and the universal has to be found for it’ (Kant). Reconstructing Kant’s theory of reflective judgement Ferrara applies it to identities in order to evaluate the attainment of an authentic relation to the self. Just like well-formed works of art, balanced identities share an exemplary quality of congruency and self-containedness which inspires in us pleasure and a sentiment of awe.

(3) After a brief detour to Simmel’s theory of ‘individual law’ as a stepping stone to a kind of non-generalising universalism, Ferrara presents his pièce de résistance: an analysis of the different dimensions of authentic identity. Drawing on psychoanalysis, he reconstructs ‘our’ contemporary intuitions about a good identity by specifying four dimensions of ‘postmodern eudaimonia’, as he says, to wit: coherence (‘perception of permanence and self-sameness throughout change’), vitality (‘the experience of joyful empowerment which results from the fulfilment of one’s central needs’), depth (‘a person’s capacity to have access to his or her own psychic dynamism’) and maturity (‘the ability to bring diversity to non-coercive unity’).

(4) and (5) The last two steps in his argument consist of an application of these four dimensions to collective identities and to ‘symbolic wholes’, especially works of art. To this end these dimensions should be understood as ‘so many guidelines rooted in shared intuitions, which as such guide our reflective judgement concerning the good for an identity … without being able to dictate to us what the best choice is’ (p. 107). Ferrara then wraps up his argument by arguing that the ‘exemplary universalism’ embodied in the four dimensions of fulfilled identities is fully in line with ‘our’ postmodern conception of the ‘good life’. Even more, on the eve of the twenty-first century it is simply the best perspective we can adopt: ‘Here we stand, we can do no other’.

In Justice and Judgment, which is probably the better of the two books under review, the Italian social philosopher takes us from the domain of moral philosophy to political and legal philosophy. The book is divided into two parts. In the first part the author uses the framework outlined in Reflective Authenticity to make sense of the transformations undergone by liberal theories of justice, i.e. those that generally conceive of justice as impartiality, neutrality and fairness, over the past decades and to develop a judgement view of justice that builds on the approach to normative validity which has been exemplified with regard to authenticity. More particularly, he reconstructs at length the theories of John Rawls, Jürgen Habermas, Ronald Dworkin, Bruce Ackerman and Frank Michelman. In each case he highlights a progressive move from a traditional model of generalising universalism to his judgement model of normative validity. In the case of Rawls and Habermas, who supposedly never give up the ‘view from nowhere’ which characterises the model of determinant judgement, this move leads to internal contradictions; in the case of Ackerman, Michelman and above all Dworkin, whose aesthetic model of jurisprudential judgement is most in tune with Ferrara’s model of reflective judgement, the rise of the judgement model leads to an almost successful combination of radical
hermeneuticism and a situated contextual understanding of universalism. In the second part of the book, Ferrara proposes to complete and to perfect this model of judgement so that it overlaps with his own conception. Central to this conception is the idea that the meaning of justice cannot be understood apart from the meaning of the self-realization of a collective identity (p. 180). In this contextual perspective, a political decision involving conflicting claims can only be said to be just if it does not affect the chances of the political community to lead its identity to a ‘fully fledged fulfilment’, conceived along the lines of coherence, vitality, depth and maturity. We are thus back on the track of the authenticity thesis, but now on the level of collective identities. However, insofar as judgements about justice are distinct from judgements about the well-formedness of works of art or the fulfilment of collective identities, an additional element has to be introduced: the ‘ideal of equal respect’. With this additional element, which represents a ‘neutral area of overlap’ at crossroads of the different conceptions of justice analysed in Part I, Ferrara has completed his reconstruction of ‘our’ conceptions of justice. ‘The best reconstruction of our intuitions of justice is a view of justice as bound up with reflective judgement oriented by the ideal of equal respect’ (p. 230). And once again, quoting Luther, Ferrara concludes with characteristic modesty by saying that this is the only conception of validity that we can accept – ‘Here we stand, we can do no other’.

In this way, Ferrara ends an intriguing and impressive conceptual endeavour on a rather shrill note. His claim to have successfully reconstructed ‘our’ intuitions concerning the ‘good life’ and justice, and thereby to have radically rethought the project of modernity ‘in order to make it finally work’ is a little bit overextended, to put it mildly. In the first place, Ferrara is at once too much of a modernist and not enough of a postmodernist. Too much of a modernist, because the notion that a philosophical analysis as presented in his books finally could make ‘the project of modernity’ work is a strange, very traditional and very rationalistic notion. As if this ‘project’ could be modelled after the example of individual gaining a better insight into its own life history and deciding to pursue a new course of action, based on a new, more adequate self-understanding. And not enough of a postmodernist, because the Dionysian project of an antagonistic and decentred subjectivity is never taken seriously, with the result that his claim to have reconstructed ‘our’ intuitions of the ‘good life’ cannot be taken at face value.

In the second place, the proposed solution to the problem of validity is conceptually unsound, as transpires from a short comparison with Habermas’s theory of communicative action and postmodern philosophy. Ferrara confines himself strictly to one element of the problem of validity, namely the claim to validity. All individuals and collectives are encouraged by Ferrara to claim potential universal significance for themselves, but he simply neglects the problem of how to connect these different claims, how to attune the conflicts between them. Habermas is by far the more radical thinker here, because he squarely confronts the problems of power, manipulation and coercion that are internally connected with the attunement of conflicts and differences. Ferrara manages to completely ignore this question, just as he ignores the proposals of postmodernists such as Lyotard, Foucault, Rorty and Irigaray to develop a new understanding of ethics, law and politics, based on an acute awareness of mechanisms of exclusion, domination and submission at work in all forms of communication and attunement of differences. Here the main weakness of Ferrara’s authenticity-thesis is to be found. It focuses exclusively on successful identities and is completely silent about those that are deemed failures and ‘below standards’. Thus, Ferrara forgoes problems of exclusion, power and solidarity. He wants us to look up to exemplary identities. Yet it is not so much exemplary identities that feed solidarity with others as our sensibility for their suffering. The central moral and political problem remains how to foster this sensibility, that is to say: how to divest ourselves of our successful identities.
When I first saw this book I was reading the feminist philosophical works of Moira Gatens and her colleagues Carole Pateman and Elizbeth Grosz, all of whom have revealed the embodied nature of the ‘abstract individual’ found in political theory, to think through a mass of material I had gathered from interviewing MPs and senior civil servants to grasp the gendered and racialised nature of these spaces. In the midst of searching for a writing genre that could marry feminist political theory with substantive data, the appearance of a text bearing the title *Gender and Institutions: Welfare, Work and Citizenship*, one which had immediate resonance with the expanding area of gender work and organisations, and the name Moira Gatens, theorist of embodiment, Spinoza and sexual imaginaries, made me think, ‘Great, at last, abstract feminist philosophy comes together with substantive social research. A combination that is desperately needed.’

This text contributes to Australia’s longstanding and extremely innovatory tradition of scholarship in the field of gender, power and organisations – one that has seen the likes of Bob Connell, Joan Acker and Sophie Watson. In Australia the phenomenon of ‘femocrats’ (feminists in elite positions in state organisations) has generated a lively discussion on the possibilities of changing the gendered nature of institutions. Having a particular institutional history, this volume brings together scholars from different traditions – economics, history, politics, social policy and psychology – who have been working together on what is described as ‘the ‘gender strand’ of the Reshaping Institutions project, an initiative of the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University’ (p. xii). Centrally, this collection is concerned with the questions: ‘What would constitute a feminist approach to institutional design and reshaping? What is the scope, in present Australian society, for ensuring our institutions deliver more equitable outcomes for those whom they are supposed to serve?’ (p. xiv).

The collection starts with an opening chapter by Gatens. Here she offers a critique of one of the most dominant theoretical frameworks in social policy and political science – rational action theory – through the notion of embodiment. Institutional design theory is criticised for working with a model of the rational actor that fails to acknowledge how people are embodied in terms of class, gender and race, and for assuming that actors are genderless, even though the male actor is presupposed as the norm. This chapter briefly and clearly sketches the classic feminist critique of the abstract individual to state the case that any reshaping of institutions has to engage with the ‘institutionally embedded masculine advantage’ (p. 8). The rest of the book illustrates the male advantage through nine chapters divided into three parts on welfare, work and citizenship.

Part I (Beyond the Male Breadwinner: Welfare, Housing and Household Labour) starts with a chapter that locates the shift in welfare policy from one based on a breadwinner model to one cast in a more individualistic mode. A great deal of detail is provided on specific policies and welfare benefits in Australia. The next chapter surveys historical data in Australia to look at the place of the breadwinner in the welfare provision of housing. Part I ends with a chapter that presents a very clear and comprehensive overview of international sociological debates and issues on the domestic division of labour. Scholars will find it extremely useful for mapping the terrain on family and household labour.

Part II is devoted to the workplace. Here we find the first essay in the collection (Chapter 5) that explicitly links itself back to the theoretical points raised in the opening chapter by Gatens.
Carol Bacchi, locates her analysis in academia to offer a critique of the managerial approach to sexual harassment that lets institutions off the hook by focusing on the ‘deviant individual’ instead of the deeply gendered nature of institutional cultures. The following chapter draws upon an impressive breadth of research literature in the area of gender work and organisations to illustrate how women are constituted as lacking and ‘ill-fitted’ for a range of occupations. The making of Affirmative Action in Australia is subject to scrutiny in Chapter 7. The place of differing and competing narratives and interests, including parliamentarians and femocrats, in both the making and implementation of this policy, is paid close attention.

Citizenship is considered in the final section. In Chapter 8 we find political theory admirably meeting history in an essay on the rise of the social sciences, their relationship to civic culture and the place of women in the whole of this scenario, especially in the rise of the rhetoric of women’s sphere. Britain figures large here. The next chapter reveals the power relations underlying narratives on populations. Interesting links are made between race, gender, nation and demographics. The final chapter examines the thinking and making of the republican debate in Australia. Unlike most literature on institutions and politics, including feminist works, questions of multiculturalism are integrated with political philosophy and a substantive analysis of femocrats. In this somewhat disparate and loose collection of essays, the book ends with a chapter written in a mode of analysis which is difficult to achieve, but urgently needed if abstract feminist political philosophy is to meet historical and contemporary material, and vice versa. In this respect, this volume marks the beginning of a project that is still very much in the making. Interestingly, Luce Irigaray, a feminist philosopher of similar ilk to Gatens, has also recently worked on a collection on democracy and feminism in Italy. The trend has been set in motion, but still, there remains a lot to be done.

NOTE: There is an unfortunate binding error in the bibliography, where twenty-three pages have been repeated.

