Ulrich Beck needs no introduction, which is another way of saying that his name, for marketing purposes, is more important than what he writes. His latest book is a sad example of this, both in terms of what he writes and the fact that Polity chose to translate is so rapidly. The title is partly ironic, but ironically only partly. Beck’s book is intended to outline both pessimistic and optimistic futures for the world of work, the former titled the ‘Brazilianization’ of the West, the latter as a postnational society invigorated by ‘civic labour’. The general conceptual background will be familiar to those with a passing understanding of the key concepts traded on the global sociology circuit – risk society, insecurity, the second modernity, reflexive modernisation and, of course, globalisation. The usefulness of these ideas is largely assumed, and Beck proceeds to offer what he calls a ‘visionary non-fiction’ in order to speculate on future directions from here.

The problem with many analyses of the first modernity, Beck says, is that they are stuck within a ‘container’ model of the nation state and an attempt to perpetuate a ‘more-of-the-same dogma’ with respect to full employment. Paid work is seen as the guarantee of citizenship, but (in the second modernity) there is no longer enough work to go around. Various scenarios have been put forward as possible solutions, some hopeful and some apocalyptic, but most of them stay within the confines of a modified work society. For one reason or another, Beck argues, the problem of the under- and un-employed cannot be dealt with by the state, or through a faith in unrestricted neo-liberalism. Instead he presents the reader with two further scenarios – one apocalyptic, one hopeful. The former, Brazilianisation, represents a society in which the majority of the population occupy a grey area between (formal) employment and (formal) unemployment. At the top, there is a class of well-paid (but time-poor) global elites. Beneath them, a variety of precariously employed skilled employees, the working poor and the (time-rich) unemployed underclass. Non-standard work becomes the norm for most, and poverty the norm for many. Political apathy and powerlessness is the norm for almost all.

Since market liberalism in Brazil, or the United States, represents the cautionary tale it is hardly surprising that Beck then goes on to provide a more positive possible future. This is largely derived from German debates on civic labour, with occasional reference to the ‘third way’. A minimum income guarantee would be available as ‘civic money’, and citizens would then have the freedom to develop a portfolio of self-determined activities. Some parts of their time may involve formal employment, others community activity or entrepreneurship. For Beck, a Europe which fully embraces the concept of civic labour will begin to address the gender problems associated with the relationships between work and care; stimulate the development of cross-national interest groups; develop a respect for diversity; animate democracy; and better deal with pressing global problems of risk, with particular reference to the environment.

I am, of course, simplifying a complex series of arguments. Beck’s book is well intentioned, contains some interesting ideas and nice turns of phrase. I am sure it has already sold enough copies to justify Polity’s decision to publish it. It is also, however, a badly structured and poorly argued piece of work that does its author little credit. This is not to take particular issue with the notion of civic labour, but rather with the way in which the argument is made. Beck’s style is continually to ask grandiose rhetorical questions, and then refuse to answer them with any
particular clarity, or sometimes to answer them at all. He frequently dismisses un-named adversaries for their misunderstandings of a particular issue, and yet seems often to refuse the implications of his own arguments. As a result, he frequently contradicts himself, seemingly carried away with the depth of his insight. So he can claim in one chapter that people are no longer interested in politics, and in another that politics is being renewed. Or he insists that, in the second modernity, ‘the rule is the exception’ (p. 87), and then goes on to list the seemingly all pervasive characteristics of this new global form. These paradoxes, to put it kindly, abound. States are being transcended by new global actors, yet strong states are necessary to provide the preconditions for civil labour in the first place. Transnational corporations are lawless and neoliberal, yet may support civic labour programmes and even human rights.

Much of his argument necessarily relies on a caricature of the ‘first modernity’, such as his suggestion that the internal regulation of states produced ‘violence free space as the precondition for equality amongst competing ethnic, religious and economic classes’ (p. 34), or his assumptions about the universality of Fordist forms of production, or Keynesian economic policy, or collective bargaining. Given the massive generalisations he is working with, it is hardly surprising then that he relies on German newspaper articles and quotations from other purveyors of global sociology to make similarly massive generalisations about the second modernity. There is no reference to the variety of empirical studies (under the ESRC ‘Future of Work’ programme, for example) which tend to stress continuity against diagnoses of radical change. What makes all this more irritating is the pomposity of his style, which sometimes descends into no more than one-liners and wild generalisations. Of course this might be put down to the exceptionally wooden translation, but my guess is that the translator had little to inspire him in the first place.

This is not to disqualify the usefulness of futurology in general. Bell, Toffler, Drucker and many others have written interesting and provocative books about the future, but their works are usually well argued, or well written, and contain ‘new’ ideas. Unfortunately for Beck, to borrow his own words, ‘in the end, none of this is fundamentally new’ (p. 78). Most of these ideas derive from his earlier works, or from Giddens, Castells and Albrow, or (to judge from his references) from German debates on Bürgerarbeit and Bürgergeld. It seems a shame that these latter debates, which are potentially very interesting, are (for many English language readers) going to be associated with such a poor book. It is somewhat ironic that someone who has traded on reflexive modernisation should have so little reflexivity about their own intellectual positioning.

Keele University

MARTIN PARKER

Zygmunt Bauman: Dialectic of Modernity
Peter Beilarz

The Bauman Reader
Peter Beilarz

Few sociologists in recent times can compare with the breadth of analysis or insight of that produced by Zygmunt Bauman. Those who attempt to characterise his work face a number of difficulties. Bauman’s writing is eclectic, not wisely placed under any particular theoretical label. As a result, he represents different strands of social theory to different people. Compounding this situation is the sheer volume of material. His is an analysis that spans a number of the major
themes of twentieth-century sociology. Many know particular fragments of Bauman’s intellectual
effort without being able to relate these to his other areas. In two complementary books, Peter
Beilarz begins to help us come to grips with the contribution of this key social theorist.

*Zygmunt Bauman: Dialectic of Modernity* is an introduction to the full range of Bauman’s
English work. Well-written and easy to read, the book combines a conceptual review with
biographical information and a personal commentary by Beilarz. It is laid out along chronological
lines, but combines this structure with a thematic analysis of issues when appropriate. The result is
a text that enables one to trace the development of Bauman’s thought without losing connections
between different periods.

