BOOK REVIEWS


David Ashley’s book *History Without a Subject* is a Marxist attempt to grasp the origins and the essence of postmodernity and postmodernism. Ashley believes that we have not left the capitalist mode of production with postmodernity, and he thus thinks that class and ownership of the means of production still play a decisive role in contemporary societies. Postmodernism represents a discontinuity with modernism as a new intellectual and cultural ‘superstructure’ that serves to make possible the continued exploitation of labour by capital. Thus Ashley is not critical of the categories of ‘postmodernity’ and ‘postmodernism’ as such, but rather of their interpretation within contemporary (postmodern) thought.

*History Without a Subject* is a provocative book—and a brave academic accomplishment—at a time when Marxism and class-analysis have been marginalised or even given up, and when Marxist Left have given up any Utopian project, and given up trying to understand contemporary (capitalist) societies in their totality and instead focuses on the so-called politics of identity and difference. In this light, an attempt to revitalize and reformulate Marxist class-analysis somehow seems outdated. For those who never believed in Marxism’s analysis of capitalism, Ashley’s book must come as an unintelligible surprise: ‘Wasn’t it supposed to have withered away, ashamed of its mistakes?’ For those who did once believe in the wisdom of Marxism, but who have since given up that belief, Ashley’s book necessarily embarrasses a guilty conscience: was the Left too comfortable, too vain, too lazy to go all the way with it? Today there is no longer any collective emancipatory subject; it is precisely this Subject of History that Ashley is looking for. Seen in this light, Ashley’s book is needed now more than ever.

Although it is not possible to do justice to the brilliant analysis in Ashley’s book here, I will try to give an account of his analysis of postmodernity and postmodernism and try to assess its importance in the following lines. In doing this I will relate Ashley’s conclusions to a collection of articles, *Sociology after Postmodernism*, edited by David Owen, which seeks to establish whether sociology must take a postmodern turn and what kind of theory and research such a postmodern turn would entail.

Ashley develops a Marxist, class-based analysis of postmodernity and postmodernism. Capitalism has changed in the sense that it has been forced to develop itself in new directions. We are witnessing a globalisation which makes a more widespread and differentiated exploitation possible. Class structures have disintegrated, and the workforce is individualised. There is a fragmentation of consciousness and culture, which speeds up the pace of consumption and creates a differentiated consumption market. In addition, the increasingly fragmented consciousness means that people are not ideologically suited to organize themselves politically against capital.

Ashley believes that production is still the determining part of capitalism, although the roles of financing and consumption are increasingly important. Consequently, we should seek explanations at the level of production-related class and not at the level of the state or culture. The conclusion is that capitalism has found new ways of exploitation, and that a culture and a consciousness that suits capital’s new ways has developed.
On the basis of this analysis Ashley reformulates the wisdom of Marxism. The circulation of capital is still the central explanation of societal phenomena, including the pre-eminence of class (in contrast to Malcolm Waters in Owen's book). However, we can no longer believe in Utopias and there is no longer any subject for the realisation of a Utopia. History is without a Subject, which is a disturbing fact for Ashley who is feverishly looking for such a subject to continue Marxism’s emancipatory project.

Ashley acknowledges that postmodernism is here in an empirical sense, but rejects it as an ideology. Postmodernism refers to several aspects of contemporary culture and intellectual life. It refers to the status of knowledge: anti-foundationalism and a refusal of universals; knowledge is particularistic. This entails relativisation, if not relativism. Ashley admits to this status of knowledge, but he does not want to give up the necessity and possibility of Reason because that would make critique impossible. We find the same problem in Sociology after Postmodernism: Ralph Schroeder dismisses postmodernism as relativist, whereas Nigel South acknowledges the importance of postmodernism's challenge of modern categories, although he does acknowledge the need for some categories.

The postmodern outlook is characterised by an emphasis on symbolic systems and on cultural, financial and commodity aspects of contemporary society or capitalism, as opposed to production and class defined in terms of ownership of the means of production. ‘New cleavages’ and ‘new issues’ have gained a primary role in contemporary sociology and in the self-understanding of the postmodern woman. These new cleavages are centred around two perspectives. One is the politics of identity and difference (such as that held by Ashenden in Sociology after Postmodernism), which is concerned with toleration and ‘affirmative liberalism’. The other is social-democratic (as seen in the chapter by Waters and is concerned with stratification and the redistribution of goods associated with new stratificatory systems. As opposed to this, a Marxist class-perspective would highlight antagonisms that cannot be solved within the present capitalist system.

The contributions in Owen's book reflect this interest in new cleavages and new issues like gender (Ashenden), race (Connolly), the body (Stein; Osborne), and the consequences of state regulation (Dean; Hunt). Ashley does not claim that these issues are not important, but rather that their importance must be seen in relation to their role in the circulation of capital. One example is ethnicity: the new interest in and importance of differences of ethnicity creates a differentiated workforce that is easier to exploit, cleavages that keep people from uniting politically against a common enemy (i.e. capital), and a differentiated consumption market that makes it possible to sell more products.

Sociology after Postmodernism is an interesting, though not exactly pioneering collection of articles, of which a few do well is assessing the current state of sociology within their particular field. David Ashley's History Without a Subject, by contrast, is a superb analysis of contemporary societies, of their foundation in a developed mode of capitalism, of contemporary postmodern culture and consciousness, of the self-understanding of theorists and researchers within the social sciences, and of the latter two’s relation to the capitalist mode of production. That said, it can be criticised on the following points.

First, like Marx, Ashley seems to hold on to the production of material goods as the determinant of class structures. What about the production of financing and consumption patterns? Ashley seems to regard these kinds of production as second order compared with the production of material goods. These kinds of production could be included in the core of capitalist exploitation without questioning the general analysis. What would that mean for the assessment of capitalist
exploitation and of the possibility of a revolutionary subject?

Secondly, Ashley rightly sees that there is no longer any natural revolutionary subject in Marx's sense. He is looking for a new subject of history, which he seems to think can still be found in the structures of production of material goods. This does not seem to be a viable strategy, though: Ashley himself admits that he cannot find such a revolutionary subject. Perhaps it would be best to stop thinking about social change and emancipation as the achievement of a certain macro-subject, whether it be a class or a certain group, in the light of the intersubjectivist status of knowledge today, and in the light of the complexity of the relations of exploitation in contemporary capitalism.

Finally, we have to address the status of Ashley's analysis which contains an unresolved tension. On one hand he seems to subscribe to social-constructivism and anti-foundationalism, but on the other hand he wants to retain some categories (like emancipation) as the foundation of critique. The question is how he can argue for just these categories when he has given up foundationalism.

University of Copenhagen/
University of Essex       LASSE THOMASSEN


The Open University's 'Concepts in Social Sciences' series has proved to be a valuable collection of books for both students and academics alike, providing useful introductions to key ideas and concepts. As such, a book on nationalism would appear to be an overdue and welcome addition to the series. Craig Calhoun claims in the introduction that, 'For better or worse, this book will not offer a comprehensive theory of nationalism' (p. 8) because what is required are 'multiple theories' (p. 8).

Ultimately, what Calhoun does appear to offer is a synthesis; a general and somewhat idiosyncratic account of nationalism, its emergence and its roles and uses across a wide temporal and geographical span.

The structure of the book is itself problematic as a student text. There is no sense of progression, or development, as you move through the book. Ideas and concepts are briefly mentioned and then passed over, only for the reader to discover that the idea is returned to in a later chapter for another brief discussion. Chapters begin without building on what has gone before – effectively, the book feels as if it had been six very separate essays, with an introduction and a conclusion attached in an attempt to create a single book.

Divided into six chapters the book provides an introduction to some ideas and debates that surround nationalism, including the construction/primordialism (primordiality in this volume) debate and the importance of history and the invention of tradition. Ideas of colonialism, imperialism and capitalism within the context of nationalism are also given a chapter. The fact that the book ranges over a long historical period is intended to provide a processual perspective on contemporary nationalism. For example, the importance of ethnic origins to nationalist rhetoric are outlined and illustrated with a seven-page discussion of the evolution and dissolution of the former Yugoslavia (pp. 58–65). However, these empirical digressions appear to be at the expense of discussion of certain key ideas within the concept of nationalism, such as 'civic nationalism' and 'banal nationalism', which are largely absent from the book; as is a discussion of feminist critiques and analyses of nationalism.

The use of examples throughout the book further adds to the sense of disjuncture encountered in its chapter structure. The continuity of chapter text is broken by the use of overly long examples that frequently do little to develop the ideas being presented. An
exception to this criticism is the discussion of the former Yugoslavia, mentioned above, which is both comprehensive and concise. The same cannot be said of the many passing references which are made without adequate context or sufficient detail for the non-specialist. Such examples in a textbook can be helpful; but incomplete reference to such disparate events as the contemporary Eritrean struggle, the Great Depression in the United States of America and to the St Bartholomew’s Day massacre of the Huguenots, frequently with little explanation or context, rather than illuminating the ideas under discussion only serves as a negative distraction.

As a result it is unclear for whom the book is best suited. Many undergraduates may struggle through the often cursory examples and the lack of clear structure of the book: however, while the book is not without difficulty for the usual target audience of this series, it is written in accessible language and published in an affordable format, two characteristics that will make it attractive to undergraduates. Everyone will find the vast bibliography a useful tool, but postgraduates and other academics in the field may find that the book does not challenge current thinking or offer anything sufficiently new.

University of Central England
EMMA CLARENCE


In an academic (and cultural) environment in which we are overloaded with theories which grapple with the question of the media’s role in contemporary society, ‘The Werewolf Complex’ is a breath of fresh air. Duclos’s analysis exposes the inadequacy of the simple cause and effect model of media violence, whilst not abandoning the premise that the media environment is central to the lived experience of social players. He offers an account of America’s widespread cultural fascination with (and inherent acceptance of) violence through an investigation of the phenomenon of the serial killer. He argues that the particular structure of contemporary American society, in which the autonomous individual is caught up in a repressive social order, has created a space for the serial killer, the ‘warrior’ of the modern world, to emerge and flourish.

His inquiry, which draws upon three interconnected areas – the social commentary on serial killing in the United States, the ‘horror’ culture directed by writers and film-makers and the mythology surrounding the Nordic warriors – is an inspired mix of the factual, fictional and fantastical, exposing the fragile distinction between them and the way they interact and impact upon each other. His consistent and almost indiscriminate usage of fictional and real criminals, details and scenarios serves as a reminder of their shared cultural habitus somewhere between celebrity and legend. Although I would say that, particularly in the discussion of the interpretation and justification of actions, the distinction is occasionally lost, it is perhaps a small price to pay for such an ambitious project.

The analysis of both the horror texts and the documentation of real cases is incredibly detailed and graphic. The author possesses a talent to captivate the reader, unusual in academic writing, and thus, even though I found the book quite disturbing and, in some parts, difficult to read, I read on. As I read my taste for the vile and the horrific developed. In this way he highlights extremely effectively the appeal of the serial killer. We are repulsed while we are fascinated. Duclos argues that this ambiguity reflects the social imposition of disgust battling against our natural desire for raw, abandoned behaviour, which lies at the root of the ‘werewolf complex’, ‘a state of oscillation between savagery and civility, peacefulness and aggression’ (p. 13).
Duclos’s proposition is ultimately a pessimistic one: Anglo-American cultures are bound to their belief in the violence of nature, for if they lose that belief they may lose the struggle to control the natural urge. The conclusion is that violent energy cannot (must not) be eradicated. These criminals cannot be socialised out of their desire to kill and serve as examples of the failure of the social machine to integrate the individual. The only solution Duclos offers is the adoption of alternative mythical traditions, which would be able ‘to master the relationship between violence and the collective by means of narrative talent, humor and lightheartedness’ (p. 214). However, whilst American culture increasingly becomes synonymous with global culture, it seems highly unlikely that effective lessons will be taken from ‘minority’ (read as non-American) cultures.

