
*Practical Reason* is a collection of lectures and course transcriptions in which Bourdieu reflects upon his work, corrects misunderstandings of it and develops his perspective upon the family, state and religion. As one might expect, given the title of the book, the question of moral reasoning is considered at a number of points, as is the question of rationalisation and its consequences, both positive and negative. Bourdieu is not yet fully persuasive on these matters but he is interesting and inspiring and his account paves the way for what could be a very important project.

On the whole, the book is excellent. Bourdieu’s response to the charge of economism, elaboration of the ‘illusio’ concept and discussion of the relational nature of his philosophy of science are particularly useful and insightful, and his discussion of the state is quite impressive too. Notwithstanding this, however, some of the key problems of his approach are perpetuated. Particularly problematic is his almost exclusively pre-reflective and pre-reflexive conception of agency. An understanding of the pre-reflective is fundamental since all reflective and reflexive capacities are founded upon and necessarily presuppose it, and since a great deal of the activity we engage in is rooted in the ‘feel for the game’ that operates at this level. It is also a particularly fascinating aspect of agency and one which leads us to other important issues, such as embodiment and the ‘fuzzy logic’ of practice. Bourdieu focuses only upon this level, however, to the detriment of any attempt to make sense of agents’ more reflexive and reflective capabilities. Reflexivity, the acquired ability to stand back from ‘the game’, and the reflective projects that might grow out of it are only really discussed in relation to the ‘scholastic point of view’ of the academic, which, Bourdieu insists, is quite different to the ‘natural attitude’ of everyday life and has quite specific social conditions of possibility which are not widely distributed through the social formation. Indeed, the value of sociology, for Bourdieu, is precisely that it can provide this critical, reflexive function and thus, as psychoanalysis is alleged to do, afford us more control over our lives. There is some truth in this. The attitude of the sociologist qua sociologist is not shaped by the same practical constraints and investments as that of the ordinary social members we investigate. We do enjoy the luxury of the reflexive *époque*, at least in respect of the lives of others. This does not mean that ordinary members are incapable of taking stock of their lives, however. Human beings have reflective-reflexive habits which allow them to call their other habits and their world into question, substituting their ‘feel for the game’ and *illusio* with awareness of the game *qua game* – albeit from the point of view of another game.

This point is particularly pertinent in relation to the issue of power, domination and reproduction which is raised a number of times in *Practical Reason*, particularly in the chapter on the state. Here Bourdieu puts great emphasis upon the unconscious complicity of the dominated in their own domination, secured by way of the embodied complicity of the dominated in their own domination, secured by way of the embodied expectations and beliefs (*doxa*) generated by their habitus. Like the citizens of Huxley’s *Brave New World*, Bourdieu’s citizens get more or less what they expect out of life and so do not question. Furthermore, because of *doxic submission* to the status quo at a pre-reflexive level, the legitimacy of the state and social order is seldom a question. ‘It does not arise except in crisis situations’ (p. 56). Bourdieu has, of course, analysed such ‘crisis situations’, specifically ‘May 1968’, and he acknowledges the critical social movements that grew out of that
crisis. His analysis fails to grasp the significance of these movements fully, however. The crisis of 1968 was thirty years ago. It is over qua crisis. But the movements which grew out of it have persisted, acquiring a momentum of their own and instituting the potential for permanent critique of the doxa. They inculcate a radical habitus which disposes citizens, albeit perhaps primarily citizens of the new middle class, towards questioning, reflecting upon and criticising the status quo. Furthermore, by way of ‘consciousness raising’ they encourage agents to reflect upon their most deep-seated habits, identifying the political complicity which these habits entail. Such activity is not perfectly reflexive. That is not possible, not even for sociologists! The dog which chases its own tail will never catch up with itself because each move towards itself is necessarily also a move away. But it does provide for a rather more dynamic and complex polity than Bourdieu suggests.

Bourdieu’s approach is, in my view, the most exciting and interesting in contemporary sociology and Practical Reason does much to reinforce this view. The approach will fall short of being completely persuasive, however, until it takes the question of reflexive action and reflective projects more seriously. Bourdieu fails to do this, I suspect, because he wishes to steer clear of the Sartrean position he repeatedly criticises. The challenge of those who wish to extend his work is to show that one can make sense of reflexions without falling foul of this critique.

University of Manchester NICK CROSSLEY


Written in honour of Denis McQuail, to mark his work with and recent retirement from the Department of Communication at the University of Amsterdam, this book consists of an introduction and fifteen essays. The contributors have worked with McQuail during, or in some cases before his time at Amsterdam, and as the editors explain, they were invited to write a ‘strongly normative’ chapter on pressing issues or neglected questions confronting contemporary media and their implications for public and popular interests. Not surprisingly, the core theme which emerges in the collection concerns the precise nature of these interests, and what they should be, in modern media times which have tested the possibilities of normative paradigms to the point of destruction if not extinction.

The editors organise the results of this invitation into four major sections dealing with the ‘Classic Debate on Media Regulation’, ‘In Search of the Public Interest’, ‘The Ethics of Popular Journalism’, and the ‘Politics of Popular Culture’. Throughout, the essays are clearly aiming to re-establish, if not to provoke and re-set, the agenda for debate and research. In some cases they articulate new directions for normative thinking; in others there is more emphasis on continuity and less a feeling of plus ça change, and this tension is a generally stimulating aspect of the collection. In their helpful introduction, the editors argue that any current agenda must recognise and respond to shifts which have taken place in the balances and geometry of the public and the popular in recent years. The normative idea of socially responsible media has too often, they argue, been bound up with what has been defined as their public dimension. This focus has occluded the media’s role in the production and mediation of popular culture, which the editors argue have become more and more entwined. The ‘classical’ frameworks and concerns condensed in the influential work of Jürgen Habermas – ‘the public sphere’ – may have resulted in one kind of normative definition of the public interest and a related concern for the conditions of access, responsibility
and organisation of modern media and cultural production. This commitment
found ready research expression in the analysis of news, current affairs and
documentary forms, conventions and practices. The editors suggest, however,
that these traditional frameworks have been compromised and overtaken by the
popularisation and the fragmentation of the public sphere, in an irreversible set of
processes.

In the light of this, the collection’s first
two sections interrogate questions of
regulation and the state of the public
interest in the new media age. Golding
provides a trenchant assessment of the
extent to which new media technologies –
satellite, cable and the internet – pose
wholly new questions of regulation; While Siune, de Bens and van
Cuienberg review and discuss aspects of
the ‘erstwhile grand projects’ of public
service broadcasting in Western Europe
and its current crisis. For Blumler and
Hamelink, media regulation and media
performance can only be effectively
guided by revitalised versions of the public
interest, or at least of plurality of
public interests. Ang contributes an
insightful account of McQuail’s work in
the context of the complexities of the
postmodern predicament.