Just as Bauman referred to certain topics as windows for examining basic social processes
rather than tidy and neat pictures within themselves, the description of Bauman’s work presented
by Beilarz is a vehicle for thinking about fundamental points regarding interpretation and
criticism. *Zygmunt Bauman: Dialectic of Modernity* begins by considering Bauman’s early work
on class and labour movements. This analysis sets the tone for the rest of the book by locating
Bauman in an ethical relation to those examined: he is committed but independent, interested but
ultimately outside many of the struggles discussed. The book covers a number of substantive
topics and sociological approaches, including the reproduction of culture, utopias, hermeneutics,
ambivalence, the Holocaust, globalisation, uncertainty and ambivalence.

Bauman is perhaps most widely known as a sociologist of postmodernity. Certainly,
postmodernity is a core concern that runs through his later work. Some of his most provocative
ideas can be found in his characterisation of the modern as obsessed with control, order,
prediction and mastery. Such themes, for instance, are central to Bauman’s analysis of the
Holocaust. As Beilarz illustrates though, Bauman should not simply be labelled as a
postmodernist. So, in his work on globalisation, Bauman is best thought of as ‘beyond, after, and
[still] with Marx’. He holds on to, but hopes to reconfigure certain promises of modernity, not least
the potential of sociology as a project of understanding and criticism. As Beilarz is at pains to
point out, Bauman’s assessment of postmodernity is as equally mixed as his position in relation to
it. Here postmodernity cuts both ways, it is hardly a progressive step from the legislative horrors of
modernity. In these heady days, identity politics traditionally associated with work or citizenship
is gradually giving way to politics located in the supermarket. Utopias on offer today typically
amount to little more than dreams of endless consumption. Those who do not fit such a model,
those who are not able to pay the admittance charge to the galleries of consumption, are not
necessarily better off than their counterparts in previous times. The underclasses are ‘flawed
consumers’ who are regarded at best as useless and at worst as a dangerous riff-raff that needs to be
kept in its place. Either way, those not able to follow or take an interest in today’s consumption
aspirations present lifestyles to be avoided.

While *Zygmunt Bauman: Dialectic of Modernity* provides a clear account of Bauman’s work,
its greatest strength is its reflexive use of biographical insights to comment on the development of
Bauman’s analysis of the politics of interpretation and interpreters. For him, the role of classifiers
should be part of the stories told by intellectuals, where what classifiers proclaim tells us much
about them as individuals. Intellectuals, and sociologists in particular, come under close scrutiny
for their representations and corresponding (albeit poorly acknowledged) responsibilities. Beilarz
illustrates how Bauman’s writing both elaborates and develops in response to the tensions within
sociology between servitude and irrelevance, where the temptation to legislate weighs heavily on
the minds of many. As Beilarz summarises (p. 84):

[Intellectuals] both project their own problems and insecurities onto others and yet deny
their interest in between those who rule and those who are dominated; they identify with
superiors or inferiors as they choose, making invisible the specificity of their own project
or ambition in the process. In other words, the ambiguity of legislation and interpretation is built into the position of the modern intellectual itself, which results in the combination of all rights with no responsibilities.

While this quote might overstate the point, it is not without merit. Marxism represents one of the most quintessential examples of an ideology serving as a tool for intellectuals aspiring to power. Still, Beilarz underscores Bauman’s commitment to a critical sociology. Sociologists can enhance the overall understanding of the conditions under which social life is constituted and interpreted, as well as the opportunities, contingencies and responsibilities that come with these processes. While we have a duty to tell the truth as we see it, that should not entail forcing interpretations on others. At best, the postmodern intellectual functions as a translator and not an arbiter. This often means striving to add ambivalence to interpretations of social life rather than establishing definitive accounts.

The most significant limitation of the book is that its critical treatment of Bauman is restricted to the types of tensions acknowledged within his work, rather than providing any space for his critics. In this way the book is more of a history of the dialectics of a scholar’s thought than a critical evaluation. Whether, for instance, Bauman’s reading of the gardening tendencies of the State and the Enlightenment fails to recognise the diversity (and contradictory movements) of tendencies in modernity is an issue acknowledged but ultimately not addressed in any detail. Other criticisms, for example, relating to the socio-political decontextualised character of Bauman’s assertion that bureaucratic rationality substitutes technical for moral responsibility, are not considered at all.

The Bauman Reader contains twenty extracts from key pieces covering the range of thematic issues identified in Zygmunt Bauman: Dialectic of Modernity, such as socialism, modernity, postmodernism and globalisation. A wide-ranging interview with Bauman is also included. The commentary by Beilarz, however, adds little to the points raised in Zygmunt Bauman: Dialectic of Modernity. As such, while The Bauman Reader can stand on its own, it is probably best seen as a supplement to the other book, allowing the reader a first-hand glimpse of parts of Bauman’s work they might not have seen before.

As Bauman has argued on many occasions, we as individuals and intellectuals must go on in life, even when we do not know how. Beilarz has done a real serve for those who have tried and struggled to come to terms with Bauman’s work. Zygmunt Bauman: Dialectic of Modernity and The Bauman Reader are significant achievements in trying to elucidate the key contributions of this prolific author.

University of York

BRIAN RAPPERT

Sounding Out the City: Personal Stereos and the Management of Everyday Life

Michael Bull


Music in Everyday Life: Soundtrack, Self and Embodiment in Everyday Life

Tia DeNora


Michael Bull’s book is an attempt, in his own words, to ‘analyse the significance and meaning of personal stereo use in the everyday life of users’ (p.1). Countering a tendency within urban and
cultural studies to sideline and marginalise the actual everyday experiences and behaviours of 'real' people in favour of abstract theorisation, Bull emphasises the importance of grounding theoretical categories in everyday experience. An understanding of personal stereo use then should not be derived from an examination of the personal stereo as an artefact of the culture industry, but rather from an analysis of how individuals utilise personal stereos in their everyday routines. In fulfilling this commitment, following the introductory chapter, Bull spends six chapters (Chapters 2 to 8) on a detailed exposition of data gathered from over sixty in-depth qualitative interviews undertaken primarily in London between 1994 and 1996. Divided into two sections, this 'ethnography' of personal stereo use covers topics such as the management and colonisation of space (Chapter 3), the transformation of mundane 'time' into pleasurable activity (Chapter 5) and the role of personal stereos in managing interpersonal behaviour – controlling talk, providing a sense of security, and minimising threats (Chapter 8).

