

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249825623>

Michael Banton, Racial Theories (2nd edn)

Article · May 2000

DOI: 10.1017/S0038038500220233

CITATIONS

0

READS

2,229

1 author:



[Stuart Billingham](#)

York St John University

7 PUBLICATIONS 3 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



I edited this collection of original research articles [View project](#)



Book Review [View project](#)

BOOKS REVIEWED

Deafness and Ethnicity: Services, Policy and Politics

Waqar Ahmad, Aliya Darr, Lesley Jones and Gohar Hisar

Bristol: The Policy Press, 1998, £12.99 paperback, vi + 142 pp. (ISBN 1-86134-088-5)

This book brings to the surface a neglected area in both generic social policy research and ethnicity orientated studies. In the process of marrying issues of deafness and ethnicity, some long-standing debates assume a new potency: in particular, the complexities around universal and targeted service provision, user and provider relations, and identity politics. These issues arise in varying degrees throughout the book, within a format which begins by introducing the reader to the wider context of ethnicity and services and of deaf politics and policy. These developments are documented in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively, with the latter incorporating a review of the literature on deaf ethnic-minority people. Indeed, the brief character of this section reflects the largely undocumented nature of this important area. Chapters 4 to 8 form the crux of the book and are based on original research conducted by the authors. The research findings are illustrated in two main ways: first, an overview of existing national initiatives involving deaf ethnic-minority people at a range of sectoral levels; secondly, a series of in-depth interviews with a range of agents, from service providers to deaf users. The salient themes that emerge from the book include the following: the prevalence of short-termism in service provision, the proactive role taken by deaf people from ethnic minority groups in combating their marginalised position and the lack of a common language between deaf ethnic-minority people and their families. The latter, of course, has very specific implications for the reproduction of cultural and religious values.

In this way the book explores a range of interrelated dynamics on a national scale; no easy task, yet in the main this is done well. There are shortcomings however, which firstly point to a lack of clarity in terminology. For instance, while the authors emphasise the diversity amongst deaf persons (in terms of, for example, 'hard of hearing', 'deafened', 'deaf-blind') which is imperative, no such courtesy is offered by distinguishing between ethnic minorities. Instead, the reader is left to wonder who precisely the authors are referring to under the blanket term 'minority ethnic communities' which is used from the outset. During the course of the book it becomes apparent that the research has focused on a wide range of minorities and, in fact, one of the telling findings is that the majority of services are targeted towards Asians and African Caribbeans with little or no services aimed at the 'smaller' ethnic minorities or 'refugee' communities. However, once again no attempt is made to clarify who constitutes these latter communities, leaving the reader to assume at his or her will. While this may be an inevitable limitation of such a large-scale research study, in view of the issues raised in this book such homogenising tendencies are surprising and disappointing. Secondly, a somewhat related point is the tendency to focus exclusively on ethnicity, at the expense of integrating important variables such as gender and in particular class into a core analytical framework. Although issues of gender and religion do arise (most notably in the formation of user-led initiatives, illustrating the complex facets of identities), 'ethnicity' in an umbrella form seems to underpin the book and thus the research focus. Finally, while the book is structured well overall, I felt the methodological aspect was glossed over by being relegated to the appendix. Having read the book in its entirety I felt that it would have been beneficial to include some discussion of the research process, as a separate introductory chapter. In particular, insight into any interview

dynamics between the researchers and deaf users might have proved fruitful for future research in this field.

Despite these limitations, this book represents groundbreaking work, primarily for its illumination of groups marginalised from the white and ethnic-minority hearing worlds as well as the deaf worlds. In addition, the issues emanating from the twin focus on deafness and ethnicity have far-reaching implications, not least for citizenship and current debates on social exclusion. It is a comprehensive and highly informative account which takes pains to voice the views of deaf ethnic-minority people and their families, both as users and professionals. It would be a gross injustice for these voices to be stifled within abstract discussion, thus hindering significant changes in perceptions and service provision.

University of Greenwich

NISHI MEHTA

Racial Theories (2nd edn)

Michael Banton

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, £40.00 (£14.95 paperback), ix + 253 pp.
(ISBN 0-521-62945-4)

The first edition of *Racial Theories* appeared in 1987. The second edition has been updated and there is a new concluding chapter. The book ranges across the centuries and many academic disciplines and perspectives. There is no doubting Banton's historical scholarship.

The first four chapters discuss various perspectives on 'race' from the sixteenth century onwards, grouping them into 'race as designation', 'race as lineage', 'race as type' and 'race as subspecies'. Here Banton is among familiar acquaintances. The discussion reflects continuous refinement of material over more than thirty years. There is a wealth of interest for the historian of ideas. The next two chapters follow the same approach but are slightly re-structured from the first edition. There is also a new concluding chapter.

The most striking feature of these final chapters is the way in which Banton treats the 'postmodern turn' in theorising 'race'. This is very briefly alluded to when summarising Michel Wieviorka's perspective in the chapter 'race as status', but is dealt with mainly in the chapter 'race as class'. The sub-heading 'social rhetoric' summarises Banton's main line of attack upon those influenced by 'postmodern' thinking.

The ideas of Rattansi, Anthias and Yuval-Davis, Solomos and Back are summarily dismissed in less than seven pages. It is not very reassuring, however, to read someone so dismissive of these approaches write, 'while the analysis of racial discourse may well prove valuable, it is still several steps removed from the explanation of actual conduct' (p. 195).

The new final chapter retreats from this brush with 'the postmodern' into territory with which Banton appears more familiar and at ease. Here he argues for a 'bottom-up' approach to racial and ethnic relations based upon rational choice theory integrated with perspectives on ethnic alignment and mobilisation. It is claimed, but not demonstrated, that this could raise new questions relevant for the twenty-first century.

Coming to the end of the second edition of *Racial Theories* there is a remarkable sense of *déjà vu*. This is not only because the approach, and so much of the content, is the same but also because, despite the new conclusion, you have no doubt where you have been but only a limited idea of where you might be going.

University of Northumbria, Carlisle

STUART BILLINGHAM

Meddling with Mythology: AIDS and the Social Construction of Knowledge

Rosaline Barbour and Guro Huby (eds.)

London: Routledge, 1998, £15.99 paperback, xviii + 276 pp. (ISBN 0-415-1389-7)

AIDS, as the editors of this book point out, has generated a vast outpouring of social science research. Behind the generous funding of an array of research projects and the publication of a multitude of findings, there is another world, a more informal and private world, in which researchers discuss the nature of the research they are involved in. AIDS, perhaps more than any other social issue in the last couple of decades, has challenged researchers to think about what they are doing and why. It forces them to step back from the detached world of data gathering, processing and analysis, and confront the epistemological, political and moral underpinnings of the research enterprise. Barbour and Huby bring together a number of interesting and thoughtful essays which reflect on the personal and professional problems that have confronted social scientists in their work on AIDS and how these problems have shaped our knowledge about the disease. The editors emphasise their particular interest in the role of research in 'myth making around AIDS' (p. 13).

The book is divided into five distinct sections. The first four sections explore different aspects of 'doing' research and are areas which are fairly familiar to those who reflect on the research process. They concern power, boundaries and identities, narrative exchange and representation and agency. The final section stands apart in that it is a tribute to Phil Strong, whose death in 1995 was a great loss to social science. Strong's contribution, together with that of his co-worker Virginia Berridge, to the development of our knowledge and understanding of the social impact of AIDS is considerable. His essay, 'The Pestilence Apocalypse: Modern, Postmodern and Early Modern Developments', is here being published posthumously and as a result his piece could not be developed in line with the common themes that emerge amongst the other contributors to this book. However, as it stands, this essay is a stimulating and insightful commentary on the intellectual heritage available to those exploring the social impact of AIDS.

The preceding sections examine the relationship between research, the researcher and the researched from a number of perspectives. Philip Gatter's essay, which explores the relationship between the private and public dimensions of research, based on his work on therapy and counselling on HIV/AIDS, draws attention to the absence in the literature of theory to provide an account of the researcher as the subject in the research process. Jill Bourne, by contrast, focuses on the more real problems of the emotional impact of carrying out HIV/AIDS research. She examines the neglect of emotion in research work and concludes that research involving people in distressing situations underlines the practical limitations of the professional ideology of detachment. These two essays highlight how this collection brings together discussion of both theoretical and practical concerns in researching the social aspects of AIDS. Most impressive is the honesty of the contributors in presenting the circumstances they found themselves in, their response to them, the choices they made and the consequences.

Much of the research around the social impact of HIV/AIDS has necessarily concerned interactions with those living on the margins of society. Reflecting on the research process has meant overwhelmingly thinking about a relationship with the powerless. The focus on marginality is part of all the essays with, for example, explicit discussion of the problems of the Turkish Cypriot population in North London (Abdulrahim) and drug users in the Lothian region of Scotland (Foster). What is less well represented is the study of those in positions of power who have played a significant part in the social construction of knowledge of AIDS; this has always been

more uncomfortable for social science. The book does, however, outline the pressures within which research is conducted today. The impact of the institutional, financial and professional demands that emerge from a culture dominated by RAE assessments is well documented. While the editors raise questions about the usefulness of too much reflection, the honest insights into the research process that books such as this provide should never be ignored.