The book dazzles the reader with the power and finesse of its central argument. However, I find that its fundamental persuasiveness is undermined by its reliance on rather questionable interpretations of phenomena and selective examples. I certainly feel that there is a glaring omission in his discussion: that the violence of the horror culture and serial killings is an almost exclusively male phenomenon. Whilst there is a discussion of the overwhelming tendency of serial killers to target women, there is no distinction made between male and female violence (for women are increasingly violent but in different ways) and between male and female natures. I understand this is an enormous issue to tackle, but it should have warranted some attention here.

Despite these reservations, The Werewolf Complex is an unusually compelling read which shows remarkable insight into contemporary American culture. Duclos’s multi-dimensional approach to the relationship between the media is rare in its attempt to account for particular media responses by their contextualisation within a broader social structure. I would say that the book represents a step forward in media studies and researchers would be advised to build upon the foundations laid here.

*Lancaster University*  
CATHERINE GRAHAM


The development of computer programmes to aid qualitative analysis has been equalled by a growing body of literature. The co-authors of this book suggest that early writings attempt to persuade researchers of the benefits (and dangers) of utilising computers. However, recent publications have been empirically based, reflecting users’ experiences. Fielding and Lee continue this trend, employing evidence from a number of focus groups they have undertaken with users of CAQDAS (Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software). Participants reflect a diversity of backgrounds and levels of familiarity with the computer software. Consequently, concrete examples form the core of this book.

Rather than accepting received ‘myths’ pertaining to the historical evolution of qualitative analysis, the authors provide a critical overview of the various perspectives. By challenging previous accounts of qualitative analysis, the authors attempt to ensure the user perceives the computer as an integral component to the research process and not an appendage. Whilst some of the points made may be familiar to qualitative researchers, this forms an invaluable second chapter.

Users’ motives for utilising computer-aided analysis vary considerably. However, Fielding and Lee manage to encompass these under three headings. First, the programmes are often viewed as labour-saving devices. When managing large qualitative data-sets, computers
appear to be the perfect remedy to the cumbersome and often time-consuming task that traditional approaches entail. Secondly, by offering numerous possibilities the users’ capacity to explore their data is enhanced. For example the facility to ‘memo’ oneself allows the researcher to keep track of and revise their thoughts on a particular piece of data. This is extremely useful for part-time students whose commitments elsewhere often inhibit continuity of thought. Finally, by appearing more systematic it can legitimate a researcher’s decision to use qualitative methodology, particularly across various disciplines. If, as one participant suggests, a researcher is unsystematic beforehand, however, there is no reason why a computer would necessarily impose a useful system.

Participants recognised the flexibility that programmes offered. This was particularly evident when coding and retrieving data. If these are undertaken manually, there is a danger that due to the laborious and time-consuming nature of the work, these tasks can limit the extent and complexity of coded data. The user may be reluctant to make amendments to initial codes, accommodate overlaps and make connections. Consequently, systematic and consistent searches enable the user to create complex coding schemes, discovering other aspects to the data that might not previously have been considered. However liberating this experience might be, users warn of the potential danger of becoming over-elaborate in their analysis to the detriment of the project.

One advantage a computer does have over traditional methods is what the authors term ‘transparency’, where it is possible to trace the pathway which informs a particular code or analysis. This encourages the users to be lucid and systematic in their thinking, thus avoiding misrepresentation. By making the researcher’s thought process explicit, accountability and openness to independent scrutiny are ensured.

Despite the various computer programmes participants utilise in their research, Fielding and Lee manage to draw on themes and experiences common to all users. This generic approach only wavers when extolling the benefits of hypertext. They suggest that hypertext has the potential to re-examine orthodox ways of viewing and presenting data. Fielding and Lee counter the suggestion that hypertext necessarily has the capacity to reflect the methodological challenges of postmodernism. Their cautious appraisal suggests the difference between more established and recent approaches to qualitative analysis has been over-emphasised. Whether the analysis is concerned with modernist notions of factual data rooted in the real world, or postmodernist ‘interpretations of situated worlds’ (p. 185) the computer has enabled users to manage practically and practise procedures.

I have recently acquired an understanding of computer-aided analysis, and this book attracts me because participants’ accounts resonate with my own experiences. This shift in focus renders the more nebulous areas of qualitative analysis comprehensible without losing any of their complexities. There are texts more appropriate to the needs of people considering using a program for the first time. However, for current users, this book is a helpful contribution to the debate regarding the use of CAQDAS.

U.C.E. Birmingham

PHIL SHELTON


There has been a dearth of case studies on which the contested history of the asylum system could be based. Traditionally, many of the claims and counterclaims about the role and nature of asylum life oscillate between self-congratulatory histories and critical accounts of ‘inmate’ life. Limited empirical evidence has frequently been
extrapolated to differing time frames and contexts in a manner which would fail to fulfill the stringent criteria of methodological adequacy now demanded of qualitative and quantitative sociological research. With the passage of time, during which hospital closure and resettlement has become the norm, there is also a need to reappraise the role of the asylum in the context of the rise in new forms of surveillance and ways of dealing with psychiatric patients in a society which is arguably no more tolerant of psychiatric patients than previous generations.

Against this background Gittins (1998) paints an ambiguous history of the asylum. Her socio-historical analysis of a large psychiatric hospital in Essex, based on the biographical narratives of staff and patients who lived or worked in the hospital, suggests contradictions and paradoxes about hospital life. For example, in relation to the lives of women patients, it is argued that the hospital, based as it was on men or women only wards, constituted a ‘women-only-space’ and true asylum in a social context in which there was little such space in external community life. Moreover, the hardships and restriction of asylum life need to be balanced against the external social, economic and political conditions that prevailed during the heyday of the asylum: extreme poverty, unemployment and wars that affected people’s abilities to cope with difficult material and personal situations.

In the first chapter of the book the rationale and events surrounding the establishment of the hospital are outlined. The second chapter examines the nature and local significance of the processes and procedures governing the entry and exit of patients and staff to the hospital. Aided by in-depth material from interviews with Russell Barton, a renowned medical critic of institutionalisation, Chapter 3 provides a fascinating description of the nuances of medical power, paternalism and politics which permeate the administration, organisation and reform of hospital life.

Chapters 4–6 focus on the gendered nature of the division of labour between male and female staff and the work, leisure and everyday living patterns of patients. Chapter 7 explores the role played by different treatment regimes deployed over the life of the hospital and its impact on patients. The last chapter attempts to link the findings to wider external trends in mental health policy and practice.

In the best tradition of oral history this book succeeds in providing a rich local history of Severalls Asylum from the point of view of the people who participated and were part of the hospital. The ‘thickly’ described accounts of patients and staff present an elaborate and in-depth picture of the subtleties and vagaries of everyday asylum life. However, conceptually, I felt that too little was made of the differing status and interests of staff and patient accounts. At times there is a feeling, too, that it was important for the author to rescue something positive from what I read as a fairly unremittingly depressing account of asylum life. This might, of course, be part of the success of providing an oral history – the reader is free to interpret the accounts of respondents themselves.

However, I did wonder whether the positive gloss that was evident at times was linked to the personal agenda of the author. The book is dedicated to the memory of the author’s mother ‘who died in Severalls’, and at one point in the book a description of the circumstances of her mother’s admission is described in detail. However, a personal account of the motivations behind the carrying out of the research from the author herself is not included, perhaps reflecting an ambivalence about the importance of the personal mixed with the need to avoid the ‘confessional’ within the culture of sociology.

Additionally, whilst it is claimed on the back of the book that the material is contextualised in relation to wider developments, the book was disappointing in this regard. References to wider controversies and sociological analyses
are all too brief and superficial. At several points in the book there are tantalizing descriptions and contradictions which are not analysed in a way which contributes to a wider sociological view. For example, the practices of the staff – petty pilfering, the marginalisation of staff as well as patients and the lack of humanity showed towards inmates – resonated with the analytical framework provided by J. P. Martin’s *Hospitals in Trouble*, which highlighted the failures of care in British mental institutions between 1965 and 1983. Grounded theorising led Martin to construct a six point typology of isolation in accounting for the structural and endemic nature of abuse and neglect which took place within these hospitals. Nevertheless, Gittins’s clear, lively and accessible account of asylum life provides a scholarly and valuable contribution to the sociology of mental health and illness.

University of Manchester ANNE ROGERS


Published in the series *Social Change in Western Europe*, this volume is edited by two social anthropologists (one from Norway, the other from France). Following an editors’ introduction there are separately-authored chapters on aspects of family and kinship in Italy, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Sweden, Britain, the Netherlands, France and Norway. Most of the contributors are either sociologists or social anthropologists.

In a challenging introduction Segalen argues that, despite their evident importance within people’s lives, family ties have little or no theoretical significance in modern societies. She suggests, however, that ‘just as active sports have developed to counter the sedentary way of life that society inflicts upon us, so ties of kinship take on the appearance of a form of resistance on the part of the individual who seeks dialogue other than with the state and its administration’ (p. 5). Many recent social changes have great significance for the family and kinship, and the book aims to find out ‘to what extent and in what ways the perpetuation of family shows itself in different European countries’ (p. 5), and to describe the distinguishing characteristics of the family in the light of two of the most important recent developments: the increased fragility of marriage and the lengthening lifespan.

The collection of chapters about different European countries does not purport to be a set of comparative studies, but their juxtaposition encourages many questions about differences and their causes. This is done in one chapter through a comparison of statistical data on trends in fertility throughout Europe, but must mainly be accomplished through the authors’ or the readers’ own suppositions and comparisons of information in the various chapters. Apart from the chapter on fertility trends the emphasis is on ‘facets of family experience that are not susceptible to an orthodox statistical approach’ (p. 12).

The chapters concentrate on the meanings attributed to family and kin in modern society and how they are perpetuated through, for example, inheritance. The chapters can be mined for specific findings about family life, for more sustained conceptual or theoretical arguments, or the development and testing of hypotheses. For instance, in the largely descriptive chapter on ‘Family and Kinship in Italy’ (by Barbagli) it was interesting to see the author’s evidence for the contention that the strength of kinship ties is stronger in Italy than in any other European country, with very high proportions of all adult children seeing their parents at least once a week (much higher today in Italy even than in the British Bethnal Green studies of the 1950s which the author interestingly cites).
In a more explanatory chapter, on what Schultheis describes as the family malaise in Germany, an attempt is made to explain why young Germans are emotionally distant from their fathers, think one should not necessarily give unconditional love and respect to one’s parents and do not generally continue to live with their parents once they reach adulthood. Asserting that explanations are hard to find because sociologists in Germany – as in other European countries – have neglected the study of the family, Schultheis suggests that the German father has been ‘morally dethroned because of the historic guilt attributed to him’ and that this has led to a ‘pronounced anti-authoritarian ideology’ (p. 59), and an emphasis on the autonomy and rights of the individual. The loosening of ties between parents and children is a strong theme throughout the book, though with most authors not seeing it in such negative terms as Schultheis (nor of course explaining it in the same way).

The central question of how family life can still be accomplished and preserved in a more individualistic world, which emphasises the autonomy of each generation and sees ‘being oneself’ rather than ‘being of use’ (as one author puts it) as a key value, cannot of course be answered. This book raises and provides many fascinating and imaginative insights into the family in the late-modern world. As with most collections there is no synthesis or conclusions, but it will help those of us who want to make family and kinship a research priority, since it amply demonstrates that the neglect of the topic is a serious omission in sociological and anthropological study.