The two remaining sections of the
book investigate the popularisation of the
public domain. The shifting ethics of
popular journalism, particularly as
embodied in infotainment, reality pro-
gramming and talk-shows, provide
productive focal points for Dahlgren,
Wieten, van Zoonen and Nordenstreng. I
found this the most engaging part of the
collection, which serves as a bridge into
broader considerations of the significance
of popular culture, especially in its
expressive, integrative and emancipatory
dynamics. Gerbner, Tudor and Hermes
offer valuable insights, anchored in the
analysis of media violence, sports report-
ing and women’s crime writing. Brants
responds well to the challenge of tying up
the final threads, juxtaposing the ‘old
nightmares’ against the ‘new dreams’
which face mass communication research
and scholarship at a time made less stable
by pre-millenial tension.

This wide-ranging collection provides
not just an affectionate but a scholarly,
generational and productive tribute
to McQuail’s work. He is quoted at
one point as describing himself self-
depreciatingly as ‘a sponge’, whose
strength lies in ‘synthesising other
people’s ideas and insights’ (p. 77). These
essays have been written to be absorbed
with deserved and justified pride.

De Montfort University TIM O’SULLIVAN


The relative decline of Britain and rise of
Japan during the twentieth century com-
prise ‘an outworking of two different
processes’, which Brown’s book closely
follows. Britain in 1900 was incom-
parably more prosperous, productive and
powerful than Japan, which was then still
engaged in the primary stages of indus-
trialisation. Average consumption levels
of the British were seven times greater
than those of the Japanese in 1913. Yet
by the 1970s this lead had all but gone.
Japan’s capacity for sustained economic
growth in several decades after 1950 led
to a formidable presence in world markets
that included significant direct invest-
ment in Britain’s industrial heartlands.
Second position in the pantheon of global
economies was attained and Japan over-
took Britain in major social indicators
including life expectancy and, by 1995,
when the book ends, the yen had become
the strongest international currency.

Brown rightly assumes that this
reversal of fortunes must be of major
significance to British sociologists and his
book provides a useful source of reference
in this important area of contemporary
history. His patient garnering of parallel
statistics is particularly valuable as a guide to the stages of modern economic development and social change encountered by Britain and Japan. Such material will also be effective in teaching courses in comparative social structure.

This comparative historical outline is divided into seven sequential chapters that are structured around criteria used by Halsey in his *Trends in British Society Since 1900*. Britain and Japan are compared in each time-defined chapter in terms of their economic, structural, political and normative spheres.

Beyond this, however, there is no detectable theme or theoretical idea which guides this history. Brown’s book does provide a skeletal overview and critique of theoretical work on the two societies but scepticism prevents him from developing a theory to explain the economic transposition of Britain and Japan. Beyond the descriptive facts of British entrepreneurial failure and Japanese investment and innovation there is no explanation. Halsey’s criteria are appropriate for the statistical survey for which they were originally intended but they do not produce a seamless history. In Brown’s hands they remain unintegrated: the social history is tacked on to the economic exposition, and the book is more a chronicle of historical detail than an analysis of a fundamental problem.

The arbitrary starting date of 1900 is appropriate for Britain, but it means that the book avoids struggling with the primary problem of Japanese sociology: why Japan alone among all non-European derived societies began to successfully industrialise in the late nineteenth century. This question has vital relevance for Japan’s development throughout the twentieth century. Less than thirty years before Brown’s book opens a crucial transition process from a centralised feudal society began to create an entirely new state form and new social classes whose interaction was to set down long lines of future historical development. These were to include an authoritarian nationalistic ethos and an interventionist government.

The modern development of British and Japanese society diverges in at least three important ways that comparative history must respect. The first is the degree to which violence, repression and pressure for ideological compliance were used in Japan in the interests of dominant elites. Until 1945 the use of terror by landlords, the military and politically organised capital were everyday realities without parallel in Britain. Coercive mechanisms within contemporary Japanese society are a legacy of this era. Secondly, while the Japanese political system has been formally constitutional since the 1880s it cannot, unlike Britain, be said even today to be representational or democratic. One political party has held office for almost all of the past fifty years by virtue of its gerrymandering and corrupt links with business. Thirdly, Japan has evolved a peculiar industrial structure in which large self-financing enterprise groups, the *keiretsu*, work in close co-ordination with state directives. Japan, unlike Britain, has a planned capitalist economy.

These aspects of social and economic organisation are crucial to Japan’s ascendancy and Britain’s decline and they need to be given detailed attention if comparative history is to have analytical value.

Reference


University of Greenwich

TIM MEGARRY


By the late 1980s, Italy had become the largest recipient of mass immigration
in Europe. Geoffrey Cole's ethnographic account is therefore a timely study of a country which, until recently, experienced net emigration. The author's main objective is to document everyday reactions to the arrival of these immigrants. In doing so, he highlights the dearth of detailed empirical research on this subject in a European context. This is particularly frustrating as racism and immigration have become inextricably linked over the last fifty years.

The main research questions are structured around a loosely Marxist framework. As a result, the book is broadly divided between presenting the view of the working class and comparing them with the views of the Italian bourgeoisie. Importantly, the book also compares the views of Italians in the, relatively impoverished, south with those of their prosperous northern counterparts and provides an account of notable disparities in their attitudes towards immigrants.

The author settled in a working-class district of Palermo, Sicily, in order to examine ethnographically the notion that, due to structural insecurities, the working class express class-specific hostility. Chapter 2 presents his research findings which reveal that working-class views are both ambivalent and essentialising. Working-class Palermitans do not hold immigrants responsible for their problems. Rather, they blame an unresponsive northern-based government and a stifling patronage system which plagues the local administration. However, expressions of sympathy, deriving from Italian emigratory experiences, do not counter perceptions of threat and innate cultural differences which also feature in their views. The author warns against interpreting this as evidence of blanket working-class racism.

Chapter 3 presents the views of the 'bourgeoisie'. Despite articulating an explicit anti-racism, bourgeois views are also shown to contain significant inconsistencies. For example, the advocated multi-racial ideal contrasts with less overt, yet hegemonic, definitions of the Western self against the, ultimately inferior, non-Western other. The author usefully conceptualises four paradigms of immigration which incorporate the views of both groups studied whilst highlighting their differences.

The fourth empirical chapter reveals that the trend towards anti-immigrant protest and violence in the north is explicable with reference to regional differences in culture, economy and politics. In particular, the author explains that, despite its prosperity, the issue of immigration has been formally politicised to a far greater extent in the north. Unlike the south, the north has traditionally had the political structures in place to address issues of general public concern. He argues that racist violence at the 1990 Carnival in Florence signalled the formation of the new racism in Italy. It served to problematise the issue of immigration in both government circles and the popular imagination.