Placing this 'everyday' detail at the centre of the analysis from the start, Bull asserts the need to develop a phenomenological ethnography that casts light on the overlooked detail of social life, drawing together the 'structure of experience ... with the sedimented meanings underlying the daily experience of subjects' (pp. 10–11). Linking a close attention to the minutiae of personal stereo use (the phenomenological method) with a re-examination of the work of critical theorists (a focus on issues of control, management, contingency and so on), the book evades a criticism often levelled at phenomenological analysis – that it focuses on the description and analysis of everyday life at the expense of an appreciation of social structure. Indeed, Bull is eager to remind the reader at various points in the book that this theoretical combination offers a sociology that is both non-reductive and structural, and may be usefully applied in analyses beyond the current context.

In setting up such a critical phenomenological framework that does not 'reduce' personal stereo use to generalised accounts and which maintains a sense of social structure through notions such as 'control' and 'management', Bull is in a sense covering all of his bases. He is free to devote space to both rigorous ethnography of personal stereo use as part of contemporary urban experience and to discussions of the relationship between forms of technology (such as the personal stereo) and social structure, avoiding the pitfalls that either of these approaches may bring on their own.

However, the promotion of a critical phenomenology is only one of the proposed aims of the book. Following from the detailed ethnography of Chapters 2 to 8, Bull's primary aim is to put sound, and indirectly the 'aesthetic', back into an understanding of urban experience and the organisation and management of everyday life. As if to emphasise this, the reader is initially encouraged to pass over the two sections of ethnography, in favour of Chapter 9 – 'Sounding Out the City: An Auditory Epistemology of Urban Experience' – in which Bull claims that urban experience needs to be understood as mediated by technology, an important example of which is the sound of the personal stereo. The 'auditory' has featured only minimally in previous theorisations and explanations of urban experience. Bull's assertion is, however, that the 'urban' is increasingly mediated, aestheticised, managed and controlled through sound, exemplified in this instance by the use of the personal stereo.

It becomes apparent when reading Sounding Out the City that Bull's attempt to integrate critical theory and phenomenological ethnography in the construction of a critical 'theory' of urban experience (Chapters 9 to 13) is only partly successful. In the light of the rich, detailed and attention-grabbing description (ethnography) evident in the earlier chapters, linked throughout to theoretical debates and discussions, the last section of the book seems somewhat out of place. This is not to criticise the aim of the author, but rather to question the need for what is often a mind-boggling and confusing replication of ideas that have appeared in earlier chapters. Indeed,
there is a general feeling generated by the book that much of what is said could have been stated more simply and accessibly. I was frequently left thinking that not only would the book be more accessible, but that it would also have more of an impact if the sophistication of discussion evident in the chapters linking data to theory was left to speak for itself. Rather than attempting to rewrite urban theory in the same breath as re-counting the always interesting ethnography of personal stereo users, I would have been tempted to concentrate on one or the other. The book is then, a bit of a disappointment, not so much for the fact that Bull occasionally loses the reader in a theoretical avalanche, but more because it does not quite deliver on any of its promises. It does offer an analysis of the 'significance and meaning of personal stereo use in the everyday life of users' (p. 1), and certainly forces the reader to consider the role of sound in urban life. But I do think that a reformulation of the focus and purpose of the book could only help to lend more clarity and transparency to the arguments presented.

In a sense, Tia DeNora’s *Music in Everyday Life* follows on from the topics addressed by Michael Bull. Where Bull sets out to make the everyday use of personal stereos as technologies of sound more transparent, DeNora takes as her broad focus the social effects of music. The primary aim then is to offer both an ethnographic account of some of the many uses music is put to and to describe the ‘range of strategies through which music is mobilized as a resource for producing the scenes, routines, assumptions and occasions that constitute “social life”’ (p. xi). While asserting the need to see music as a cultural form that mediates social life, implicated in social action, interaction and organisation, DeNora is critical of the notion that the link between music and the social should be presumed. Associating this idea with the work of Adorno and a so-called grand tradition of studying music and society, she rejects the kind of approach that links ‘styles of art with styles of social being and with patterns of perception and thought’ (p. 1). Preferring to see the link between music and the social as something to be demonstrated rather than taken for granted, DeNora takes a lead from the work of cultural studies, in particular Paul Willis’s *Profane Culture* (1978), which is seen as providing ‘excellent tools’ (p. 5), with its reliance on ethnography, and as posing important questions about what music actually does – the affect(s) of music.

Moving through a critical account of semiotics and discarding the often-made theoretical leap from reading musical works to describing the social impact of music, it becomes apparent that the nature of musical affect, use and interpretation is a topic ripe for a more focused empirical enquiry. And this is precisely what the book proceeds to do, turning first to music as a ‘technology of the self’ (Chapter 3). Drawing on in-depth interviews with fifty-two women in the United Kingdom and United States, DeNora offers a consideration of the appropriation of music by individuals as ‘a resource in the ongoing constitution of themselves’ (p. 47). Focusing solely on women, the book claims to redress the gender imbalance evident in cultural studies of music and social life. However, throughout the discussion of interview data, I did wonder just how different DeNora’s findings would have been if she had interviewed a group of men. The discussion of music as a technology of the self, for instance, whilst based on data from women, was much more about how music is used to reconfigure moods, (re)construct memories and order the self, than it was about gender differences in either music use or the construction of a self.

Indeed, the claim that the book redresses a gender imbalance only seems to be true to the extent that this is a book based upon interview data from women rather than from men. It does not, for me at least, make enough of the imbalance in previous studies and perhaps propose an alternative programme of research. Despite this though, the book does bring to attention some interesting issues in the remaining chapters, addressing the relationship between music and the body through the examples of aerobics and music therapy (Chapter 4); music as a device for social ordering, scene setting and its use (and affect) within public places, including a fascinating exploration of and insight into the use of music within the retail sector (Chapter 5). Having offered
a detailed, theory-bound ethnography of music use, DeNora concludes with the assertion that society is increasingly being ordered (both individually and collectively) by aesthetic and expressive dimensions. This appears and I think is meant to be taken as a call for sociology to take music – as one of the aesthetic bases of social life – more seriously, to invest more time building understanding. I have little doubt after reading DeNora’s articulate and readable account of contemporary music use that this is a call that does not deserve to fall on deaf ears, particularly if subsequent studies spend as much time and thought picking through theoretical minefields, establishing methodological rigour, and recounting rich ethnographic material as is done in this book.

