SECTIONCULTURE

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Fake News. Twitter bots. Troll farms. More than ever, it seems, there is a crisis of confidence permeating the public sphere. How can we participate in discussions about matters of real concern when we have no idea if the person we are debating is even a real person? How can we discuss current events if we cannot distinguish between real and fake news? How is rational discussion possible when armies of strategic communicators navigate digital spaces looking to inflame the passions and promote polarization? What happens to social trust when politicians label as "fake news" any inconvenient information, when they question the motivation of critical journalists as well as the legitimacy of an independent press? And what can cultural sociology tell us about these questions?

A good place to start, perhaps, is Knorr-Cetina's (1999, 2005) work on epistemic cultures. In a world increasingly focused on knowledge and information, Knorr-Cetina argues, it becomes imperative to think about the different cultures in which knowledges get produced. Epistemic cultures refer to "those sets of practices, arrangements, and mechanisms bound together by necessity, affinity, and historical coincidence that, in a given area of professional expertise, make up how we know what we know" (Knorr-Cetina 2005:67). Knorr-Cetina's research demonstrates that there is a good deal of epistemic diversity in

the worlds of science, and even more epistemic diversity when we move into other worlds of knowledge and information. Rather than seeing knowledge as one component of social and political life, we need to see different arenas of social life as embodying their own distinctive epistemic cultures. From this perspective, a key issue has to do with the institutional arrangements and the social practices that develop to deal with the exchange and the processing of information that is emerging from different epistemic cultures.

In today's digital world, figuring out how to process different epistemic cultures is not nearly as straightforward as it once was. Mapping the new terrain is the central goal currently being pursued by Fuyuki Kurasawa, a cultural sociologist from Canada who currently holds the York University Research Chair in Global Digital Citizenship. In many of today's digital spaces, Kurasawa argues, the dominant epistemic cultures are shaped by the practices of the troll, who posts deliberately offensive messages designed to provoke an angry and emotional response.

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The goal of the troll is to disrupt and to polarize, not to engage in rational debate. Viewed from the epistemic culture of the troll, a serious presentation of facts is met with instant mockery. The effective response is not to provide more facts, with the hope of persuading people to change their opinion. A more effective response may be to adopt the practices of the troll, provoking the original troll into an emotional over-reaction. Of course, this strategy is not equally available to all actors. As Kurasawa shows in his preliminary research, it may be effective and available to feminist activists responding to online misogynistic harassment, but it is less available to scientists responding to climate change denialists. It is less available to journalists responding to charges that they producing "fake news", as I found in a recent study of journalism after Trump (Jacobs 2017). The deployment of a different or a new epistemic culture is less possible when the actor who is thinking about deploying it still hopes to derive expertise and professional standing from a prior one. To be sure, even within those epistemic cultures defined by science and rationality, internal critiques and alternative criteria of distinction have been circulating for some time now. Since the 1960s at least, we have witnessed repeated and influential counter-performances challenging the somber seriousness of science and scholarship in most spaces of cultural and intellectual life. In the older and more mainstream epistemic cultures, though, the counter-performer has generally confronted a discursive terrain where seriousness is signified as pure. The effect of the conflict has most often been to reinforce the sacredness of the epistemic culture that was being challenged. Matters are different in the digital spaces of today How can a scientist, an intellectual, or a journalist engage with digital soldiers trained on troll farms, without thoroughly undermining the professional expertise they have carefully built up as well as the sacred discourses of evaluation upon which their expertise depends? How can they correct mistakes and characterizations being circulated by the thousand by Twitter bots, without feeding into the very algorithms that are making the offensive tweet go viral? These are complicated challenges, and ones which are unlikely to be resolved by the extended argument of the columnist or the

scientific practices of peer review. Great as the normative and the practical challenges may be, I have every confidence that cultural sociologists will "follow the controversies", providing nuanced accounts of what is going on and compelling explanations for how things have developed the way they have, and not otherwise. There is a long tradition of sociological scholarship addressing these issues. And I look forward to reading about the research of my colleagues in the Culture Section, who no doubt are exploring these questions as well as many others.