University of Wales, Cardiff

KEVIN WILLIAMS

The Sociology of Health Inequalities

Mel Bartley, David Blane and George Davey Smith (eds.)

Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998, £25.95 (£14.99 paperback), viii + 226 pp. (ISBN 0-631-20929-8)

Health inequality is back on the political and research agendas in Britain after the fairly barren Conservative years. *The Sociology of Health Inequalities* consists of nine chapters grouped in two sections: 'Understanding the social dynamics of health inequalities' and 'Social and spatial inequalities in health'. The editors in their introduction provide a brief history of the social study of health inequalities since World War II.

In the Introduction the idea is addressed that 'health inequalities are not found only between rich and poor, or between "the deprived" and everyone else', but also the so-called 'fine grain'. The latter refers to the phenomenon that life expectancy is greater in those who are materially slightly better off than others. One of the examples given is that life expectancy is greater in 'those with a car and a garden than in those with only a car' (p. 3). Questioning such 'fine grain' often leads to better discussions amongst students about the relationship between health and inequality than the more abstract and more 'common sense' differences between social classes.

Several chapters address the issue of the link between individual behaviour and social structure. This is a hot potato, especially in the health promotion field: 'To what extent is it possible for people to change their behaviour and adopt a healthier lifestyle?' Curtis and Jones (p. 106) suggest that 'health variation is caused both by characteristics of individuals, and also by the setting in which they are situated'.

I was somewhat puzzled to see two social geography chapters and an epidemiology one in a book with sociology in its title. There is the chapter 'Is there a place for geography in the analysis of health inequality?' (Curtis and Jones) and one by Shaw, Dorling and Brimblecombe 'Changing the map: health in Britain 1951-91'. Are geographers making inroads into the sociology of health and illness? Furthermore, the chapter by Van der Mheen, Stronks and Mackenbach offers the reader some serious social epidemiology, including odds ratios and confidence intervals. Epidemiologists use these statistical representations because they are more precise than the traditional social science way of using χ^2 and *p* values. However, as long as sociologists have not caught up with this approach it could be considered out of place in an edited sociology collection.

Overall, I feel it might have been more appropriate to leave 'sociology' out of the title. The editors fail to explain why the different authors/chapters were selected for this edited volume. Were the papers selected from a conference on the subject or did the editors approach people for contributions?

I particularly enjoyed the chapter by Cameron and Bernardes, 'Gender and disadvantage in health: men's health for a change', but their methods section is sloppy. Why not tell the reader how many (few?) interviews have been carried out, rather than that 'a small number of in-depth

interviews' were conducted (p. 118)? Since their study focuses on prostate health a questionnaire was sent out to men who had contacted the Prostate Help Association; however, later on the text suggests that partners of men with prostate problems were also interviewed, or that couples were interviewed together. 'One man gave up reflexology ... according to his wife' (p. 125).

Nazroo's chapter, 'Genetics, cultural or socio-economic vulnerability? Explaining ethnic inequalities in health', is not about the genome project or genetic risk prediction, as the title might suggest to some. On the contrary, it is partly an attack on those studies of ethnicity and health in which the explanatory factor, ethnicity, equals untheorised definitions, i.e. stereotypes such as 'genetic heritage'. Although it is impossible to discuss every single chapter, the chapter by Wilkinson, Kawachi and Kennedy, which uses US data on homicide to explore the link between income distribution and mortality, merits mention.

This book will be useful for a range of courses on, for example, social policy, social inequality and medical sociology in both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. The timing of its publication may benefit from the recently introduced Higher Education Copying Accord in Britain. This agreement on photocopying and copyright has major implications for providing students with lecture packs, hand-outs and/or reference lists, and will lead to a greater demand for edited volumes in any discipline.

University of Aberdeen

EDWIN VAN TEIJLINGEN

Work, Consumerism and the New Poor

Zygmunt Bauman

Buckingham: Open University Press, 1998, £50.00 (£14.99), xii + 106 pp.

(ISBN 0-335-20155-5)

'The poor are always with us. What it means to be poor depends on the kind of "us" they are "with"' (p. 2). This book, the first of a new international series tackling social issues of public interest, finds Zygmunt Bauman firmly in 'legislative' rather than merely 'interpretive' mode, to borrow his now famous distinction. As the above quote suggests, Bauman is interested not only in those who are defined as poor but in the broader treatment of poverty by society more generally.

In Chapter 1 Bauman reviews the emergence of the work ethic in Britain during the nineteenth century. This work ethic had two functions, namely to solve the labour supply problems of the burgeoning new industries and also to deal with paupers by forcing them to join the workforce. So successful was this that 'work occupied the focal position on all three analytically distinguishable levels of modern arrangement – individual, social and systemic' (p. 19). In time, however, the struggle between labour and capital shifted from the workers' focus on preserving their autonomy to a narrower concern with maximising their share of the surplus. This increasing instrumentality paved the way for what, in Chapter 2, Bauman describes as the move from a society grounded in the work ethic to one based on the aesthetic of consumption, one in which there are still producers, but where one is a consumer first and foremost. Interestingly (but not entirely convincingly), he argues that the rise of labour market insecurity has been partially offset by the fact that people increasingly shy away from a life-project tied to a single vocation and instead embrace (consumer) identities which are easy to flex. Therefore in 'Modernity Mark II' poverty is no longer defined by unemployment but by being an 'incomplete consumer'.

The second part of the book deals with the emergence and subsequent retreat of the welfare state. Although this is familiar ground, Bauman's analysis is clinical and quite compelling. Locating the Beveridge report in the context of two centuries of the work ethic, he discusses the shortcomings of the means test and argues that the more people are removed from the embrace of public welfare, the more politics and citizenship are diminished as a result. More depressingly still, the economic argument for the welfare state has been undermined by mass unemployment and the availability of cheap labour around the globe. Whereas once employers saw the welfare state as a good investment in keeping the reserve army of labour in perpetual readiness, now there is little prospect of them ever being needed and thus little to be gained from doing so.

Perhaps the most convincing section of the book is where Bauman stresses the entrenchment of consumerist culture in the form of the right to choose. 'Choice is the consumer society's meta-value' (p. 58). Universally provided (and by implication undifferentiated) welfare services are no match for a freely chosen (though possibly inferior) alternative. In a telling analogy between welfare spending and 'affirmative action' policies in the United States, Bauman explains how it is often those who have gained from such policies who wish to pull up the drawbridge behind them and erase the memory of any advantages they were given along the way. Thus although the welfare state never remotely completed its job it has produced enough successes to undermine its own logic. Chapter 4 goes on to reinforce many of these points, but explicitly tackles the process of social exclusion and the labelling of the poor as criminal through discourses such as the underclass thesis.

The book concludes that the prospects for the new poor are somewhat bleak and offers a lengthy discussion of the way in which the social exclusion of the poor continues to be maintained and consolidated. The worst of it is that the poor no longer have any purpose in society, unlike in pre-modern Europe where they stood as a reminder of the punishment for original sin and a spur to others to live a life of virtue and charity by caring for them. In the face of this scenario Bauman's combination of exhortation to political action and recourse to Offe/Gorz style schemes for income entitlements independent of the workplace seems to fall hopelessly short. To this extent he is simply the victim of the eloquently set out but brutal logic of his earlier arguments.

University of Plymouth

ERIC HARRISON

Jokes and Their Relation to Society

Christie Davies

Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998, DM178, x + 234 pp. (ISBN 3-11-016104-4)

The sociology of humour is an embryonic sub-discipline with devotees throughout the world, most of whom proselytise their work through the International Society for Humor Studies. With few sociological precedents, Christie Davies has become the leading British humourologist whose ongoing world-wide comparative study of jokes in all types of society is encapsulated in this new book. It revises earlier less accessible essays, augmenting these with new introductory and concluding chapters.

Davies's central thesis is that jokes in advanced societies (excepting Japan) are universally directed against social, especially ethnic, groups widely deemed to be stupid compared with so-called 'canny groups' in centre-periphery relationships within geographical, economic,

linguistic or religious contexts. Thus his first table reveals the extensive global distribution of countries in which such paired comparison jokes are told. His researches and numerous examples demonstrate that the similarity of stupidity jokes operating at different socio-spatial levels is more important than the differences between them.

The original versions of such regional and local jokes in Ancient Egypt and Greece targeted peoples from a particular village, town, region or nation deemed by members of a rival joke-telling or joke-sharing group to be inferior. In post-war Britain, however, increased social mobility has meant that professional comedians have been instrumental in replacing such foolish community jokes with ethnic jokes reinforced by nationally available, as opposed to local, joke-books. Contemporary ethnic jokes in industrialised countries also differ in highlighting ignorance of modern machines and artefacts as well as the 'rationally' organised market-place.