University College Northampton

NIRMAL PUWAR

Crime and Social Change in Middle England: Questions of Order in an English Town

Evi Girling, Ian Loader and Richard Sparks


When George Orwell returned from Wigan Pier in the late 1930s, he brought back an account of working-class lives that were still mostly hidden from respectable view. Since then, successive waves of investigative journalists, documentary makers and criminologists have followed him onto the streets of ‘problem’ estates and decaying inner-city areas to report on ducking, diving and desperation at the sharp, unforgiving, edge of economic and social change. In contrast, ‘Middle England’ which features so centrally in New Labour rhetoric, including pronouncements on law and order, has remained largely unvisited and unmapped. As a result we know surprisingly little about the lived reality of respectability. The present book sets out to redress this imbalance by producing a thick description of the ways crime is experienced and imagined in one provincial town – Macclesfield in Cheshire. The authors collected material over a two-year period, from 1994 to 1996, drawing on a wide range of sources, from local documents and personal observations to depth interviews and focus-group discussions.
They are particularly interested in how peoples’ talk about crime intersects with their sense of time and place ‘both of the place in which they live, and of their place within a wider world of prospects and opportunities’ (p. 160), and how it folds together ‘elements of personal biography, community, career, and perceptions of national change and decline’ (p. 170). Most of the adult residents of Macclesfield to whom they spoke saw their town as relatively well placed. As a place to live they felt it offered the best of ‘both worlds’, bordering on spectacular countryside, within striking distance of Manchester and Liverpool, but without their urban problems and crime rates. They also saw its relatively painless transition from reliance on silk production to a local economy centred on pharmaceuticals as placing them on the right side of industrial transformation. This sense of living in a zone of relative stability and safety led them to construct crime as mostly an unwelcome visitation from outside, personified by the ‘away-day’ thieves arriving by rail from the surrounding conurbations. However, this could not account for the continuous and chronic, if low level, nuisance – noise and petty crime generated by local youth congregating on the streets.

From the zenith of Britain’s imperial power in the late nineteenth century onwards, talk about the condition of youth has been mapped onto talk about the state of the nation and provided a potent focus for worries about the fragility of social reproduction and the precariousness of progress. As the authors rightly point out, it is precisely because it is embedded in a dense web of local ties and affiliations that link biography to history, that the ‘thick’ disorder of youth (as they usefully dub it) is so strongly intertwined with popular perceptions of national decline and calls for more police on the beat as visible (and accountable) markers of known authority and pastoral care over public space.

At the same time, the authors are careful not to subsume the statements and stories they record under the convenient rubrics of ‘nostalgia’ and ‘reaction’. They go to considerable lengths to point up the ambivalences and tensions in popular talk about crime, insisting that: ‘It makes sense of troubling and alarming events but also expresses confusion and uncertainty . . . evokes authority and order, yet voices criticism and mistrust of authorities and orders’ (p. 6). Their dissection of these slips and shifts is wonderfully well crafted and provides solid support for their central contention that research that treats ‘fear of crime’ as a separate object of inquiry and intervention is now ‘exhausted’ and needs to be replaced by work that explores how talk about crime ‘serves to condense, and make intelligible, a variety of more difficult-to-grasp troubles and insecurities’ and to animate everyday models of ‘social conflict and division, social justice and solidarity’ (p. 170). As they point out, this argument has major implications for research in other areas of risk, where the connections between popular reactions to risk events are routinely divorced from other sources of anxiety and fear and from more broadly based conceptions of change and power.

At a time when the ‘Daily Mail reader’ has become the absent centre of much political speechmaking, and not a little social analysis, it is refreshing to see this convenient rhetorical fiction deconstructed. In constructing their nuanced account of provincial structures of feeling, however, the authors are in danger of smoothing off their more punitive and coercive edges. First, their evidence suggests that the sense of safety their respondents celebrated was bolstered in a number of cases by a marked disregard for civil liberties and in some by a willingness to resort to vigilante action to expel ‘undesirables’. These popular oppositions between law and order merit more sustained attention than they are given. Secondly, as the authors point out, Macclesfield remains almost entirely white. But this does not mean that an exploration of popular racism and xenophobia was surplus to their requirements. On the contrary, given the present crisis of ‘Englishness’, it is impossible to tease out the darker links between local identities and general perceptions of national conditions without it. The importance of these connections has been thrown into particularly stark relief by the wave of hostility towards asylum seekers that has swept...
over other towns in ‘Middle England’ in recent months. Their absence from the present text is an opportunity missed.

There are problems too with their single-minded focus on the grounded knowledge generated by talk about ‘what happened to me, you, your neighbour, on the street, round the corner, across town’ (p. 5). This is certainly a central resource for everyday meaning making, but people also have continuous access to the linguistic tags, resonant images and narrative forms, furnished by newspaper, television and other media. Given that one of the authors, Richard Sparks, has previously produced a fine analysis of representations of crime and order in popular television fiction, it is disappointing to find so little attention paid here to the interplay between situated and mediated meaning systems.

At the same time, the authors’ concerted focus-grounded experience enables them to intervene powerfully in the current debate on globalisation. Against those commentators who rather too cavalierly celebrate the onward march of de-territorialisation and the displacement of place by space, they insist that ‘place continues to matter’ because ‘people continue to live somewhere’ and ‘go about their business somewhere’ (p. 162). Indeed, the whole book is a call for future work on the shifting relations between the global, the national and the local to anchor its claims in close-grained studies of situated lives and grounded understandings. By choosing Macclesfield, a deliberately unremarkable locale, as their research site, they demonstrate that you do not have to go to Los Angeles to see the dynamics of globalisation ripple through a neighbourhood and that the patient interrogation of the mundane can tell us as much, and perhaps more, about change (and inertia) than the repeated study of the spectacular. In this sense, this is a very English book. But its modesty is its great strength. It refuses to shout, but what it has to say is well worth listening to.

Loughborough University

Graham Murdock

Taking Sides in Social Research: Essays on Partisanship and Bias

Martyn Hammersley


Hammersley’s latest methodological text evaluates research’s role in or for society. In today’s climate, which call for contributions to ‘United Kingdom, Ltd,’ (to use Hammersley’s term from a previous article), a discussion on research’s usefulness and potential users is important and timely.

Hammersley opens with the argument that the partisan position of the researcher defines not only the character of their research, but also the use of their research findings. Hammersley identifies an increasing trend in current social research, which fails to reflect on partisanship. He cites the uncritical use of the writings of C. Wright Mills, Howard Becker and Alvin Gouldner on partisanship as particular examples. Hammersley argues that these authors have become ‘black boxes’ (p. 4) in which their rejection of value neutrality is taken to advocate partisanship. Such an assumption he suggests is almost as dangerous as research claiming to be value-free. The book hence takes these particular three black boxes and evaluates each case for a partisan sociology.

Hammersley opens with Mills. Here we see the background influence of Marx and Weber (and beyond to Nietzsche, Hegel, Gramsci and Althusser) in Mills’s work and the tensions in his syncretism, or synthesis of their work. Hammersley projects Mills as an advocate of a radical progressive model of social change, in which sociology and social research are used to validate his critique of existing social arrangements. Hammersley criticises such use of research, arguing
‘social science cannot on its own indicate what form the good society should take’ (p. 58). Mills is described as a ‘heroic’ (p. 49) sociologist, yet Hammersley suggests that Mills’s hard sell outweighed a concern for the validity of the data.

Hammersley moves next to Becker, in what I feel to be the best chapter of the book. Here we revisit Becker’s (1967) *Whose Side Are We On?* and are treated to a concise summary of labelling theory’s use and abuse, once it became caught in sociology’s more journalistic imagination. Hammersley reads Becker as a realist, with the latter’s relativism more cultural than epistemological. Hammersley attempts to stress that Becker’s emphasis lies less with the ‘underdog’ (as Gouldner assumes) than with the individual, rather than the collective. Where Mills identifies a power elite, Becker holds a plural definition of power and hence sees sociology’s potential for political critique an effect more than a deliberate intent. Hammersley’s familiarity with Becker’s sociology is impressive (indeed, the two corresponded) and we even learn Becker nearly left sociology for a career as a jazz pianist.

Chapter 5 turns to Gouldner and classic articles such as ‘Anti-minotaur’ (1962) and ‘The Sociologist as Partisan’ (1968). Gouldner’s vision of universal values unites the role of sociologist and political activist together. Hammersley is unconvinced by Gouldner’s arguments, and finds them based more on rhetoric and linguistic ploys than substantive evidence. Gouldner’s role for the sociologist is overtly reified. ‘What Gouldner seems to propose is a kind of secular priesthood of sociologists’ (p. 122) and his partisanship is found to lack the very reflexivity he sought to advocate.

The final two chapters consider a contemporary form of research partisanship. Chapter 6 details an exchange between ‘methodological purists’ on the one side (which include the author) and ‘anti-racist’ researchers on the other on the issue of whether there is widespread teacher racism in schools. Hammersley dissects the ‘anatomy’ of the debate and in doing so reveals his own partisanship. Hammersley is self-admittedly (and this will be no surprise to readers of his recent work) a bit of an unreconstructed positivist. He flirts with concepts such as reflexivity, subtle realism, fashionable rhetoric and a rejection of foundationalism but holds fast to a vision of knowledge which can be seen to be valid from all points of view. The result is an overtly technicist analysis and a neglect of post-structuralist and postmodernist research forms.

Bias and social research are generic enough issues to attract a solid audience of academics, postgraduates and particularly dedicated undergraduates. Indeed, much insight is gained through Mills, Becker and Gouldner’s comparison and the book inspires their (re)reading. One (minor) quibble is Hammersley’s enduring preoccupation with all matters methodological. The reflexive turn in recent social research (to which Hammersley has made a fundamental contribution) is important. However, reflexivity risks becoming a victim of its own success, if field research is to be debated to the neglect of research practice.

*Lancaster University*  
S. H. HILLYARD

**Adorno: A Critical Introduction**  
**Simon Jarvis**


For an introductory text the opening sentence of Simon Jarvis’s *Adorno: A Critical Introduction* is remarkable. Jarvis simply sets a question: ‘Why read Adorno today?’ Besides setting the tone for
the whole book, Jarvis distinguishes his introduction to Adorno as one concerned not only with
the business of introduction but also with criticism. To do this Jarvis ejects the traditional form
many introductory texts rely on and quickly embarks on a truly critical appraisal of Adorno that
is, as introductory texts go, not all that introductory.

A major strength of this book is that it impressively avoids becoming either a bland
oversimplification or an impenetrably complicated interpretation of Adorno’s work. In fact, Jarvis
is not afraid of pitching the emphasis towards the more difficult rather than the simple, suggesting
that an unusually high level of reader engagement is required, one not solely dependent on the
author’s instruction. Evidence of this approach can be found in the sections dealing specifically
with Kant and Adorno’s Aesthetic Theory. However, this is not a complaint, more of a warning to
more general readers who might find themselves occasionally having to raise an extra effort to
make it through certain sections of the book.