Ron Jacobs,
Univ. at Albany, SUNY

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FOUR QUESTIONS FOR LISA MCCORMICK

Section Chair **Ron Jacobs** (Univ. at Albany, SUNY) interviews **Lisa McCormick** (University of Edinburgh), representing the new editorial team at *Cultural Sociology*

Ron Jacobs: *How did you become interested in editing* Cultural Sociology*? Please tell us about some of your own research in cultural sociology.*

Lisa McCormick: The announcement that *Cultural Sociology* was seeking new editors was made shortly after I arrived at the University of Edinburgh in September 2015. I was still unpacking my books when we started working on our proposal; our team of three [McCormick, with **Isabelle Darmon** (University of Edinburgh) and **Nick Prior** (University of Edinburgh)] formally took over in April 2016. To develop our vision for the journal, we began by reflecting on its history. When *Cultural Sociology* was first launched in 2007, it carved out a distinctive position by filling a conspicuous absence in the publishing landscape. Cultural studies scholars were well served by several publication outlets. *Theory, Culture & Society* had established itself as the journal for cultural theorists, while empirical studies of cultural production and consumption filled the pages of *Poetics*. Ten years later it is no longer the case that cultural sociologists are "conceptually homeless." Strongholds have been established on both sides of the Atlantic and *Cultural Sociology* has gained a US counterpart in 2013 with the launch of the *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*. Cultural studies is no longer the close cousin against which cultural sociology defines itself; cultural sociologists now engage with a broader range of cognate disciplines. We welcomed the challenge of navigating this exciting juncture in the journal's (and the field's) history. Two of my co-editors, Nick Prior and Isabelle Darmon, share my research interest in music, but we could not be more different in the approaches we take to this common empirical focus. Nick is known mostly for his engagements with a

Bourdieu/ANT inspired approach to music; he is currently working on a book about virtual idols (such as Hatsune Miku, the first "crowd-sourced celebrity") that will draw on the concept of assemblage to explore questions of representation, the body, vocality and participatory culture. Isabelle, in addition to her interest in music, does research in the sociology of food, the environment and sustainability, and classical social theory. She combined all these in a recent project on the orders of flavours and sounds; drawing on Weber, she considers how the dynamics of capitalism influence culinary and musical domains of practice. My work on music is informed by the strong program in cultural sociology. This influence is most apparent in the performance perspective I developed through my work on international classical music competitions, and it continues to shape my research on symphonic diplomacy after the Cold War and the use of music at funerals. Our new co-editor, **Angélica Thumala** (Edinburgh University), is the only member of the team who is not a sociologist of music of some description. She brings an expertise in the sociology of religion, consumption, elites and reading. She is currently working on a project about the personal and political significance of reading in Latin America and the UK.

RJ: What do you see as some of the key points of similarity and difference when comparing cultural sociology in the UK and the US?

LM: The biggest difference is that cultural sociology has a more distinct identity in the US than in the UK. One contributing factor is the ASA Culture Section; there is no counterpart in the BSA, which means that cultural sociologists are scattered across several research "streams". Another contributing factor is the tension between "cultural sociologists" and "sociologists of culture" in American sociology. This has raised the intellectual stakes and prevented a stagnant consensus from taking hold concerning the field's self-definition. A related difference is that cultural sociology has never been considered a "fringe" area in British sociology, as it was in the US. The sociological study of cultural forms and processes has long existed in some shape or form; British sociology escaped the "Parsons effect" and therefore never had to rehabilitate the culture concept. As a result, British sociologists adopt this identifier much more casually and without much adjustment in the approach or substance of their work. Regarding substance, research on the arts (music, literature, visual art, etc.) is much more prominent in the British context.

The most obvious points of similarity are the enduring influence of Bourdieu and the considerable empirical research activity based on extending and refining Peterson's "omnivore thesis".