Age Concern Institute of Gerontology, King’s College London JANET ASKHAM


Theology and the sociology of religion have traditionally been kept separate, and specialists in each field have often been suspicious of the other. This book brings them today for the benefit of both. It is a collection of seventeen essays in a new series on religion and modernity, and argues the validity of the concept of post-modernity and surveys the place and role of religion within it. Although the authors themselves are drawn solely from English-speaking countries – Britain, the United States, New Zealand, Australia and Canada – both the theoretical chapters and the case-studies offer an insight into sociological, philosophical and theological traditions beyond those of the English-speaking and the Western worlds. This should make interesting reading, whatever the reader’s background.

This book is well structured: Heelas’s introduction gives us some very good markers on the debate surrounding modernity and post-modernity. We are briefed on the major theorists (Beckford, Rorty, Gellner, amongst others) and provided with clear definitions of the key concepts of ‘differentiation’ and ‘dedifferentiation’, religion and tradition; key terms which will be found throughout the book and form part of the criteria for a choice between modernity and post-modernity. The first part consists of general essays on different aspects of religion in modernity and provides us with a theoretical framework. An international perspective comes next with a series of case-studies taken from around the world and considering a wide range of religions. These essays offer a more socio-cultural approach. The third part brings us back to a more theoretical approach which is essentially theological, giving us a glimpse of the future and suggesting that, as we approach the second millennium, the debate is far from drawing to an end.

This is the part I personally found the most challenging but well worth the effort. However, other non-theologians
should be warned that some of the text can be a little perplexing and require several attempts. The table of contents had led me to think that these essays would be completely separate entities, held together merely by the fact that they all dealt with some aspects of religion. However, these apparently heteroclite and unconnected texts came together in a logical sequence and showed many similarities beyond a general uneasiness at considering religion in terms of post-modernity.

Despite the title, we soon notice—as the introduction warns us—that the majority of contributors chose to discuss religion and modernity, often dismissing the concept of post-modernity altogether, as does Bruce for whom all patterns of religious change are distinctive of modernity, and Smart, who sees tradition as a misused concept. Mark Taylor’s ‘Terminal Faith’ follows Bruce’s text with a philosophical account of the growing technological culture on the eve of a new millennium. He presents us with the ‘dream of the New Age’ (p. 52) to come. The promise of a new era is forever postponed but the believer does not falter because his faith is unshakeable.

Bauman appreciates the fact that post-modernity, unlike modernity, does not feel the urge to define the term religion in a rigid way. Furthermore, post-modernity provides us with new non-religious agencies capable of offering the ‘peak experiences’ (p. 70) which were once the responsibility of religious agencies. However, as strong sensations are created and satisfied, stronger ones are created. Increasingly, post-modernity cannot keep up with the needs it creates; this is where the only form of post-modern religion which Zygmunt Bauman is willing to recognise comes into play: fundamentalism.

Fundamentalism is also the subject of Bruce Lawrence’s contribution. Three major types of fundamentalisms are considered: Christian literalist, Muslim terrorist and Jewish political activist, each a product of modernity. The author comments on the formation of a great variety of hybrid forms of fundamentalism, which merely illustrate the complexities of identity formation in modernity, rather than confirm the advent of post-modernity.

Bernice Martin, the only female contributor, uses Brazil as a case-study. There the new Pentecostal Church adopts mediatic means to reach out to the casualties of the dramatic socio-economic changes which have taken place over the past thirty years, whilst keeping some traditional elements, such as the folk liturgy. Thus it challenges post-modernity with its own weapons. Like Brazil, Japan skipped modernity and moved straight from pre-modernity to post-modernity and, in his chapter, Davis shows how ‘Japan Theory’, which throughout history has anchored a rigid definition of national identity in the Japanese psyche, is now being challenged by new religious expressions borrowing from Buddhism, Shintoism and technology and offering alternative definitions of identity. Davis suggests that Japan could be seen as the first post-modern society.

The theme of national identity is also discussed by Robert Hefner and Richard Roberts. For Hefner, there are tensions between the formation and sustenance of a shared national identity and the respect for differences in plural modern societies. He contrasts and compares the Western—i.e. Christian—and Islamic worlds, looking more closely at Indonesia, and comes to the conclusion that they are similar; the fate of Islam will eventually follow that of Christianity as it becomes more rationalized. Whether we wish to interpret this as a sign of modernity or post-modernity depends on our definition of secularisation.

Roberts’s approach is different, as he surveys the theological debate on modernity and discusses the problems of contrasting identities in Europe and Scotland. He believes that pre-modernity, modernity and post-modernity mix with one another rather than follow one another. Aware that throughout history Churches have attempted to monopolise the ‘souls of Europe’ (p. 188) and to
define Europe in their own terms, Roberts sees the role of today’s theologians as major in providing a framework for the understanding of the concept of identity in the European context, taking into account cultural agencies.

Cupitt also advocates the need for a change of attitude amongst theologians who must reconsider all inherited ideas and take into account the new ‘mediascape’. He recognises the importance of language, and especially that of metaphors which give sense to our world. He explains the rise of fundamentalisms as a thirst for an other-worldly truth.

In the final part of this book we are challenged by Ward, Millbank and Hart, whose theoretical chapters are alternative discussions on the role of theology in the post-modern world. In their own way, each argues that theology has been harmed by modernity and lost its momentum. Whilst Ward and Millbank investigate the meaning of love – kenosis, agape and eros – and the purpose of Christian theology in today’s world, Hart turns to the sacred, which is the impossible as it cannot represent itself, and poetry, which is the only possible response to it.

This book is essentially aimed at students in theology and philosophy, but I believe that it will also provide sociologists and historians with some fascinating and original material. There is a useful general index. Each chapter but one includes its own bibliography and the material used is generally very recent. I was pleased to see that the bibliographies were not limited to works published in English, but also include many sources published in other languages. This way, having had their appetite whetted by such compelling reading, both the polyglot and the less-able linguist can find further intellectual nourishment. However, I would have welcomed direct contributions from scholars from other traditions; this is the only criticism I would make of an otherwise excellent book.

University of Exeter DOMINIQUE MACNEILL


In 1970 Ronald Inglehart first presented his theory that value priorities within the advanced industrial societies had shifted from ‘materialist values’, emphasising physiological sustenance and safety, to ‘post-materialist values’, prioritising ‘quality of life’ issues, human rights, self-esteem and individual expression. Now, there is more: more data drawn from more societies – forty-three of them – and more values. Inglehart extends his investigation to consider cultural shifts additional to that from materialist to post-materialist values, covering a wide range of value changes to do with anything from religion to sexual norms. To find out what proportion of Dutch people believe in the devil and how many Mexicans would be willing to join an unofficial strike one can simply turn to the appendixes.

Inglehart restates his theory of long-term value change. Based on the assumptions that our values reflect the conditions found early in life and that we place greatest subjective value on what is in relatively short supply, the expectation is that younger generations, born into greater prosperity and not having experienced war, will contain more post-materialists than materialists. Rising levels of tolerance apparently share the same cause. Xenophobia and intolerance thrive in conditions of insecurity. Those raised in conditions of relative security can afford to be more tolerant and have less need for absolute rules.

Value change will take place gradually as older generations are replaced by younger, more post-materialist generations. Post-materialists are more articulate and politically active than materialists, so they may already carry more social weight than their numbers suggest. Eventually,
the top decision-makers will be post-materialists. Inglehart admits that there will be short-term dips when economic troubles produce a rise in the emphasis of materialist values – for example, Great Britain experienced a shift towards materialist values between 1981 and 1990 – but he predicts that the long-term change will re-assert itself and argues that the current available evidence supports his position. He predicts that a ‘materialist’ backlash may take place, and suggests that it is happening in certain countries (the United States and Germany), but it cannot succeed. Materialists are a dying breed.

This is a choice about priorities, though; this is not an either/or option. Post-materialists are not anti-materialists. They are still in favour of economic and physical security, but they give ‘quality of life’ issues a greater priority.

All this is located within a wider discussion of modernization theory – of which Inglehart accepts a broadly Weberian account – and an account of post-modernisation – not a rejection of modernity, not a revalorisation of tradition, but a value shift away from the emphasis on economic efficiency, bureaucratic authority and instrumental rationality. These value changes will have a progressive impact: increased levels of tolerance and greater support for individual freedom, democracy and more participatory forms of democracy.

Inglehart’s thesis has been taken up in the study of social movements, especially environmental movements, and has relevance to debates about the rise of a ‘new’ middle class, the breakdown of old class cleavages and shifts in political allegiances and he devotes a chapter to discussion of these themes. He now believes he has taken account of, and vanquished, his critics – both those who have challenged whether the trend towards post-materialism is as universal, strong or permanent as he suggests, and others who have put forward alternative explanations for the rise of post-materialist values. However, some criticisms remain. Inglehart’s theory appears to rely on the assumption that basic material needs are fixed so that, in conditions of increased prosperity when these needs are met, people then turn to satisfy other, post-materialist needs. May not improvement in material conditions lead instead to a redefinition and extension of what counts as basic material needs? Similarly, even if people do place greater emphasis on self-expression, might they not choose to express themselves through purchasing stylish, consumer goods? Surely this is exactly what much of the literature about post-modernity has suggested is happening. Naturally, Inglehart would respond that the evidence backs up his claim that levels of post-materialism are increasing.

School of Social Sciences
University of Sussex


The work of deciding what the Blair Government is really about has become a major preoccupation of academics as well as journalists. The IPPR Reader is an interesting ‘primary source’ for this endeavour. It provides a selection of some of this centre-left think-tank’s most important contributions during the 1990s and it is intriguing to see what has been picked up by New Labour and what has not. Social Issues and Party Politics is a rather different book. A number of (mainly) academics were apparently asked to keep a record of the 1997 election campaign covering both the main aspects of social policy and the view from the different parts of the United Kingdom. Contributors have also written about the ‘early days’ of the Labour
Government, but the majority did not go too far in this respect.

The question arising from the Jones and MacGregor book is the one that has been worrying commentators over the past eighteen months: how different is New Labour from what went before? ‘Welfare’ is one of the most interesting areas to look for answers. Labour chose to make ‘welfare reform’ one of its flagship policies and rashly promised that it would save money that could then be used for health and education. As Carey Oppenheim reminds us, the language of reform in this area of social policy underwent change during the last Conservative Government and has persisted under New Labour. Out went ‘social security’ and in came ‘welfare reform’, and with it, the idea of ‘welfare dependency’, both American imports. ‘Welfare to work’, which identifies welfare as bad and (paid) work as good, also smacks more of continuity than change, especially in respect of a group like lone mothers, although the New Deal for young people represented a major new effort to tackle unemployment among this section of the population.

But, as Valerie Symes points out, New Labour appeared to be even harder on ‘scroungers’ (a particular concern of Frank Field pre- and post-election) and to take a more disciplinarian approach to the unemployed. The compulsory element in the new Government’s programme has proved controversial. The Introduction to the IPPR volume talks about the need to move away from the paternalism of the post-war, big bureaucracy, welfare state, but Suzanne MacGregor makes an important point in her conclusion when she draws attention to what the American writer, Lawrence Mead, has identified as ‘new paternalism’. The determination to put the emphasis on individual responsibility has been accompanied by moralising, about which many Labour supporters feel uneasy.

This has of course come to the fore in the field of family policy. Miriam David’s chapter in the Jones and MacGregor book, which is one that takes the post-election story furthest, points out the extent to which Labour’s education policy put greater emphasis on morals and the family than did that of the Conservatives. The family reached the top of the policy agenda in the early 1990s, as the extent of rapid family change bore in upon ministers. Labour has not found this issue any easier than the Conservatives did.