The definition of the groups studied as working class and bourgeoisie slightly weakens the arguments advanced in the book. The composition and key features of each group are not identified, leaving the reader to assume that the author has separated Italians into two over-simplified groups. The fieldwork examining the bourgeoisie is mainly confined to questionnaires administered to students of a university and prestigious high school. Although the research findings are useful, the degree to which a youthful and distinctly liberalised section of the population is indicative of the whole is questionable.

The author's assertion that few Palermitans express working-class racism is also debatable. As the author himself acknowledges, immigration is a new phenomenon in Italy and anti-immigrant sentiment is still forming. The blueprint of the new racism is evident in his account of working-class views in the form of the apparent natural inferiority of immigrants and their rightful place at the bottom of the labour market hierarchy. Overt collective protest and violence are simply less subtle, better organised
expressions of racism and are not necessarily more damaging in their effects.

Overall, the book succeeds in demonstrating that expressions of racism, although often class-specific, cannot be reduced to class and that a comprehensive account of racism in Italy, and indeed elsewhere, must include the influence of local history, culture and political-economic context. Although the book will be of specific relevance to those interested in Italian culture and political economy, it is a useful reference for anybody studying how and why various context-specific forms of racism persist in Europe today.

**University of Manchester**

NADIA JOANNE BRITTON


This book is concerned with the field of comparative housing policy in industrialised countries, rather than with providing country by country accounts of housing systems. It is concerned to explore what can be gained from comparative housing research, and how it can best be undertaken. It seeks to be theoretically informed and policy relevant. In passing, it traces the degrees of convergence and divergence in the housing policies of advanced industrialised countries as one aspect of the development of welfare policies in such societies, and provides many useful examples.

The first four chapters provide the building blocks of the author's approach. The first chapter traces the origins of intervention in housing provision in industrialised countries, noting that such intervention is substantial in all such countries, though of a diverse character. The European paradigm of intervention is compared with that in the United States and Japan, but Doling concludes that existing models indicate little other than geographical and historical variation in processes and patterns of housing intervention. A second chapter considers the methodological issues involved in comparative housing research. Whilst this chapter draws usefully from a consideration of the problems of comparative research in the social sciences in general, it is odd that it does not draw upon comparative policy research in other related areas, such as urban policy or planning, where similar problems are encountered. This is the more regrettable as Doling notes that as well as methodological gains, comparative studies may have direct practical value in the policy field. Useful for the student, this chapter reprises the many practical problems which researchers encounter in this field.

Evaluating the current development of the field of comparative housing research, Doling concludes that it does not meet the rigours of a natural science, experimental approach (which is to beg the question of the appropriateness of this paradigm for this field).

Chapter 3 reviews the range of housing policy options available in industrialised countries in terms of the stages of the housing provision process, setting out possible housing policies in terms of their content. Again, the conclusion is that housing policy is highly complex and multi-faceted. Chapter 4 explores the range of contestable theories about the origins of housing policy. The analysis in this chapter is rather brief, providing caricatures of theoretical approaches rather than deeper exegesis. A fundamental problem is the failure, either in this or the first chapter, to problematise the nature of ‘industrial’ or ‘urban’ societies. As such, the relationship between ‘housing policy’ and ‘context’ will always be difficult to handle, as will the nature of ‘the welfare state’ itself.

Whereas the earlier chapters treat housing policy as an aspect of social policy, the remainder of the book is housing policy specific. Chapter 5 contains a useful, balanced review of the work of significant housing researchers in
the debates on convergence, divergence and welfare retrenchment. The following six chapters each review individual stages of the housing provision and consumption process, seen as individual elements of the housing policy system. Whilst this is a useful way to structure a wealth of empirical material, its link to the theoretical and methodological arguments set out in earlier chapters seems tenuous. As the author points out continuously, the empirical gaps in comparative housing research are so extensive that inevitably the discussion is forced to focus upon the work of a few researchers in a comparatively small sample of advanced industrialised countries. Not surprisingly, in relation to a comparison of housing subsidies and housing finance, it transpires that generalisations are difficult to make. Recognising the problems which tenure poses for international comparison, Doling is able to do little more than indicate that statistical categories are disjoint with comparative taxonomies. Aspects of this problem also compound a comparative analysis of social housing, whilst private renting is acknowledged to be a relatively neglected research field in comparative research.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the final chapter, entitled ‘Which Policies Work Best?’, is rather brief. The author bases his argument in this chapter on a pragmatic position, rather than upon theoretical preference. Curiously, this chapter excludes the very cultural and economic frameworks of housing policy which structure the convergence, divergence and retrenchment themes dealt with elsewhere in the book, limiting itself to the criteria researchers might use in drawing up a league table of policy models. The sceptical reader might well concur that comparative housing policy is an undeveloped field.

Nottingham Trent University  ALAN HOOPER


The Entrepreneurial City is a very exciting intervention in the debates surrounding entrepreneurial governance and will be a very welcome contribution to courses across the social sciences. Developed within the context of the ‘new’ geography the book attests to the creativity generated by the inter-disciplinarity of social sciences. The book is wide ranging in its discussion of entrepreneurial strategies as they are generated and sustained by specific cities in relation to the processes of globalisation and rapid change. But the authors brought together in the volume are equally aware of the political economy of the entrepreneurial city and its effects in sustaining class, race and gender divisions as spatial segregations. The book has a long and cogently argued introduction which charts the rise of entrepreneurial governance and the debates surrounding the conceptualisation of entrepreneurialism, within the context of the new urban politics.

The book opens with a series of fascinating articles on place marketing, or the selling of the entrepreneurial city, with a contribution from Stephen Ward on the history of place marketing cities in both the United States and Britain. There is another on the role of marketing in times of urban crisis in the United States by John Rennie Short and Yeong-Hyun Ki, which includes a wonderful list of the slogans used including gems like Omaha NE – ‘Wild creatures loose in the city’. Bob Jessop’s chapter then considers the ‘narrative of enterprise’ and the ways in which cities can become subjects within the discourses of competitiveness, spatiality and entrepreneurship. These chapters set the scene for the development of an analysis of the distinctiveness of strategies and the impact that forms of entrepreneurial governance have had, and are having, on urban landscapes.

In four fascinating studies of Newcastle in Australia, Birmingham in England,
Coachella Valley in Southern California, and eastern Germany, the tensions between local and national states, charismatic leaders and local resistance, territorial conflicts and a variety of outcomes over time, are teased out and analysed, offering a complex story. One part of this is the distinctiveness of context and the malleability of strategies, the other is the continuity within elements of the strategy. Amer Althubaity and Andrew Jonas in their paper on Southern California, which considers a specific form of ‘suburban entrepreneurialism’, make a specific call for more attention to be given to political fragmentation and the interest groups involved, the ways in which the politics of development strategies are frustrated or realised, and the consequences for citizens. Equally, according to Tassilo Herrschel the transformations in eastern Germany within cities like Dresden and Leipzig have provided new regulatory modes and a shift from civic impotence to a position within an overall state strategy which has both denied and promoted the re-emergence of ‘localness’. In a large, state capital like Dresden this can be allied with a form of urban entrepreneurialism not seen in the smaller, poorer cities.