One of the reasons this introduction stands up so well against those of the past is that Jarvis,
whilst respectful of Adorno’s work, is never afraid to engage with Adorno on a more critical level.
Many interpretations of Adorno’s work suffer from their own sense of remaining true to Adorno
and, while I am not suggesting that this is not important, too much respect has been counter-
productive, hindering, rather than encouraging, engagement with Adorno. As Shierry Weber
Nicholsen— an established translator of Adorno’s work— has suggested, it is this attitude which
has left creative interpretations of Adorno’s work far behind those of his contemporary Walter
Benjamin. And whilst this book cannot reverse this trend overnight, Jarvis’s critical commentary
continually highlights the possibility of a more perceptive and imaginative utilisation of Adorno’s
work.

However, there are a couple of important omissions from this introduction. Although Jarvis
covers all of Adorno’s key works at some stage of this study — Dialectic of Enlightenment,
Aesthetic Theory and Negative Dialectics, to name but a few — there emerges from these readings
Jarvis’s own intention to identify the strong materialist qualities inherent in Adorno’s thought.
It has to be said that Jarvis is clearly on to something here, but the problem of such a sustained
focus on Adorno’s materialism has meant that many other influential aspects are not explored
as fully as they deserve. Most crucially, Freud and psychoanalysis receive only a brief exegesis
and, lucid as this section may be, when one considers the attention Kant and Hegel receive, the
impact of psychoanalytic thought on Adorno appears more a footnote than a shaping influence.
Unfortunately missing too is a more sustained discussion of Benjamin and Adorno’s
relationship and its impact on Adorno’s work, especially with regard to configurational thought
and aura.

Criticisms aside, Jarvis has written an introduction to Adorno that stands out amongst its
Polity ‘Key Thinkers’ stable-mates and it does so, paradoxically, by not being overly
introductory. By this I mean Jarvis never underplays the complexity of Adorno, preferring to
make the reader work through Adorno rather than simply giving Adorno over to the reader.
What prevents the reader from becoming lost in this process of ‘working through’ is the
presence of Jarvis himself who acts as a guide, addressing mis-readings or defending
Adorno’s thought against other philosophical positions without, thankfully, resorting to
dogma.

In the end, Jarvis indirectly answers his own question ‘Why read Adorno today?’ by directing
our attention towards the diversity and flexibility of Adorno’s thought, proposing that we might
see Adorno’s work as a resource, one that might benefit from a more diverse and flexible approach
to Adorno’s work itself. And the only way to do this, of course, is to read Adorno.
Do we need another book on homelessness? The quality of this edited collection suggests that we do, not least because of the ways in which contemporary social theory is put to work throughout the volume in illuminating what Marsh and Kennett describe as ‘the new homelessness’. The editor’s introductory chapter signposts the speed of social and economic change, which has ushered in more pervasive levels of housing market uncertainty and insecurity. In the second chapter, Forrest flags the disturbing growth of ‘misery on a breathtaking scale’ (p. 33) across much of the globe, by noting how previously secure groups have become vulnerable to the ‘precipice’ of homelessness. In Chapter 3 Kennett explores the concept of social exclusion, arguing that there are clear tensions between the political rhetoric of labour market inclusion, and the heterogeneous needs and characteristics of the homeless population. In the following engaging chapter, and reflecting the multi-disciplinary foundations of the book, the geographer Cloke and colleagues focus on homelessness in rural areas, together with the transience of homeless individuals. Watson, in Chapter 5, contributes to a gender-focused homelessness literature, in this case the normative linkage of women with domesticity through which homeless women are labelled as doubly deviant. The disproportionate experience of homelessness amongst ethnic minorities is the theme of the following chapter. Here Harrison highlights how welfare state inconsistencies systematically disadvantage certain groups. The somewhat lengthy Chapter 7 by Fooks and Pantazis explores the nexus linking the control of rough sleepers and beggars with their ‘care’ and ‘control’ (p. 149) by a dedicated police unit based in London’s Charing Cross. The combined legal and housing practitioner backgrounds of Cowan and Gilroy are insightfully applied in Chapter 8 where the ambiguous nature of the homelessness legislation is empirically explored within the context of the ‘demonised paedophile’. Given the demographic profile of the current population, Hawes’s valuable contribution in Chapter 9 reminds us that older individuals are also at risk of homelessness as a consequence of labour market change, the retrenchment of welfare and the fragmenting of family and social networks. The transitional economy of Russia provides the international backdrop to Beigulenko’s chapter where a laissez-faire approach to homelessness proliferates in the face of poorly developed homelessness legislation. Chapter 11 focuses on policy response, through research by Pannel and Parry who detail the effectiveness of multi-agency working in Bristol. They identify the positive, though part-accidental, constellation of factors that combine to produce successful working practice. The book concludes with a chapter by Harvey, who examines issues of resettlement within the wider context of the European Union. Here, the prevalence of homelessness has fostered creative strategies oriented at reintegrating marginalised individuals into mainstream tenure through recognising the long road to successful transition.

The book resonates with the recent developments in the homelessness literature. Here, contributors avoid the pitfalls of ‘reifying’ homelessness, through their mapping of interrelated risk-contexts. This ensures the reader’s awareness of the complexities of the process through which homeless might emerge and be sustained. In addition, and closely linked, attempts at transcendence of the structure/agency dichotomy are apparent in the more theoretically inclined chapters. Harrison reminds us that ‘an analysis of social stratification remains crucial to understanding processes and patterns of relative exclusion, and homelessness should not be analysed as if it were separate from this’ (p. 118).

Though the collection will be of considerable value to undergraduate, postgraduate and
practitioner alike, I do feel that it could have benefited from work highlighting the somewhat paternalistic tone of policy implementation. To these ends, the addition of anthropologically informed chapters could have offered clues to the relative ineffectiveness of the current service provision through including the voices of a group impersonally referred to as ‘service users’. In a similar vein, further work is needed to demonstrate the potency of social networks fostered within the context of ‘street culture’, as the sense of belonging they create is rarely rekindled in the isolation of ‘(re)settlement into independent living’. The book’s effectiveness lies ultimately in the influence of its readership; perhaps one can be dispatched with some haste to Louise Casey, the so-called ‘Homelessness Czar’.

University of Bristol

PAUL HIGATE

Social Exclusion in Europe: Problems and Paradigms

Paul Littlewood (ed.)

This edited collection originated from an Erasmus collaboration. It is rather uneven in content with some good and some not so good chapters. The book comprises three sections. The first deals with social exclusion in the context of economic change, the next addresses issues of social policy and state welfare, and the last is concerned with cultural and political identity. The chapters vary in form. Some are essentially conceptual pieces. Others have an empirical element. There is no coherent thematic structure to the book as a whole, although Littlewood and Herkommer in the introduction do identify ‘three fundamental questions’ that are addressed in the collection as a whole: namely, why should the term ‘social exclusion’ have acquired such saliency in recent years, what do those who use the term understand by it, and what are its origins? This is useful although, in the nature of things, already somewhat dated.

Voruba addresses the implications of ‘the end of the full employment society’. The title of his chapter illustrates the major deficit in the collection. The authors just have not appreciated the implications for employment of the US and British model of deregulated postindustrial capitalism. Voruba does consider the issue of quality of work as well as quantity of jobs but he does not address the capacity of postindustrial capitalism for generating effective full employment in poor work and without workers’ power of resistance. Van Kooten follows up with a neat enough discussion of the implications of flexibility but again without grasping the significance of postindustrial capitalism as a whole. Glorieux’s discussion of the role of paid work in linking individuals and society benefits from an empirical foundation based on a study in Flanders. This is useful, not least because the respondents say things which are very much in line with respondents elsewhere in other empirical studies. Here we have a sense of what people are thinking and that always matters. Herkommer and Koch’s chapter confronts the debate about ‘the underclass’ with the wider body of sociological theorising about class. There is nothing particularly original about this, but it is a useful and coherent summary, especially for students.

The chapters on social policy are more varied. I thought Jönson’s on ‘Women, Work, and Welfare’ was very dated. Asserting that ‘Mainstream welfare research neglects gender and very little attention is paid to women’s position in the welfare system’ (p. 104) is plain wrong in 1999. More to the point this chapter simply does not address the US and British model of welfare to work, and the role of support systems alongside coercion in making women workers as an alternative to welfare recipients. Pioch’s chapter is a useful report of political actors’ views on
social justice in Germany and the Netherlands. Blomberg and Petersson take up the idea of stigma in relation to ‘declining welfare state programmes’. This is one of several chapters in which the authors go back to earlier discussions, here not only Goffman’s original conception of stigma, but the debate between Titmuss and Pinker – again very useful for students. This is even more the case for Littlewood in a chapter which is really about the importance of Bourdieu’s and Parkin’s ideas for the debate on what is called social exclusion. Here there is a robust and necessary reminder of the significance of major structural inequality for any understanding of these issues. McGuiness’s chapter is a useful summary of the institutional framework of citizenship in the European Union. Sabour reports on a small-scale but interesting study of the feelings of non-Europeans in Finland about their place in that society.

Overall this is a book to have in the library. Some of the chapters are very useful for students as reference material. Others remind us of the significance of debates and concepts ‘beyond’ the social exclusion paradigm for addressing these issues in general. However, I do wish the authors had taken into account the implications of US postindustrial capitalism and its hegemonic reach. That would have made for a better book.

University of Durham

DAVID BYRNE

Clubbing: Dancing, Ecstasy and Vitality
Ben Malbon

The growing body of work in sociology and cultural studies which seeks to explore ‘club cultures’ has, to date, made some significant interventions into telling the story (or stories) of clubbing; however, the majority of the books and articles produced have lacked something – something of the experience of clubbing itself. Too often they retain the aura of the distanced academic observer, usually ‘sympathetic’ to the scene but ultimately unable to convey the complexities and subtleties that constitute an activity like clubbing. These studies have produced valuable insights – Sarah Thornton’s discussion of subcultural capital, for example – but I have always found them lacking in the ‘buzz’ of clubbing (something more readily found in journalistic accounts and clubbing novels). Now that has all changed: Ben Malbon has written an exceptional account of the dance music club scene which has that ‘buzz’ about it. While Malbon acknowledges that the core components of the clubbing experience – dancing, music-listening, drug-taking, socialising – are very difficult to write about (and that this accounts in part for their underdeveloped status in the academy), in Clubbing: Dancing, Ecstasy and Vitality Malbon manages to write about his own experiences of clubbing alongside those of his respondents in an uplifting, playful and engaging way.