However, it is interesting that its recent consultative paper, Supporting Families, appears to have heeded at least some of the warnings issued at the beginning of the decade by IPPR (and others). Social Policy and Social Justice reprints Anna Coote, Harriet Harman and Patricia Hewitt’s 1990 piece on the family, and one of the most significant ways in which New Labour has recognised this work is in the title of its consultative paper, which refers to families rather than ‘the family’. However, Adrienne Burgess and Sandy Buxton’s work on fathers has remained a policy outlier. The emphasis on the virtues of paid work has left little space for an expanded discussion of unpaid care work and Labour has shown no inclination either to provide paid parental leave, or to extend compulsion and the new paternalism to men in their role as carers for children.

An awful lot does look very similar to what went before, but to judge only by the factual content of policies may be misleading. For example, ‘best value’ is different from compulsory competitive tendering, and it is not clear that it is wholly accurate to represent changes in the National Health Service as a wholesale extension of general practitioner fundholding. To stress cooperation rather than competition is important. To praise rather than to denigrate the public services is different. The culture of social policy has changed. This is hard to capture and harder to measure, but it comes across forcibly from the IPPR Reader.

It is nevertheless a pity that neither book explicitly examines the ideas that
inform New Labour. There are, however, interesting pointers in the *IPPR Reader*, not all of them consistent. The Introduction distances Labour from communitarianism and lauds ‘democratic liberalism’, which is not defined. However, the importance attached by a number of contributors to new forms, such as citizens’ juries and to processes that use procedural rights provide some clues. Procedural rights are not unimportant in the delivery of services, but they sit rather weakly alongside Raymond Plant’s robust case for a right to welfare. It is highly unlikely that the framework provided by Lenaghan in respect of health care, which allocates decisions on the nature of the service to be provided to central government, decisions on the level of service to health authorities, and the prioritisation of individual cases to clinicians, will solve the thorny issue of rationing.

Readers are unlikely to be much clearer about the precise nature of the ‘third way’ (a term not much evident in either book) after reading these volumes, but will come away with a much clearer sense of what is in the policy pot.

University of Nottingham    JANE LEWIS


Margaret Thatcher will find cold comfort in the latest edition – the fourteenth – of *British Social Attitudes* (Whatever the solace she might find in the long view as best expressed in Alan Macfarlane’s *The Origins of English Individualism*). Marking the end of eighteen years of Conservative government, the new survey asks whether the British public ‘bought’ Thatcherism. The answer in short is no. In general, the public still worry about inequality and job insecurity; believe that spending money on the welfare state will make services better; have few concerns about the ‘dependency culture’; and still feel that governments, however untrusted, have the responsibility for solving the problems of the world (like the environment). The ‘Me decade’, it seems, was not as egocentric as many thought. The ‘enterprise society’ never got off the ground. For all the efforts of the late Lord Joseph, the political ratchet of public opinion remains firmly stuck at social democracy circa 1968 – not 1998. Indeed, ‘Thatcher’s children’ are the least likely to be Tories – though young people have always tended to be more left-wing than their elders (p. 6).

It is this that is so curious about reading this volume. Since 1987, Labour modernisers have placed great store by listening to what people think (an exercise which the Conservatives are now imitating). But in a number of important respects, ‘new’ Labour clearly has not heard what the public are saying – or more to the point, what a representative sample of Britons say.

For example, Peter Mandelson’s view that ‘we are intensely relaxed about people getting filthy rich’ hardly chimes with the public’s growing concern with income inequalities. In the 1990s, around half of employees think the gap between the highest and lowest paid ‘too big’ (pp. 26–7). While *British Social Attitudes* paints a complex picture of the public’s view of signing-on – a significant minority think welfare recipients are both villains and victims, and a majority blame neither the individual or the system (p. 78) – the idea of the ‘job-shy’ unemployed, central to Thatcherite folklore, receives short-shrift. The unemployed, it seems, have a higher commitment to work than those in employment (p. 82). The current Government’s welfare to work policies rely on the carrot of ‘making work pay’ through tax credits and the minimum wage, and the stick of compulsory work experience programmes.

Law and order is perhaps one area where the rhetoric, if not always the
practice, of Thatcherism found public support – certainly in its neo-conservative rather than neo-liberal guise. (One disappointing aspect of the volume was the reading of Thatcherism as neo-liberalism and the consequent downplaying of its neo-conservative elements. Public attitudes to education, for example, which are not covered in detail, might have given a fuller picture of the public’s support for Thatcherism’s social conservatism). The public have tended to support Conservative explanations of the causes of crime – individual responsibility and poor parenting – rather than old Labour’s – poverty and unemployment. The public have also become noticeably less liberal towards criminal justice, supporting greater police powers (p. 202) and tougher action by courts (pp. 208–10). When Tony Blair said that Labour would be ‘tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime’, he clearly was listening to public opinion.

Whether this makes for good public policy is another matter. Although one chapter on ‘How We View Violence’ shows that public policy is in line with public opinion, several others show how difficult it is to divine what the public’s message is. The chapter on the National Health Service (NHS) is a good example. Growing dissatisfaction (even among those who also support the NHS) is matched by an unwillingness to support reform – this despite the one-third of the public who both oppose a two-tier NHS and yet also believe that individuals should have the choice to pay for private health care. ‘As always,’ the authors of this chapter comment, ‘the pattern of public opinion is complex’ (p. 61). What is a politician to do?

Roehampton Institute
London
STEPHEN DRIVER

In his account of gentrification in six Canadian cities since the 1960s David Ley explores how various inner city sites have been redeveloped for residential purposes. The book is divided into two parts, the first and more substantial section of the book uses quantitative data to highlight the spread of gentrification in these areas, while the second section is dependent on qualitative data. These are principally drawn from interviews with key participants. These are the developments.

Using an impressive array of quantitative data, Ley demonstrates how selected urban areas endure various phases of ‘gentrification’, which although not uniform for all cities share many important characteristics. Relating Canadian ‘gentrification’ to that of another Commonwealth country, Australia, Ley highlights how the process starts with a cultural phase. Linking early gentrifiers with the student uprising of the late 1960s and the rise of the New Left during the same period, the initial entry requirement for gentrified areas is high levels of cultural capital. Ley argues that this prerequisite is eventually replaced by the need for large amounts of economic capital as the real value of the property and the social esteem of the area increases. Professionals, particularly those from the public sector, are replaced by managers as the gentrification cycle reaches a more advanced phase. Throughout all stages of the process single women and new forms of family units are common inhabitants of such areas.

Utilising further statistical data drawn from recent censuses, Ley offers a number of important observations on why specific inner city areas are chosen for gentrification. For instance, one of the most important relationships which he exposes is that such locales are near to existing middle-class areas. Other reasons suggested for the choosing of such sites include their proximity to work, public amenities, recreation facilities and their general ambience created through the area’s architecture and heritage.

Ley goes on to situate gentrification in relation to wider societal changes such as the advance of post-industrialisation, the decline of manufacturing industry and the shift of its remnants to the suburbs. The massification of architecture and social life in the suburbs is one of the reasons given by certain strata of the middle classes for living in the gentrified areas of the central city. Ley also links the process to disillusionment with the Ford planned city, especially the growth of the modernist high-rise flats associated with the 1950–60s and suffocation of the city by road networks. Emphasising the history and the unique public spaces visible within the central city, gentrification offered (middle-class) people the opportunity to reclaim the streets of the city during the rise of post-modernism.

Although this is an excellent and comprehensive overview of gentrification in six Canadian cities during the last four decades, Ley’s account has a number of limitations. While there are repeated promises of substantial qualitative evidence towards the end of the text, not much actually materialises. With such a dependence on quantitative data little is actually made of the different experiences of gentrification. Although Ley is keen to emphasise the importance of women to gentrification, the prominence of other groupings such as homosexuals are marginalised because their role and visibility are much more difficult to demonstrate from statistical sources. The continued existence of lower-class families in gentrified areas is also largely ignored in this text. Ley’s account of these areas appears to suggest that these are middle-class ghettos free from the presence of other social classes.

Lancaster University

JOHN GALILEE


The literature on media audience research can seem both daunting in quantity and bewildering in the variety of approaches taken. Although there are a number of books available which seek to map out this vast field, Denis McQuail’s Audience Analysis attempts to do something more. The book does outline the main branches of research in this area, describing different schools of thought and highlighting contemporary debates. The purpose of the book, however, is to reassess the conception of the audience. Common-sense ideas of the audience as the receiver of messages are outdated, he argues, as there is room for differences of meaning, misunderstandings and theoretical conflicts. Written in a lively and accessible style, Audience Analysis is sure to be useful for both academic and undergraduate readerships.

The book’s nine chapters fall into three sections. The first three chapters, introducing the audience concept, wrestle with the complexities of defining the term and offer a brief overview of research traditions. A number of approaches – Critical, Structural, Behavioural, Cultural Studies, and Reception Analysis – are sketched out, although it might have been helpful to have had these placed in both a historical and a comparative framework. However, the main purpose of McQuail’s review is to draw out his central theme and interrogate the term ‘mass audience’. Different research traditions suggest different ways of conceptualising the audience, and these are being further problematised, McQuail argues, by the impact of new technologies. The remainder of the book discusses these points in more detail.

The middle section of the book examines how different research agendas produce varying definitions of media use. Audience research undertaken or commissioned by media organisations, for example, attempts to understand media use through measuring media reach, or viewing figures. Yet this media-centric approach fails to produce even an approximate estimation of who they are reaching: its results are merely quantitative in the worst sense. Audience-
centred approaches, too, are shown to underestimate the complexity and heterogeneity of the audience. Indeed, all research which is designed to serve the needs of the media industries tends to offer a reductive explanation of media use.

Reception analysis would seem to promise an alternative, positioning the media as part of a complex pattern of everyday social interaction and experience, and viewing media use as determined by the influence of situational factors. Examining the definitions of media and of media use which different research traditions produce, McQuail examines the gap between them. Within this under-researched space, he argues, there is a set of complex social and personal roles and arrangements between the audience and the communicator, which as yet lie unacknowledged as a site for the understanding of the audience and its media use.

The two final chapters examine the implications both for the concept of audience and for the character of the contemporary audience of four recent technological innovations: (1) the development of cable and satellite, (2) the development of recording, storage and retrieval of sound and pictures, (3) the transnationalisation of television flow, and (4) the interactive capacity of various media. McQuail explores the claim that these technological changes have altered the balance of power from communicator to audience, countering the view that the mass audience is vulnerable to an all-influential media. Rather than an undifferentiated mass, the audience is continually fragmenting and segmenting, presenting difficulties for the would-be persuader, advertiser or propagandist. Furthermore, it is claimed that such changes not only destabilise previous conceptions of the audience, but even render the concept obsolete. Despite these over-emphasised claims, McQuail concludes, media-created audiences live on. The world has not fundamentally changed, as nation states continue to use the media to communicate with publics, and large advertisers continue to create audiences.

**Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College**  
**JULIAN MATTHEWS**


Ecofeminism is often dismissed out of hand as a naively essentialist approach which holds that women are linked to nature by virtue of their biology. With this book Mary Mellor attempts to challenge this predominant and negative stereotype, both by illustrating the variety of ecofeminist approaches and by developing her own materialist ecofeminist position. Rather than seeing the idea of a link between women and nature as necessarily regressive, she suggests that asserting such a link can be empowering and contribute to moves towards a more egalitarian and ecologically sustainable society.

Mellor’s starting point is the observation that human beings have physical bodies (or are ‘embodied’) which are ‘embedded’ within a natural environment, and that to ignore this is ‘ecologically, socially and theoretically unsound’ (p. 73). She suggests that Western society has ‘created itself against nature’ by trying to ignore and transcend the existence of natural and bodily needs and limits. The illusion of transcendence, however, imposes costs and Mellor argues that it is women, other exploited groups and the physical environment which bear these: ‘transcendence creates patterns of exploitation, oppression and ecological degradation’ (p. 190).