Economics is not, however, the only player in the politics of entrepreneurial cities. Cities must be ‘sold’ and this involves the politics of representation and the making and re-making of images of the urban, specific city identities and the cultural spaces that the city can promote. As Phil Hubbard suggests, ‘it is not only high culture that is being harnessed by city imagineers’ (p. 199). It is, of course, street cultures, earlier traditions, ethnic and religious festivals, the possibilities seem endless. The papers in this section of the book are fascinating and move from the world of corporate art to specific local projects like the sculpture park in Sunderland and the ways in which a politics of artistic production is developing within the entrepreneurial city. These are issues of the moment given the current government’s attention to the selling of Britain as the cutting edge for popular arts and cultures. But the impact of the culture industries is growing beyond the sphere of consumption and is having an impact on manufacturing, commodity-based production. These themes are explored by Malcolm Miles and Justin O’Connor with a final paper on the ‘New Barcelona’ by Donald McNeill, who is also trying to unravel his role as a researcher/story-teller in a piece on the politics of writing in relation to urban research.

The final section of the book foregrounds politics in relation to the entrepreneurial city as a post-Fordist mode of regulation. The article by Joe Painter takes issue with current understanding of ‘urban regime’ as being too heavily dependent on rational choice models of power relations. Equally, Andrew Wood’s paper seeks ways in which to refine our understandings of the global and local by moving to an account of spaces as ‘areal spaces’ and part of a network of flows. Returning to the economics of the entrepreneurial city, Helga Leitner and Eric Sheppard seeks ways in which to assess the efficacy of entrepreneurialism and suggest that we should not be seduced into believing that there are no alternative strategies. They suggest there needs to be more co-operation between cities against the current competition and a plurality of voices should have an opportunity to negotiate urban agendas.

Hall and Hubbard reiterate these concerns in a very lively Afterword which concludes the book and also considers the growth of entrepreneurialism in academia. Like the authors in the volume they are seeking ways of using the creative impulses that mark so many of the urban strategies, and they conclude, ‘Creativity, while offering optimism and apparently thriving within and among the fragments of entrepreneurial cities, has, as yet, done little to demonstrate its ability to connect the fragments of these cities in new meaningful ways. This is its challenge and the broader challenge facing urban government into the next millennium’ (p. 317). This volume is a contribution to their own challenge and I
hope it will be widely read beyond academic circles. I hope, also, that a paperback edition is in press, because this is a rich, lively and exciting text that deserves the widest possible dissemination.

*University of Leicester*  SALLIE WESTWOOD


According to the authors of this book, it addresses one of the central issues of power within democracy – the influence of the press in forming public opinion. It combines specialisms in social anthropology, and the use of computer technology in research. Together Lacey and Longman have produced a fascinating investigation based on exhaustive research into a particular case study.

Central to their thesis is the claim that British newspapers do indeed influence the opinions and particularly the perspectives of their readers. The authors strongly argue that the press, with its potential to enlighten, can in fact stifle the potential to analyse and question. Thus the book is subtitled ‘Cultures of Understanding, Cultures of Ignorance’. The analysis focuses on the fostering of understanding and/or ignorance of ‘major problems facing humanity’, one of which the authors identify as global environmental vulnerability. Central to Lacey and Longman’s value judgement on the press is a view – contrary to Lippman’s, for example – that if newspapers have a role in maintaining or forming cultures of understanding then they *could*, at least potentially, be a tool in raising the quality of understanding by improving what the authors term ‘intelligence’.

It is entirely correct to state that cultures exist because they help people to solve problems. However, the reader may balk at the idea that the culture of a newspaper’s readers is akin to the concept of subcultures. This idea has the attractiveness of simplicity but may not have that of accuracy with respect to the reality of newspaper readership. There can be no doubt that Lacey and Longman’s theoretical tools are usable and the weight of their evidence is impressive.

The empirical material is based around coverage of the Rio Earth Summit of June 1992. The authors chose quantitative analysis of the press because the data are readily available. The massive amount of data can be managed with the help of computers and software developed in recent years (NUD*IST and TACT for text analysis and SPSS for statistics). The Sussex University Data Archive collected the material on the Rio Summit and poll data were supplied by MORI.

The book’s strength is in taking one issue – one (major) event in the development and awareness of that issue – and then exploring the media and educational efficacy from that starting point. Yet serious questions must be raised on using US models of analysis considering these media are so different in their (lack of) coverage of international, or even national, issues. However, the authors quickly move on to the much more interesting material which examines ‘evidence of cultural understanding’.

Readers are likely to find the chapter on evidence of newspaper influence to be of most interest. This reviewer’s view, after reading the book, is that the jury is still out; which does not mean that exposure to *The Press as Public Educator* was not a worthwhile and thought-provoking experience. Lacey and Longman scrupulously put the case for – Linton – and against – Kellner – on ‘the myth of media potency’. There is also some very good material reviewing recent research on the subject of ‘the myth of public opinion’.

One thing this book lacks is any attempt to measure the *quality* of analysis of the reporting. By extension, there is no possibility of measuring how quality of coverage would affect the influential
power of that coverage. What is also missing, paradoxically, is what the newspapers do carry when they are missing out all this important environmental stuff, such as moral panics, overt and covert attitudes to social change and emerging outgroups (as defined in terms of the newspaper’s readership), which may well influence the readerships’ attitudes to all weighty issues, including the environment.

The authors deserve praise for bringing together the key issues of media, education and environment in an entirely readable and accessible, yet rigorous and stimulating, analysis. The book ends by suggesting that the analysis has implications for reform of the media, without suggesting who will do this, and calling for a new era of public accountability for the press, without suggesting how that would come about. The authors themselves state in the introduction that their ideas ‘may seem extravagant and utopian’. Indeed, their view of education as a life-long activity for the whole population of the planet is utopian, but as an aim it can only be seen as praiseworthy if not, at least as an aim, essential to the future of civilisation.

Institute of Communications
The University of Leeds

Graham Roberts


Foucault did not write much about management and work, but many of his ideas seem clearly to apply. This book shows us how. Gibson Burrell kicks off the collection with a useful chronology of Foucault’s writing and its relevance to organisations. Previously published in Organization Studies, the article shows the impossibility of drawing a single approach from Foucault’s complex body of work. In a rich but difficult piece, Stewart Clegg considers Foucault’s understandings of power and connects these to well-known organisational theories. Pointing out that current forms of organisational power are temporary and historically-situated, Clegg proposes a postmodern research agenda for organisational theory.