The book is structured around a ‘night out’, and blends ethnographic material with critical commentary in a way that will surely make it a model for the practice of researching youth cultures and expressive and embodied cultural activities. Important themes, such as the rituals that clubbers use to structure their experiences, the role of ecstasy (MDMA) in producing ‘oceanic’ states in clubs, and the negotiations of self-identity and the collective identifications of the crowd that clubbers feel on the dancefloor, build up to a picture of clubbing as ‘playful vitality’ – a useful term that contradicts those dismissing such activities as simplistically hedonistic, individualistic and/or deviant. Instead, Malbon shows that ‘Dance clubbers are continually investing and deploying skills, techniques and competencies (in other words, sociality) that they have acquired
and are acquiring in the processes of attaining and maintaining notions of group identifications and social identities and in their own imaginative constructions of self” (p. 92).

Throughout Clubbing, Malbon deploys a ‘light touch’ approach to theory, rather than bombarding the reader with needless complexity. This again makes the book a model for use in teaching, and to show students how to pull together their own knowledge and experiences, ethnographic fieldwork and critical/theoretical literatures in a cool way (Malbon has a lot to say about the notion of ‘cool’, so it seems a fitting term to use here; Clubbing is certainly a cool book). And while I’m sure that the tabloid press would have loved to have known that taxpayers’ money was spent on someone’s night-life (the book arises from Malbon’s doctoral research, funded by the ESRC), it is great to see this kind of engaged research being carried out; it has produced an account of the club scene which is rich with detail, experience and insight, and that takes its subject seriously as well as playfully. It is especially great to see this kind of research emerging in geography, which has been slow and stubborn, by and large, to come to terms with topics like music, youth and identity. Although Malbon modestly ends by saying that ‘This book represents only the beginnings of an understanding of the countless meanings, interpretations, practices, rewards and experiences of clubbing’ (p. 188), it is a very important – and very entertaining – beginning, which, I would hope, will inspire other researchers. The back jacket of the book says that Ben now works for an advertising agency; while this is academia’s loss, we can at least (I hope) look forward to some cool commercials equally marked by playful vitality.

Staffordshire University

DAVID BELL

News Corporation, Technology and the Workplace: Global Strategies, Local Change

Timothy Marjoribanks


In the first chapter of this impressive analysis of the relationship between technological innovation and workplace reorganisation, the author poses the questions of who controls and who benefits from the process of technological innovation which fundamentally changed the process of newspaper production in the late twentieth century. In his final chapter he concludes, perhaps unsurprisingly, that in the three countries (Britain, Australia and the United States) where he investigates the global media company News Corporation, management are now in a much more powerful position. Workforces have largely been forced to accept technological development on the terms imposed by management. The success of Rupert Murdoch in changing the relationship between management and unions in his own companies has also had a knock-on effect on other newspaper groups. As Marjoribanks’s review of the Financial Times (a non-Murdoch paper) illustrates, the threat of another Wapping has been enough to make unions more complaisant towards fundamental changes to the balance of power in the workplace.

The author begins by outlining the various theoretical models attempting to explain the impact on workplaces of the introduction of new technology. The accounts are clear and concise, and provide a useful introduction for the general reader. Marjoribanks recognises the strengths and weaknesses of the approaches, and offers an alternative ‘relational model’ which combines elements of two earlier models – the ‘labour process model’, which emphasises the primary importance of class relations, and the ‘institutional social choice model’ where the role of the state is fundamental.
The relational model proposes a more flexible and less deterministic view of the process, arguing that a more complete understanding of variations in workplace relations is achieved by emphasising the dynamic relationship between actors, globalisation and technological change.

Taking due regard of historical developments, Marjoribanks examines the institutional and social context in the three countries. His case studies of Britain and Australia are first class — balanced and thorough, and not flinching from criticising the actions of actors when he thinks they deserve it. For example, while not overlooking the often questionable tactics of Margaret Thatcher’s government and the Metropolitan Police during the Wapping dispute, the obduracy, disunity and self-interest within the British trade-union movement, which made the task of stripping away workers’ rights so much easier for both government and business, receives due attention. While the relationship between business, labour and government was more consensual in Australia, and the process of introducing technological change was less confrontational in Murdoch’s Australian operations, the initiative throughout was with management. Helped by a more co-operative workplace tradition than in Britain, and with the support of a government eager to open up the Australian economy to world investment, the emphasis was on facilitating technological developments; again, the process was influenced by earlier events in Wapping.

The author’s examination of the American experience is less satisfactory — a thin analysis relying on secondary sources. However, the importance of America for Murdoch’s operations elsewhere is noted. Technological change in the newspaper industry happened much earlier in America and News Corporation’s pursuit of innovation and reorganisation there influenced the company’s strategies when introducing change in other countries.

The utility of Marjoribanks’s ‘relational model’ as an explanatory tool might also be queried, although his model is undeniably useful in emphasising both the dynamic nature of the process and the potential importance of local and national conditions in mediating global trends. As Marjoribanks notes, the interaction between the local and global is poorly understood, and he maintains his model offers the possibility of explaining the different outcomes in Britain, Australia and the United States. However, sceptics might ask, if the outcome of innovation is so dependent on the particular balance of so many different factors, and if there were key differences in the three countries, why were the overall outcomes effectively the same? The end result of the introduction of new technology has been a diminution of union power and the acceptance of new conditions imposed by management, even in Australia, where Marjoribanks argues the unions have remained key actors. From the evidence of his case studies, he appears to overstate the capacity of workers to influence the introduction of technological innovation.

Notwithstanding this criticism, Marjoribanks has succeeded in producing a stimulating and well-written study of the impact of global and technological changes on the workplace, which recognises the importance of the events at Wapping for newspaper production world-wide.

Staffordshire University

Michael Temple

Gender, Power and the Household
L. McKie, S. Bowlby and S. Gregory (eds.)

Gender, Power and the Household is an edited collection of chapters, most of which draw on empirical social research and are written by contributors to the “Gender Perspectives on
Household Issues” conference, organised by the editors in April 1995. The book comes in four parts, starting with a section called ‘Theoretical Issues’. Here, two chapters — one by the editors and one by David Morgan — develop the theoretical context of the book. The editors introduce the book, and both chapters address how gender, family and household have been conceptualised. Morgan argues that there are complexities in studying the gendering of households, partly due to the fact that households differ so much in terms of the people living in them. His suggestion that much can be learned from a focus on household types other than the ‘nuclear family’ is not really put into practice in this particular volume. With the exception of one chapter on lone mothers, the others all centre on heterosexual couple households with children.

Part II, ‘Gendered Care’, contains an account by Duindam of a rather specific group of Dutch fathers who take a primary role in the care of their children at home. The Seymour and Gregory chapters offer good illustrations of interaction dynamics in households subject to a sudden change in their lives. I found the Seymour chapter particularly interesting for its deconstruction of the various forms of negotiation taking place in households experiencing the onset of disablement, and how this highlights the nature of power relations between partners in the intimate couples studies.

The relationship between the public and the private comes to the fore especially in the third part of the book called ‘Gendered Time and Space’. Stephens focuses on the various ways in which the combination of motherhood and careers influence the time experience/use/strategies of professional medical women, whilst Standing shows how the public sphere — schools, their requests for ‘parental involvement’ and notions of ‘good motherhood’ — penetrates the private lives of women who head lone-parent, low-income families. These dictate the time-scheduling of the women’s lives and also negatively affect what they can hope to achieve in terms of paid work.

Valentine’s chapter concerns the negotiations that take place between parents and children on their use of and access to public space. It is argued that both children and their parents work on the construction of children’s competence to frequent public space on their own. The significance of gender on these outcomes is discussed in relation to different perceptions of boys’ and girls’ competences and the differing parenting styles of fathers and mothers. The last chapter in this section, by Gilroy, considers the relationship between household dynamics and women’s leisure.

Collections like this often offer chapters which work more or less well in terms of the particular interests of the reader and/or their formulation around the major themes of the book. In these respects, I found the last section not as engaging as the others. Arber’s chapter contains very interesting evidence on the earnings and income differentials between partners in heterosexual couple households, but it does not offer evidence to support the link between this and variations in economic power between husbands and wives. The chapters by Hardill et al. and by Corden and Eardley again report on rather interesting research topics, but there was a lot of contextual writing in these chapters, with rather less on issues such as how the findings show the operation of power in the households studied. In relation to Chapter 11, for instance, I would have been interested in learning how the authors derive the categories ‘traditional’ and ‘egalitarian’, and how the respondents in their study thought about them.

One might have expected this volume to have appeared on the market somewhat sooner. Since another collection of papers from this conference appeared in a special issue of Women’s Studies International Forum in 1997 (Vol. 20, No. 3), I just wonder whether the cause for this must be sought with the publisher? It must be worrying to both authors and readers to have to wait so long for the results of research which, in some cases, was conducted in the late 1980s and early 1990s. These issues aside, I think this volume is a welcome addition to debate on the gendering processes which are ongoing between household members. By considering the consequences of changes in the ways we think about gender for the study of households and their internal dynamics, by
drawing the reader’s attention to issues of time and space, and by going beyond studies which focus solely on the division of domestic labour, it also develops debate in this area.

University of Durham

Organizational Culture and Identity: Unity and Division at Work

Martin Parker


Concerned with organisational culture, the central tenet of this book is that culture is not a harmoniously agreed principle, but a ‘fragmented’ unity, where members are simultaneously both fragmented and unified. The groundwork is laid through a detailed overview of three texts concerned with differing management styles: Peters and Waterman’s (1982) call for ‘Honda’ level of employee dedication, rather than stifling bureaucratic working cultures; Deal and Kennedy’s (1988) anthropological analysis, citing the manager as ‘the big tribal chief’ and Ouchi (1981) who suggests a move away from individually compensated contributions towards a ‘clan-like’ mentality, working for the common good of the organisation. Further introductory chapters examine culture in different ways, through its history (Chapter 2), previous academic searches for unified definitions (Chapter 3), and its language and representation (Chapter 4).

Leaving the theory side behind, the book moves on to offer detailed examples of the fragmentary nature of organisational culture through the analysis of ethnographic studies undertaken by the author within three differing industries: a health authority, small manufacturing foundry and a building society, with a chapter devoted to each. Despite their diverse characteristics and nature of work, Parker contends that all three organisations experience operational difficulties through failure to generate an organisational culture understood by all employees. Organisational problems for the health authority were compounded by an internal power struggle between managers, doctors and information technology (IT) professionals, each vying for ‘ultimate control’ of new IT systems. For the foundry, the half-hearted imposition of Japanese-style manufacturing practices accounted for the emergence of division and distrust between the pragmatic mass-production model of ‘old engineers’ and the abstract systematic concept of ‘new engineers’, whilst increased use of IT in selling and regularisation of workflows caused concerns for staff within the building society. Parker’s research thereby illustrates that inherent problems for all three sites can be seen to arise from the pursuit of divergent, often contradictory, strategies by employees and management giving rise to differing understandings as to the central task of the organisation. All respondents may work for the same organisation, feel they have its best interests at heart, but hold widely differing views of what the organisation should be.