Women are identified as bearing the costs of transcendence both because they remain largely responsible for managing what Mellor calls ‘biological time’ – nourishing and caring for the bodies of others whether in a paid or unpaid capacity – and also because they suffer...
disproportionately from the effects of ecological damage (this latter claim is routinely made within the ecofeminist literature but needs more detailed empirical verification than is provided here). Thus: ‘Women are not closer to nature because of some elemental physiological or spiritual affinity, but because of the social circumstances in which they find themselves’ (p. 184). Mellor suggests that a critical analysis of the position of women in ‘sex/gender systems’ can provide a starting point for moves towards a society which takes political responsibility for the social and ecological consequences of bodily existence.

In the course of developing her argument Mellor provides a logical sequence of useful and detailed reviews of relevant literature. Chapter 2 provides an introduction to women’s participation in the environmental movement and is followed by an overview of ecofeminist theory in Chapter 3. Rather than distinguishing between essentialist and more social versions of ecofeminism, Mellor emphasises the common themes which run through this diverse literature: the engagement with human embodiment; the critique of the dualist character of Western patriarchal society which legitimates the devaluation and exploitation of both women and the natural environment; and the vision of moving towards a more egalitarian and ecologically sustainable way of living. These ecofeminist ideas are then related to wider feminist debates about women, biology and nature; and the arguments for and against feminist-standpoint perspectives are reviewed. The book then moves on to consider ecofeminist ideas in relation to deep ecology, to social ecology and to ecosocialism before concluding with an overview of the arguments considered and an exposition of her own materialist ecofeminist position.

In the course of developing her thesis Mellor tackles some very controversial issues and tries to steer a difficult path between polarised positions. For instance, she attempts to develop a position on human embodiment which falls between biological determinism and social constructionism. Equally, she seeks to avoid the universalism of essentialist approaches to women’s experiences, while rejecting the idea that the diversity of individual experience renders any talk of commonalities obsolete. She is careful throughout to qualify her assertions and also stresses that, while her focus is on gender inequalities, she does not view these as taking precedence over other dimensions of inequality; rather she hopes that elements of her analysis may prove useful in looking at other oppressions.

This book should prove useful and provocative for a wide range of readers – those interested in feminist thought, ecological debates and political theory. One of its strengths is that it suggests linkages between discrete areas of sociological enquiry which may lead to insights from one substantive area informing or challenging ideas in another. Some of these, such as the implications of ecofeminist approaches for ecological and socialist thought, are explicitly addressed. Others, such as how contemporary sociological theories around human embodiment relate to discussions within environmental sociology, are hinted at but left for others to develop.

University of Surrey  KATE BURNINGHAM


Daniel Miller’s book is a rich blend of ethnographic description, penetrating insights, and serious theorising. It is a sustained argument and a thoroughly absorbing read, putting paid to any notion that shopping is a trivial topic. The empirical work, carried out in association with Alison Clarke, involves a study of shopping by seventy-six households in and around one street in North London. The focus is on routine provisioning of food and drink, clothing and
small domestic items. The street, the pseudonymous Jay Road, is not a community; we are a long way from the fabled working-class Gemeinschaft that was Bethnal Green.

Miller's argument addresses two paradoxes. First, although Jay Road is a socially diverse non-community, Miller found a high degree of normative consensus in discourse about shopping. Secondly, there are profound contradictions between this discourse and the activity of shopping as revealed in the ethnography. Miller's theory of shopping is advanced as a resolution of these paradoxes.

The discourse of shopping – whether in journalistic features, academic commentaries, or from Miller's respondents themselves – is cast in terms of self-indulgence, hedonism, individualism, materialism. It is negative and condemnatory, equating consumption with excess and incorporating occidental myths of ourselves as superficial and materialistic compared to the noble savage. In this discourse, shopping functions as a symbol to stigmatise ourselves and the spirit of our times.

Miller argues that shopping is a ritual through which acts of expenditure are transformed into acts of saving. The infrastructure of retailing supports this. Suppose we buy a tin of baked beans. Whether we choose the brand leader, the supermarket's own brand, or the no-frills 'value' line, we consider ourselves to be saving money and avoiding unnecessary expenditure or false economies. Supermarkets facilitate our quest for thrift by offering us multiple opportunities to exercise it: 'savers', mark-downs, multi-buys and the like. Different retail sites appeal to different status groups, of course. For example, the John Lewis Partnership plays to middle-class conceptions of rational consumption, symbolised by the 'never knowingly undersold' price guarantee. By contrast, 'cheapjack' stores, operating in retail sites on a short lease, pitch their appeal at romantic working-class notions of the bargain secured through semi-legal dealings. In each case, the consumer's underlying aim is the same: to make a thrifty purchase, that is, to save money by spending it.

Routine provisioning is not self-gratification, but skilled action directed towards others, specifically to other members of the household. It is women's work; men's routine provisioning is incidental and amateurish, and many men make truculent companions on shopping expeditions. Women do 'treat' themselves during shopping, offering themselves small indulgences as a reward for their hard work, but this concept of 'the treat' as an exceptional purchase points up thrift as the core activity and paramount concern of shopping.

In Hubert and Mauss's theory, the essence of sacrifice is to constitute a relationship between the participants and the sacred order. By analogy, shopping is a sacrificial rite directed not to the gods – Miller takes secularisation for granted – but to other household members. Shopping is not the epitome of ungodliness, but a ritual serving the cult of domesticity. In calling shopping an act of love, Miller is not questioning feminist critiques of patriarchal domination, since love is quite compatible with exploitation. The love he speaks of is not the romantic ideal, but love as the ideological foundation of relations within the household. He argues that although feminism may have removed the husband as the object of devotion, the outcome has been to put the no less demanding child in his place.

Miller's book is full of sharp insights: most of us help ourselves to a grape or two as a treat the supermarket owes us; children are skilled in transforming what was intended as a one-off treat into a regular ritual; Marks and Spencer's food department functions symbolically as a restaurant, where we buy expensive food as a substitute for a meal out. Despite these and other ethnographic aperçus, the book is driven by the theory rather than the ethnography. Miller's informants talk about the discourse of shopping as hedonistic materialism; his theory is a challenging construction to explain the
contradiction between this discourse and the social reality of shopping.

University of Nottingham  ALAN ALDRIDGE


Bill Osgerby has written a smooth, competent account of the lives of British youth since the Second World War. Beginning with a scene-setting backward glance at the emergence of youth cultures of consumption in the nineteenth century, Osgerby takes the reader on a speedy ride through a cultural landscape itself made familiar by recent ‘retro’ fashions and popular cultural nostalgia. From Teddy boys and the birth of the ‘teenager’, through mods and rockers, the beat generation, Rastafarianism, punk, Sloane rangers, new romantics, Goths, ravers, new age travellers, lager louts, gangsta rap and generation X, a progression of old friends stomp, mince and tramp dissolutely across the pages of history.

The text serves its introductory purpose well, the author executing his task with an admirable economy, using pertinent statistics and illustrations. Osgerby’s broad contention is that during the post-war period young people have increasingly become the symbolic focus for wider anxieties about social transformation. A range of dimensions of young people’s experience are explored within a narrative which moves easily between political context, the media, fashion and music, class differentials, employment patterns and so forth, and engages with a variety of forms of social research. The author offers measured and perceptive judgements, for example, on the effects of National Service between 1945 and 1960.

What could be improved? More material would have been desirable on disability; sexual behaviour and AIDS; lesbians; experiences of youth within educational systems and the workplace; sport; travel; national and regional differences; and the internet. The chapter headings could usefully have indicated dates; and, given the theme, the cover could have been more zappy.

Stanley Cohen’s concept of ‘moral panic’ is a crucial reference point, but one upon which the text is somewhat over-reliant. After discussing Cohen’s study of seaside battles between mods and rockers, Osgerby claims the concept ‘could easily be applied to media treatment of the procession of subcultural groups that have appeared since’ (p. 45). This comment seems to linger, inhibiting the author from addressing uncomfortable questions or developing alternative theoretical resources.

For example, is the argument that ‘the relation between youth and illicit drugs, in fact, represents one of the most enduring moral panics of the post-war period’ (p. 45) part of the reason why the author neglects a substantive analysis of the growing problems faced by young heroin users? When the narrative suddenly arrives at the Hysel stadium in 1985, where ‘a phalanx of Liverpool fans charged at their Juventus rivals’, leaving thirty-eight people dead (p. 101), the reader is left wondering how ‘sensationalised press reports’ of highly organised hooliganism in the 1970s (p. 67) related to subsequent disastrous events. ‘Moral panic’ is a vital concept, but here perhaps it looms too large.

Though Osgerby provides a careful critique of the 1970s subcultural theory literature, it continues subtly to inflect his approach. Fashion and music among visible minority groups are granted excessive coverage, compared with behaviour among the ‘silent majority’. Osgerby harbours the heart of an idealist, hopefully seeking signs of meaningful political resistance from new generations. ‘Grunge’, for example, is generously read as an expression of uncertainty and malaise induced by economic insecurity, rather than the refuge of affluent Whites, forced to find some form of vacuous
‘rebellion’ within now established patterns of parental expectation and subsequent life course. Osgerby also needs a more clear-headed engagement with the nasty side of youth cultures, particularly recent ones: the violence, the political apathy, the anti-intellectualism, the crushing conformity. There remains a slight tendency to view youth through rose-coloured spectacles, and from a safe distance.

A final point is that the author employs separate chapters on the histories of young women and issues of race, when, arguably, a preferable strategy would have been to integrate these issues into the main chronology. A full synthesis would have involved significantly more work to overcome existing divisions in the youth research literature, but might have yielded new insights and avoided the tendency to focus on implicitly male experiences. For example, an extended discussion of public order and drug offences is followed by a brief explicit discussion of young women, which addresses only sexual behaviour (p. 46).

Nevertheless, this professional text is readable, considered, well-referenced and provides a valuable and comprehensive introductory resource.

South Bank University  MATTHEW WAITES


No More Kin investigates racial, ethnic and gender difference in the participation of extended family support networks in family life. The study is motivated by debates on poverty and welfare reform, explicitly racialised in America. Past research, exemplified by Carol Stack, All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in the Black Community (1974), suggests minority ethnic families, from deprived economic backgrounds, turn to extended kinship support systems when welfare assistance is removed. Roschelle dismantles the traditional assumption, highlighting the serious implications for minority ethnic impoverished families if welfare reforms reduce public assistance.

No More Kin is organised into three sections. The first part of the book assesses existing literature on African-American, Chicano and Hispanic family models, contextualising these debates within historical, cultural and structural frameworks. Roschelle observes that extended family care as a respite from poverty is central to each of these debates. This inevitably pathologises minority ethnic families, by persistently linking them to poverty and welfare in America. The second section addresses the study itself – the implementation of research, methodological approaches and methods of analysis undertaken. The final section reports the research findings, namely that kinship support networks are not culturally specific to minority ethnic families. Therefore, public policy cannot assume minority ethnic families can be relied upon as a buffer for their poor if public expenditure on welfare assistance is reduced for impoverished families.

The study moves away from simplistic modes of analysis, in determining patterns of kinship network participation. Instead, intersections of ‘race’, class and gender are identified as informing the provision of support systems. These are mapped against a myriad of interconnecting variables, also affecting kinship assistance. The type and form of household composition; the number of dependent and non-dependent children in a household and familial migration patterns across America are, for example, identified as significant variables.