University of Nottingham

MATT PADLEY

Renewing Class Analysis

Rosemary Crompton, Fiona Devine, Mike Savage and John Scott (eds.)


Reviewing an edited collection in the limited space available is never an easy task, and in the case of this collection it is made even more difficult by the self-proclaimed ‘pluralistic’ aims of the editors. Coupled together this can only mean that this review cannot do justice to all the contributions to the collection and so rather than try to review each of the ten chapters this review focuses on those contributions to the collection which appear to offer most to the aim of ‘Renewing Class Analysis’.

The collection begins with an editorial by Scott and Crompton which reviews the current state of class analysis in British sociology, guiding the reader through the familiar territory of the Nuffield studies, the Cambridge scale and the demise of Marxism. This introduction ends with a pointer as to how class analysis can be taken forward: through a multi-dimensional, ‘post’-post and pluralistic approach. The chapters that follow are given the task of taking up this challenge.

Unlike many other recent attempts to demonstrate the persistence of class few of these chapters focus on either life-chances or life-styles as usually understood. The chapters tend towards an increased focus on economics and how economic theory and class analysis can be linked. This is most obvious in the chapter by Sørenson, which draws directly on the theory of rents but is also present in chapters by Gershuny, Ingham and Pahl. Whilst each of these contributions is interesting in its own right they all seem to share a desire to redefine rather than renew class analysis.

The later chapters of the book are more recognisable as class analysis, as they focus more specifically on structured inequalities and the increasing polarisation that these have brought at the end of the twentieth century. Wacquant’s contribution offers an analysis of this increasing polarisation in terms of four different ‘logics of polarisation’: the macrosocial, the economic, the political and the spatial. The macrosocial and economic ‘dynamics’ are those that we would be most likely to associate with class analysis, however Wacquant’s analysis points to the need to consider these dynamics in the context of political responses to them and not as free-floating processes. This theme is also implicit in the following chapter by MacDonald and Marsh, although their study of the position of unemployed young people in Teesside more clearly highlights the disjuncture between traditional class analysis and analysis of social exclusion and poverty. It is clear that if class analysis is to be ‘renewed’ that it must be able to address these concerns directly.
The final two chapters, by Edwards and Crompton respectively, bring the focus back to what has more traditionally passed as class analysis, focusing more explicitly on employment relations and occupational structures. Edwards focuses on the changing nature of occupational groupings and the obvious problems this entails for a class analysis based on the idea of occupational status; whilst Crompton focuses on the changing gender division of labour, and in particular the increased participation of females in ‘middle-class’ jobs. These two chapters together highlight that, even without the challenges to class analysis presented in the earlier chapters, traditional class analysis cannot remain static in the light of wide-ranging changes in the significance of the occupational order.

As the editors recognise at the end of the collection, the chapters do more to challenge class analysis than renew it, although taken as a collection they point to useful ways in which this renewal might take place. An increased focus on the economic as an embedded feature of class processes, its link with the cultural and social is a starting point towards the ‘holistic’ approach to class and stratification that the editors promote. However, it is the concern of this reviewer that we do not go too far down the road of holism, lest we render class-based divisions meaningless.

University of Salford

PAULA SURRIDGE

Tripping on the Color Line: Black–White Multiracial Families in a Racially Divided World

Heather M. Dalmage


Heather M. Dalmage provides unique insight into the dynamics of multiracialism both academically as a sociologist and personally as a woman in a black–white interracial marriage. As she writes on the first page of her work, ‘More than five hundred years’ worth of socially, politically, economically and culturally created racial categories rest in the phrase “what are you?”’ Dalmage succeeds in capturing her audience with this compelling statement.

Although great diversity exists in the make-up of multiracial families, the focus of this book is on black–white family members and the impact of race in America. From cover to cover, rich text is provided through in-depth interviews with New York and Chicago area black–white multiracial families as Dalmage explores both the theories and harsh realities of racism. The author illustrates how the identities, politics and communities of multiracial family members both form and are transformed by the colour line. The varied meanings of the colour line are discussed in the introduction and include exploration of the concept of ‘tripping’.

Students and active researchers will find this book highly readable and powerfully thought-provoking. The chapters walk the reader through such complex and racially charged issues as defining race, interracial marriage, institutional racism in the housing market, census categories, and transracial adoption. One form of discrimination related to these issues concerns borderism encountered ‘by those who cross the color line, do not stick with their own, or attempt to claim membership (or are placed by others) in more than one racial group’ (p. 40). Dalmage argues that borderism may be experienced as border patrolling, rebound racism or intensified racism. In discussing these concepts, the author provides a revealing framework from which to view multiracial discrimination.
In this context, Dalmage addresses the limitations of language available socially, culturally and historically to determine an individual’s race. One of the more notable discussions on this topic concerns the process of assigning race to a racially ambiguous person via the racial Rorschach test. In this case, human beings replace inkblots. Factors such as one’s style of dress, speech and street address are filtered through our available language forming the basis of racial stereotypes and therefore racial determination.

Through her interviews, Dalmage explores how multiracial family members often confront this passive interpretation of race by actively claiming their own racial identities. However, the author reveals how language can be a barrier in this respect as well. Dalmage argues that the essentialist language, which categorises race, is lacking in terms to address multiracial identities. For example, Dalmage writes (p. 173), ‘Candace, the white mother of five grown multiracial children, worked in the public schools for years and has become very sensitive to the differing treatment she receives relative to her sons and her husband. She no longer identifies herself as white, but given the lack of language and the fact that she still receives privileges granted to whites, she is left without words to describe herself’.

As Dalmage addresses these and other provocative issues, the reader gains perspective on the lives of multiracial family members. There is a greater understanding of both informal networks and formal organisations of the multiracial community as well as their social and political implications. These implications can have a profound impact on racism in American society. For instance, Dalmage stresses the necessity for these organisations to maintain an antiracism agenda. Without one, she writes (p. 139), ‘multiracial organizations seem to be distancing themselves socially and politically from blacks, creating one more layer in the racial hierarchy in which whites remain privileged, blacks disadvantaged, and multiracials somewhere in the middle.’

Dalmage brings forth compelling arguments, encourages critical thinking and will motivate her readers to discuss the powerful issues and challenges facing black–white multiracial families. While her work does not reflect a global perspective as the title might suggest, Dalmage provides comprehensive coverage of black–white multiracial issues in America. Her contribution to this field of study will greatly benefit students and researchers alike.