Parker is concerned to highlight how his research illustrates the multiple divisions inherent within organisational culture, and three types are identified: spatial/functional, generational and occupational. Despite these problems with fragmentation, the research also highlights the existence of certain commonalities of organisational culture revolving around patriarchy, influence of local cultures and specific working practices.

A final chapter reiterates the central theme of the book, that there is no one perspective on organisational culture, and that ‘all organisational cultures are unique, yet at the same time they share similar features’ (p. 222). Parker further concludes that ‘organisation’ is both a noun and a verb – a continually contested process.
The introductory theory is very well illustrated by the ethnographic research undertaken, and a brief methodology is offered as an appendix. The book is well signposted, offering summaries both at the beginning and end of each chapter. Though these link the sections very well, they may be criticised as repetitive.

Whilst appealing in its theoretical perspective to students of management and organisational studies, the research examples make the book of value to industrial sociologists and its straightforward clarity will appeal to undergraduate sociology students meeting concepts of social theory for the first time.

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University of Plymouth

SUSAN CHILD

Researching Health Needs: A Community-Based Approach

Judy Payne


The statutory requirement to assess the health needs of the population was laid upon Health Authorities by the 1990 NHS and Community Care Act. Within each Health Authority a number of different groups – such as general practitioners, health visitors or members of voluntary agencies – may seek to build on, or develop, these population-based assessments in order to provide a health needs assessment of smaller groups, such as patients in a general practice population. At whatever levels such an assessment is undertaken, the investigators must gather information that is robust enough to support the planning and provision of services. However, despite the availability of numerous introductory tests on research methods, it would be difficult to find a single volume that addresses the specific range of methodological challenges that confront those who attempt to undertake a health needs assessment. Judy Payne’s book is a very welcome answer to this problem.

Researching Health Needs grew out of work which Payne conducted for the Healthy Plymouth Alliance. This group required expert advice on research methods and techniques for its own investigations in the field of need assessment and Payne produced a handbook to guide its work. As a result of this collaboration Payne saw the need for a more developed and extended version of the handbook and her present volume is the result. It offers a lucid and logical exposition of the research process. It begins with a short introduction to the relevant policy context and a clarification of the terms ‘health’, ‘need’ and ‘community’. The following chapters cover the planning stage of a project, a general introduction to collecting information and the use of existing information such as morbidity and mortality statistics. The book then moves on to the empirical stage of research namely sampling selection, data gathering, analysis and reporting. The volume concludes with a number of short case studies that illustrate a variety of health needs assessment projects detailing, inter alia, the main focus of the investigation, the principal investigator, the research approach, and some examples of costing and funding sources.
Payne’s book has a number of key strengths. It uses research terminology judiciously, providing clear explanations and illustrations. A useful selection of references to additional texts is also given. The emphasis on, and a guide to, undertaking sufficient preparatory groundwork for an investigation represents wise counsel for the novice researcher. In addition, the identification of a range of typical problems associated with the interpretation of official statistics will help would-be investigators to avoid drawing wrong conclusions about the health status of different groups. There is a useful and succinct description of a number of deprivation indices, together with relevant references. The sections on sampling strategies and the analysis of statistical data are particularly good in terms of coverage, clarity and explanation of technical terms. As an introductory text, the volume does not include coverage of the more challenging research strategies that are necessary for investigating hard-to-reach groups such as prostitutes, homeless people or those who misuse drugs. It also deals quite sparingly with the ethical issues associated with social research. This is slightly surprising given that health needs assessment will focus on sensitive issues and may involve seeking access to sick and vulnerable people. However, as an all round ‘use-friendly’ text, the book achieves its aim admirably. It presents a clear guide while at the same time conveying the challenges and possible pitfalls inherent in investigative research work. This approach will, without doubt, encourage readers to adopt the level of reflective and critical awareness that is so necessary to the conduct of sound research. Furthermore, an important message is contained within the final pages where Payne identifies the strategies which researchers or investigators should use if they wish their findings to have an impact on either service providers or policy makers. Payne is quite right to draw attention to this frequently neglected aspect of presentation, as it is essential in this particular field.

This book provides an invaluable resource for anyone planning to undertake needs assessment in the field of health, community or social care. It also offers an excellent basic text on health and social research for undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Glasgow Caledonian University

JEAN MCINTOSH

Message Received

Greg Philo (ed.)


Over the past five years the seemingly indefatigable Glasgow Media Group, who first came to public prominence with the seminal Bad News in 1976 and have been closely studying media representations ever since, have been examining the ‘production, content and reception of media messages across a range of substantive areas – from public understanding of mental illness and child abuse through to media portrayals of ‘race’, migration and violence’ (p. ix), and Message Received brings together their findings.

As in their previous work, the approach is both empirically based and critical, with the central emphasis upon analysing the role which media messages play in producing public beliefs and understandings and setting agendas of public concerns, in order to demonstrate the way in which these messages help to sustain ‘the real and often brutal relations of power which form our culture’ (p. ix). Thus there is little patience here with ‘semiotic democracy’, ‘textual polysemy’ and the rest of the theoretical baggage which, Greg Philo argues, has meant that much of media studies has ‘lost the ability to engage critically with the society in which it exists and has drifted off into irrelevance’ (p. ix) and the production of ‘arcane and pointless material’ (p. xvii). For the Group there is, most
emphatically, a real world out there which cannot be simply collapsed into media representations, and the gaps between image and reality are perfectly proper objects of critical sociological analysis. This is not to suggest, however, that the Group are hostile to media theory per se, only to certain forms of it. Nor do they believe that the media are all-powerful agents of influence. The underlying principles of their approach are clearly outlined by Jenny Kitzinger in the book’s first chapter. Here she draws on the subsequent case studies to show how their work with focus groups demonstrates that the media are not only important conduits for basic information but are also ‘clearly used as common reference points to explain or justify certain points of view’ (p. 5). At the same time, analysis of actual media texts shows that they can also be ‘very effective conveyors of false information’ (p. 6). However, she also stresses the need to take into account that ‘every media message interacts both with the universe of other media messages and with the material and social realities of people’s lives’ (p. 10) and that ‘the power of any particular media message depends on how it taps into people’s pre-existing perceptions’ (p. 8), which may derive from other media messages, personal experience, ideological positions or a mixture of all three. Thus it is acknowledged that audiences can indeed engage critically with media representations whilst also stressing, via the work with focus groups, that they do not always necessarily do so. Kitzinger concludes that the fact of active engagement ‘should not prevent us from acknowledging media power. It is clearly true that personal or collective experience, politics, logic and scepticism, as well as diversity of images within the media, allow for a more complex process than straightforward ‘imprinting’ of individual media messages on a tabula-rasa audience. However, it is still possible to chart media influences and to trace sources of inaccurate beliefs or particular frameworks of thinking. Acknowledging the complexity of audience reception processes does not necessitate deserting any attempt to theorise about media influence’ (p. 20).

Indeed, and the Group’s stress on the importance of critically based empirical study of media texts, the actual processes of their production, and the responses of real audiences to them, is entirely laudable, with much of the work presented here being extremely valuable and a welcome addition to an all-too-small field. The only problem, however, is a distinct tendency to elide media influence with ‘media effects’, a term which simply cannot be unloaded of its crudely positivist overtones, replete with inescapable connotations of ‘hypodermic’ media injecting dangerous messages straight into the brains of passive, manipulated audiences/victims. Indeed, Greg Philo and David Miller themselves highlight the shortcomings of this approach, only to express regret on the following page that ‘questions of influence or effects … have become objects of derision in some quarters’ (p. 24). Similarly, in the course of successive sentences they appear to engage in a spot of intellectual sleight of hand by seeming to equate ‘the potential impact of media on behaviour’ and film and television as ‘powerful influences on audiences’ (p. 29). Elisions of this kind particularly inform Philo’s chapter on children and film/video/television violence, making it one of the weakest in the book. There is, however, not the slightest intellectual inconsistency in deriding ‘effects’ theories whilst firmly agreeing with Philo that ‘media representations can be very influential under certain circumstances’ (p. 3).

Brunel University

Leisure in Contemporary Society

Ken Roberts


Ken Roberts has been a major contributor to the development of sociological perspectives on leisure for more than thirty years and in this, his latest book, he seeks both to sustain many of the
arguments that he has pursued in earlier writings, whilst acknowledging the needs to address an evolving agenda. The conventional sociology of leisure, he claims (p. 159) faces potentially terminal challenges from alternative and competing perspectives – from Marxism to postmodernism, and from cultural studies and new sociologies of consumption. The response that he proposes to these challenges (perhaps unsurprisingly) is one of assimilation, in which he asserts an almost reassuring adherence to building upon foundations of earlier research, whilst drawing selectively upon arguments from the new perspectives.

In attempting to achieve such a synthesis, Robert’s book works rather well. It is intended as an introductory text for undergraduates and both the language and the structure of the volume are well matched to the needs of this particular readership. The work is arranged around nine chapters, focusing at first upon the traditional interests in the growth of leisure as a social phenomenon (Chapter 2) and the relations between leisure and work (Chapter 3); gender (Chapter 4); and the life course (Chapter 5). Thereafter, Roberts broadens his discussions to examine how far new perspectives that centre upon the experience of leisure and its place both within individual lifestyles and a wider consumer culture, enhance our understanding of the place of leisure in contemporary society. In so doing, Roberts returns at almost every opportunity to reinforce a basic premise upon which the book rests: namely, that despite fashionable shifts to redefine leisure in terms of experience, traditional views of leisure as a residual concept remain as the ‘more usable and productive’ (p. 24).

Throughout the book, the style is clear and mercifully free of the jargon that has sometimes plagued texts on the sociology of leisure. Within each chapter (especially in the first half of the book) Roberts initiates the discussions with a broadly familiar set of understandings, but then encourages the reader to question and reappraise the ways in which contemporary social change creates new questions or invites alternative ways of reading the apparently familiar. This is an excellent approach for an undergraduate text. Student readers will also appreciate the fact that each chapter is lightly referenced – or appears so, yet the sum of the parts is a substantial bibliography that will provide a valuable staring point for further reading or research for course assignments.