Davies expands this theme perspicaciously in core chapters against a Weberian background in which jokes question the rationality of 'rationality' in terms of what he calls the 'comic spirit of capitalism'. Further evidence of unforeseen irrational consequences is found in several of the former socialist countries of Eastern Europe, where identical jokes were told about stupid groups exercising totalitarian political power. Such widespread oral joking by inversion of reality (Koestler's *Bisociation?*) protests 'against the irrationality of rationality as well as the irrationality of irrationality' (p. 82). Ethnically-related jokes about alcohol further uncover the humour of marked ambivalence in moral attitudes to drink, especially drunken behaviour, in industrialised societies of Europe and North America. Traditional British jokes directed at visibly hard drinkers such as the Irish, coupled with anti-temperance jokes associated with the Scots, reinforce ingrained attitudes about the stupidity of the former and the canniness of the latter. This interestingly contrasts with the far more benign treatment of English counterparts, such as the comic strip 'hero' Andy Capp, and the reader is confronted with the conundrum of why there are no jokes about the historically notorious hard-drinking behaviour of the English, albeit the behaviour of contemporary lager-louts is hardly a joking matter.

In the case of 'sick' humour and ethnic jokes, Davies reminds the reader of many man-made disasters in the recounting of which the skilled joke-teller relaxes his serious visage in delight at the 'mixture of consternation and hilarity produced in the listeners' (p. 139). Thus recent space disasters have perhaps surprisingly inspired a spate of sick jokes of a question and answer kind encouraged by mass media audiences desperately trying to comprehend the enormity of such tragedies. Ethnic jokes set in submarines, planes or space-rockets, by exporting stupidity to another group, thus assuage our unease induced by dependence, however indirect, on such artefacts and specialist expertise unfamiliar to us.

Chapter 9 highlights the contemporary relevance for the serious discussion of humour of other cultural artefacts, in this case the early novels of H. G. Wells which satirise early twentieth century unsatisfactory and anomic work practices and situations, especially amongst the lower middle class shopocracy. His comic caricaturing of the hierarchical organisation as well as the mythology of work of his time critically exposes the irresolvable contradictions (unemployment, bankruptcy) endemic in the market economy with its myths of enterprise and the more surprising 'black' humour of arson by bankrupt small shopkeepers as stock comic characters seeking to defraud insurance companies.

The concluding chapter admirably summarises Davies's arguments in a taxonomic empirical model based on his micro- and macrosociological theorising of human activity underlying work or other similar purposive activities central to the ethnic jokes discussed in the book. The continuing invention of such humorous oppositions in ethnic or quasi-ethnic jokes about women (British Essex/blond promiscuity jokes) and sex (American JAP/Jewish frigidity jokes) exemplify modern or modernising societies' seemingly insatiable appetite for this pivotal oral practice in

their popular cultural life. This book, then, is a model of comparative method which should not only advance any cultural studies teaching and research programme but may well revivify the sociological literature of leisure as well as that of work, within which context joking is a central feature of the informal organisation.

Aston University

GEORGE PATON

Divided Society: Ethnic Minorities and Racism in Northern Ireland **Paul Hainsworth (ed.)**

London: Pluto Press, 1998, £14.99 paperback, xiv + 270 pp. (ISBN 0-7453-1195-4)

The sectarian divide dominates discussions of Northern Irish politics and society. The British government has created an extensive, if not always effective, bureaucratic structure to combat religious discrimination and intimidation. In contrast, the Province's ethnic minorities were until 1997 without even the legal protection against racial discrimination that has been in place in mainland Britain since 1976. They have long been invisible, even within Northern Ireland. *Divided Society* examines the racism, discrimination, misrepresentation, segregation and inequality affecting Northern Ireland's main ethnic minority groups. It is of great benefit to have this volume added to the small but important number of works examining racism and the treatment of ethnic minorities in both parts of Ireland.

The contributors come from a variety of backgrounds, academic and non-academic, and McVeigh and Hainsworth do a good job in setting the other contributors' work within general themes of relevance to ethnic minority studies. McVeigh builds on his work of examining the relationship between national identity and racism, demonstrating how racism in Northern Ireland has a high level of Irish specificity. He describes the way in which sectarianism filters anti-Traveller prejudice. Arguing against theories of 'state racism' he illustrates how racism in Northern Ireland has more in common with that in the Republic than it does with 'British' racism. He also gives us some fascinating historical context which disproves the assumptions that Northern Ireland has only recently become multi-ethnic and that ethnic minorities are somehow insulated from the sectarian conflict. For instance, during the 'Lady's Day Riots' of 1872 Protestant gangs forced Catholics out of their homes in 'Protestant' areas. One of the gang leaders was a black man who lived in the Shankhill Road.

More cross-referencing and cross-fertilisation between chapters in the 'Issues' and the 'Case Studies' sections could have knitted the book together better. Further theoretical informing of the case studies might have been illuminating. For example, McVeigh's concept of 'sedentarism' (as the root of anti-Traveller prejudice) is used by Paul Noonan in his chapter on Travellers, but is not linked to other racisms. The concept is valuable and could be extended to the concrete manifestation of 'Irish racism' in day-to-day prejudice against other ethnic minorities. Greater co-ordination would also have helped to avoid some irritating repetitions between chapters, although bringing coherence to a multi-author volume is an extremely difficult task and one that Hainsworth has managed quite well.

The lack of ethnic minority voices in this volume is a little disappointing. Indeed, there is too much lamentation in some chapters about the absence of sufficient research into the area, and not enough evidence that the authors have sought to rectify this absence. For example, White's chapter on the criminal justice system rakes over too much already well-trodden ground and delves into

unnecessary legalistic and bureaucratic detail before getting down to the nitty-gritty. Mason's health chapter also has too many instances of research from the British mainland being quoted and followed by statements along the lines of 'this would also appear to be the case in Northern Ireland'. Fawcett's chapter on the media does better in recognising some specificity, but only as local 'filtering' of racism. She reproduces a theoretical assumption about the unidirectionality of racism that I find unhelpful. It suggests that racism adheres to the same overall pattern which is then filtered by local conditions. It might be as useful to examine the concept in reverse – local racisms are filtered and delimited by national and international forces. She highlights the unstated conflict between these two paradigms. In his own work, McVeigh tends towards the latter paradigm of 'local racism', while most ethnic and racial studies researchers implicitly employ the former.

The book counters the dominant viewpoint in sociology about racism being largely the result of imperialism and capitalism. It is because of this that I am somewhat unsure about the attempt by several authors to link opposition to anti-Irish racism with attempts to fight other forms of racism in Ireland. The opposition to anti-Irish prejudice in Britain has not combined well with opposition to other racisms, particularly opposition to anti-Traveller racism.

In spite of my reservations, *Divided Society* is undoubtedly a valuable contribution to the field. It takes the point at which British and Irish racisms intersect, illustrating the complex patterning of meanings, discourses, beliefs and practices which structure the lives of ethnic minority members. It should be necessary reading for anyone studying, or indeed involved in, the politics and society of Northern Ireland.

University of Edinburgh

ANGUS BANCROFT

The Violences of Men: How Men Talk About and How Agencies Respond to Men's Violence to Known Women

Jeff Hearn

London: Sage, 1998, £45.00 (£14.99 paperback), x+258 pp. (ISBN 0-8039-7940-1)

The extent and nature of men's violence to known women – principally their wives, partners and girlfriends – is the focus of this fascinating and richly detailed text. The author, adopting a 'pro-feminist' approach, considers how men talk about their violence against known women (as opposed to strangers), the complex interplay between doing violence and talking about it, and how various agencies respond to men's violence. To these ends Hearn analyses accounts from interviews conducted with sixty violent men, accessed via agencies such as probation, prison, men's programmes and welfare agencies, with whom Hearn also conducted interviews, administered questionnaires and examined case records. The extent of the men's involvement in violence to known women was wide-ranging, as was their involvement with the various agencies. Some of the men in the sample had been convicted of murder and received life sentences, others had been arrested for assault(s) but not been charged.

It is worth noting that Hearn discusses the 'stresses' that he underwent whilst researching this difficult topic, which is always refreshing, but particularly so in this instance as it comes from a male researcher conducting research 'on men', 'for women' (*vis-à-vis* the 'pro-feminist' framework).

One of the recurring themes throughout the text is the persistent and close connection of violence with power, control and patriarchal relationships. This is particularly evident in the manner in which Hearn interprets the men's accounts of their violence(s), but also in relation to theory. Hearn tackles a number of complex issues in this respect, such as how a theory of power can be adequately constructed to deal with the complexities of men's violence to women and the problematic nature of the social category 'men' which, Hearn suggests, must be treated with 'sociological caution' (p. 216).

Without doubt the most thought-provoking and informative aspect of the whole text is the men's accounts of their violence and the author's dissemination of them. Hearn unpacks the men's accounts, particularly the terminology they adopt to describe their violence (which incorporates verbal, emotional/psychological, physical and sexual violence), offering valuable insights regarding ways of contextualising and deconstructing the accounts. As such, the manner in which the men describe, dismiss, excuse and deny their violent acts is continually challenged. Methodologically, there are huge problems in relying upon accounts; but the author deals with this very well, devoting a chapter to conceptualising the relationship to violence and talk about violence, and a further chapter to the contexts of men's talk about violence to known women. An example of the latter includes discussion of the manner in which the men's involvement with various agencies might affect the nature of the accounts given (men imprisoned for violence may conceptualise their acts in very different ways from those undergoing probation). The problem of giving, receiving and (re)interpreting accounts continues to perplex. As Hearn aptly states 'pure truth is not to be found here' (p. 40).