Florida Atlantic University

AMY I. KORNBLAU

Body Modification
Mike Featherstone (ed.)


Originally published as a collection in *Body and Society* (1999) and the outcome of a Theory, Culture and Society conference held at Nottingham Trent University in 1996, this wide-ranging collection of articles deals with questions of corporeality, identity and performativity via an analysis of body modification practices and representations of body-modifiers. These practices – which include drug taking; tattooing; piercing; cutting; fitness training; body-building and surgical procedures such as cosmetic surgery; the separation of conjoined twins; RealVideo surgery; genetic testing and transsexualism – are addressed in terms of how such corporeal acts, artefacts and technologies constitute the self, the body and identity. In this sense, the body is neither positioned as a neutral object that pre-exists such practices and is simply inscribed upon,
nor is it taken for granted in discussions of identity formation. Rather, through a range of original research projects on body modification, including empirical studies, an analysis of historical material, literary texts, and interviews with the body performance artists Stelarc and Orlan, these authors and artists address social theory, cultural theory and feminist theory on the body through an interrogation of the objects, procedures and practices of body modification. This is the most important offering this text makes as a whole, especially since these contrasting – and sometimes conflicting – analyses form a body of work that calls into question normative definitions of social bodies, the natural, the cultural, the biological, the technological and the subject. In so doing the various authors consider in innovative ways how and where the body is constituted and, moreover, the different bodies/selves that are made up in and through processes of modification.

Whilst the focus is primarily on how embodiment needs to be addressed through modification practices, some chapters also consider the significance of objects, especially medical technologies for understanding processes of self-making. This is most explicit in interpretations of the performance work of Stelarc’s ‘prosthetic extensions’ (Goodall, p. 161) and Stelarc’s understanding of his own prostheses as situating the self ‘beyond the skin’ (Stelarc, p. 120). Although the latter forms of analysis contrast to those chapters focusing on issues of embodiment, and indeed these two approaches to definitions of ‘the body’ may be read as somewhat oppositional, nonetheless there is a tendency in both to interpret difference as something which exists outside of modification practices, and therefore as pre-existing. As a consequence gender, for example, is understood as quite fixed and is mapped onto or read off from modified bodies. Thus gender is discussed as being stripped off (Sassatelli, p. 231), ‘a site of resistance’ (Clarke, p. 202), and in relation to ‘critical feminist claims’ (Monaghan, p. 269) rather than as being constituted through body modification practices and prosthetic extensions themselves. Examples of chapters where such assumptions are not made can, however, be found in the collection. Pitts, for example, in her work on self-mutilation found that the representation of women body-modifiers in newspaper articles as pathological was significantly different from those of men and thus shows how body modification practices may be constitutive of difference.

In this sense Body Modification is careful not to simply imagine the modified body to be transgressive or utopian. As Bryan Turner warns, the tattoo in a postmodern context is a middle-class commodity that is ‘superficial’ (p. 45) and ‘narcissistic’ (p. 42). This phenomenon, Turner suggests, contrasts with the historical significance of the tattoo in traditional and modern societies as inscribing the body of the other, constituting group membership and as having political significance in working-class male culture. In response to these claims however, Sweetman suggests in the following chapter (via his research data) that by considering the time/space factor in the physical act of getting a tattoo and being pierced – and especially the embodied pain of these practices – such permanent markings take on a new significance in postmodern culture, one tied to the self and memory. In this sense, Sweetman argues the tattoo becomes a personal ‘part of the body’ (p. 67) not simply a commodity that is consumed and worn but ‘corporeal artifacts’ (p. 64) that can ‘tell a story’ ... ‘like a diary’ (p. 69) and thus ‘commit the tattooee to a particular narrative’ (p. 69). Yet Kleese in his chapter warns against such processes of self-making which call on narratives of primitivism, as if somehow to authenticate the identity of the body modifier. Moreover, Kleese suggests that Modern Primitivism may involve practices of appropriation, difference making and identification which are linked to contemporary practices of racialisation.

Rich with such tensions, this collection is both theoretically challenging and empirically grounded and should be read by everybody interested in researching, theorising and teaching the body, technology, objects, power, difference, subjectivity and identity formation.

Lancaster University

NICOLE VITELLONE
Social Mobility in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century England

Andrew Miles

This is an interesting and well-researched book looking at social mobility in the period 1837–1914. Using the occupational information for bridegrooms and their fathers given on some 10,210 marriage certificates, supplemented with short case-histories, Miles attempts to show us that in the period under review Britain was a relatively closed society in which most of the mobility that took place was essentially short-range and occurred within either the working class in the case of, for example, an agricultural labourer’s son who became a carpenter, or within the middle class in the case of say a teacher’s son who became a vicar. Miles further differentiates his sample according to both time period and type of community. This analysis suggests that social mobility (both upwards and downwards) was more common at the end than at the start of the period, and differences were also found to exist according to the type of community.

I have several criticisms of Miles work. Firstly, having examined marriage certificates from the period myself I am acutely aware of the limitations of the occupational information supplied. Often the occupational terms given can be quite vague and less informative than the descriptions given in the census enumerators’ books (CEB). A man described as ‘a labourer’ on a marriage certificate, for example, might become an agricultural or iron-works labourer in the CEBs. Secondly, I feel that Miles is unduly dismissive of research that might now be undertaken using the CEBs for such a study, which (under the 100 years confidentiality rule) now allow for the tracking of families and individuals across six censuses. The Data Archive holds complete runs of CEBs for each census for a number of industrial and rural communities, including my own for Warrington, that could easily be used in a study of social mobility at comparatively little cost. Moreover, the CEBs for 1881 for the whole of Great Britain can now be purchased in machine-readable form for less than £30 from the Mormons. Finally, I would have liked more discussion of the methodology and in particular of the occupational schema employed within the text itself (rather than in the appendix) and more of a rationale for using it. Miles’s occupational schema is based upon that used for the 1951 census. This schema uses the five main social class groupings of the registrar general well known to sociologists. Miles has, however, significantly modified the schema to move clerks and low-level white-collar staff to social class II and downgraded agricultural labourers from social class IV to social class V. For my own part I would have preferred to use a seven-point schema with social class III being differentiated into manual and non-manual classes and agricultural workers treated as a class in their own right. During the period under examination the agricultural sector declined dramatically in importance and, as is well known, many agricultural workers were forced to ‘flee’ the land in search of jobs in the expanding towns and cities. Generally, one suspects that most such people would have found work in relatively low-level occupations in industry and therefore the way in which this group is treated can be expected to have had a fundamental influence on how social mobility is perceived in the period under review.