Throughout the book, Roberts also manages to convey a lively sense of how academic enquiry has progressed and developed. This comes through very well in the chapter on gender, but is also true elsewhere. Although he is often sceptical, particularly towards postmodernism and the current fashion amongst some social theorists for decentring (which he wapsishly describes as ‘a rather tortuous route to a well-established position’ (p. 146)), he does a generally good job in raising awareness of a range of critical perspectives, particularly in the latter stages of the book. As a result, one of the great strengths that this reviewer values in this work is its sense of balance.

The main areas of weakness are in presentation. Limited use is made of illustrative material (in the form of tables or diagrams) and whilst there is some use of boxed information, this looks like an afterthought and is done inconsistently. One or two boxes contain so little information as to be almost without value. Frequent use is made of subtitles to break up the text, but some sections are relatively short and occasionally the discussion becomes too fragmented as a result. As an undergraduate text, some thought might also have been given to appending annotated reference lists and key discussion questions as a guide to further study, and each chapter would have benefited from a conclusion to draw together what are often quite detailed lines of argument. The greatest weakness, however, is the cover priced. This is a book that deserves to be bought and read widely by undergraduate students, but at £30 for a paperback of just 250 pages, I fear that relatively few will do so – which will be a pity.

Staffordshire University

STEPHEN WILLIAMS
Mental Adjustment to the Post-Communist System in Poland
Kazimierz M. Slomczynski with Krystyna Janicka, Bogdan W. Mach and Wojciech Zaborowski

This book was published originally in Polish with the title *Struktura Społeczna i Osobowosc* (Social Structure and Personality) and has appeared already in English in the *International Journal of Sociology*, Volume 27, Numbers 1 and 2 (1997). The authors intend that the rather unwieldy current English title should reflect the central concern of the book – an evaluation of the psychological adjustments made by the Polish people to the transformation from socialism to capitalism. This evaluation is carried out by the analysis of a series of surveys carried out between 1978/80 and 1992/95. The original 1978 survey of economically active urban males only, ‘Job Conditions and their Psychological Consequences’, was modelled after surveys carried out by Melvin Kohn and associates in the United States. The second main survey took place in 1992 and was a partial replication of the 1978 survey with the sample being extended to include women and the economically inactive. Both surveys were supplemented by small surveys of the spouses and a child of a subsample of respondents. Reinterviews of the samples to these smaller surveys and to some additional surveys add a panel dimension. The resulting datasets allow for comparison between gross responses to the same or similar items between ‘socialist times’ in 1978 and ‘capitalist times’ in 1992 as well as father/mother or parent/child comparisons and also a limited amount of true longitudinal analysis.

These data are subjected to a variety of multivariate analyses in order to generate empirical findings that are all concerned with the effect changing social structure has had on people’s psychological values. The general form of these analyses is to construct a composite ‘psychological’ variable from the results of a factor analysis of several attitude questions. The resulting ‘psychological’ variable then becomes the dependent variable in a causal analysis in which the independent variables are mainly indicators of social structural change. The authors find that people located in more privileged positions exhibit higher levels of ‘self-direction’. The mechanism driving this relationship is seen to be ‘learning generalization’ – people in higher level positions have more complex work tasks, more control over their actions and are less subject to routinisation at work – features of their work that lead to ‘self-direction’. Since the general form of this relationship holds both for the 1978 ‘socialist’ data and for the 1992 ‘capitalist’ data, the authors conclude that ‘self-direction’ is driven by job-related characteristics and not by changes in societal value features. Similarly, the authors find that parental values strongly affect the values of their offspring in both the pre-1989 and post-1989 watershed data. Aversion to change in the social system is found to be most directly affected by a ‘privileged’ or ‘unprivileged market position’ and to current economic success – indicators of people’s interests as implied by social structure (the ‘privileged’ are less adverse). The main conclusion is that, while levels of some attitudes have changed (for instance, towards more self-direction generally), the job-based mechanisms driving these attitudes have remained constant across the change from socialism to capitalism.

Aside from a tendency to use ordinal data in parametric analyses, the empirical results seem sound and are quite extensive and carefully developed. The main problem of the book is one of context. The research design is based upon comparing two bodies of data, one collected when Poland was socialist and a complementary set of data collected after the transformation to capitalism. There is only a very rudimentary mention of the historical contexts during which the datasets were collected. For instance, manual workers in the 1992 dataset are found to have the highest ‘aversion to systematic change’. One may assume that this might be due to their
vulnerability and having been adversely affected by the transition to capitalism. The authors, however, do not provide information about the relative experiences that different social strata have had of unemployment and losses associated with the transformation to capitalism. The explanations for empirical results often seem to imply a relationship where none may exist. For example, in contrast to most of the sample, the intelligentsia surprisingly are found to have higher scores on an ‘authoritarian conservatism’ scale after the transition to capitalism. The exploration given is that the intelligentsia may have a clearer appreciation of the ‘real’ demands of the new Polish capitalist society. In the next chapter, however, the intelligentsia are found (less surprisingly) to have a higher level of ‘ideational flexibility’ which is associated with self-direction, which in turn is negatively correlated with ‘authoritarian conservatism’. In sum, while the book provides careful analyses of datasets that span the 1989 watershed, it is marred by the failure to place the empirical results into a relevant historical context. That, and the tendency to interpret results in an ‘abstracted empirical’ manner, mean that Mental Adjustment disappoints because it does not reward the reader with insights into the transition in Poland from socialism to capitalism.

The Queen’s University of Belfast

Robert L. Miller

The Social Edges of Psychoanalysis

N. Smelser


Experiencing Identity

I. Craib


Neil J Smelser’s The Social Edges of Psychoanalysis is a collection of essays on the social appliances of psychoanalysis, most of which were previously published in professional psychoanalytic and sociological journals during the last few decades. Organised around four central themes – interdisciplinarity, psychoanalytic sociology, ambivalence, and micro–macro connections – the book skilfully illuminates the ways in which psychoanalytic thinking can deepen a purely sociological approach to the self, social relations and culture. There is some consideration of how and why psychoanalysis became part of social theory (from Marcuse to Habermas, as well as contemporary feminist and postmodern writings), and also of the dynamics of psychoanalysis as a critical method. The bulk of the essays, however, are concerned with the deployment of psychoanalytic concepts and methods for understanding social behaviour and culture, with a particular stress on how Freudian and post-Freudian theory can inform and guide social scientists’ empirical research. Smelser’s own suggestive merging of sociology and psychoanalysis is best represented here in his essays on affirmative action, multiculturalism and the ‘culture wars’. Using psychoanalytic theory to probe the cultural and psychological meanings of ambivalence, Smelser deftly traces the emotional roots of social diversification and its various political manifestations. He argues that debates over cultural diversity, multiculturalism and the integrity of community necessarily involve flux and negotiation, rather than neat conclusion and closure.

If The Social Edges of Psychoanalysis is an interesting introduction to the complex relationship between sociology and psychoanalysis, it is also a fascinating guide to the prejudices against psychoanalysis that pervade the sociological profession as a whole. In a moving autobiographical
Smelser discusses in detail the hostility and antagonism that many sociologists have shown towards Freud and psychoanalysis, and considers possible reasons for such resistance and fear. His own professional career is very interesting in this connection. Many readers will know of Smelser’s important contributions to the sociology of social movements, as well as his writings on British social history and economic sociology. Perhaps fewer will know that Smelser is also a psychoanalyst who has worked as a part-time therapist for the University of California student health service for many years, as well as being a major contributor to the University’s doctoral programme in clinical psychology. Smelser connects his long-standing interest in depth psychology to both disciplinary limitations (the narrow-mindedness of much sociology) and personal difficulties (primarily the painful end of his first marriage). Of his decision to apply for training in the early 1960s at the San Francisco Psychoanalytic Institute, Smelser writes: ‘My colleagues in sociology provided no support for this decision. Most of them were indifferent or unfriendly to psychoanalysis, and they wondered why I would be going off in a direction that would not help and might detract from my career as a professional sociologist’ (p. viii). Bearing in mind that Smelser is a former President of the American Sociological Association, such a comment can only make one wonder about the interdisciplinary interests and credentials of professional sociology.

American sociology, however, has not always shown antipathy towards psychoanalysis. Smelser notes that, during his time as an undergraduate and postgraduate at Harvard, the culture of the Social Relations Department was strongly predisposed towards psychoanalytic thinking. Indeed, many of Harvard’s luminaries – including Talcott Parsons, Robert F. Bales, Alex Inkeles and Gardner Lindzey – pursued psychoanalytic training at the Boston Psychoanalytic Institute. Interestingly, Smelser gained work as a research assistant with Parsons when the latter was writing *Family, Socialization, and Interaction Process*, a volume that Smelser views as foundational to psychoanalytic social theory. Many years later Smelser also worked with Erik Erikson, on a collaboration regarding changing patterns of work and love in the late modern age. From this angle alone, Smelser has interesting things to say about shifts in sociological thinking towards issues of human subjectivity, agency, mind and emotion. As such *The Social Edges of Psychoanalysis* is an engrossing account of some of the curves and colours of psychoanalytically informed social theory.

*Experiencing Identity*, by British sociologist Ian Craib, also charts the fraught relationship between social theory and psychoanalysis, with particular emphasis upon identity and the self. Developing upon his previous books, *Psychoanalysis and Social Theory* (1989) and *The Importance of Disappointment* (1994), Craib is out to show that sociological theory tends to suppress the process of internal negotiation involved in the creation of identity or identities – that is, the world of affect, emotion, desire and fantasy. For Craib, the emphasis placed upon difference and otherness in recent (and particularly postmodern) sociology represents an important conceptual advance, primarily since it draws attention to the process of intersubjective negotiation at the heart of social identities. Yet the social fabrication of identity, notes Craib, is only half the picture; what goes on ‘inside’ the agent or subject of identity is equally significant, especially if we are adequately to grasp the non-identical aspects (such as unconscious processes) of identity. The lack of concern with lived internal experience evident in various versions of sociological theory (from functionalism to systems theory) creates immense theoretical and empirical problems in Craib’s view.

Like Smelser’s collection, the bulk of the essays comprising *Experiencing Identity* have been previously published, and were written over a period of several decades. It works reasonably well as a book, although the organisation of themes and topics is not always easy to follow, and at times one gains the impression that the odd essay has just been added to give padding to the volume. The
essays concern, among other topics, sociological theories of identity, the application of psychoanalytic thought to sociological issues, the recent turn to subjectivity in social theory (with detailed discussion of Goffman and Giddens), the relationship of psychoanalysis and philosophy, and the articulation of psychic space in recent versions of psychoanalytic and social thought.