Anne Roschelle’s study conforms to others, in recognising that gender stratification underpins network participation. Women, across all ethnic groups, act as the primary support givers, reinforcing traditional roles as primary carers. However, she challenges other studies on three main issues. She concludes, contrary to popular belief, that African-American women residing within
impoverished black communities are least likely to provide care, as a result of the lack of resources and multitude of societal problems afflicting these communities. Secondly, Roschelle could find very little ethnic difference between white and minority ethnic families in the support they provide. In terms of class differences, middle-class families, traditionally perceived as having the least need for kinship support, enjoyed the greatest kinship participation across all ethnic groups.

Anne Roschelle’s No More Kin presents a direct challenge to the current political climate in America, which favours the reduction of public expenditure on welfare provision. As a result, the book is a ‘must read’ for those interested in a comparative approach to social policy and welfare reform, family studies, ‘race’ and ethnicity. It is a unique and interesting critique to the normative discourses governing studies in all these areas.

Reference


In this lively and erudite ‘selective introduction to sociology’ Runciman faces two formidable questions. Why have human societies become so different from each other, and what varieties of society are possible at any particular level of social development? Runciman’s succinct and colloquial style is used to argue for a theory of social evolution and the book might just as well have been called ‘Can There Be a Darwinian Sociology’? The first four chapters examine the nature of human society, the scope of sociology, sociological theory and power. Chapters 5 to 7 are used to develop a theory of social evolution and the book ends with three chapters devoted to social mobility, the limits of social change and the uses and abuses of sociology.

Runciman argues that modern social science and comparative history provide a new bedrock on which to build a theory of social selection. Humans, like other culture-using primates, have evolved the capacity to use complex forms of culturally-directed behaviour as part of an elaborate adaptive pattern. Natural selection has implanted a set of attributes, including sociability and aggression, which are realised in social interaction. Ordinary social life is activated through a three-fold integration of evoked species-specific traits, acquired cultural patterns and imposed institutional rules. Biological evolution cannot explain differences between societies or the configuration of institutions within a society. None the less Darwin’s ‘descent with modification’ is useful to sociology since all societies have evolved from prior forms and cultural reproduction occurs by virtue of social evolution.

Social change, like natural change, occurs through an inordinate accumulation of unintended, chance events with no final goal. At a cultural level social evolution operates by selecting ‘memes’ – free-standing patterns of information or instructions affecting behaviour – which have a replicating function analogous to DNA. Social institutions, like memes, change by random mutation and recombination in a branching process in which alternative evolutionary pathways are followed. Historical development is largely a matter of chance since it is mainly driven by unpredictable competition between power-holders. Major historical events, and sometimes even small mutations, can divert the course of social evolution. The social environment in which these nuances emerge then selects from among these new permutations of power, labour form, ranking or coercion.
Runciman’s breadth of vision is seen in his impressive ability to draw upon an extensive range of historical and contemporary societies to argue for sociology’s need for an evolutionary theory. Human Prehistory, Revolutionary France, Tokugawa Japan, Aztec Meso-America, Republican Rome, Classical Greece, Feudal and Early Modern Europe, Ancient Egypt, African, Islamic, Australian, and Polynesian societies and Nazi Germany, modern India, Russia and Cambodia, provide material which is skilfully integrated with his main argument. The scope and vigour of this book can only enrich sociology but how convincing is the argument for social evolution? Runciman avoids the teleology of Spencer, the crassness of Social Darwinism or any commitment to a theory of progress or historical stages. His evolutionary perspective is valid whenever he refers to primatology and human evolution. But he comes close to accepting an axiom of sociobiology and evolutionary psychology that altruism is a product of evolution.

Can evolutionary theory be used in social analysis? Evolution by Darwinian natural selection means descent with modification through continuous random mutation between single members of a species population whose aberrant morphology or behaviour may be adaptive because it corresponds with new demands made by a changing environment. Societies are not the equivalent of single organisms, with a finite existence, which are produced by genetic combination in the process of sexual reproduction. And social change is no guarantor of fitness. Like other social scientists who have pursued similar theoretical goals, Runciman presents an evolutionary theory by metaphor and analogy. Concepts like mutation, recombination or adaption are imports from evolutionary biology which have no unequivocal meaning in sociology. Nor is there any empirical evidence for memetic cultural transmission or a mechanism like social selection. Natural selection and social development are distinct processes. Nevertheless Runciman’s book should be read for its sparkling, sustained argument and its astonishing richness of social-historical illustration. This is a sociological imagination working at full strength – a reminder of how exhilarating sociology at its best can be.

University of Greenwich

TIM MEGARRY


Scott’s edited work is a welcome addition to the growing literature on what is now generically termed ‘globalisation’. Globalisation, like many generic terms can mean many different things, indeed it could be said that there are as many globalisations as there are globalisation theorists and analysts. This is the line taken by this book.

Scott, together with the contributors, presents the readership with a multidisciplinary approach to issues to which globalisation is a pertinent backdrop. Among the many topics examined are specific and global issues such as air transport, a South Asian clothing magazine and global popular culture. What we have here is an overview of the various ways in which globalisation affects different aspects of people’s social, political, economic and cultural worlds.

One of the starting points is the question of whether there is something that is real in this idea of globalisation, and Scott pursues this by looking at the debates and controversies in the introduction (Scott’s major contribution to the book). Here he gives an overview of the nature of globalisation: in particular he emphasises the importance of the work of Polanyi, who is supposed to have introduced the theoretical basis of what we now call globalisation. I feel he does this at the expense of other major theorists such as Giddens, Robertson, Turner and Weber.
In Part I there are two chapters on the Berlin Potsdamer Platz and the 1980s women’s peace movement. It is at first difficult to see how they fit in with the rest of the book’s contents; Part II, for example, on South Asian orientalism or air transport. But reading the last three chapters under the heading of theoretical reflections, one sees that these are precisely the issues that we face, that there is no ‘essential’ globalization (or globalization) to which we can turn. Rather, globalization has to be applied to different situations and different contexts with respect to local (and consequently, global) sensitivities.

The third part of the volume looks at the location of the national within the international and global, concentrating on parts of the ‘West’ and Russia, which thus removes the ‘rest of the globe’ from this discussion. The final part shows what a particular discipline can bring to the debate on contested conceptualisations, interpretations and the application of globalisation, which this collection does particularly well. It presents the idea that the nature(s) of the world, from the recent past to the future, hold a wide variety of possibilities which, hopefully, would provide space for all ethnicities, genders, art forms and economies to articulate their presence and have themselves recognised within global cultures, economies, traditions and futures.

Scott’s edited volume provides a panoptical lens with which to view the state of the world. It does so in a clear and efficient way. It demarcates the theoretical and substantive issues one needs throughout and thus this volume is a welcome contribution to the wide field of what we now see as globalisation.

Manchester Metropolitan University

NADEEM HAI


This book is a longitudinal study of a group of eighty-three working-class women who were originally enrolled on caring courses at a college in an industrial town in the North West of England. The study extended over eleven years. The introduction is followed by chapters on methodology, the historical development of caring employment for working-class women, and a depiction of the manner in which the ‘caring self’ is developed on the courses. Topic-oriented chapters follow on social class, femininity, sexuality and feminism.

The book is faithful to the prescriptions of feminist ethnography, and written in an intensely personal style. Thus at times it emerges as being a book ‘about class’ almost despite the personal preferences of the author—who after emerging from Marxism, on her own account, has been variously influenced by cultural studies, post-modernism, and post-structuralist feminism. However, notwithstanding these theoretical influences, Skeggs tirelessly argues that (a) ‘class’ is in fact central to the lives of the women taking part in her research, and (b) is a structural, rather than merely discursive, concept.

In conceptualising class as ‘structural’, Skeggs defines class in relation to access to Bourdieu’s four different types of capital: economic, cultural, social and symbolic. The women taking part in the study had only meagre resources in respect of all four of these dimensions. In order to survive (both as individual persons as well as in a material sense), these women gained self-value through the development of their feminine cultural capital as ‘carers’, as well as investing in their femininity in order to reinforce cultural acceptability and achieve a degree of material security through marriage. However, although it was the women’s lack of (class) resources that was ultimately responsible for these behaviours, the women in the study found it very difficult to talk or discuss ‘class’, and indeed, often vehemently rejected the notion. That is, despite class
being central to their lives, it was systematically denied. This was in large part because of the desire to avoid the ‘working-class’ label, which was seen as degrading and stigmatising. Skeggs argues that for working-class women, in particular, ‘working-class’ status is associated with ‘all that is dirty, dangerous and without value’. What the women desired above all was to be ‘respectable’ – and this meant not being working class. In their eyes, the real working class were the not-respectable, the ‘rough’, those on the dole, the very poorest of all. These women’s daily ‘class struggle’, therefore, was to overcome and avoid identification with these groups – an everyday practice highly unlikely ever to be associated with class politics of any kind. Similarly, their investment in femininity was associated with a rejection of feminism. ‘Feminism’ was, like (working) ‘class’, associated with negative statuses and therefore to be avoided.

This book, therefore, discusses ‘class’ very much in the tradition of cultural studies. It is of considerable interest, not least because of the relative absence of ‘class’ from this particular area of academic discourse in recent years. This absence is frequently commented on and discussed by the author – indeed, she suggests that one explanation of the retreat from ‘class’ in academic debates in these quarters might be a reflection of the fact that the very academics who regard class as ‘unimportant’ have the resources of capital (of all four kinds) to distance themselves from the kinds of preoccupations experienced by working-class women. Against this argument, it might be suggested that the middle classes – even academics – are simply beset by another set of worries – most notably, that their children might slip down the occupational hierarchy. Nevertheless, Skeggs’s arguments that both cultural and material resources are required in order to make successful moves toward ‘individuation’ are well taken. As she puts it, ‘The women’s ontological security was found precisely not in being an “individual” but in “fitting-in”’. Again, however, the point may be made that ‘fitting-in’ is hardly a characteristic peculiar to working-class women.

It may be suggested, therefore, that although (following feminist methodological principles) Skeggs lays much emphasis on the specificity of the experiences of the women she researched in generating her own convictions as to the significance of class structures – despite currently fashionable arguments in sociological theory – what was actually of greater importance in shaping her conclusions was the process of empirical research itself. That is, a similar study of a group of middle-class women might have come to parallel conclusions relating to the nature and significance of ‘class’ for them – although their perceptions and concerns would have been different. This is not so much a criticism of the book, rather a heartfelt plea for a continuing commitment to empirical work amongst those who theorise about ‘class’ – or the absence of it. Anyone who has carried out empirical research will recognise the amount of effort required to produce and write this book, which is destined to become one of the classic case studies of the 1990s.

*University of Leicester*

ROSEMARY CROMPTON


*Narrative and Genre* is the first volume in the new series *Memory and Narrative* that sets out to explore ‘how personal and collective memory is shaped and represented in different cultures, contexts and forms’ (p. iii). Under these broad themes the series editors invite an interdisciplinary and international debate. *Narrative and Genre* focuses more explicitly on how shared conventions of communication, or genres, shape autobiographical accounts, a question that
points to fundamental issues of all research that works with people's accounts. Many of the chapters take up discussions that have been going on in a variety of disciplines since the ‘crisis of representation’ from the perspective of oral history. Most useful and inspiring to me were the chapters that combined these quite fundamental reflections with an analysis of their own research material and process. Other chapters offer a more detailed account of a particular oral history project that would be of interest to a specialised reader.