Foucault suggests that labour encompasses the productive, the symbolic and ‘dressage’. Norman Jackson and Pippa Carter develop this last concept, labour as ‘non-productive, non utilitarian and unnatural behaviour for the satisfaction of the controller and as a public display of compliance’ (p. 54). It is epitomised by the British Research Assessment Exercise, an illustration which will immediately bring the concept home to British readers.

The rest of the book covers two basic themes, (1) how careers act as a disciplinary device and (2) how financial systems control workers, making them both countable and accountable to management. Mike Savage draws upon employment records from the Great Western Railway from 1833 to 1914 to show that railways invented careers to discipline workers when traditional forms of control, based on punishment and visual observation, failed. Subsequent articles focus on post-Fordist, high-commitment workplaces and theories of Human Resources Management. Alan McKinlay and Phil Taylor evaluate commitment and resistance in work groups evaluated through a peer-review system. Stanley Deetz discusses ‘strategizing one’s own subordination’, the idea that employees consent to be controlled ‘to obtain money, security, meaning, or identity’ (p. 164), and shows how organisational discourse renders some ideas unthinkable. These two articles, based on detailed case studies, bring up important issues in the inter-relationship of power and identity. These issues are taken up in Ken Starkey and Alan McKinlay’s afterword, which connects discipline and desire. In contrast, Patricia Findlay and Tim
Newton look at performance appraisals, arguing that old-fashioned sovereign power is pre- eminent in organisations and cautioning against too heavy an emphasis on positive, constitutive power. Barbara Townley also examines recent managerial theories.

McKinlay and Starkey bridge the gap between the two themes in their analysis of Ford Motor Company and its shift from financial to participative management. Ford holds employees (especially professionals and managers) in a ‘velvety grip’ – they not only submit to control, but enjoy submitting. Keith Hoskin takes a cursory view of accounting through the ages in an inversive critique, the ultimate goal of which is to undo economics and to lead to a superseding discourse. Trevor Hopper and Norman Macintosh draw upon the autobiography of International Telephone and Telegraph’s erstwhile Chief Executive Officer Harold Geneen – famous for saying ‘the numbers will make you free’ – to show the power of accounting.

Not surprisingly, this collection dwells on discipline, surveillance and the creation of docile bodies. Control, however, has long been a topic for organisational analysis. The book is strongest when it shows how Foucault’s approach is different from its predecessors, not just new jargon applied to old concepts.

One difficulty in applying Foucault to organisations involves the level of analysis at which power operates. This complicates discussions of various forms of power, especially what Foucault terms sovereign power (power vested in a person or an identifiable group, which is based on sanctions and is negative) and disciplinary power (diffuse power, which constitutes identities and is positive). Top managers clearly hold sovereign power. Disciplinary power, especially its constitutive aspect, is taken advantage of by managers, but is it actually wielded by them? I do not think so, even in organisations where highly committed individuals define themselves by their jobs. ‘Identity projects’ are embedded in society, not in the organisations that rely on them.

Inevitably, the authors differ in their interpretations of Foucault. These differences could profitably have been considered in a conclusion. Inasmuch as no attempt was made to integrate the chapters, many articles describe the Panopticon, and several quotations from Foucault appear a number of times. Each chapter stands alone, but the repetition is tedious for someone reading through them all.

This book is not easy. Though on the whole clearly written, it requires knowledge of both Foucauldian, and organisation and management theories. I had hoped it would demonstrate the usefulness of Foucault to sceptical organisational theorists, but it does not. The book does, however, show the fruitfulness of Foucault’s ideas on power and refines his theories as they apply to organisations. As such, this book is likely to be of great interest to Foucault scholars concerned with organisations and also of interest to organisation experts with some familiarity with Foucault.

University of Surrey

Victoria D. Alexander


This book makes a very good job of sorting and systematically working through arguments for and against the market. Defenders and critics of markets will find it rewarding. It is particularly excellent at untangling conceptual confusions.

The book takes different arguments for the market in turn. Neutrality defences of the market are rejected on the grounds that perfectionist ideas of the good life provide a better grounding for pluralism. Amongst well-being arguments, preference satisfaction versions are said to fail because what we prefer
may not actually provide well-being. Informed preference satisfaction approaches, it is argued, effectively endorse objectivist approaches to the good. Against liberal worries about the paternalism of objectivist ideas of the good, O'Neill argues that the latter require autonomy and pluralism more strongly than preference satisfaction approaches do. Unintentional outcomes versions of the well-being case for the market, meanwhile, he says are undermined by the corrosive effects of the market on the non-contractual solidarism underpinning it.

O'Neill claims that liberty arguments for the market fail because they reduce liberty to choice. Perfectionism, however, recognises the conditions, in non-market educational and cultural institutions, for turning choice into autonomy. Hayek and postmodernists assume that because heteronomy obstructs liberty then individualism must be preferred. But, for O'Neill, autonomy depends on having an identity of your own that can only be developed through settled dependencies and attachments which are undermined by market individualism. Market criticisms of paternalism, meanwhile, fail to see how reliance on epistemological authority – for example, the judgement of the doctor, scientist or teacher – can be a basis for autonomy. Fukuyama and other postmodern social theorists, it is argued, favour a market idea of recognition which is self-obsessed and based on difference and appearances. Yet O'Neill feels this market version fails because it does not see the role for equality and real worth in recognition.

O'Neill re-assesses the socialist calculation debate, arguing that Mises and Lange put too much emphasis on monetary values and too little on ethical, political and other non-economic criteria for calculation, to which Hayek and Neurath were more sensitive. But Hayek's epistemological argument for the market, he argues, does not take into account informational and co-ordinative deficiencies in the market itself. By assuming the only alternative to central planning is the market, it overlooks non-market associationalism.

The example of intellectual property and the incursion of markets into science is taken to suggest that science is better driven by associationally determined priorities than market values. On public choice, he is sympathetic to its ascription of egoism to the state but not to its attempt to extend an over-narrow concept of egoism to other spheres beyond state and market. Public choice, he argues, fails to see that individual preferences are developed within institutional contexts rather than given prior to them.

Occasionally, O'Neill makes contentious empirical claims that need more justification – that markets corrode solidarism, that economic growth does not increase satisfaction, that associations are not narrowly self-interested, for instance. He makes value claims, for example on his own ideas of the good life, which require more substantiation. Postmodernism is treated more dismissively and in a less carefully referenced way than the liberalism of Hayek and others. Hence sympathisers of the former may be alienated from the good points O'Neill makes about their arguments. And he is too generous to the public choice critique of benevolence in the state.