Smelser and Craib are in agreement that psychoanalysis powerfully questions and subverts sociological assumptions of rationality and knowledge based on cognition. In particular, the macro-micro link so dear to sociologists is subjected to an interesting critique by both authors — with Smelser arguing for a dualistic theory that contains both social-structural and social psychological elements, and Craib theorising the tension between social identity on the one hand and identity or lived experience on the other. My own sense of this sort of critique is that, while provocative and interesting, it seems dated and somewhat tired. Rather than deploy psychoanalysis to reassert the power of subjectivity over social forms and structure, the more interesting task, in my view, is to engage critically with psychoanalytical theory to deconstruct and reconstruct sociological divisions governing imagination and society, fantasy and institution. Here the post-Lacanian, and sometimes anti-Lacanian, tradition of European social theory (from Cornelius Castoriadis to Jacques Derrida) provokes a fresh analysis of the production of psychic space, the making of radical imagination, and the organisation of social relations or practices. Certainly, as Smelser and Craib highlight, social theory needs to attend to psychic processes that human subjects bring to their encounters with the social network. But for a radical social theory, even more than that can be said: there is no society or institution not governed by the social imaginary. The task of a critical social theory is to interrogate and elucidate the creation of representations of action.

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ANTHONY ELLIOTT

**Globalization and Culture**

**John Tomlinson**


Without question, the theme of globalisation has been the leading idea in the social science during the 1990s. And the demand that culture be taken seriously has been the leading argument of sociologists and those in cultural studies writing in this field. As a theme, globalisation has also been a publishers’ dream: one needs to write about world experiences and not just those specific to any nation state — experiences as relevant in Los Angeles, Johannesburg, Melbourne or London. Such a demand means that they can sell such books, especially those accessible to an undergraduate audience like this, across the globe. This book, then, like the many others currently available on the subject, is as much a product of the effects of globalisation on academic publishing as it is a book about globalisation.

Tomlinson’s brief is simple: he has written a book in that new global genre of the textbook/monograph, accessible to the imaginary ‘second-year undergraduate’ that seeks to put the analysis of culture at the centre of understanding globalisation. Culture is not treated as a cause but a principle consequence and way of experiencing globalisation. We are presented with six chapters which offer an informed review of the most familiar literature on the various sub-themes that such a brief requires: the relationship between globalisation and culture; the relationship between globalisation and modernity; utopian and dystopian perspectives on
globalisation; de-territorialisation; global mediated experience; and the ‘problem’ of the cosmopolitan type. Without doubt this is a useful text worthy of a place on any undergraduate reading list concerned with globalisation that students will find eminently readable, but Tomlinson clearly wants his book to be read as more than just a student text. He wants, in particular, to develop a new spatial vocabulary for globalisation, called here ‘complex connectivity’ (p. 2 and throughout). The aim is to avoid the problems associated with regional and dualistic thinking more associated with analysing the nation state than the globe. It is this theme that Tomlinson weaves through his review of the field. Such a position allows him to offer a pluralist and pragmatic understanding of the central questions of culture raised by the problematic of globalisation. At times, it also means he is a little bland in his argument; wanting to see both sides of the argument and not wanting to take the ‘strong’ position found in some of the more speculative pronouncements that can be found in the literature.

But the main issue raised here is whether such spatial metaphors are appropriate to understanding globalisation. While relational approaches might be commendable and indeed preferable to dualistic theorising, they are not without their problems. As we all rush madly towards metaphors of network, connectivity and flow to try and capture something of the complexity that underlies the idea of globalisation, moving away from an outmoded regional spatial thinking associated with the nation state and a map of the world divided into empires and blocs, one cannot help feeling we are missing something. In such a view the globe becomes a space of difference, cultural difference, and of distributions of uneven but knowable relations, notably power relations. This is a world in which everything becomes both connectable and accessible, albeit still with a skewed geometry that draws upon an earlier spatial imaginary of centres and margins. What we are missing in such an account, though, is the possibility of alterity, or rather we witness the tendency to turn any idea of otherness into an example of (related) difference.

The ‘benign universalism’ that Tomlinson defends as a philosophical basis for this view of connectivity (p. 68ff) is perhaps less benign than he thinks. Rather, it is another form of Western cultural imperialism that hides behind the guise of a ‘politics of recognition’. As the anthropologist Marilyn Strathern has persuasively argued, the vocabulary of endless networks and relations of difference (complex connectivity in this context) is not a universal way of thinking about relations but one underpinned by the epistemological conditioning provided by a Euro-American model of kinship that assumes relations to be infinite in possible connection. One cannot be outside such kinship relations – one cannot be other than the way one can be in other cultures. This is only one view of relation (and network). Others, Strathern argues, are more sensitive to the question of otherness and the ‘stops’ it can bring to a network.

Tomlinson’s final chapter on cosmopolitanism testifies to this denial of the possibility of alterity within such an idea of globalisation as complex connectivity and the stops it can perform. While he is keen to distance himself from simplistic models that see the cosmopolitan as the figure of globalisation, acknowledging the Eurocentric and patriarchal assumptions that remain hidden behind such a figure, he ends up defending a variant of the cosmopolitan experience that he calls ‘ethical glocalization’ (p. 194). Both pragmatic and universal, seeking to make connections across the globe, respecting local difference, perhaps also exhibiting a little guilt about the previous role of Western imperialism, such a figure seeks to make connections, to make relations and to remove any possible location for alterity and the trouble it brings. Why is this a problem? It refuses to recognise the effects upon both epistemology and representation that otherness can have when experienced as an outside rather than as another connected relation or source of difference; it refuses, moreover, to recognise the interpellating force of the non-relation in helping to make this globalised set of relations – for good or ill. It also denies, as a matter of course, other ontological,
epistemological and representational frames for understanding the world that do not fit with this idea of an endless set of connections.

Just one suggestion will have to suffice: we now have a certain knowledge of the HIV virus and the effects it continues to have across the globe; its globalising force. We can indeed relate to it through an understanding of the globe as complex connectivity. We have turned it from a source of alterity to one of relation, and in a certain way, through the epistemological models of Western science and epidemiology that assumes a variant of complex connectivity in the way that a virus moves. But there might have been other possibilities, other cultural understandings of relation that might have been taken and may as a consequence have had different effects on the spread of the disease, especially in the non-Western world. Tomlinson’s spatiality of complex connectivity might pass for a way of thinking about globalisation in the sense that it takes us away from outmoded regional and geometric thinking but is still does not capture the uncertainty and multiplicity that we must associate with globalisation and the moments of alterity that will be unleashed within it. Its universalising of relation and connection fallaciously assumes that we can know how this world is connected in advance. It offers a single, perspectival mode of representation and knowledge that remains resolutely Western and seeks to impose this across the entire globe. Like most of the literature the book assesses, it is still a theory that emanates from Euro-America and is insensitive to what we might learn from other forms of knowledge emanating from other bits of the planet.

Brunel University

KEVIN HETHERINGTON

Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-first Century

John Urry


In his latest book, Urry aims to set a sociological agenda for the twenty-first century, by unseating the prime sociological concept: society. Faith in the distinctive social characteristics of this or that ‘society’ seems no longer plausible in a globalised setting. Instead, individual national governments merely exercise precarious acts of control over a small segment of the economic processes, ecological catastrophes, transnational diasporas, and multimedia information exchanges, which are the social substance within which they are embedded. At some points such exercises of regulation may be effective – but they take place sporadically, and merely interrupt larger trains of events. Incidences of the homogenisation of such mobilities into a semblance of locally specific order – what we might risk calling ‘a society’ – should thus be seen as temporary pleats in a moving fabric, soon dislodged by the next set of ripples. Sociology should not make the mistake of reifying such national projects, by asserting the existence of any ‘society’ as such.

Urry sets out a two-part agenda in the book, via a careful linking of existing approaches. The first part reviews the conditions of this new conceptualisation of global mobilities; the second defines a series of what Urry sees as new areas of focus, which he suggests must be central to future sociological projects: the senses, time, dwelling-places and citizenship.

Fundamental to this first part are the ‘flows’ of material which criss-cross the globe. Like body fluids, they circulate, picking up new objects on their way. A flow of peoples passes from one country to the next, depositing customs while acquiring new ones; and flows of capital come
across national boundaries with their own purposes. An idea may flow too, transforming as it is picked up and reworked by different groups, who disseminate it as a flow of images and data via global information networks. Such flows converge into ‘scapes’: networks of nodes which connect and relay the flows. We may, for instance, talk of the car-scape: the totality of human and non-human processes connected to car-users. Such a scape comprises particular locations (the petrol station, the lay-by, the car-ferry) and produces a defined set of sensory experiences (music, air-conditioning, the musty smell of recirculating air). It consists of a precise set of emotional states (from drowsiness to road-rage) and is shaped by a range of legal, economic and technological shifts. The car-scape — as simultaneously the collective experience of all the world’s drivers, the global map of their journeys, and the details of the laws, investments and breakthroughs which have defined its contours — is a social phenomenon without being a society. For Urry, such scapes must be read not as the effects of any given society, but as themselves semi-autonomous realms, productive of new social formations.

In his account of scapes and flows Urry sets an impressive agenda, plausible in its fine details and exciting in its provocative new metaphors. He synthesises an extraordinary array of theoretical perspectives and specific research projects, to give the definitive account of the new global landscape — attentive both to its coherences and its decompositions, its freedoms and its brutal repressions.

The second part of this project is less successful. Many of what are claimed as methodological innovations are familiar enough. For instance, the claim that sociology neglects the body might have been plausible fifteen years ago, but it hardly holds up now. Furthermore, it is not often clear how these ‘new’ areas of study connect to his larger account of global flows. When he makes this link, the meandering central portion of the book comes to life. For instance, the notion of ‘perpetual present’ in which the future is unrealisable and the past seems unbearably remote is familiar from Lasch’s *The Culture of Narcissism*. But when Urry yokes it to the arrival of new socialities, whose sense of ‘instantaneous time’ allows the rejection of regulated time of working weeks and eight-hour days, in favour of new temporal regimes that transcend individual national clock-times (such as the convergence of television watchers around a shared spectacle), the concept acquires a new vividness and depth. Too often though, when this link is lost, the chapters become interesting but unfocused reviews of recent work.

Whatever its flaws, this is a lively book, moving at an energetic pace, which draws together many of the key threads of recent social theory.

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JO EADIE

**Male Bodies: Health Education and Identity**

**Jonathan Watson**


(ISBN 0335-19785-X)

This is a provocative and challenging book; erudite and densely written. Not the kind of paperback one can browse at the airport escaping the drudgery, after marking mountains of scripts, doing numerous course evaluations and sitting on committees of mock democracy. The body and all its variants now spearheads many sociology degrees and interests as a major theoretical and organising category: for example, rounding off Foucault’s grand theory (with its ‘dodgy history’);
Armstrong and Douglas’s body as symbolic space; body as sexual politics, control and risk; body as attempt to specify gender with unsolvable difficulties of defining ‘masculinity’; not least, specialised bodies, as in disablement.