RJ: Your journal is one of the key sites organizing an international community of cultural sociologists, and yet it is also an official journal of the British Sociological Association. What kinds of things do you do to manage these two somewhat different missions of the journal?

LM: *Cultural Sociology* is undoubtedly more than a journal for British scholars writing on British topics. Take for example our most recent issue ([Vol 12 No 1](#)): authors are drawn from an impressive range of international institutions – Switzerland, Australia, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark and South Korea – writing on a range of topics from the international scene. In addition to welcoming a diverse authorship, we have developed several strategies to cultivate our international reach and appeal. For example, we have introduced occasional "regional spotlights", which offer perspectives on cultural sociological traditions, fields and scenes around the world. The inaugural article ([Vol 11 No 4](#)) by **Dmitry Kurakin** offered an intellectual history of the causes and consequences of the "missed cultural turn" in the Soviet Union and Russia. Future "regional spotlight articles" will further illuminate how cultural sociology has taken root and flourished beyond the Anglophone context.

Another mechanism of internationalisation is the composition of the editorial board, whose influence

is also reflected in the pages of the journal. We were delighted when **Professor Lyn Spillman** (University of Notre Dame) agreed to serve as the American editor, and this year we welcomed **Dr. Daniel Muriel** (University of Deusto, Spain) as the new European book reviews editor. Professor Spillman is ensuring that our book reviews section includes reviews of important recent monographs in American cultural sociology, while Dr. Muriel will commission reviews of significant publications that are not yet available in English. Our new co-editor, Angélica Thumala, will also be an asset in this respect thanks to her fluency in the Spanish language, and her continuing affiliations with the World Bank and the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile. Angélica will oversee "regional spotlights" about Latin America. Between the editors we have language competency in several additional languages, including French, Swedish and Japanese.

At the same time, we never lose sight of the journal's established reputation and role in promoting British sociology. Our main activities in this vein include participating in conferences and sponsoring events. We regularly contribute to professional development sessions on academic publishing organised by the BSA. At the 2017 BSA annual meeting in Manchester, we marked the journal's tenth anniversary by hosting a panel on "Cultural Sociology and Contemporary Capitalism" (the video podcast is available on our [website](#)). We have also organised a panel for the forthcoming European Sociological Association Midterm conference, when the research networks on the Sociology of Art and the Sociology of Culture will congregate in Malta. The panelists, who are all recent contributors to the journal (and UK-based academics), will cast light on the economic, political, social and cultural ambivalences of "heritage" in British coastal towns and cities. In October 2018, the journal will co-sponsor a symposium in London on cultural trauma organised by two of our editorial board members, **Kate Nash** (Goldsmiths, UK) and **Eric Woods** (University of East London, UK). Finally, we have enhanced the journal's social media presence by introducing a Twitter feed. In addition to drawing attention to OnlineFirst articles and new issues, we have been "live tweeting" from conferences and events to generate discussion.

RJ: *What are some of the recent debates and special issues that you have organized in your journal that you found to be particularly exciting? What future plans do you have for special issues in the journal?*

LM: We could not have chosen better timing for publishing the special issue that came out last year on "Producing and Consuming Inequality: A Cultural Sociology of the Cultural Industries" (Vol 11, No 3, guest edited by **Dave O'Brien**, **Kim Allen, Sam Friedman** and **Anamik Saha**). Since it was published in June 2017, public concern about race, gender and class discrimination in the creative professions has only increased. In addition to its topicality, we are also pleased to see that the special issue has engaged the interest of scholars working on this topic in related disciplines, such as cultural policy and cultural economics. We hope that this will help to secure sociology's place in research on a topic that was increasingly being considered the domain of media studies, cultural studies and business management.

More special issues are planned. This year we are publishing an issue on "DIY Music" guest edited by **Andy Bennett** (Griffith University, Australia) that will feature both theoretical articles and empirical research on musicians' careers in Austria, Italy, China and Taiwan. We are also preparing a special issue on "Artification" guest edited by **Roberta Shapiro** (EHESS, Paris), which will include an article by Diana Crane (University of Pennsylvania). Later, **Jason Mast** (University of Warwick, UK) and **Erik Ringmar** (Lund University, Sweden) will be guest editors for a special issue on "Cultural Sociology and the Cognitive Neurosciences."