This is primarily a philosophical book and critical rather than positive. As such the big political problems for non-market arguments are left unanswered. How can a lesser role for the market be pursued in the face of public scepticism and the sway of global capital and markets? What institutions could provide for non-market forms of economy? O'Neill suggests decentralised associationalism, but what form this might take or how it might be implemented needs more development. O'Neill is right to say that political defeat should not be allowed to slip into intellectual defeat for the case against the market. In this refreshing spirit the philosophical discussions are done very well here. The political questions still have to be answered.

_University of Sussex_  
LUKE MARTELL

Why do potentially successful women give up their chance of a career and happy family life to join New Religious Movements (NRMs)? This is one of the questions Puttick sets out to address in her study of *Women in New Religious*. The focus is on women in counter-culture NRMs with particular reference to the Osho Movement. By way of comparison, these groups are contrasted with more conservative NRMs throughout the book. Puttick writes as a feminist sociologist, drawing on her own experiences of NRMs, both as a member and researcher. Her methodology is briefly described as including participant-observation, formal interviews and informal conversations with NRM participants. No mention is made of the sampling strategy or sample size.

The book begins with an overview of the development of NRMs. Puttick describes how interest in the human potential movement and Eastern Spiritual traditions converged in the 1960s and 1970s to give rise to NRMs in the West. The Osho Movement was one of the more successful groups and, like many NRMs of its type, its attraction lay principally in the charismatic personality of the group’s leader, Osho (formerly known as Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh). The movement was structured around a master–disciple relationship and Puttick provides an informative chapter examining the dynamics of such relationships within NRMs. This is followed by a detailed account of how they can be open to various forms of abuse. She then turns to more positive aspects of the master–disciple relationship by considering devotion as a means whereby femininity can be celebrated. Puttick notes that within the Osho Movement female sannyasins were regarded as potentially better disciples than male sannyasins; men having to find their feminine side before they could effectively surrender to the guru and achieve spiritual enlightenment. Indeed, the Osho Movement held traditional female characteristics (intuition, emotion, receptivity, etc.) to be of higher value than traditional male characteristics (rationality, intellect, etc.) Puttick, therefore, suggests counter-culture NRMs may provide a context in which women can find the affirmation they seek. For example, one chapter highlights the positive view of female sexuality expressed within some counter-culture movements compared with misogynistic attitudes in mainstream religious and conservative NRMs. There are also two chapters considering how counter-culture movements have afforded women leadership positions often refused them in more traditional contexts. One of the best chapters in the book provides an interesting discussion on the dilemma of motherhood within such an environment. Whilst the traditional female traits may be highly valued, motherhood could be seen as a distraction from a woman’s personal and spiritual development.

Puttick then moves away from guru-based counter-culture NRMs to consider the women’s spirituality movement in the 1990s. Here the focus is on goddess worship, paganism, Wicca, feminist witchcraft, shamanism and ecofeminism. Various feminist perspectives are described in relation to each of these practices.

Puttick finishes her book with a typology of spiritual values and needs which she offers as a way of classifying NRMs based on Maslow’s theory of human motivation. The typology is, however, somewhat problematic and would be hard to employ empirically. We are told, for instance, that groups can ‘transform their character fast’, may present ‘classificatory questions’ and that the typology cannot readily be applied to world religions (p. 240). Puttick finally describes various spiritual trends in the West and concludes that the future lies in the hands of the young, envisioning a possible clash between conservative
evangelical groups and New Age movements.

The strength of this book lies in its accessible style and detailed description; many interesting examples are given throughout the text. It certainly provides a helpful introduction to NRMs and women’s place within them. The bibliography is extensive and Puttick includes a list of internet sites as a useful follow-up to the text. The book is weaker in terms of analysis. The relationship between NRMs and the New Age, for instance, is treated as unproblematic and there is little by way of a sociological critique, especially in the early chapters. The significance and appeal of counter-culture NRMs also seems to be exaggerated. Nevertheless, it remains an informative text with much to offer and is to be recommended.

Kingston University SYLVIA COLLINS


In this work, Nicole Hahn Rafter traces the development of eugenic criminological theories in the United States, from the late nineteenth-century establishment of the first institutions for ‘defective delinquents’. She attempts to draw parallels between early positivist theories and the resurgence of biological explanations for crime and other human behaviours, contained in the ‘new genetics’, sounding a salutary warning on blanket acceptance of scientific ‘progress’. Sociological analysis, however, is really left until the end of the work; the main body of the book is taken up with a meticulously detailed history of how the ‘mentally retarded’ (author’s phrase) became criminalised, often for little more than being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

During the late nineteenth century, scientists began to apply their research to social concerns, believing that positivism could find answers to pressing social ‘problems’. In this climate, institutions were established for those deemed ‘imbeciles’, first with a philanthropic aim of education, but soon progressing to a punitive function as they became more entwined with the penal establishment and research commenced on their unfortunate inhabitants. Those scientists who had leaned towards the study of genetics and early eugenics then applied their ideas on heredity to the families of those now named ‘criminal imbeciles’ and decided that the tendency to crime and other ‘undesirable’ behaviours were the result of ‘feeblemindedness’ passed down through generations. All efforts were made to eradicate ‘degeneracy’ in order to rid society of crime. These efforts included incarceration of ‘imbeciles’ and in some cases compulsory sterilisation lest they should procreate more ‘born criminals’.

Rafter firmly locates the rise of eugenics in the nineteenth-century popularity of science, and spends much time setting the scene. She pinpoints several interesting strands, which run through this sad history and also bear examination in contemporary society; unfortunately, this work is so full of historical detail there is no space for the analysis they need.

First, it transpires that there was professional rivalry between the superintendents of the early institutions, who were drawn more from the ranks of penal superintendents, and the medical profession in the form of psychiatrists, who were keen to appropriate ‘defective delinquency’ and medicalise it. This drove the superintendents to extend their own research and produce quick results recommending penal incarceration of their unfortunate subjects. This hints at interesting undercurrents surrounding the construction of social and professional identity between the groups and how this shapes their work, but it is not fully explored. Eventually psychiatrists win the battle, as the popularity of ‘defective delinquency’ declines and is replaced with psychopathy, firmly under the jurisdiction of the medical profession.
Again, this development bears examination in the light of modern pro- and anti-psychiatry work, but is not taken up.

The criminalisation of women as ‘feebleminded’ is detailed here and Rafter touches on this characterisation, often based on women’s disruptive behaviour in the institutional setting, or their previous sexual conduct, rather than the level of their intelligence (measured by very crude tests). In fact, anyone who did not fit the stereotype of the good woman was branded ‘feebleminded’, but no further analysis of this trend is offered. This issue has of course been explored by other authors, but is not here.