The book consists of an introduction by Chamberlain and Thompson and ten chapters that do not appear to follow any particular order. In the introduction the authors discuss their focus on genre with respect to life stories. They do that by tracing the origin and use of the term ‘genre’ with regards to autobiographical writing in literature and the humanities in general. Autobiographical writing within ‘high’ literature has traditionally been the domain of famous people, and only recently – the oral history movement is part of this trend – the genre has been recovered by and for ‘ordinary’ people. The authors point to these issues of class, gender and race, refer to more recent feminist critiques and also discuss oral storytelling cultures and how oral and written accounts are interwoven. To take genre from literary critique and use it for the analysis of life stories is supposed to bridge both the conceptual gap between the shaping forces of accounts and the accounts themselves, and the disciplinary boundaries between the social sciences and the humanities.

The concept of genre remains a broad one and is consequently understood in varying ways that overlap. For example, autobiography as a genre draws on various genres like drama or comedy and constitutes in itself a variety of genres like interviews, life stories, documents, psychoanalytic consultation. The authors emphasise the complex ways in which autobiographical accounts are shaped through genre and point to other important dimensions such as the interaction between narrator and audience.

These issues are taken up by the authors of the other chapters. The chapters that I found most stimulating and relevant include Diana Gittins’s discussion of the silences she encountered in her oral history project of a mental hospital that was about to be closed down and how these silences operate within power relationships. Writing about life story research with girls in the final years of their schooling, Chris Mann focuses on how different settings (group versus individual) and forms of telling (oral versus written) produce specific accounts. Stephen Feuchtwang, an anthropologist, speculates on the relationship between researcher and researched, drawing on his research in China. Using detailed textual analysis of a cross-cultural interview, Yvette Kopijn discusses the underlying assumptions of the interview that set specific speech styles as the norm. Kathryn Dudley draws out the specific disciplinary practices of oral history that she sees in contrast to ethnography; and Paul Thompson describes history and problems of archiving qualitative data.

The remaining chapters focus more specifically on oral history. Alessandro Portelli discusses oral history as a genre, while José Lopes and Rosilene Alvin write about an autobiography in the form of a novel that was given to them after conducting anthropological fieldwork in a Brazilian factory. T. G. Ashplant looks at anecdotes and the music hall tradition as narrative resource in a published autobiography and Orvar Löfgren discusses life narratives from the ‘world of goods’.

The variety of topics and styles of the chapters makes it difficult to find a concluding remark, but overall the focus on genre and on the construction of accounts reflects debates in most social science disciplines, and some of the chapters offer inspiring perspectives on those debates based on interesting research projects.

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BETTINA BECKER

When distinguished scholars republish, in their original form, essays covering twenty-five years, they run less risk of unevenness and contradiction than of uniformity. While members of a younger generation may be forced to include articles they now regard as immature, but thereby reveal the extent of their development, senior figures may find themselves reflecting on three decades at the top, realising with a feeling of melancholy that the plateau was reached long ago. Charles Tilly’s latest collection is both the defeat of melancholy and a testament to an unfailing desire to know more. The graph which might best represent it is a straight line heading horizontally across the page, the right-hand edge an arbitrary nuisance. The very antithesis of Becket’s Molloy, Tilly will go on.

If melancholy has been defeated, has reflection triumphed? Not exactly. In the three opening essays Tilly offers his thoughts on what he has been saying all these years on what social science should be. He describes his approach as ‘relational analysis’. It entails two claims: (i) that ‘the recurrent patterns of interaction among occupants of social sites (rather than, say, mentally lodged models of social structure or processes) constitute the subject matter of social science’ (p. 7); and (ii) that ‘social science is the systematic study of what could happen, what possibly will happen, in human life, and why’ (p. 17). This theoretical and methodological programme then combines a modest defence of counterfactual awareness with the attempt to perform ‘causal analysis in an interactionist framework’ (p. 25).

Yet Tilly has little time for theoreticist dead ends. There is work to be done, data to be gathered, files to be organised. While the uninitiated may read the opening section, with its appeals to Merton, as a defence of middle-range theorising, Tilly is closer to abstract empiricism, the abstraction taking the form mostly of a resolute classification of a vast range of material but sometimes of a homespun account of concepts and categories (pp. 123, 135, 167, 198), the empiricism the result of an American-style quantificatory zeal.

The collection is coherent and brings together the enduring themes of Tilly’s work – conflict, power, modernisation, revolution, state formation – and features essays on those European states in whose history he is most at home: France and Britain. The essay on revolution from 1973, which makes revolution dependent on structures of strictly political power rather than – contra Marx and Samuel Huntington! – industrialisation/urbanisation, anticipates Theda Skocpol’s great work. Yet, tellingly, the longest piece in the book, placed at the end but capturing most adequately Tilly’s intellectual sensibility, is ‘Demographic Origins of the European Proletariat’. The question here is ‘how the absolute number and proportion of the European population in the [proletarian] category changed from . . . 1500 to 1900’ (p. 300). To answer this, we are given a list of ‘components of proletarianism’, and a set of indicators of when proletarianism is more or less likely.

The results of this approach, both here and in the pieces on changing forms of political conflict in France and the parliamentarianisation of British politics between 1758 and 1834, fall short of the combination of causal and interactionist analysis to which Tilly subscribes. In fact, each of these meticulously researched articles is an account of patterns of developments, tendencies, trends, changes, variations. To be sure, they bring order to the chaos of fact, but what they miss is the dynamic of such development, the sense that contestation and conflict are themselves the mechanisms by which changes in the patterns of conflict occur, and that historical actors caught up in ‘networks’ (a favourite word) are capable of taking a position on
such networks and orienting their action accordingly. Despite the claim that the study of parliamentarianisation ‘focuses upon changing relations among actors’ (p. 228), this is hardly E.P. Thompson or Norbert Elias.

Instead, to make the point that parliament became increasingly the locus of political contestation in Britain around 1800, a catalogue of reports on 8,088 ‘contentious gatherings’ is classified and cross-tabulated in a way which will leave all but the most tenacious readers floundering. Tilly says that parliamentarianisation was the product not only of parliament’s increased tax-raising powers but also of changes in actor networks themselves, but the showing of it is by means of statistical tables. Here, as always, Tilly’s massive command of variables serves him well, but what does not is his disdain for narrative style (p. 20), which even the more analytical of historical sociologists, such as Perry Anderson or Barrington Moore, have used to great effect.

The effect of this book is rather one of being confronted with a colossal series of research notes, of immense help to the specialist, but leaving the more general reader uncertain about their overall import. It was Max Weber who said that every social scientist should be ready to perform thousands of calculations in his head. But it was Weber too who said and showed that the essential dignity of human beings is their capacity to attach significance to the world.

University of Warwick

CHARLES TURNER


In a landmark judicial decision, Jean Kambanda, the former prime minister of Rwanda, became the first person to be convicted under the Genocide Convention of 1948. The United Nations tribunal ruled that by presiding over cabinet and other meetings where the wholesale slaughter of Tutsi tribes people was planned and discussed, he had actively participated in a ‘widespread and atrocious’ slaughter that killed hundreds of thousands and was therefore guilty of the ‘crime of crimes’. At the same time, an English court was hearing evidence that two generations of a west-country family had engaged in persistent and savage child abuse over a period of more than thirty-five years. Sentencing the elderly couple at the centre of the case, the judge, William Taylor, clearly shocked by the witness accounts of torture and sexual violence, condemned the defendants as representatives of ‘wickedness beyond belief’.

At first sight these two cases appear to deal with very different things. The first involves official approval for a concerted military campaign against historic enemies. The second illuminates the brutalities and betrayals of trust normally hidden behind the barricades of secrecy surrounding everyday intimacies. The Turpin and Kurtz volume sets out to challenge the division between public and private violence, official action and everyday aggression, and to ask ‘whether a relationship exists between the causes of violence at the micro level and the causes at the macro level’ (p. 2). A few pages later, this question has become a statement, as they ‘assert that there are links’ but they do not know what they are (p. 13.). Their contributors’ task is to suggest possible connections.

In contrast, the Colin Sumner collection is more concerned with how different forms of social violence are constructed in public discourse, and particularly with the mechanisms used to justify or condemn them. The chapters explore ‘the two-dimensional character’ of violence (p. 1), the fact that there is always ‘a latent violence in censure and a
latent censure in violence’ (p. 3), and that all acts of individual and collective violence, whether state sanctioned or spontaneous, mobilise censure against particular people or actions in an attempt to reaffirm preferred definitions of ‘normality’. Sumner, whose early work made important contributions to the debate around ideology, is particularly interested in how official acts of censure work within ‘cultural ideologies of domination’ (p. 4) and how the claims to monopoly and legitimacy on which they rest are contested and repaired.

Questions of culture and ideology, of the ways violence is imagined and represented, also dominate the Turpin and Kurtz collection. Consequently, despite their different agenda, the two books share a good deal of common ground, providing further evidence of the generalised ‘cultural turn’ with social theory and research.

The most ambitious attempt to link formations of violence of culture comes from one of the founding figures of peace, Johan Galtung (in Turpin and Kurtz), who argues that explanations of military conflict must begin by examining the ‘cosmologies’ that ‘program nations in general and national leaders in particular for patterns of international behaviour’ (p. 189). This militant insistence, that culture determines in the first instance, distances him from every other major approach in international relations. By offering enduring myths of a chosen people with a glorious past and a destiny that is continually thwarted by enemies without and within, these cosmologies, Galtung argues, provide reservoirs of cultural resources that can be mobilised to support a range of ideological improvisations. Drawing on analogies from clinical practice he presents nations and civilisations as simultaneously megalomaniac and paranoid and explores how various forms of therapy developed for treating individuals might be applied to international relations.

These speculations throw up some intriguing parallels, but there are serious problems with his basic model. His division of the contemporary world into seven major cultural poles is strongly reminiscent of the map of the post-Cold War order that underpins Samuel Huntington’s much disputed thesis of the coming Clash of Civilization (1996) and suffers from the same problems of essentialism and arbitrary division. It is disappointing to see a theorist of Galtung’s sophistication offering characterisations of Islam and India (two of his major poles) that gloss over the fierce internal struggles between competing conceptions of useable traditions and desirable social trajectories with these formations.

The dynamics of these on-going discursive contests are unpacked elsewhere in the two volumes, in relation to another of Galtung’s seven cultural poles: the United States. In his analysis of the increasingly violent censure of inner-city American Blacks (in the Sumner collection) Raup explores how the dehumanising and demonising discourse of a Black ‘underclass’ paved the way for concerted police and political intervention in selected neighbourhoods, legitimated by the official declaration of a ‘war against drugs’ in general and crack cocaine in particular. Robert Elias (in his chapter in the Turpin and Kurtz collection) presents this process of criminalisation as one more instance of a much more pervasive ‘culture of violent solutions’ (p. 143) which has seen the repertoire of options for addressing social problems progressively narrow in recent years within the United States, leaving official rhetoric promoting ‘little more than a menu of violence’ (p. 142).

But as Smith argues (in the same volume) because these initiatives (‘zero tolerance’ of street crime, escalating prison populations) have not addressed the underlying causes of social dislocation, the continuing gap between public policies and popular concerns has left the way open for vigilante solutions. His analysis centres on the case of Bernhard Goetz, a White electronics expert, who shot at four African-American youths in a New York subway
car in 1984, claiming that they were threatening him and that he feared for his life. Initially, the coverage was sympathetic to Goetz and the incident was widely interpreted as a further sign that the American criminal justice system was failing to protect respectable citizens. After deliberating, the grand jury decided not to press charges against Goetz.

At the same time, the publicity surrounding the law suit being filed against him by one of his victims created a new arena in which other accounts of the situation could be mobilised. Within this space, Goetz was presented not as an ordinary 'joe' acting in justifiable self-defence but as an unstable and monstrous figure acting out a fantasy of retaliation. This counter-definition quickly gathered momentum and six weeks after the original grand jury decision a second one indicted Goetz on a charge of attempted murder.