In the final chapter of the text, the author tackles key issues for theory, politics, policy and practice – responses to men's violence to women. On the issue of policy, Hearn suggests, 'governmental and other policies and strategies should embody a clear opposition to violence by boys and men, should tell boys and men not to be violent' (p. 222). Somehow the idea of a national commitment against violence seems unrealistic given recent events such as the sustained air strikes by the United Kingdom and America upon Serbia (in the former Yugoslavia) in response to the war in Kosovo.

In summary, this is a highly readable and informative text. Men's violence to women (known or otherwise) remains a pressing issue and texts such as this, which deconstruct men's accounts of violence and consider the links between articulating and doing violence are, therefore, highly valuable. It is unfortunate, but perhaps inevitable, that the author was unable to offer more realistic policy solutions to the problem of men's violence. That said, what the text lacks in policy terms, it more than makes up for in its rigorous attention to methodological and theoretical issues.

University of Glamorgan

FIONA BROOKMAN

The Sociological Revolution: From the Enlightenment to the Global Age

Richard Kilminster

London: Routledge, 1998, £50.00, xiv + 221 pp. (ISBN 0-415-02920-1)

This book deserves a more detailed treatment than can be given in a short review, and the reviewer is in the pleasant position of being able to recommend a book with which he disagrees in many

ways. It is pitched at a sophisticated level and takes up issues and arguments of which many contemporary sociologists seem unaware. The book is many things: an assertion of the existence of sociology as a science with its own object, a critique of philosophy as a discipline, and of those philosophical ideas which Kilminster sees as holding back the development of sociology; a critique of modern social theory; a critique of structuralism which attempts to draw out a structuralist sociology; an analysis of globalisation and finally a history of British sociology. The arguments are densely packed and it is easy neither to read nor to summarise – but it repays the effort it asks of the reader.

Kilminster argues that the development of sociology in the nineteenth century took over and transformed philosophical concerns with epistemology, ontology and morality. That philosophy remains a university discipline is explained sociologically by the power of the academic establishment, not because there is any special area to which philosophy can now lay claim. Philosophy is concerned with 'eternal truths' and sociology shows that there are no such things.

The main philosophical problem for Kilminster is the neo-Kantian framework that he sees as having been the dominant philosophical basis for social theory; even the apparently Hegelian alternatives provided by Lukacs and Western Marxism turn out on closer inspection to have been neo-Kantian. Though he sees Hegel as offering the main philosophical alternative, he concludes that Hegel is too intimately linked to theology.

The neo-Kantian assumptions in Parsons and other more modern theorists are traced and used as a basis for criticising them. The sociology that emerged in the nineteenth century was concerned with empirical regularities in social life and social relationships. We do not need to drag the concerns of philosophy into such sociology – Marx's and then later Mannheim's discussions of the social origins of ideas transform the old problems.

Rather as all roads used to lead to Rome, so all critiques lead to Elias's figurational sociology. The objects of Kilminster's critiques (Parsons, the phenomenologists, the debate between structuralists and existentialists, structuration theory, the globalisation debates) are opportunities for taking us to Elias. The structuralists are seen as having hit on something but it was distorted by the way in which their position developed through the debate with Sartre. Interestingly, Kilminster does not talk about Merleau Ponty in this context – one suspects it would be difficult to fit into his schema.

For this reviewer the faith in Elias (should we start talking about 'figurationists' or 'figurationalism?') is the least convincing part of the argument. It is too close to the sociologists' bad habit of claiming to have found the solution to the problems that have plagued Western thought as long as Western thought has been in existence, and it leads to a certain naivety about processes, particularly the notion of democratisation which seems empirically dubious.

Yet some parts of this book should be read by anybody who claims the right to talk about the development of sociological theory, whether or not one agrees with them. The account of the emergence of sociology as the study of social uniformities and regularities is something that this reviewer can accept without accepting all the implications that Kilminster wants to attach to it; and the discussion of the Hegelian alternative is particularly stimulating. The book is littered with insights and deserves more than its place on library shelves where I fear it might stay in the absence of a paperback edition.

The Inclusive Society? Social Exclusion and New Labour

Ruth Levitas

London: Macmillan Press, 1998, £16.99 paperback, xii + 224 pp. (ISBN 0-333-73087-9)

The Inclusive Society is organised around nine chapters, through which New Labour rhetoric is systematically unpacked, and its ideological underpinnings subjected to scrutiny. The critical spotlight focuses on such topical themes as social justice and social cohesion, stakeholding, communitarianism, equality, the Third Way and, of course, social inclusion and exclusion. In the book, political discourse is conceptualised as 'more than simply words' (p. 3). Levitas understands it to be imbued with the ability to shape potential horizons of action, as language frames conditions of citizen possibility through a 'matrix of interrelated concepts' (p. 3).

An interesting feature of the book concerns its use of the acronyms RED, MUD and SID. They refer respectively to: the linkage of social exclusion with poverty through which a redistributionist discourse is invoked (RED); the conflation of cultural factors with social exclusion, such that the materiality of poverty is downplayed and replaced by explanations turning on the characteristics of the 'moral underclass' (MUD); and paid employment as the central pathway to greater inclusion (SID). These represent ideal-type formulations that are used analytically as conceptual templates against which recent and current New Labour policy linked to the inclusion/exclusion debate is appraised.

In pursuing a critical and erudite journey through the work of such commentators as Will Hutton, John Gray and Amitai Etzioni, Levitas clearly demonstrates the marginalisation of redistributionist thinking in the New Labour project, which has become increasingly colonised by a skilfully 'spun' pastiche of MUD and SID; the resonance of Murray's feckless underclass continuing to pervade the former. Justification for the flight from redistribution is to be found in New Labour's frequent reminder that conditions of economic possibility are contingent on global capitalist forces. These are asserted – within the context of the latter dimension (SID) – as 'inevitably' dictating the narrow definition of inclusion through paid employment.

Continuities with the previous Conservative administration are detailed throughout the book, and are contrasted with New Labour discourse which attempts to articulate a 'third way between the New Right and the "old left"' (p. 112). Legitimation of this third way is rooted in New Labour's rewriting of its own history (p. 114), offering a polarised vision of the past that ignores the labour and conservative movements' traditional use of mixed economies. Levitas concludes by pointing up the resonance of Durkheimian thinking in the current project, not least the tendency for conflict to be repressed and for the status quo to be defended (p. 188).

That the book makes for depressing reading is a testament to the academic rigour with which Levitas transcends the illusory tenets of New Labour's project. After eighteen years of Conservative hegemony, during which time deep and lasting damage was done to the social fabric, there appears to be little firm evidence that these scars can be healed within the context of New Labour's project. Indeed the recent 'Carnival against Capitalism' held in London during June 1999 may well represent a promise of things to come, no doubt in part-response to their divisive mix of policy dilution and timidity.

This is a provocative work that deserves to be read by a wide audience, including undergraduate and postgraduate students of politics, sociology and social policy, together with those seeking a sophisticated analysis of the New Labour Project. To these ends, a later, or alternative edition would benefit from a simplification and condensing of some of the arguments, together with a greater use of diagrams, mapping out the conceptual frameworks used throughout.

There is a sense in which the wellspring of the author's arguments suffers from the transformed political terrain in which we are all forced to operate. Self-identifying as a socialist-feminist, neglect of unpaid work by the inclusion discourse features centrally in her position, though visions of an alternative social and economic structure are mooted only cautiously. Levitas has the intellectual gravitas to travel further in this direction – much in the spirit of Will Hutton's widely read *The State We're In* and *The State to Come* – to map out a vision of the future in which tolerance to difference and the inclusion/exclusion dichotomy are comprehensively disavowed.

University of York

PAUL HIGATE

Worlds of Talk: The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life

Martin Malone

Oxford: Polity Press, 1997, £39.50 (£12.95 paperback), xiii + 182 pp.

(ISBN 0-745-61433-7)

This book is an attempt to combine the perspectives of symbolic interactionism, of conversation analysis and of Goffman into a coherent programme for investigating 'the reciprocal creation of society and self' in conversational interaction (p. 3). Since these are quite evidently cognate approaches to interaction, it has long seemed attractive to show how they can be welded together to tackle what are regarded as core sociological topics; and Martin Malone is another to have answered the siren call – whether more successfully than his predecessors is for others to judge.