Creating Born Criminals is without doubt a fascinating work: Rafter’s attention to detail is phenomenal and the accompanying notes are exhaustive. As a social history text, the book is excellent, but falls short as a criminological/sociological study, because too little critical analysis is present. Where analysis is included, however, it is well formulated. Rafter shows very clearly that the real social control subtext of the historical developments (and their current echoes) is the penal/medical sub-ordination of large unruly poorer classes, at a time when the rich white male establishment feels threatened. This is especially apparent in the accounts of the early criminal anthropologists’ efforts to characterise the lower classes very firmly into lumpen ‘defective delinquency’. When contrasted against modern works such as Murray and Hernstein’s The Bell Curve, the similarities are apparent. ‘Good’ equals white middle and upper class; ‘bad’ equals almost anything else.

Despite its descriptive intensity, this book does indeed fill a clear gap in criminological history. As the preface suggests, it is the first social history of biological theories of crime in sixty years. The author’s style is clear and lucid and what analysis is included works well. It asks many questions, but in my view they are not always adequately answered. Much work remains to be done on these issues.

University of Essex
SHARON BOLTON


Originally written in 1984, *Restoring the Kingdom* has been through numerous reprints before its recent revised edition (1998). The book had previously enjoyed wide acclaim not only for the impressive fieldwork upon which it is based, but its thoroughness in detailing the growth, consolidation and ultimate decline of one of the most significant forms of New Religious Movements in Britain, namely, Christian Restorationism. The work is all the more welcomed since there are pitifully few accounts, either socio-logically or historically, of Pentecostalism within the British tradition, and practically nothing concerning Restorationism that emerged in the mid-1960s alongside Charismatic Renewal in the traditional churches.

Unlike its mainstream cousin, Restorationism went largely unnoticed until the huge ‘Bible weeks’ of the 1970s and 1980s that attracted many thousands of people from the newly established independent ‘house churches’ which formed its institutional basis. Such events revealed the scale of the movement, while the dogma espoused displayed the distinctiveness of its theology. With the catch-phase of ‘the abomination of the denomination’, many of the earliest Restorationists were insistent that Christ’s commandment was to build God’s Kingdom, not an institutionalised Church. At the same time, Restorationism in Britain also embraced what Walker calls an ‘eschatological imperative’ which was based upon the millenarian requisite of bringing as many converts as possible, before the Second Coming of Christ, into what amounted to a sectarian theocracy.

Two-thirds or more of the revised edition of *Restoring the Kingdom* remains largely unchanged. There are a number of modifications and a new Introduction. Those familiar with the book however, might have hoped for a more substantial
re-working of the material and deeper sociological reflections a decade further down the line. None the less, these chapters still contribute towards the book being the definitive work in the area. In Part I (Chapters 1–5), Walker gives a detailed description of the origins of the movement and develops an ‘ideal type’ to distinguish between the two principal strands of Restorationism which were visible from its formative stage; the more sectarian ‘R1’ and the loose confederation of churches that constituted the less dogmatic ‘R2’. Part II, which has a further eight chapters, amounts to an evaluation of the movement until 1985. This includes a discussion of the more controversial aspects of Restorationism, including the ‘heavy shepherding’ (intensive pastoral guidance) of church members which brought so much notoriety to the churches involved. Part II also examines the distinct ecclesiastical structures of Restorationism, and provides the useful insights of a ‘Kingdom Tour’ through participant observation and interviews of leaders and the rank and file.

There is room in Part II for Walker to address the vexed question as to whether Restorationism has, ironically, developed into the very denominational forms to which it was so vehemently opposed. Here, Walker provides the most incisive sociological insights of the book. Calling upon sociological theories of sect development, he maintains that, after Brethrenism and Pentecostalism, the Restorationists are the third ‘restorationist’ sect to emerge in Britain over the last 150 years and argues that it has, largely by solidifying into organisational structures, met the same fate. Walker also develops Bryan Wilson’s view that the whole sect-denominational process has been speeding up in recent decades in that, in order to survive, such sectarian forms of religion more readily become world-accommodating. This theme is substantially developed in Part III. These are the new chapters of the book which comprehensively traces the transformation of Restorationism into the ‘New Churches’ that largely dominate the charismatic scene today, typified by those such as New Frontiers International.

Part III is aptly named ‘The Breakdown of the Kingdom 1985–90’. Essentially it charts the decline of Restorationism, the demise of the ‘R1’ axis, and the developments within the ever-fragmenting ‘R2’—changes which largely account for its survival. For ‘R2’, the dilution of its sectarianism and theology, the embrace of popular cultural themes (such as alternative healing) largely accounts for its enduring attraction to the middle-class cohorts which comprise its congregations. There has also been a considerable softening of shepherding practices, a greater reflection on outside criticism, the application of modern business techniques in relation to church-growth strategies, and even a flirtation with environmentalism. The broad picture however, is of an overall decline. Walker suggests that by the mid-1980s both strands were making very few converts (indeed earlier editions had increasingly and substantially reduced what he initially approximated as the total membership of Restorationism). He now estimates that while ‘R1’ (virtually the only remaining core of true Restorationism) is no longer viable, ‘R2’ has in its combined fellowships over 200 churches and some 200,000 members. None the less, these are not impressive figures and suggest that the ‘New Churches’ have done little to reverse the decline of general church attendance in Britain.

Walker suggests that the Restorationist movement continues to develop and fragment. For the most part, it has become an element of the wider story of the British, and even global, Charismatic movement; that of collaborative evangelistic endeavours, new alignments, and it continues to embrace new fads (such as the so-called Toronto Blessing) which circulate the charismatic world. Walker concludes that for Restorationism there has been a loss of momentum, rather than total extinction. However, the future of what he regards as the most significant
development in the British Church in the second half of the twentieth century remains far from certain and, therefore, affords a timely statement on today’s New Religious Movements.

University of Reading STEPHEN HUNT


Perhaps someone who eschews teaching from text books as firmly as I do should have passed up the opportunity to review this work, but my experience is that Sandra Walklate’s contributions are always worth reading, so I accepted. In the event the weaknesses of this short introductory text are most usually imposed by the format, while the strengths are the author’s own.