Wisely, Watson does not attempt the scattershot approach to body. His focus is the construct of male embodiment, health and culture identity. His targets are policy makers and their foot soldiers, like health promoters, who peddle simple formulae for ‘redemption’ – the four steps to heaven type. Men should change their beliefs, give up selfish and risky behaviour and rectify their deficits of life-style (as Woody Allen says, ‘eat brown rice and live for ever’). Watson’s sample, albeit mostly middle-class, employed, 30 – 40 years in North East Scotland, are on message. What is debatable in whether change is an individual matter or one from a constraining environment. The author is all for ‘evidence based practice’, the recent National Health Service slogan. His analysis shows the difficulty of the task here, for very few health agencies conduct serious research into men’s health.

The opening section of the book succinctly runs through all the bad news concerning men’s health, borrowing feminist critiques: in health debates men are still invisible, reified and crucified on the cross of an undifferentiated masculinity, neglected in screening processes (9,000 deaths from prostate cancer is not as ‘evocative’ as breast cancer); increased deaths from suicide are reaching lower age groups; infrequent visits to general practitioners; declining sperm levels; and the greatest inequality, women are increasingly living longer than men (but maybe getting more Alzheimer’s disease), etc.

Watson’s overview of body theorising setting the stage for his own research into male lay beliefs may be a little truncated for the analyst, but is a good and fair summary for students. The Orphic myth of the body, though attributed to Descartes, has much earlier roots in Plato’s notion of the transmigration of souls. Descartes’s body as ‘earthen machine’, the one sex body, women’s ‘imperfect’ body, the rise of the medicalised body and then Turner’s discourse (1984), sorting out the modern sociological research agenda for the body, are notable benchmarks. Douglas’s two bodies – the physical and symbolic, with origins in Levi-Strauss – also set the modern agenda.

The hinge of the book, its template for the author’s own theorising, is the major section on men’s narratives, lay beliefs, on body and health; health as a resource, as fitness, well being, physical appearance, etc. Others have also noted the same; e.g., fitness being predicated on work and other activities, fitness being the commonest word used by younger men to relate notions of health. The body, implicitly and explicitly, underpinned health talk. Watson is quite clear that his own association with the health centre from which the sample derived and his being regarded as a ‘doctor’, could have influenced the outcome. Some, worried about their health, wished him to examine them! The shared images of healthy/unhealthy bodies did not always refer specifically to males. ‘Naturalism’ was often appealed to in elaborating shape. Those who exercised little perceived those who did as having ‘artificial’ bodies. Dieting, too, was considered a women’s activity. Marriage was considered as a time for ‘letting go’ (as women do and stop dieting).

What Watson does not comment on is that men’s accounts are very much devoid of talk about specific organs. Like ‘externalising’ health beliefs the ‘internal’ body in largely an undifferentiated black box. Very little cross-cultural data, not Eurocentric, is presented for further illumination of the author’s own interesting findings. Instead, he uses his grounded data to build his own model of body representation, adding to the growing pantheon of body typologies. With Parsonian vigour his four-fold division of male embodiment of being in shape includes: normative embodiment, with mesomorphic and endomorphic bodies merging into the unhealthy and blurring gender differences; pragmatic embodiment, marginalising body on parenthood; experiential embodiment, the site for experiencing emotionality, like the ‘good feel’ factor; visceral embodiment, very much ‘submerged’ and cannot be perceived by self or others except when it...
‘surfaces’ via the experiential body. The latter has its parallel with Freudian mysticism of mind and unconscious. Most types should have their linked ‘atypical’ mode, but Watson stops short of this.

Finally, this is a well-crafted book, a valuable addition to the sociology of body (not mind) debates. Policy makers, both health and welfare, can also learn much, but it will make their existing messages more difficult to project and raise difficult questions about their own practice. That is how it should be.

Manchester Metropolitan University

JOEL RICHMAN

Science and Social Science: An Introduction

Malcolm Williams


On the cover kneels a girl on a beach. Her concentration is etched on a pebble, which is fingered tightly. What is she up to? Read into the epigraph and it turns out that she is representing ‘science’, a modern echo of this famous moment of self-reflection by Isaac Newton. ‘I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing in the sea shore and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.’ Here then is our first glimpse of the grand theme of the book. Williams’s aim is to look beyond some of standard philosophical polemics and to scrutinise ‘scientific’ and ‘social’ inquiry at work in order to reassess the case that the former can inform the latter. His own position is ‘critically pro-science’, indeed he advocates that ‘social scientists should reclaim science as being as much theirs as it is the physicist’s or biologist’s.

Chapters 1 and 2 work through key episodes in natural science in endeavouring to uncover some of its major underlying principles. Williams avoids the trap of seeking any simple and single demarcation criterion to distinguish science from non-science. He proffers a view of scientific method as a heterogeneous system of checks and balances involving theory-choice, testing and inference. Chapter 3 sketches out the basic justification for a ‘scientific’ approach to social science. The social world does display pattern and regularity and is thus amenable to probabilistic explanation. Chapters 4 and 5 confront ‘two angry crowds’ – the strong programmers who denounce the science project per se and the sociological anti-naturalists with the more localised concern of keeping science out of their backyard. He confronts the former with throwing out baby with bath water and the latter with having cake and eating it. Chapter 6 considers the balance that must be struck between the quest for ‘objectivity’ and the lurking presence of ‘values’ in social research. Chapters 7 and 8 contemplate new pathways for a unified set of sciences, which share the common task of explaining complexity and emergence in social and physical systems.

Science and Social Science, then, presents us with an ambitious and intricate proposal, attempting on the one hand to forge ahead with a grand integration of the sciences whilst, at the rearguard, fighting off the philistine, relativist hoards. How fares the argument? Well, Williams is fortunate in his reviewer here, who is also critically pro-science, and thus rather well disposed to the overall thesis. What follows here, therefore, is an instant opinion of some relative successes and failures within a winning treatise.

The portrait of scientific practice is a masterpiece of precision and concision in its depiction of the layers of reasoning that actually go into the making of ‘good theory’. It should be compulsory
reading for all students, text-book writers and research professors still busy peddling Aunt Sally tales of science-as-positivism. The stress on the role of 'moderatum generalisations' as the engine and test bed of sociological hypotheses is a vital message for us all, as is the realisation that what follows can only be a modest social science. Some elegant arguments are used to pull the rug under the relativists and constructivists but this, after all, amounts to using the weapons of reason to undercut the authority of the unreasonable. They will, no doubt, continue hurling pebbles at the latter-day Newtons.

I am less convinced by the prognostications for the 'new science of becoming'. The problem here is to the old tendency to carry such arguments through in a somewhat schematic, formative and metaphoric style. The really conclusive arguments for sociology-as-science exist in the form of 'show and tell' and one looks in vain for detailed examples that carry the method into research strategies and designs. My educated guess is that Williams had little room for such manoeuvres in 150-page text, in the face of RAE deadlines and Routledge page/profit margins. This all goes to show, of course, that even the best social science is a social practice.

University of Leeds

RAY PAWSON

New Religious Movements: Challenge and Response

Bryan Wilson and Jamie Cresswell (eds.)

The so-called New Religious Movements (NRMs) receive considerable media attention. Violent acts such as the gas terrorism by members of the Aum sect in Japan or tragedies such as the suicides among the Order of the Solar Temple in Switzerland make international headline news and perpetuate the public ignorance about the movements in general. This edited volume brings together academics who specialise in the study of the NRMs. Some of the contributions are by sociologists already known for their work in this area, but it is an additional strength of this particular volume that they have been joined by contributors from other disciplines, notably from law and psychology.

This book does not aim to provide detailed descriptions of the various NRMs. Instead, the contributors aim to debate the wider, and arguably more important question, of the societal influence and effect of the NRMs. Certainly the reaction to the NRMs would seem to be out of proportion to their relatively small numbers. At the outset Eileen Barker insists that one cannot generalise about NRMs, the main feature they have in common being that they have been labelled as NRMs or 'cults'. However, given that critics of the NRMs, the media and the general public often fail to distinguish among the NRMs, general patterns in the responses to the NRMs can be revealed. In this volume the greatest number of references are to the Church of Scientology, the Unification Church and to the Krishna Consciousness movement. There are two detailed case studies of Japanese NRMs in Brazil (Clarke) and of the Damanhur community in Italy (Introvigne).

The wider societal focus of this volume is evident, for example, in Heelas's description of the many instances of management and business training enterprises which have harnessed ideas from the New Age movements. Bradney highlights how the law in Britain is not neutral in addressing religious issues. Furthermore, he notes that the position of NRMs cannot be separated from that of some other religions or indeed that of other socially isolated groups. The value of
comparisons with other minority groups is also noted by Beckford in his chapter on the media, and its tendency towards sensationalist coverage. However, more could have been written on the comparison with the legal and media treatment of sexual minorities, which could have been illustrated by the invocation of the blasphemy laws.

A critique of psychoanalytical theories and popular impressions of the mental health implications of membership of NRM}s is offered by Lilliston and Shepherd. This extends to the wider issue of religion and health; they propose mechanisms by which in certain circumstances membership of particular types of NRM}s may contribute to improved health. There are additional chapters on women (by Puttick) and on the churches (by Slee) and the NRM}s. Methodological lessons concerning the dispassionate study of controversial minority groups abound in this volume.

The book is especially strong on the response to the NRM}s, notably from the anti-cult organisations, from the largest Christian denominations and the media. Many of the contributions are quite provocative, in particular the three unflattering critiques (by Melton, Usarski and Chryssides) of the anti-cult organisations. Readers will have to look elsewhere for the replies to these critiques. Indeed, controversial theses are advanced which go unchallenged within the volume, for example Campbell’s thesis that ‘the traditional Western cultural paradigm no longer dominates in so-called Western societies but that it has been replaced by an ‘Eastern’ one’ (p. 41). Given that most of these papers originated from the same conference, perhaps also the contributors could on occasions have engaged in debate with each other within the same volume.

While occasionally a chapter presumes prior knowledge for the non-specialist reader, in general the contributions can be accessed by the non-specialist. An additional attractive feature of the book is its layout. Each chapter is preceded by a summary, and the entire volume by a user-friendly table of contents. While the entire book will be an indispensable resource on New Religious Movements and will appeal to sociologists of religion, individual chapters in this impressive collection will appeal to a wide range of other readers.

University of Oxford

RICHARD O’LEARY