The first two chapters set out the theoretical basis for this attempt through accounts of these perspectives, including their intellectual progenitors (notably the connections between pragmatism and symbolic interactionism, and between phenomenology and ethnomethodology). Unfortunately, these accounts are organised largely through brief exegeses of individual authors (Goffman, Pierce, James, Dewey, Mead, Schutz, Garfinkel and Sacks) with insufficient attention paid to the thematic, analytic or methodological links between them. Indeed, only half a page is given to any treatment or exposition of what these connections might amount to, or how these perspectives could combine into a distinctive approach to the interactional construction of the social self. Malone identifies a 'set of fundamentals' which they have in common, along the lines, for instance, that they 'are interested in how people "make sense", how they figure out what is going on, and so are able to get on with life. They are sociologies of meaning' (p. 40) – which is neither very original nor very compelling as an analytical or methodological synthesis.

This theoretical account is followed by a series of case studies of the interactional construction of 'self' in conversation. These focus on pronouns and personal deixis (Chapter 3), gender (Chapter 4), 'altercasting' and friendship (Chapter 5) and a disagreement involving character contests and threats to face (Chapter 6). Each chapter takes a similar form: Malone first reviews some of the relevant literature, for example studies of interaction and gender (from which it emerges that 'there are distinctive gender-related identities learned from a very early age and reinforced in talk and peer interaction. American females learn to be nurturing, collaborative, empathetic, and non-directive ... American males tend to be competitive, aggressive, independent and emotionally insensitive' (p. 89).

These literature reviews – which are often quite useful guides to research themes and findings in these areas – are followed by illustrative data extracts and analysis (the data are mostly extracts from discussions among students). The results of these analyses often serve as a counterbalance to

conclusions reached in the various literatures which have been reviewed. For example, Malone's analysis of one extract leads him to question the 'neat dichotomy of male versus female' (represented in the quotation above), on the grounds that 'it may be more fruitful to see male and female styles of talk as the result of an interaction of influences, rather than just differing gender-type styles' (p. 96), and that 'strategies of individuation and affiliation are not associated with gender in a simple sex-types fashion' (p. 97). It has to be said that the grounds for such conclusions are pretty thin, not only because they are based on a single extract, but also because the analysis is too often speculative and unsufficiently substantiated. (It is a kind of 'analytic commentary' on what speakers are 'really' doing in their talk – so that it is shown that while the speaker seems to be co-operative or supportive, she is really controlling the other person, p. 94). At any rate, there is little rigour either in the particular aims in Malone examining data extracts in each chapter, or in the way analysis is conducted. But the illustrations do have a certain value in opening up issues associated broadly with the 'social construction' of self, and might be used (with caution) in introducing students to the potential of investigating such issues.

Overall, there is a certain lack of clarity of purpose in the book as a whole, and of focus within individual chapters. I found only occasional and elusive glimpses in these studies of the ways in which 'self' is relevant in interaction, how conceptions of self are apparent in talk, and how self concepts might be 'procedurally relevant' in interaction.

University of York

PAUL DREW

Emerging Voices: Women in Contemporary Irish Society

Pat O'Connor

Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1998, £18.95 paperback, x+308 pp.

(ISBN 1-872002-74-9)

This book consolidates a range of statistical studies on the position of women in contemporary Ireland, from a feminist perspective. As the author points out, gender has been largely ignored in core texts on Ireland. The book focuses on the interrelation between familial roles and paid work for different generations of women, in terms of economic, political, religious and sexual structures, as well as in terms of the impact of the women's movement. The aim is to illustrate the patriarchal character of Irish society, as well as the processes through which it is sustained. Ireland is presented as definitively European, rather than as a unique or anomalous patriarchy.

O'Connor presents interesting and wide-ranging data, for example on the dramatic increase in participation of young married women in paid employment; the role of the popular media, notably radio and television talk shows, in opening up debate on the nature of the family and women's role within it; and on women in 'top jobs' being clustered in positions of professional expertise rather than decision-making authority. The changing nature of family life in Ireland provides the rationale for much of the discussion, together with the simultaneous changes in women's working lives. The book suggests, following Connell, that Irish patriarchy is undergoing a 'crisis of institutionalisation', largely due to the declining influence of the church, the changing constructions of heterosexuality, and the state's increasing inclusiveness, particularly through pressure from the European Union. O'Connor argues that the state has reinforced unequal citizenship, notably by defending the idea of the male citizen's right to paid employment, for example through operating taxation disincentives against married women working outside the home.

The book attempts, not wholly successfully, to address the general theoretical weakness of Irish sociology. First, O'Connor uses ideology and discourse interchangeably. She defines 'ideology' as a meta-discourse which legitimates social structures, and 'discourses' as highly specific ideological instances (p. 20). This is confusing for the reader who usually encounters these as alternative problematics.

Secondly, she justifies at length her specific focus on women, largely through rehearsing debates on patriarchy, perhaps indicating that publishing a book on the position of women in contemporary Ireland is in itself controversial. This may explain her heavy and often unnecessary reliance on quotes from other theorists and commentators. She tentatively suggests, referring to Weeks, that the importance of sex/gender identity may provide insights into tensions in the wider social and political context. However, she does not sustain this theme, concentrating instead on presenting data on gender inequality. It is unclear what insights into broader social and political tensions the book aims to provide. In addition, the exposition lacks historical context, notably failing to provide any genealogical account of the emergence of gendered, sexualised, specifically Irish identities, for example through a discussion of the impact of colonialism.

Thirdly, her chapter on changing conceptions of womanhood in Ireland presents problems. She establishes three alternative conceptions of personhood which she claims are altering conventional conceptions of Irish womanhood. Women are increasingly constructed either as persons with distinct familial roles, who can also transcend the limits of the familial (what she terms 'family feminism'); or as degendered paid workers, in effect 'honorary males'; or simply as 'different' (p. 103).

There are a number of problems with this. First, the relationship between womanhood and personhood is unspecified. Secondly, the idea of 'family feminism', which O'Connor applauds, seems problematic, given that this phrase emerged in Ireland through a conservative appropriation of feminist discourse for anti-feminist ends. Finally, O'Connor recommends the 'difference' option, described as acknowledging women's varying needs and desires, while at the same time insisting on women's difference from men. She argues that this constitutes a 'subversive relativism' which both legitimises women's agency and overcomes biological determinism (p. 105). However, difference theory either relies on essentialism, or entails an unqualified deconstruction of the categories 'woman' and 'man'. O'Connor fails to clarify how her particular use of 'difference' theory retains the woman/man opposition, so central to feminist politics, while also rejecting essentialist constructions of womanhood. Despite these problems, this book is a welcome attempt substantively to outline the generally undocumented changes in the position of women in contemporary Ireland.

University of Warwick

LISA SMYTH

Inside the Celtic Tiger: The Irish Economy and the Asian Model **Denis O'Hearn**

London: Pluto Press, 1998, £12.99 paperback, xiv + 200 pp. (ISBN 0-7453-1283-7)

Another miracle has been observed in the Irish Republic. This time it is in the form of a rapidly-growing economy rather than a Madonna-like apparition. Even so, the 'Celtic tiger', as it is now known, is thought to offer salvation to those who follow in its path. The path, according to *The*

Economist, *De Spiegel* and other press reports which have covered this secular miracle, consists of low levels of corporate tax combined with high levels of foreign direct investment (FDI). The endpoint is remarkable rates of economic growth and prosperity for all.

The problem with miracles, as Denis O'Hearn indicates in his stimulating *Inside the Celtic Tiger*, is that they are frequently founded on illusions. In this instance, these include misleading economic indicators and an over-enthusiasm for comparison with the 'Asian tiger' economies by self-serving politicians and state officials. O'Hearn's book, which is the first detailed analysis of the Celtic tiger phenomenon, challenges many of the contemporary claims for tigerhood while providing a more general critique of Irish economic development.

This critique, which is grounded firmly within the traditions of the *dependency* school, claims that dependence on foreign investment is inevitably linked to the hollowing out of domestic industry, the widening of social inequalities in income and, inevitably, to job losses as transnational corporations (TNCs) relocate to more attractive sites. What emerges in the Irish case, according to O'Hearn, is an economy that benefits from increases in the flow but not the stock of FDI. In other words, foreign investment produces immediate short-term growth but as the number of transnationals increases they produce externalities that have a negative impact on the economy. For example, the shift to free trade brought a flood of foreign products that not only drove indigenous firms out of business, it also discouraged domestic investment in similar areas.

It would be wrong to assume from this that *Inside the Celtic Tiger* is merely a parochial Irish study, for it offers detailed comparisons between the so-called Celtic and Asian tigers (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan). Interestingly, O'Hearn finds the Irish case bears some resemblance with that of Singapore. Both are small nations with developmental states and both have sought to achieve economic development through a strategy of export-led industrialisation based on FDI. Though each has been highly successful in attracting investment, notably in electronics, Singapore has managed to acquire a significant proportion of investment from Japan, while Ireland relies, almost exclusively, on the United States. Here the similarities end, because Japanese TNCs are much more likely to develop linkages with the local economy by sourcing products from indigenous firms. They also differ in that they show an unusual ability to promote the development of local suppliers, some of whom subsequently graduate from low-tech to hi-tech activities. By contrast, the US firms that locate in Ireland only purchase a limited range of goods from local suppliers (mostly services).