Notwithstanding these criticisms I was impressed by Miles’s work and feel it makes an important contribution to the study of both nineteenth-century Britain and social mobility.

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DAVID ALAN GATLEY
Gay Masculinities
Peter Nardi (ed.)

Lesbian and Gay Studies: An Introductory, Interdisciplinary Approach
Theo Sandfort, Judith Schuyf, Jan Willem Duyvendak and Jeffrey Weeks (eds.)

The inter-disciplinary subject area of lesbian and gay studies while tolerated is still often a taboo subject in academia. Even within sociology attitudes towards the area appear decidedly mixed, often dependent on institutional, individual and research council biases. Although there are countless disadvantages to those working in a marginalised subject area, there are a number of advantages which this status conveys. For lesbian and gay studies some of the advantages include the ability to provide a unique critique of heterosexual orthodoxy. Lesbian and Gay Studies: An Introductory, Interdisciplinary Approach provides an assessment of past and present research, whilst Nardi’s collection showcases new empirical research, focusing on one specific area of lesbian and gay studies — gay masculinities. As suggested by the title, Sandfort et al.’s book highlights various disciplines, attitudes towards lesbian and gay studies, as well as highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of such studies. Having to exist (or disguise itself) as a sub-research category with a wider discipline is often how such scholarship has continued to survive, sometimes within hostile environments. Practically all of the chapters in Lesbian and Gay Studies follow a standard pattern: the assessment of the past and present attitudes of a particular discipline (e.g. sociology, anthropology, geography, law), their resistances and viewpoints towards lesbian and gay studies, along with some recommendations for future research.

Ken Plummer’s discussion of sociology and lesbian and gay studies provides an excellent historical overview of the sometimes tense and uncomfortable relationship between the two. Plummer charts the key stages of the liaison from the initial ignorance of homosexuality by social scientists in the late nineteenth century, to the turn to queer and post-structuralist explanations in the 1990s. The current difficulties of a lesbian and gay sociology are also examined, with it being suggested that the relationship is continually being problematised by conflicts with mainstream sociology, the gay community, differences between men and women, and also more recently by queer theory. Sociology’s alleged ignorance of lesbianism is also exposed by Plummer. However, his account on lesbian and gay sociology is not totally pessimistic. For instance, he discusses the important role the relationship has played in debates around identity, and he also sets out proposals for future lesbian and gay research projects focusing on the media, stratification studies and heterosexist practices.

Established in Mary McIntosh’s foreword to the collection and a theme that runs right through the book is the volume’s hostility towards queer theory, labelling it debilitating, obscure, elitist and too fashionable. The impact of queer theory on gay and lesbian studies, however, is explained in the majority of the chapters, particularly in Jon Binnie and Gill Valentine’s review of geographies and sexualities. They too cast a critical eye over the role queer theory has played in geography, and call for sexual politics to be discussed with regard to wider political economy debates. Jeffrey Weeks, in the opening chapter ‘The Challenge of Lesbian and Gay Studies,’ argues
that queer theory has placed too much emphasis on diversity, rather than addressing the common themes of lesbian and gay studies. He calls for a common methodology to unite the various factions.

Lesbian and gay studies and legal studies is a topic tackled in Les Moran’s chapter. This section provides a revealing overview of the distrust expressed by many in the legal establishment towards socio-legal scholarship into lesbian and gay issues. Recognising these suspicions, Moran adopts a more restrained (and perhaps more realistic) view of the impact and role of lesbian and gay studies and legal scholarship. Another excellent piece is Mendès-Leite and de Zwart’s overview of social Auto Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) research, an area of scholarship which had only been established over the previous fifteen years, and drew heavily on lesbian and gay studies in its work investigating the sexual behaviours of men. Although social AIDS research has led to a greater knowledge about the sexual behaviour of gay men, the authors claim that one consequence of this has been the (re)-medicalisation of sexualities. Liana Borghi’s chapter on ‘Lesbian Literary Studies’ is less scholarly in its content, drawing on obscure literary references, with this section’s impact being hindered by following on directly from a chapter on gay literary studies which raised many of the same issues. Although it is a significant issue which should be addressed in such a collection, the chapter examining lesbian and gay studies’ chequered relationship with women’s studies is too flaccid, primarily because it is the unedited transcript of a discussion between four academics on the topic.

Whilst Sandfort et al. provides a useful rough guide to where and what has happened, the collection does not promote a strategy for future interdisciplinary partnerships (or indeed highlight existing collaborations). As the subtitle of the book suggests the collection is an interdisciplinary introduction to the subject but there is little evidence in this book that lesbian and gay studies does work across such subject boundaries with shared research motivations. If the collection is correct in its depiction, the style of lesbian and gay studies is discipline-specific, tolerated as a sub-area of study within the field, with often little or no dialogue between others conducting similar research within other subjects. This lack of collaboration between disciplines could also explain the slow development of lesbian and gay studies, so maybe future partnerships between disciplines is the only way forward. Undoubtedly, such co-dependent approaches would need to reflect the differences and parallels between such disciplines but would be united in their shared belief in enhancing knowledge of lesbian and gay issues, populations and relevant cultural products.

The Lesbian and Gay Studies collection is also predominantly Euro-centric with occasional cross-references to developments in North American lesbian and gay studies. Mirroring transatlantic differences in cultural studies, a couple of the chapters discuss the alleged differences between European and American studies, with European lesbian and gay studies being predominantly sociologically biased, whilst in America such studies are more focused on texts and literature. The literary biases of American gay and lesbian studies are not reflected in Peter Nardi’s collection Gay Masculinities though, which is wholly dependent on recent sociological, empirical research carried out in North America. The volume includes contributions on gay masculinity in relation to religion, friendships, race, sexism and risk. However, the research contained in Nardi’s collection is the type of work which Weeks criticises in Lesbian and Gay Studies, as it highlights the diversity of gay masculinities, utilises a multitude of research methods and does not unite behind a common banner of lesbian and gay studies. The research in the volume also illuminates the difficulties experienced by those engaged in lesbian and gay studies research, with many of the projects being relatively small-scale and poorly funded.