As can be seen from the above, there is much going on in the journal *Cultural Sociology*, which reflects the vitality of our field. My fellow editors and I extend a warm welcome to share with us your thoughts, ideas, research and questions.

Culture Program Profile

University of Texas, Austin's Urban Ethnography Lab

Nino Bariola
Katherine Sobering
Javier Auyero
University of Texas, Austin

Ethan works at a luxury hotel in downtown Austin, Texas that caters to the 1%—elites and celebrities that visit for the South by Southwest music festival, the Formula One races, and other mega events. His job isn't by any means unimportant for the reproduction of the social order of Austin's "new urban economy." Yet handling the instability, meager wages, stress and emotional labor demanded by his job takes a toll: "We [service workers] are the genuine junkies…" Ethan explains. "Waiting tables and working in hospitality is very, very stressful and demanding, you know? And so all that fuels the fire." The comparative benefits of luxury hospitality work do little to address his social suffering. As **Katherine Sobering**, a Graduate Fellow of the Urban Ethnography Lab, reveals, Ethan also struggles with addiction, which he explains as "a product of the [service] industry."

Sobering is part of the group of graduate students who wrote [Invisible in Austin: Life and Labor in an American City](#) with professor **Javier Auyero**. The book portrays the life stories of people like Ethan who struggle with precarity as Austin consolidates into a "creative city," a trendy hub for technology and finance. While sociologists have produced excellent accounts of "objective" inequalities in changing urban contexts, "We are on less certain terrain when it comes to understanding the many ways in which individuals, alone or in groups, make sense of and cope with these inequalities," argues Auyero. "These experiences matter because they oftentimes do the cultural work necessary to perpetuate the social order, but at other times they serve as the basis for challenging it."

Invisible in Austin is the first project of the [Urban Ethnography Lab](#) at the University of Texas at Austin. Discussions and debates that started in one of Auyero's graduate seminars transformed into a collective project, and eventually, a collaborative book. In one of the [journal articles](#) about the project, **Caitlyn Collins** (now an assistant professor at Washington University, St. Louis), UT graduate student **Katherine Jensen**, and Auyero explain, "the book sought to intervene in the local public sphere by shedding sociological light on the sources and forms of affliction and on the manifold ways in which inequalities are lived and experienced on a daily basis." Exemplary of the potential of public sociology, the book today is widely utilized as a learning material in high schools and college classrooms to teach about the often hidden and sometimes forgotten social problems associated with the so-called "creative class" and growth of "new urban economies."

Housed in UT's Sociology Department, the Urban Ethnography Lab has been a stronghold of ethnographic and qualitative research since its inception in 2012, organizing and sponsoring conferences and talks with leading scholars and providing graduate student fellows with guidance, resources, and space for individual and collective scholarly creation. Of note are regular workshops like the biweekly brown bags where students and faculty present their work. As Invisible in Austin shows, many fellows and faculty affiliates are invested in the study of cultural dynamics and particularly how social inequalities in terms of class, race, and gender are (re)produced, legitimized, or challenged via cultural work.

The Lab brings together a growing number of faculty who use ethnographic methods. **Christine Williams'** recent work explores [gender inequality](#) and diversity culture in the oil and gas industry, and her previous and widely-cited book, [Inside Toyland](#), inspects low-wage retail work to expose how the social inequalities of gender, race, and class inequalities are embedded within consumer culture. **Sharmila Rudrappa's** book, [Discounted](#)

Life, is a fascinating account of the cultural politics of exchange in transnational surrogacy. **Gloria González-López**'s book unveils the intricate cultures of gender inequality as well as the social organization of secrets and silence that enable incest and sexual violence in contemporary Mexican families. **Harel Shapira**—who leads one of the seminars on ethnographic methods—currently studies gun culture in the U.S. **Sarah Brayne**'s work examines the use of "big data" within the criminal justice system, and particularly how the adoption of predictive analytics is changing views and practices of surveillance in law enforcement organizations. **Daniel Fridman's** research looks at the intersections of culture and the economy in his book, Freedom from Work, which explores the social world of financial self-help in Argentina and the U.S.