In any case, O'Hearn shows that there are numerous other differences between the Celtic and Asian versions of the tiger economy. For instance, Irish growth rates averaged approximately 5 per cent in the early boom of the 1990s while those of the Asian economies were in the region of 8–9 per cent for almost thirty years. Similarly, investment rates differ dramatically, not least because the Irish economy had the lowest in Europe during the 1990s. What all of this indicates is that the performance of the Irish economy during the 1990s simply does not warrant the use of the 'tiger' metaphor.

O'Hearn's debunking of the myths associated with the Celtic tiger is a timely and convincing contribution. However, his argument for an alternative economic strategy based on state investment in indigenous industry is not without problems. For instance, recent efforts by the Irish State to develop the indigenous beef industry led to an unhealthy relationship between a Fianna Fáil government and certain 'beef barons'. Though this was eventually the subject of a judicial inquiry, it may require a genuine miracle before such relationships end.

Mainstreaming Equality in the European Union: Education, Training and Labour Market Policies

Teresa Rees

London: Routledge, 1998, £15.99 paperback, 260 pp. (ISBN 0-415-11534-5)

Mainstreaming Equality in the European Union focuses on the attempts made by the European Commission (EC) to ensure that education and training policies incorporated equal opportunities. Drawing on a feminist theoretical framework, Rees (an expert adviser to the EC on equal opportunities and training policy) shares her knowledge of the various EC programmes, policies and projects with those less familiar with these areas. Rees's starting point is that while systems of training provision and their take-up reinforce and solidify patterns of occupational segregation, the role of education, training policies and practice in the reproduction of gender segregation is neglected in the literature. It is this which Rees seeks to address.

To begin with, she outlines the extent of gender segregation in the European Union (EU), before providing a brief overview of the EC's education, training and equal opportunities policies. In Chapter 3, she presents her three-fold conceptual framework of equal opportunities: tinkering (equal treatment), tailoring (positive action and discrimination) and transforming (mainstreaming equality). Mainstreaming, a new approach to equal opportunities (EO) in the late 1990s which moves beyond equal treatment and positive action approaches to EO, 'involves the incorporation of EO issues into all actions, programmes and policies from the outset'. It aims to 'develop a set of programmes and policies which are based on a recognition of diversity and the politics and the diversity of difference' (p. 6). Thus, while addressing the differences between men and women, a mainstreaming approach to equal opportunities will also uncover the differences between men and between women.

Several detailed chapters follow where Rees applies her conceptual framework to the various equal opportunities policies and initiatives which she presents. Chapter 4 documents the history of the EC in fostering equal opportunities for men and women. Chapter 5 discusses the impact of post-compulsory education and training policies within one member state (the United Kingdom), while Chapter 6 focuses on skills shortages in information technology in the EU. Chapter 7 examines the influence of the various community action programmes on training for women, while in Chapter 8 Rees focuses on the European Social Fund and the Leonardo Da Vinci programme. Rees uses these chapters to trace the shift in the EU's policies from tinkering to tailoring.

Finally, in her discussion of the three EC White papers in Chapter 9 (*Growth, Competitiveness, Employment; European Social Policy: A Way Forward for the Union; Teaching and Learning: Towards the Learning Society*), Rees concludes that these documents are gender neutral and as a consequence would have limited effect on women's role in the European labour market. Hence, Rees calls for a mainstreaming approach, accompanied by more traditional EO policies. In conclusion, she argues that mainstreaming in education, training and the labour market will only be effective when all policies – housing, welfare, tax, pensions and so on – treat individuals as individuals, rather than as members of a nuclear family. To this end, current legislation requires a radical overhaul. Furthermore, Rees argues that the male breadwinner/female homemaker model needs to be replaced with a new gender contract which allows women to compete in the labour market on the same terms as men.

Teresa Rees provides an excellent path for novices through the maze of European-funded initiatives in this area and raises interesting questions with regard to their effectiveness. At the same time, she offers a route through which equality could potentially be achieved. *Mainstreaming*

Equality will be welcomed by those responsible for equal opportunities policies in education and training and also by academics and students in women's studies, social policy, sociology and economics.

University of Leicester

SALLY WALTERS

The Reality of Law: Work and Talk in a Firm of Criminal Lawyers **Max Travers**

Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1997, £40.00, xv + 175 pp. (ISBN 1-84014-028-X)

Law in Action: Ethnomethodological and Conversation Analytic Approaches to Law

Max Travers and John F. Manzo (eds.)

Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1998, £40.00, x + 296 pp. (ISBN 1-84014-078-X)

'We hope that this collection will make it possible to appreciate the methodological basis of ethnomethodology and conversation analytic studies and the wider implications for the sociology of law' (Travers and Manzo 1998:x). An underlying theme of both these texts is the difference and 'radical character' (Travers and Manzo 1998:ix) of the ethnomethodological approach from formal sociology, attempted via the presentation of empirical studies rather than methodological debate. While there are good reasons for adopting this approach, it is one which does not state explicitly, at least in any depth, what this difference is. Briefly, while both ethnomethodology and sociology are concerned with the investigation of order, in ethnomethodology's case order* – the asterisked vernacular term is used to avoid inventing new terms to describe new phenomena, or a more exacting usage of an existing term – is a locally produced and accountable phenomenon, in contrast to formal or classical sociology's 'order', which is seen as extra-local rather than local (Garfinkel and Wieder 1992). Although the central issues for both technologies of respecification (i.e. ethnomethodological and 'classical') are the issues of descriptive precision and probity, ethnomethodology emphasises the 'production and accountability of order in and as ordinary activities' (Travers and Manzo 1998:178), while formal analysis uses one or other of its many forms of 'transcendental' analysis. In terms of probity, ethnomethodology is concerned only with issues in the phenomenon of order* itself, whereas formal analysis is concerned with the issues of how transcendental issues such as equality, justice, power etc. affect members. Ethnomethodology is indifferent to any such concern with 'transcendental' issues unless they are phenomena to be investigated in situated activity. So basically ethnomethodology is interested in the details of order* displayed within activities rather than through the imposition of some external conception of order utilised by some forms of sociology.

However, the criticism of the sociology of law to which both these texts draw attention is not the imposition of sociological theory upon legal activity, but rather its '(hyper)-empiricism' (Travers and Manzo 1998:3). That its priorities are 'not so much those that satisfy any sociological theory, but those of law, legal practitioners, and the ideology of jurisprudence' (Travers and Manzo 1998), resulting in a situation where 'the motivating question has become "are actors in legal settings accomplishing what the law prescribes?" and not, "what are actors in legal settings *doing* in the first place?"' (Travers and Manzo 1998:4). It is this focus on what actors are doing without recourse to the transcendental analysis of sociology or legal prescriptions that these ethnomethodological studies of legal activities are engaged.

Law and Action is a collection of both previously published and unpublished ethnomethodological and conversation analytic studies of legal phenomena, ranging from the processing of suicides, the ascription of motive in police interviews, a variety of work performed in the courtroom, and the deliberation of juries to the practices involved in training as a lawyer. Following Manzo's concise discussion of the place of the ethnomethodological alternative to other sociologies of law, noted above, which serves as an introduction, the book is divided into two parts: 'Exemplary Studies' and 'Contemporary Contributions', each having an introduction by Travers describing and providing background information to the included papers.

Following an initial paper by Garfinkel is a previously unpublished paper by Harvey Sacks, founder of the conversation analytic branch of ethnomethodology, entitled 'The Lawyer's Work'. Written about 1961, it is a series of observations on the locally organised nature of lawyers' activity and, being prior to Sacks's development of conversation analysis, displays both his debt to Garfinkel and his early wide interests. The first conversation analytic paper as such is Paul Drew's analysis of a defence attorney's attempt to discredit a principal witness's account of the events prior to an alleged rape. Drew presents the construction of facts in institutionally asymmetrical turn-taking through the transformation of a witness's account of events into a puzzle, the understated solution of which is unfavourable to the witness's version of events. Significantly, though, the witness is shown to be aware of, and attempting to counter, this version being built up by the attorney. Conversation analysis is also deployed by Rod Watson's study of recorded police interrogations showing the use of the typification of victims into categories of social groups and the assigning of activities 'typically' associated with these groups, thus allowing offenders to provide 'justifications' and 'motives' for their crimes. However, I thought that the use of categorisation devices as an analytic tool led to some confusion here as it detracted from the situated use of these terms in the ongoing activity of the offender's account and its reception by their interrogator. The second previously unpublished paper is Michael Lynch's ethnomethodological description of the work of judges in court proceedings. Without making great claims for the data, Lynch displays both the limitations of schematic accounts of courtroom activity and provides a descriptive account through the use of both ethnographic notes and data transcripts of some of the activities which judges engage in. The paper displays the limitations of rule-governed accounts of courtroom activity and should be read by anyone attempting to produce such accounts.