One of the more appealing chapters in the Nardi collection is Jan Ward’s piece on queer sexism. She argues that some gay men are sexist because of their huge investments in hegemonic...
forms of masculinity. Ward argues that the sociology of masculinity fails to address such issues in the same way as it challenges the relations between heterosexual men and women. Shinhee Han’s section on gay Asian-American men explores this group of men who, due to racist attitudes, have been labelled the ‘invisible of the invisible population’.

Some of the other chapters in the collection are not as innovative or methodologically sound as Ward’s or Han’s pieces. Dwight Fee’s chapter on gay men’s friendships with straight men fails to draw very much on his interview data of this area. Instead, he produces some complex theorising on the ‘transformist’ nature of straight–gay friendships. There are also some problems with Halkitis’s controversial chapter on masculinity in the age of AIDS. Due to the need to project an image of good health, Halkitis argues that AIDS has contributed to the popularity of the muscle-man image with American gay men. Whilst there may be some unsubstantiated evidence to back-up his argument, other factors such as the growth in consumption practices by men and the need to break free from past stereotypes of effeminacy are surely more pertinent. Halkitis concludes his piece by wishing that with the eradication of the virus, gay men will be less concerned with their physical appearance.

Whilst a collection dealing with the neglected area of non-heterosexual masculinities should obviously be welcomed, some of the contributors stumble in their attempt to link their subject area with gay masculinities. Although Connell’s book, *Masculinities* (1995), is essential reading for anyone with an interest in gender, virtually all of the contributors to this volume slavishly use Connell’s definitions of masculinity (particularly ‘hegemonic masculinity’), without ever contesting or suggesting any alternatives. After initially utilising Connell’s definitions, some of the contributors go on to use a multiplicity of different definitions of the term, which sometimes contradict the original definition. Whilst a recognition of diversity is essential in all areas of social life, the exaggerated emphasis on plurality in regards to masculinity by some of the contributors, renders the area unnecessarily complex. But perhaps one of the unique themes of this collection is the emphasis on how gay men are just as much products and promoters of traditional gender roles and relations as heterosexual men. This point is illustrated by the excellent concluding chapter from Steven P. Schacht on gay female impersonators, which deconstructs Judith Butler’s claim that drag is ‘radical’; instead, he argues that such impersonations simply replicate existing gender hierarchies.

**REFERENCE**

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JOHN GALILEE

‘No One Likes Us, We Don’t Care’: The Myth and Reality of Millwall Fandom

**Garry Robson**


The self-styled ‘hoolie shelf’ at Sportspages creaks these days with dozens of ‘hit and tell’ boys’ own accounts of aggressive masculinity around football culture, in Britain and abroad. Much of this autobiographical genre is what in the mid-1990s would have been called ‘new lad’ writing, the sort which for years filled *Loaded* magazine. In 1999 Colin Johnson wrote one of these books whose title
was based on the ‘terrace’ proclamation ‘We Fear No Foe!’ and the content of which remembered a decade following Millwall. The book was done by Terrace Banter, an imprint of ST Publishing who are responsible for a number of ‘hit and tell’ mythologies, including Johnson’s own version of flying the flag of St George for England. Garry Robson’s book, also about Millwall, has a title – echoing the South London club’s most defiant chant – which sounds as if it, too, comes from this genre, though, thankfully, it is nothing of the sort.

Robson’s book on the myth and reality of Millwall fandom is a fine piece of sociological work. In particular its theoretical underpinnings, drawing on Pierre Bourdieu and Basil Bernstein and the lesser-known but in some ways equally important contributor to this specific area, Christian Bromberger, are a delight to read about. Unlike many other sociologies, and anthropologies, of football (sub)culture, this book focuses on ‘deep connectedness to social background’ – in other words class culture – and relationship to ‘broader and deeper sources of consciousness and experience’, rather than on its development as a cultural industry. The method for studying what Robson conceptualises as ‘Millwallism’ – a Millwall/South-east London ‘habitus’ – is ethnographic. The full-time research was conducted into the notorious club’s fans between 1995 and 1997. However, Robson is a ‘native of South-east London’ himself and has been a ‘fan of Millwall for over thirty years’. This, he claims, allows him a ‘degree of access to the broad sphere of embodied cultural practice’, that is ‘Millwallism’. I agree, though it is Robson’s skill as a theorist and his adept employment of a relevant interpretive framework rather than merely his autobiographical male fan’s experience which marks him out from the ‘hit and tell’ merchants referred to earlier.

I have one personal gripe about Robson’s book. It is incorrect for him to attribute the concept ‘post-fandom’ to Richard Giulianotti, as he does on p. 6. I developed this notion, albeit in a different way from Richard Giulianotti, in the context of both music and football fandom in a cultural theory book originally written in the late 1980s and early 1990s under the title ‘post-fan, post-youth, post-culture’, eventually published in 1997. Garry Robson, in his good bibliography, fails to even reference this work. When Routledge put out Post-Fandom and the Millennial Blues, they chose to give it the misleading subtitle ‘The Transformation of Soccer Culture’ and adorned the cover with a picture of a ‘global’ painted-face soccer fan compounding the interpretation problem still further. As Routledge books do these days, the back cover of the paperback version proffered the question ‘Where Have All the Soccer Hooligans Gone?’, a singularly inappropriate query for the work in view. In conventional studies of football culture such as Robson’s, though, we are entitled to ask whether soccer culture has been transformed, where all the soccer hooligans have gone, and similar questions. In my view, Robson’s book goes some way towards partially answering these – and other pertinent and current – questions in a contribution which anyone interested in this field of so-called ‘football studies’ should read immediately.

Manchester Metropolitan University

STEVE REDHEAD

Civility in an English Village

William Stephens


William Stephens’s book is an anthropological study of an English village (to which he gives the fictitious name ‘Clevelode’), written in the style of the rural ‘community studies’ of the 1960s and 1970s. The book covers many aspects of village life from the organisation of village societies to the
invasion of urban migrants and the growing problems surrounding rural crime in nineteen
colourful chapters, and the author paints a detailed picture of contemporary rural life in lowland
England as seen and interpreted by a visiting American academic. Within this diversity, however,
the main concern of the book is with the social relations operating within the village and, in
particular, the day-to-day pattern of community life and interaction between residents (and
occasionally outsiders).