Understanding Criminology has eight chapters: an introduction, a discussion of pre-1980s perspectives, and discussions of right realism, left realism, gendering the criminal, crime-politics and welfare, victimisation-politics and welfare, and a conclusion. Throughout an important theme is the relationship between politics, criminological theory and the policies which result from each formulation. The introduction does its job, but the chapter on past perspectives disappoints despite being appealingly organised under the themes of ‘the behaviour of criminals’, ‘the criminality of behaviour’ and ‘the criminality of the state’. Compression into seventeen pages means that important differences between positions are elided. Foucault, for example, is not important because he offers a ‘more careful and detailed analysis’ (p. 31) of power than his predecessors. Indeed, a case could be made that the three volumes of Capital alone, from Marx’s œuvre, constitute a more careful and detailed analysis than Foucault attempted at the level of theory. Surely Foucault’s importance depends, at the level of politics, on the fact that he offered a concept of power which did not depend upon class structures at a time when the women’s movement and post-colonial and minority movements were mounting a challenge to the established order which precisely did not depend on class position. At the level of theory Foucault is important because he solved the seemingly intractable problem of the dependence of ideology by inventing the alternative concept of discourse-as-power. I believe that such abstract arguments can be made in a sufficiently simplified way to find a place in an ‘A’ level/undergraduate first level text – but only if there is enough space. As this example suggests, the chapter is too cryptic in many of its allusions to be of value, and Walklate would have done better to start her work with the two realisms, which indeed come next.

In contrast, these two chapters are full and well argued and will be a boon to students and teachers alike. The centralising of victims’ and citizens’ experiences in left realist work is shown to be problematic both from an epistemological point of view and in terms of democratic theory. Again as a result of the short text format, in later chapters discussion of both these extremely important issues is curtailed with very short presentations of Bhaskar’s and Giddens’s conclusions and references to the author’s own earlier work. But at least the larger questions are raised, and these themes emerge, submerge and appear again through the rest of the book.

‘Gendering the criminal’ is another helpful chapter, though I would have welcomed more on the gendering of the penal process, as well as a few fully developed examples of empirical research. The points are all there, a very solid agenda indeed for teachers, though they will also have a lot of work to do to bring the material alive for the students. But then again, perhaps one is asking too much. I have just read two new texts on theoretical criminology which do not consider gender at all!
Chapter 6 discusses the changing meanings of citizenship, the underclass debate, the feminisation of poverty, and the family: again, two chapters’ worth inevitably squashed into one, and again it is full accounts of the data giving rise to, or collected in terms of, the theoretical positions which are left out to solve the space problem.

By Chapter 7, on victimisation, we are back to another of the author’s areas of deep expertise. This time the topic is more specific, and the seventeen pages sufficient both to review the debates and explore two major points. Walklate reveals the limitations of the individualised conception of the victim deployed in most approaches, and most conspicuously in problem-solving strategies based on individualised explanations of multiple victimisation. She also develops her emergent argument about the connections between these individualised approaches, the positivistic foundations of even contemporary and even progressive criminological theories, and the endemic masculinism of the discipline. These points emerge again in her conclusion, in which she seeks to review and expand the notions of risk and trust. Only after an epistemological shift will research which explores these concepts as gendered experiences in a social context with the pleasure and pains of postmodern citizenship, postmodern criminality and postmodern victimisation become known. Only after an epistemological shift will research which explores these concepts as gendered experiences in a social context with the pleasure and pains of postmodern citizenship, postmodern criminality and postmodern victimisation become known. Quite how Bhaskar’s and Giddens’s realist ontologies will lock into this project is not clear. My impression is that the author can do it, but once again it is off the paper because she has run out of space.

All the above ambivalence notwithstanding, anyone who teaches criminology at ‘A’ level or at an introductory level in a degree programme should put Chapter 4 on left realism and Chapter 7 on victimisation on their book lists.

University of Birmingham MAUREEN CAIN


The ‘McDonaldization’ of society thesis has often proven a useful way to introduce students to key sociological concepts. After all, we all ‘know’ McDonald’s restaurant chain. This book joins a growing list which is, in varying degrees, mesmerised and disgusted by this exemplar of cultural globalisation. Its method is anthropological and its focus is on consumption.

The basis thesis of Watson and his co-authors is that McDonald’s has outgrown its United States’ roots to become a ‘local’ phenomenon across the world rather than an ‘American’ one, as in crude versions of the ‘cultural imperialism’ thesis. Thus we have McSpaghetti in the Philippines, McHuevo in Chile and, as I can report from my own field notes, McBife in Argentina. Oh yes, and the late McPloughman’s in Britain. McDonald’s (in)famous hamburgers were not so easily assimilated into East Asian cuisine as was Coca Cola and, for example, Spam, which became popular fried in an egg batter. The hamburger did not so readily fit into the structure of a meal and is often relegated to the category of ‘snack’ in East Asian cuisine cultures. Whether this is ‘localisation’ and in some way opposed to globalisation I would not be so sure. It would seem to be more of a hybrid between the two, a process of ‘glocalisation’ as it were.

McDonald’s in East Asia seems to be less about food than total cultural experience. McDonald’s ‘sells more than food’ (Watson), ‘it offers not filling food but a fulfilling experience’ (Yan), ‘it is not food alone that draws people to McDonald’s’ (Wu). What customers buy into is a ‘feel’ or, to be precise, a ‘taste’ of ‘America’. In what seems a lone critical voice in this collection, Ohnuki-Tierney refers to how in Japan, ‘I continue to be amazed by the image of America and Americans . . . Even intellectuals who are...
attuned to world affairs believe that the United States is a country where social hierarchies do not exist . . . The myth of a classless society, held dear by many Americans as well, is widely accepted in Japan’ (pp. 180–1). Herein seems to lie the secret of McDonald’s. The book is rich in ethnographic detail illustrating this theme, how McDonald’s ‘invented’ birthdays in Hong Kong (now celebrated with Ronald McDonald), how students have taken over McDonald’s space for studying (also in Hong Kong) and how women like McDonald’s in China because they are alcohol-free zones. My favourite, though, is the McDonald’s employee addressing prospective customers outside the new Moscow branch through a loud-speaker: ‘The employees inside will smile at you. This does not mean that they are laughing at you. We smile because we are happy to serve you.’

I would have considerable reservations about this text and can well understand why the editor feels compelled to note in the preface that: ‘Not one dime, yen, yuan, or won of research support derived from McDonald’s Corporation or its East Asian franchise holders’. Thus, for example, Watson dismisses the campaign in Britain against McDonald’s (McLibel’s) as simply an ‘urban myth’ and just accepts at face value the company’s ‘firm international policy’ on ecological matters. While the emphasis on consumption is well taken, we still need to know more about McDonald’s corporate structure, employment practices and profitability. Without this contextual material, the niceties of consumption patterns appear somewhat detached or disembodied. A passing reference to the stock market panic in Beijing, when there was a rumour that the company would be shifted from its pride of place off Tiananmen Square, is indicative of the company’s importance in global capitalism. Indeed, McDonald’s has acted in Moscow, Beijing, and eventually one presumes Havana, as a beach-head for international capitalist penetration. Watson believes that, for children, ‘McDonald’s stands for home, familiarity, and friendship’ (p. 22). Many other, less rosy, stories could be told about McDonald’s.

University of Liverpool RONALDO MUNCK