Part Two, 'Contemporary Contributions', is a collection of post-1980 studies. While there is no space here to comment on all five studies in this section, two may illustrate the diversity of ethnomethodological studies contained. The first of these is Gregory Matoesian's analysis of the high-profile Kennedy Smith rape trial, which was prime-time television in the United States, the data source being the video-taped testimony. While at times the analysis concerned itself with the development of conversational category types of 'repetition' at the expense of the situated interpretation of the participants, this account of the 'detailing-to-death' of evidence as a courtroom strategy produces a quality piece of conversation analysis. The second, Albert Meehan's ethnographic ethnomethodological account of text production and usage in police work, looks at the careers of documents in the production of factual accounts and the members' knowledge in the use of these documents across time and place. Not all ethnomethodological studies of law take courtroom interaction as their phenomenon and this account of events being retrospectively fitted and altered to produce an offence is a salutary warning to researchers who take documentary accounts as referring to actual phenomena. Not only does it show that officers using documents produced by other officers do not unquestioningly take them at face value, but it displays the use of their members' understanding of the context of document production in their own utilisation of them. The study of document use and production in law and beyond,

is an under-researched area in sociology and one where ethnomethodology has much to contribute.

Travers's *The Reality of Law* is an ethnomethodologically informed ethnographic study of a firm of lawyers in a Northern English city, and is an account of the 'everyday activities' of a legal practice that is seen by its staff to be 'radical'. The book itself is not claimed by Travers to be a socio-legal text as such, but a demonstration of how ethnomethodology, in its ethnographic form, 'can be applied to the study of law and legal phenomena, and to provide an insight into the sort of issues that arise for members of this tradition when pursuing a piece of empirical research' (p. xi). The book is derived from a doctoral dissertation, but is none the worse for this as it does not have pretensions of grandeur and, as a result, is a text that would be an informative read for anyone engaged in an ethnographic doctoral study since it is quite a reflexive account. The study itself employs both interviews as well as 'participant' and 'non-participant' observation accounts, successfully displaying the workings of this criminal law practice. Working well as a companion to *Law in Action*, it provides both another form of ethnomethodological study in its account of the everyday practices of the law firm and a descriptive account of the practical realities of doing the research itself. In my opinion the book could have been longer, expanding perhaps upon the particular 'version' of ethnomethodology it was based upon and relating this to other ethnographic and ethnomethodological traditions. However, this might have distracted from the aim of providing an account of particular events.

A striking feature of *Law in Action* is that none of the studies use British data, even those by British authors. While ethnomethodological studies such as Travers's *The Reality of Law* are undertaken, although few and far between, the studies presented in *Law in Action* using audio/visual recordings demonstrate the type of knowledge we lack of the British system. Although collecting much of the necessary data is problematic due to legal restrictions, a situation which I would suggest needs reviewing, ethnomethodological studies of legal activity in Britain, although restricted, are possible. Both books are welcome contributions to the literature, providing a display of the diversity of ethnomethodological possibilities for understanding and respecification of legal activity.

REFERENCES

- Garfinkel, H. 1967. *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Engelwood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
 Garfinkel, H. 1974. 'The Origins of the Term Ethnomethodology'. In R. Turner (ed.), *Ethnomethodology*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
 Garfinkel, H. and Wieder, D. L. 1992. 'Two Incommensurable, Asymmetrically Alternate Technologies of Social Analysis'. In G. Watson and R. M. Seiler (eds.), *Text in Context: Contributions to Ethnomethodology*. Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage.

University of London

K. NEIL JENKINGS

Consumption, Food and Taste: Culinary Antimonies and Commodity Culture

Alan Warde

London: Sage, 1997, £42.50 (£14.99 paperback), v + 231 pp. (ISBN 0-8039-7973-8)

Consuming Geographies: We Are Where We Eat

David Bell and Gill Valentine

London: Routledge, 1997, £55.00 (£17.99 paperback), ix + 236 pp.

(ISBN 0-415-13768-3)

In recent years there has been a burgeoning interest in the social science of food choice and eating habits. The sociology of food is a growing field, but progress within it has not been impressive. There has been a tendency to make claims for theoretical developments in the sociology of food which are over ambitious, given the meagre bases on which they rest: the few, mainly small-scale empirical studies which have been carried out, padded out with developments in social anthropology, which, though has a long pedigree in food studies, has its own concerns and perspective. Much of the input into the sociology of food has shown little respect for those economic and social structural factors with which sociology is concerned, perhaps in part because the sociology of food attracts practitioners from outside the discipline of sociology. While their interest is gratifying, it does little to advance a theoretical framework on which a sociology of food can be built.

Alan Warde's *Consumption, Food and Taste* is arguably the first mature book on the sociology of food. Based on theoretical concerns arising out of the sociology of consumption it uses food to test a number of hypotheses concerning consumption, taste and social change, while also addressing the problem of whether consumption of food is sufficiently unique to render it inappropriate for the focus of work seeking to develop or test more general theories of consumption.

In his introduction Warde sets out his theoretical concern, which is to 'reconcile the achievements of materialist and cultural analysis, which here takes the form of seeking to understand systematically the interrelationship between processes of economic production and patterns of consumption' (p. 1). Underpinned by this theoretical stance, food is used as a case study in examining the effects of social and cultural change from 1968 to 1992.

The book is in three parts: Part I reviews the literature on consumption, particularly food consumption, and taste, clarifies the theoretical jumping-off point and describes the data sources and methods to be used to test, evaluate and elaborate the theories already discussed. These sources and methods are: the contents of the food columns in a sample of British women's magazines published in 1967–68 and 1991–92, analysed as 'messengers of taste' (p. 44); the Family Expenditure Surveys of 1968 and 1988 analysed using discriminant analysis to explore patterns of social differentiation; Warde's own survey of Greater Manchester in 1990, used to examine issues of provision and preparation of food in the household.

Part II uses four antimonies 'which comprise the structural anxieties of our epoch; they are parameters of uncertainty, apt to induce feelings of guilt and unease'. These antimonies are novelty and tradition, health and indulgence, economy and extravagance, convenience and care.

Part III brings together the theoretical concerns discussed in Part I and the data analysis from Part II. In particular, Warde re-evaluates Mennell's thesis that recent changes in food consumption represents 'increased variety and diminishing contrasts' (1985). He points out the 'indeterminacy' of Mennell's work and proposes to clarify developments which Mennell leaves suspended. Warde

concludes that the majority of British households have experienced increased variation in food consumption and that, although regional and seasonal contrasts have diminished, class contrasts remain fairly constant.

The rich material and comprehensive discussion of theories of consumption are impressive and the use of four seemingly rather arbitrary antinomies to evaluate these theories is surprisingly successful. Their use seems to be more of a literary than a sociological device (note the alliteration in 'economy and extravagance', 'convenience and care') yet it facilitates the organisation of highly complex theories with analysis of various types of data and, moreover, delivers up some sophisticated insights. To summarise some very intricate discussion, Warde identifies four social forces or tendencies as significant factors in modern consumption: individualisation, 'communification', stylisation and informalisation, and found evidence that all these tendencies influenced food consumption over the period under study. He also draws attention to those characteristics peculiar to food consumption, such as its ephemeral nature, which allows the consumer to make major changes in consumption patterns from day to day, week to week or month to month. These weaken food's potential as a test case for theories of consumption generally, while food remains a perfectly valid area in which to explore them. This recognition of the uniqueness of food consumption, however, serves to strengthen the argument that food requires a sociology of its own.

Any book dealing with such a complexity of theoretical propositions using a variety of data sources and research methods is potentially a difficult read. Although Warde takes great pains to encourage accessibility by outlining the structure of the whole book in the introduction and reminds us of this rationale section by section, this work is dense and demanding of the reader. Those who have made sociology of consumption (and/or food) their life's work may not object to this but those who have an interest in the subject but are not well grounded in sociology may feel excluded. For teaching purposes this might be a problem, which would be a pity, as Warde's book is an excellent example of the potential for research which focuses on food to develop insights into consumption while tightening up food's own, specific, body of sociological theory.

Bell and Valentine's book centres on cultural analyses of food consumption. *Consuming Geographies* is a different kind of text altogether. Written in an entertaining and popularist style, Bell and Valentine's book seeks to contribute a geographical perspective to cultural studies work on food. The reader is encouraged to 'think through food'; to consider geographies of food consumption, since 'in a world in which self-identity and place-identity are woven through webs of consumption, what we eat (and where, and why) signals, as the aphorism says, who we are' (p. 3). Or, to put it more succinctly, 'you are where you eat'. (Incidentally, the adoption of this perspective contrasts with Warde's assertion that the role of commodity consumption in the formation of self-identity has been exaggerated.) These geographies of consumption can be organised according to spatial scales – the body, home, community, city, region, nation, global – and the book is organised accordingly, with a chapter on each. The material is drawn from literature from many social science disciplines, newspapers, magazines, film, television, autobiographies, and Bell and Valentine's own interview data. This last source, however, is not explained; the reader is given no information about the subjects, how they were recruited, who they represent, the purposes for which they were interviewed or the form the interviews took. These are serious omissions if the book intends to stand as a serious, academic work, and indicate a slapdash approach which is more in keeping with popular journalism than academic writing.