Stephens's central argument is that Clevelode has succeeded in maintaining a traditional (and
very distinctly rural) moral code which guides all aspects of social interaction in the village. This
code (the civility referred to in the book's title) is based on a caring concern for others and a
tolerance of 'different' people. It ensures that the elderly are not neglected, women are safe,
children do not misbehave and people are not swindled in the course of business transactions.
Stephens's belief is that this moral code is at the heart of the English village – he accepts that it may
not be reproduced in the same way in all villages – but sees it nevertheless as a function of the rural
way of life and only possible in small communities. He also maintains that social relations shaped
by this code represent a triumph over contemporary American social problems and that while
Americans may share some of the moral values evident in the village of Clevelode, there is a trust
between people, unique to the English village, which allows them to come to the fore.

In many ways this book presents a stereo-typical view of English village life and reflects some
of the classic prejudices espoused under the guise of 'rural values'. The village and rural people
generally are seen as very separate from urban society and the survival of what is valued about
rural life appears to be dependent on maintaining this separation. The familiar complaints about
urban incomers and the pollution of the rural way of life with urban influences (especially crime
and bad behaviour in general) litter the book, while the author stresses the tolerance of rural
people. The values discussed are expressly 'middle-class' and conservative. There are frequent
references to the 'problems' experienced and created by the families from the council houses and
the lone mothers. Bad parenting (linked directly and indirectly to the 'non-traditional' families) is
blamed for disruption to the moral code of village society. Traditional gender roles are applauded
with childcare assumed to be an almost exclusively female duty. The appearance of women in
'frocks' is also held up as an indication of the superiority of rural life.

A key strand of the book concerns methods of child rearing since the basis of the moral code is
believed, by Stephens, to be established in childhood and there are chapters on 'the children' and
'school and the school code'. Village children in Clevelode are seen as respectful and well behaved –
especially in comparison to 'urban' children and to children from Stephens's home country. The
arguments on rural child rearing and schooling make reference to some child development
literature but appear somewhat poorly developed and partial.

This indeed is my main concern with this book. I find much of what is written uncomfortable
and, at times, even distasteful, but could accept that these are the views of someone with a
particular personal philosophy that is different from my own. As an academic text, however, the
book is difficult to defend. The research for the book has obviously been painstakingly carried out
and yet it is, by its own admission, partial. The book is clearly the highly personal views of the author
and yet these are presented as truths, not to be challenged or contested. It does not engage with
established literature on rural social and cultural change to any great degree and bypasses entirely
recent work on rural identity and difference. The style of writing, while refreshingly readable and
sometimes entertaining relies more on off-the-cuff thoughts and observations than carefully
constructed and supported arguments.

As a teacher of rural social geography I can see a use for this book. It provides an insight into a
highly traditional view of rurality and one which, I am sure, continues to hold some credence with
both urban and rural people. It is important, however, that it is read for what it is – a very
individual interpretation of rural life from a man with a particular personal philosophy – and not as a blueprint for contemporary village England.

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JO LITTLE

Eating Out: Social Differentiation, Consumption and Pleasure

Alan Warde and Lydia Martens


At the risk of appearing melodramatic, there is perhaps some justification for arguing that, with this book, the sociological study of food and eating has come of age. As the authors note in their opening remarks, the 1990s saw an ‘explosion’ of social scientific research in food; before this: ‘interest in the practical, social and cultural aspects of food was minimal. For a sociologist, the field consisted of a stuttering debate on the nature of the proper meal and its role in domestic organisation’.

There is little that is stuttering about Warde and Martens’s text: it has clarity of purpose and is written in a refreshingly accessible manner. It reports and develops the results of a project undertaken by the authors and funded as part of the Economic and Social Research Council programme, ‘The Nation’s Diet: The Social Science of Food Choice’. Two principal types of data gathering were employed: semi-structured interviews and a social survey. Some thirty-three interviews were conducted with principal food providers in thirty households of varying circumstances in the Preston area of Lancashire. Subsequent to this, a survey of 1,001 people, predicated on quota sampling, was administered in three English cities (London, Bristol and Preston again). The authors provide a useful, if brief, ‘Methodological Appendix’. Given the unique richness and importance of their empirical data, a minor reservation is that more detail could have been given here, if only to reinforce the nature of their achievement. There are very few extant empirically based accounts of ‘eating out behaviour’ of this magnitude. Information of this range and quality from industry- or company-sponsored surveys rarely seeps out into the public presses for reasons of commercial sensitivity. Those few, similar, ‘academic’ studies in the public domain are largely of comparative, historical interest. A more extended discussion of methodological issues would, at the very least, have provided insight and guidance for other researchers working in this area and wishing to learn from Warde and Martens’s experience.

Eating Out has ten chapters that chart the development of that phenomenon in Britain, through the meanings and patterns of eating out, to eating out as a source of enjoyment and gratification. There are, additionally, useful and interesting chapters on the relationships between eating out, family meals and domestic organisation; the nature of service in public and private settings; and the minutiae of dining out. One attractive feature of this book is the extent to which, though addressing a specific and under-researched topic, Warde and Martens manage effectively to explore a great many antecedent themes in the sociology of food and eating, but without employing the mechanistic style such a task often entails.

A second, and evidently more important, merit of the work is the manner in which the authors engage with debates about the nature of dining out. This reviewer and others besides are chastised severally for promulgating a cynical view of the phenomenon in terms of the convergence of culinary tastes and the extent to which the dining public are emotionally manipulated while
participating in the ‘meal experience’. Warde and Martens make a strong theoretical and empirical case against these analytic dispositions. In so doing, they court the potential for much healthy disagreement but also clarify with great skill the core critical issues with which the sociology of food and eating could usefully engage. These notably include the interpenetration of domestic and public food systems; subjective experiences of dining out; food and gender relations; and the nature of hedonism.

For those who have traditionally regarded the study of ‘food habits’ as a trivial occupation, the rigorous analysis offered by Warde and Martens of eating out should supply a useful corrective. The strength of this work lies not simply in the originality of its conception and execution, nor in the skilful linkages built to many mainstream sociological concerns. At the level of the sociology of food and eating, Eating Out liberates the field from its turbid social-nutritionist past. At a wider intellectual level, the book represents a sophisticated example of sociologists engaging with ‘real worlds’ of human experience in a manner that extends, rather than compromises, their discipline.

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ROY C. WOOD