Graduate student fellows carry out qualitative and ethnographic research across the globe, from Brazil and Peru to India, Nepal, Sweden, and the U.S. They are developing innovative research questions, including: "What are human rights organizations doing to get social media taken more seriously in courts?" (**Anna V. Banchik**); "How do 'bad jobs' become legitimized as 'cool' and 'crafty' occupations in the Peruvian culinary field? (**Nino Bariola**); "How do people working in the gig economy conceive of work and choice?" (**Kathy Hill**); "How do micro-level interactions within a family unit influence whether these individuals choose to utilize formal care services for their elderly family members?" (**Corey J. McZeal**); "How do Chinese rural residents who stay in migrant-origin communities continue to support urban migration even if economic returns from migrant workers become increasingly small and unpredictable?" (**Ruijie Peng**); "How are

stereotypes about cannabis dealers reconfigured during legalization?" (**Katherine K. Rogers**); "How has Japan's political crisis after the nuclear disaster in 2011 set the stage for emerging anti-racism politics? (**Vivian Shaw**); "How do Tunisian women's groups protect their existing (secular) rights during an Islamist-led transition to democracy?" (**Maro Youssef**).

The culture of intellectual collaboration and support continues today. Most recently, Auyero and a new group of graduate fellows are studying the political culture of the working class in Texas. Teams of graduate students conducted fieldwork in five Texas towns experiencing drastic economic, socio-political, and environmental transformations to examine how communities cope with and make political sense of inequalities. The group is now extending the model of Invisible in Austin to use the qualitative data they collected to write a book that will richly describe and theorize political culture in everyday life.

In the Urban Ethnography Lab, the craft of sociology is undertaken collectively and horizontally through the sharing ideas, field notes, proposals, and papers. It is a place where students and faculty come together to provide, as Loïc Wacquant accurately captures, the "mutual support and crisscrossing control at multiple stages [to] help each [other] to fashion a better research object than would have been possible on one's own…" As messy as ethnographic research may appear from the outside, at UT Austin, cohorts of sociologists now have a space to learn what it takes to produce rigorous ethnographic research in both theory and practice.

Culture and Theory... again

Monika Krause
Goldsmiths College

Isaac Ariail Reed
University of Virginia

Claudio Benzecry
Northwestern University

To discuss a book like Social Theory Now (University of Chicago Press) in the newsletter of the ASA Section on the Sociology of Culture is to raise once **MORE** the question of the relationship between social theory and the sociology of culture—a question, which Michèle Lamont so productively raised in the newsletter of the theory section when she was chair of that section in 2004.

Biographically, like many colleagues of our generation, we, the editors, feel described by Lamont's observation then that "a number of young sociologists interested in theory may have come to define themselves primarily as cultural sociologists, perhaps because this field allowed them to pursue theoretical interests within a context more favorable to empirical research, and without having to deal with old theoretical dichotomies that have come to appear increasingly obsolete (e.g., between micro/macro, symbols/ structure, objective/subjective, etc.)" (Lamont 2004:16).

Yet there is a deeper—dare we say, "theoretical"—affinity between social theory and the sociology of culture. We make the case in framing the book, that if theory holds together as a conversation despite continuing fragmentation, it is through a shared engagement with question of order, of practice, of meaning and of materiality. The last three (and to a lesser extent the first) have at the same time also been the core concerns of

conceptual and empirical work on culture in the last decades.