In the course of the book a vast array of material is drawn from, some very superficially dealt with, some in a more rigorous, scholarly fashion. This may be due to the interdisciplinary nature of the work, which perhaps necessitates covering literature from disciplines and areas with which the authors are not very familiar. However, the chapter on the home (the locality in which much

research on the sociology of food has been based), is insightful and erudite and offers useful critiques of the sociological literature on domestic food preparation and consumption.

The structuring of the book around spatial scales, although another clever literary device, is not always helpful, since some define and represent characteristics other than space. This problem arises especially in the chapters on the body and the community. Treating the body as a spatial category is uncomfortably contrived and the discussion in this chapter of the 'ideal body' and those which deviate from the ideal, class differences in patterns of consumption, and the management of 'bodily boundaries' in relation to foods is especially confusing and strained. In the 'community' chapter, the authors have to deal with the complexity of *meanings* of community, whereby membership is conferred by, for example, shared values and beliefs rather than locality, or by both. This chapter also contains annoying references to 'Britain' when they surely should have said 'England': the prevalence of VE Day and royal wedding day street parties, for example, was not a phenomenon in Scotland, yet the authors claim that *Britain* was overtaken on these occasions by celebrations in which street parties featured prominently.

There are considerable omissions in the analysis, as might be expected of a book which sets out to provoke and inspire thought rather than contribute to the body of theory in a more systematic way. The impressionistic use of material from the mass media and (presumably) their own interview data means that some claims are made without the reader being offered the benefit of conflicting arguments or competing explanations. Their assertion that the magazine *Vogue* is a 'social barometer' (p. 127) suggests that the authors are alarmingly out of touch.

There are also omissions in terms of subject matter. For example, the section on community, while devoting nearly three pages to prisons and their cultures only briefly mentions religious communities and their food cultures, while the book's organisation implies that there is nothing of cultural significance outside of the village or the city.

As an introduction to the social science of food, Bell and Valentine's *Consuming Geographies* covers extensive writing in the social science of food. Well written and very entertaining, it is also inspiring in terms of raising awareness of food as an important area of consumption. While this sociologist of food welcomes a book which encourages the study of food consumption in its social contexts, it would be a pity if the selective and rather superficial coverage of some (but by no means all) of the material in this book were to encourage such practice in social science research on food consumption.

REFERENCE

Mennell, S. 1985. *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present*. Oxford: Blackwell.

University of Edinburgh

DEBBIE KEMMER

Nurses and Doctors at Work

Deidre Wicks

Buckingham: Open University Press, 1998, £16.99 paperback, xviii + 202 pp.

(ISBN 0-335-20273-X)

In *Nurses and Doctors at Work*, Wicks sets out to re-examine the position of modern nursing, paying particular attention to the relationship between nursing and medicine. The author states that it is her intention to question the dysfunctional, blind acceptance of a division of labour that

is based upon an outdated nineteenth-century conception of appropriate master/servant gender relationships. Throughout the text, the author assumes the nurses' standpoint, working diligently to provide illustrations of nurses as agents rather than as victims. The text is both approachable and interesting, with a consideration of familiar issues, often from a novel standpoint.

Wicks begins her consideration by critically examining existing accounts of the history and present position of nursing. She points to limitations in both Marxist and feminist accounts due to a failure to take into consideration the intricacies and contradictions within everyday realities of nursing work within hospitals. The author proposes that this shortfall will be addressed by her own work. A very detailed (and lengthy) chapter then follows on the history of nursing as a basis for the subsequent analytical chapters.

In the historical chapter, Wicks challenges mainstream assumptions that modern nursing effectively began with Florence Nightingale. She states that there has regularly been an oversimplification of the role and motives of Nightingale, and asserts that five themes have emerged from the history of nursing that essentially address the segregation of medical and nursing roles. The themes of pleasure, power, conflict, skill and healing shape the analytical chapters that make up the rest of the book.

Wicks's analysis draws heavily on Giddens's theory of structuration, with an image of doctors and nurses collectively making the division of labour. The author acknowledges an existing dominant discourse in relation to nursing, but maintains both that this is incomplete in terms of its hegemonic status, and that nurses call upon different elements of the discourse to serve different purposes. In so doing, the sexual division of labour is constantly being re-made or transformed.

The analysis is limited by an over-emphasis of the agency element of Giddens's structuration thesis. Wicks is heavily critical of portrayals of nursing that present nurses as victims – either of the dominant medical powers or of their own leadership structure. The author seems reluctant, however, to consider possible structural influences on the relationship between medicine and nursing beyond those of gender. Not only did this mean that other elements within struggles over professional control are neglected (such as control over areas of knowledge, skill and work), but also the gender element is often clearly limited in terms of its application. An example is the inability of a gender-based analysis to incorporate either the experiences of male nurses or female doctors, both of which are increasingly evident within medical settings.

Wicks's alignment with the perspective of nursing allows her to consider the positive aspects of the work that are frequently neglected within considerations of the profession. Her chapter on pleasure is particularly engaging. She presents possible pleasures gained from a wide range of nursing work, from the pleasure gained from engaging in skilled work, to the intimacy involved in many tasks, and finally even touches upon possible pleasure to be gained from the sexual aspect of daily activities.

Overall, Wicks has achieved what she set out to do. She presents a positive portrayal of modern nursing, incorporating the intricacies and contradictions involved in daily work. She considers nurses as agents of their own destiny, but set this within a larger structural framework, largely concentrating on gender relations. Wicks concludes her text with a proposed radical solution – that doctors should perform nursing work as part of their training. The author hopes that this would lead to better understanding and appreciation of the different skills involved in the two areas of work. While I appreciate the proposal of possible solutions to the difficulties raised within the text, I wonder whether this particular solution would not actually reinforce the image of nursing as subservient to the dominant medical model.

Exploring Expertise: Issues and Perspectives

Robin Williams, Wendy Faulkner and James Fleck (eds.)

Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998, £45.00, xvii + 340 pp. (ISBN 0-333-63227-3)

According to the book's editors, in an emerging knowledge society, expertise is becoming a recognised 'issue' within a range of scholarly disciplines. As such, *Exploring Expertise* seeks to explore what is meant by expertise and by expert knowledge, particularly scientific and technical expertise. The book is divided into three sections, the first being an introduction outlining some of the key issues. The second section reviews different perspectives on expertise from the standpoints of economics, politics, sociology of knowledge, cognitive psychology, gender studies and artificial intelligence (AI). The accounts cover different fields of social life from different fields of social science (and beyond). The last section of the book reports on empirical studies conducted from a variety of different research traditions. Particularly interesting to sociologists are Hardstone's ethnographic study of expertise in a printing works, and Spinardi's exploration of expertise within the US nuclear weapons programme.

Such diversity presents the reader with the book's greatest strength and/or weakness. The book's economist sees expertise as a form of knowing embedded in the routines of organisational practice. The question is how to best enable and spread such knowing. For the book's psychologist the issue is how to measure the object called 'expertise' so as to better identify, cultivate and transfer it. For the feminist it is a question of showing how expertise is what powerful groups within the workplace are able to call what they 'have'. For at least one of the sociologists the question is how knowledge/expertise is transferred, via tacit learning and informal interactions. This central section of the book is rounded off with an attempt at synthesis: Fleck argues that expertise has a 'trialectic' nature, constituted by three equal and opposing forces: knowledge, power and tradability (internal stock of knowledge, basis for authority/exclusion, and 'efficiency').

What do these differing accounts offer? In the first instance, the book falls somewhat short of its aim to explore the wider social significance of expertise. With the exception of McNeil's chapter (on gender and expertise), the wider social issues surrounding expertise are dealt with in a cursory fashion. One is left to draw one's own conclusions. At what point does 'an expert' become 'an authority'? According to 'internalist' accounts of expertise as knowing, this is a legitimate question. According to 'externalist' accounts of expertise as power, the former is only ever a manifestation of the latter. This impasse, highlighted in the introduction, seems intractable. The book offers no way beyond it. Fleck only reinforces the distinction, rather than overcoming it.

A lot of disciplinary boundary setting is done by attacking the way other disciplines get things wrong. However, what this book shows, if only by default, is that instead of getting the answers wrong, different disciplines may simply be defining the question in a different way. They use the same terminology – in this case expertise – but differently. If a psychologist wants to say that an expert is someone who knows a lot, this may not be at odds with a sociologist/feminist who wants to say that an expert is simply someone able to legitimise their power. Many people have acquired high levels of problem-solving ability (the psychologist's definition of expertise). Far fewer people, by virtue of such knowing, give the kind of counsel which cannot legitimately be shunned. To use the same word (expert) to describe these two people has caused dispute. Perhaps, in line with Fleck's classification, we might talk about experts, people in authority and, thirdly, people with authority. This might avoid some confusion, but academic differences may have deeper roots.

Whether such disputes are simply turf wars between competing epistemic communities or

touch on substantive ontological questions is not answered. However, such questions were raised, at least in our minds. As such the book was a stimulating, if fractured, read. As for answers, well, we will have to leave those for the experts, or should we say authorities?

University of Plymouth

MATTHEW DAVID AND RICHARD J. CHRISTIE