These localised contests of definition continually draw on a range of generalised rhetorics about justice and retribution. In her contribution to the Sumner volume, Harbord argues that recent American crime films, such as *Natural Born Killers* and *Pulp Fiction*, are moving away from the clear-cut moral frameworks that previously characterised mainstream Hollywood productions and increasingly depicting more extreme and arbitrary forms of violence against which 'the forces of law and order' appear 'as powerless' (p. 143). She suggests that these representations reinforce popular anxieties about social order and fuel renewed calls for more stringent artistic censorship and social censure. This is an interesting argument, which takes up many elements in the model that George Gerbner has developed in his 'cultivation analysis' of American prime-time television. But as with all case studies it raises awkward questions of typicality. It would have been good to read it alongside a more synoptic piece that extended and updated Richard Sparks (1992) work on the moral universe of crime drama. Given that Sumner supervised the doctoral thesis on which Sparks’s work was based and has shown a consistent interest in the way ideologies work through popular narratives of law and order in his own work, the relatively scant attention the volume gives to the media as central arenas for discursive contests and collective imaginings around violence and coercion, might be fairly seen as an opportunity missed.

However, one of the attractions of the Sumner collection is precisely its refusal to round up the usual suspects and its commitment to breaking out of the parochial stockades of mainstream British criminology and cultural studies. One important aspect of this project is Craig’s effort to reconnect deviancy studies to Holocaust studies. Following Hilberg (1985) he argues that the Holocaust involved a tripartite process in which definitions of selected ‘others’ as wholly alien and set apart justified firstly their separation and exclusion from ‘normal’ society and then their annihilation. He then retrieves the rich tradition of psychoanalytic commentary on these processes to argue for a psycho-analytically informed sociology of collective censure and routinised violence.

Building on Walter Benjamin’s pioneering analysis, Craig lays particular emphasis on the way that the Third Reich’s ‘aestheticization of all spheres of life’ through the proliferation of celebrations, ceremonies and staged events ‘distanced Nazi Germans from a critical perspective on their actions’ (p. 57). In a companion piece, Amatrudo focuses on one of the founding moments in constructing this culture of compliance, the 1937 exhibition of *Entarte Kunst* (Degenerate Art) which defined the Nazi aesthetic by parading and condemning a panoply of modernist ‘others’, including a number of Jewish artists. By erecting an immediately recognisable pictorial opposition between Aryan art and degenerate expression, ‘our’ culture and ‘theirs’, this symbolic expulsion helped prepare the cultural ground for the physical extermination of the ‘final solution’. In his contribution to the Turpin and Kurtz collection, Lifton
pursues the logic of binary opposition into the everyday operations of Nazi bureaucracy, arguing that the institutional culture of Auschwitz reworked the mythology of the doppelganger or double to allow the doctors who oversaw the extermination programme to split their private selves from their official roles.

Although the genocide of the Holocaust is undoubtedly the defining event in the history of perhaps the most violent century in human history, its underlying dynamics are by no means unique. As Yuan-Horng Chu argues in his contribution to the Turpin and Kurtz collection, any attempt to constitute ‘the people-as-one requires the incessant production of enemies’ (p. 76). He illuminates this process through a detailed study of the successive campaigns against ‘counter-revolutionaries’ pursued by another of the century’s defining regimes, Communist China. He is particularly good on the dialectical interplay between official rhetorics of denunciation and rituals of popular mobilisation, and the way ordinary citizens are encouraged to seek their moment of fame in this theatre of disgrace by denouncing chance remarks and incautious actions of neighbours, workmates and family members.

The dynamics of censure and solidarity are also explored in Laurence Grant’s detailed account (in the Sumner collection) of Peron’s Argentina, the post-war regime that, more than any other, illustrates the modern politics of populism. Given the extensive literature on Mrs Thatcher’s efforts to forge an authoritarian populist settlement in Britain, and the somewhat selective accounts of Peronism offered by key authors in this debate, making a solid overview of Argentinian experience readily accessible to British students of criminology is particularly welcome.

As this piece, and the other essays on state and government in the two volumes repeatedly show, official efforts to construct a secure definition of ‘us’ requires the continual identification and censure of elements that can be presented as threatening, anti-social and beyond the pale. This is difficult enough in relation to public speech and behaviour, where the rhetoric of rights persistently challenges restrictions on ‘free’ expression and civil liberties. But it is even more problematic if the activities under scrutiny are mostly confined to the private sphere.

In her contribution to the Sumner collection, Valier explores the boundaries of tolerance through a detailed analysis of the censure of sadomasochism. Starting from Nietzsche’s remark in the Gay Science that ‘what we do is never understood but only praised or censured’ she shows how the almost universal censure of sadomasochism as ‘pathological’ and ‘extreme’ across a range of academic as well as lay discourses, precludes any real insight into its meanings and pleasures for participants. Even the most ardent academic chroniclers of the bizarre and disreputable have been dissuaded from venturing very far into this territory. She laments this lack of adventure and ends by urging social analysts to break away from the standard binary opposition, to ‘think beyond good and evil’ thus avoiding automatic censure and ‘apology and eulogy’ (pp. 25–6).

In cases where violence in domestic settings involves stark inequalities of power and the absence of informed consent, however, sailing with ‘both wind and steam’, as she puts it, is more likely to appear as an abnegation of responsibility than a commendable openness. In their illuminating chapter in the Turpin and Kurtz collection, Ellison and Bartkowski show how contemporary American guides to parenting written by conservative Protestants mobilise religious rhetorics to discourage the use of corporal punishment to punish children’s irresponsibility while strongly endorsing its deployment to root out rebellion against parental authority. By sacralising physical chastisement this discursive strategy simultaneously legitimates its selective use among the devout and cements the unquestioning respect for religious authority on which fundamentalist beliefs depend.
This dogged insistence on the natural justice of patriarchal power can be seen as a response to the repeated assaults made in the name of the children’s and women’s rights. As Eisler notes in her contribution to the same volume, we are now entering a new phase in the development of rights as a key element in the struggle to replace what she calls the ‘dominator model’ of human relationships with a ‘partnership model’ based on egalitarianism. Whereas the first phase of this movement challenged domination and institutionalised violence within the political sphere, she argues that ‘the next essential step’ is to challenge domination and institutionalised violence ‘in the private sphere of family relations’ which provides the essential base on which the generalised pyramid of domination, with its embedded patterns of force and fear, ultimately rests (p. 175).

This general theme is taken up in a companion piece by Brock-Utne. She argues that since the exploitation of children and the abuse of women is arguably most widespread and tenacious in low-income countries, writers on ‘development’ urgently need to do more to open up ‘the black box of the household’ (p. 157). They need to integrate a thoroughgoing analysis of intimate relations into their accounts of change and their measures of the quality of life.

In the course of arguing for an alternative definition of ‘development’, she distinguishes sharply between ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ peace. The first assumes the absence of war, of officially sanctioned violence, and of informal violence on the streets and within the family. The second requires the abolition of the economic arrangements and structural inequalities that shorten life-spans, reduce life chances and restrict life choices. As she notes, the major sources of these indirect forms of violence lie as much in the economic as in the political realm.

At a time when the brutal consequences of economic globalisation and ‘restructuring’ programmes are more widespread and visible than ever, it is somewhat surprising that neither collection addresses the routinised violence and censure of markets and transnational capital. Though both books make efforts to present a cross-national selection of case materials, tackled from a variety of intellectual vantage points, their failure to engage with the rhetorics and practices of economic power is a major blind spot. Without an analysis of this central force in the contemporary world their declared project of reorienting and broadening the study of violence, remains substantially incomplete.

This requires a ‘material turn’ in the direction of future work, committed to re-examining how economic dynamics are implicated both in the patterning of social violence and in the organisation of public censure. It also calls for a more globally grounded vision. In this, as everywhere else, to grasp contemporary processes fully we need to move beyond the boundaries of the state and interrogate the connections between commerce and public culture, violence and enterprise, corporate activity and governmentality, as they play across as well as within the imagined spaces of nations.

References


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The title of the book notwithstanding, Wynne seeks to demonstrate that the new
middle class is fractured into a series of classes along lines of social origin and education. His argument is ‘not that social mobility has simply made the middle class “larger”, but that it has destroyed many of the common elements previously possessed by, or understandable as, the middle class’ (p. 8). He suggests that ‘any cultural cleavage within the new middle class may relate more to educational level and its corresponding effects upon occupational choice than to initial class origin’ (p. 67). For example, he proposes that among those who have their roots in the working class, educational differences determine how they demonstrate their new status through the lifestyles they adopt. Those with lower educational attainment demonstrate their economic capital by ‘looking back’ in their leisure styles to confirm their success in their parent culture, whereas those with higher educational backgrounds demonstrate their acquisition of cultural capital by looking to the future, attempting to become their new class by adopting its hallmarks.

As you may have gathered from the language already used, Wynne adopts Bourdieu’s position that it is life outside of work that orients people’s lives and he develops Bourdieu’s ideas of distinction and social space to analyse differentiations in the lifestyles of the new middle classes. What are potentially interesting diagrammatic representations mapping these spaces are unfortunately not easy to follow.

Wynne suggests that the rationale for his study lay partly in the absence of research on the middle class. This may or may not be so, but they certainly have a strong enough voice through the abstract theorising of postmodernist writers; it is their lifestyles that have dictated the reformulation of theory. Wynne’s contribution to the empirical base is a case study of a purpose-built development in the Cheshire green belt. He stresses the significance of historical developments, yet I could find no reference to when any part of the empirical work was conducted (though I know from an earlier publication (Wynne 1986) that it began some time ago) or any consideration of the changes and shifts over time at The Heath as it has matured and society itself has changed. It may be that the processes of the early 1980s are the same as those of the late 1990s, but for this project in particular this absence of historical context seems a major shortcoming.

I also found it surprising that the author has not drawn on the work he did when investigating the lifestyles of the middle class moving into Salford Quays. True, he presents this book as a case study, but then he also presents it as an ethnographic study. In view of that, the book is strangely dependent on the presentation of simple statistics; only the last substantive chapter carries the hallmarks of an ethnography. The rather awkward use of statistics (derived largely from a questionnaire of social life and demographics) contributes to a strangely distanced account – for an ethnography. Moreover, some of the tables do not suggest to me what they purport to show and errors, however minor, in the presented data are disconcerting. The overall impression is one of the theoretical and empirical not quite chiming. This is supported by the early literature review, which gets the book off to a fairly solid start, quoting at length a wide range of writers on class.

In his case study Wynne puts the construction of place centre stage even though he sees The Heath as being a ‘no place’ place. Although the developers stress the communication network serving The Heath, it is strikingly isolated. Residents have no significant contact with nearby villages (The Heath has leisure facilities for the exclusive use of its residents and their guests), and separation from the city, the source of employment, reduces the amount of free time that can be spent in this ‘new countryside’. The Heath is characterised by loose friendships rather than neighbourliness, and the social construction of communities is through interests rather than necessity.

Wynne concludes this chapter on the social space of lifestyles by drawing
attention to the relationship between occupational status and lifestyle, despite earlier engaging in the almost obligatory dismissal of Parker’s attempt to theorise this relationship. I take Wynne’s argument to be that the cultural heterogeneity of the middle class(es) is the product of class background, recreational history and educational background as well as occupation. Wynne concedes that the study reveals little new on gender, but on the basis of the fractures identified he questions the ‘essentiality of a common world of women’.

In his conclusion Wynne seems to be proposing some kind of reconciliation between Beck and Bourdieu. They do not make happy bedfellows; although this combination appears to offer a veneer of success, the potential conflicts are not hard to identify.

Reference

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