We put together an edited volume of individual contributions, which speak about and for theoretical traditions that we have identified as distinctive. One could imagine sketching a map of the relationship between the individual traditions represented in *Social Theory Now*, and the notion of and research on "culture." We think this would be a fruitful exercise, which might reveal, for example, that while recently some sociologists of culture in the U.S. have fallen in love with science and technology studies, and to some extent with actor-network theory, actor-network theory often avoids the term culture. ANT argues that when we describe technology, markets, or nature as political socio-material forms, calling the political "culture" adds relatively little. On the other hand, while work on gender and sexuality has long felt an affinity with the notion of culture, some feminists would argue that culture has not loved gender back in the same way.

In short: it's complicated. But we are excited that so many of our colleagues seem ready to have these arguments, and to engage in the necessary work of conceptual development. For this, we are grateful.

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SOCIAL THEORY TOMORROW: A COLLABORATIVE MINIATURISM PROPOSAL

Omar Lizardo
University of Notre Dame

Benzecry, Krause and Reed's (*BKR*) *Social Theory Now* (*Now*) is as much of an accomplishment as advertised by blurbers in the book back cover (you'd be surprised to find that sometimes this is not the case). Faced with the herculean (and unenviable) task of taking a snapshot of the increasingly amorphous and evolving entity called "social theory" at this moment, I believe the authors have largely accomplished this task. This is made more impressive because the editors are of a still young institutional age. The book massively succeeds in its task of serving as a contemporary replacement (for both purposes of pedagogy and reflection) of the "green book" from the 1980s (*Today*).
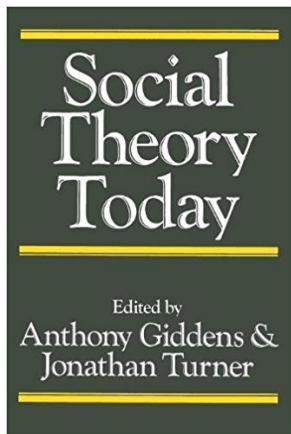
However, in what follows I must set further pleasantries aside, to focus on the mandate laid out by one of co-editors (*K*): To assess the extent to which *BKR* have identified the "core questions and concerns" that "hold the conversation together." I was also tasked with assessing whether the authors have identified the "most distinctive traditions in the current landscape which engage these questions." Finally, I was asked to point to anything that BKR might have "missed" and note what I would have done differently.

I will begin by noting what I think the authors got right. The main thing, and I believe this is where *BKR*'s institutional youth worked well for them, is that the book is devoid of the "is sociology *really* a science" epistemological hand-wringing that weighed down previous efforts (including *Today*).

This "woe is sociology" discourse (usually in relation to some ahistorical caricature of physics, biology, economics, etc.) is both boring and likely to be more reflective of the status anxieties of aging male scholars than any conversation worth having. Second, I think *BKR* did as good of a job as possible of both dealing with the perilous "social" versus "sociological" theory distinction and of partitioning the current landscape of "schools" or "traditions."

One surprising observation is how little things have changed in this respect. If you take out two of the "theory outside of sociology" chapters (e.g. on feminist and postcolonial theory), the current book has a chapter of (mostly Luhmannian) "systems theory" (*Today* had a chapter on Parsonian systems theory); both *Now* and *Today* share chapters on structuralism/post-structuralism and World Systems Theory; *Now* has a microsociology chapter and *Today* had chapters in symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology. Even some "new" theoretical traditions included (e.g. Network Theory, Sociology of Conventions, and Actor-Network Theory) are packaged in the old "theory school" format that dominated *Today.*

I believe this is a weakness of *Now*, but it has nothing to do with faulty judgment by *BKR* or deficiencies with the work of the relevant chapter authors (in fact these are some of best chapters in the volume). Instead, this is actually a feature (and a weakness) of "really existing" social theory today. So if this reflected in the volume, it means that BKR did their job.

However, as I've argued elsewhere (2014), I believe the theory school format is a faulty, "hysterectical" feature of a theory field in flux: A mode of organization and a style of "primitive classification" that befitted an earlier state of the theory field but that it is increasingly obsolete now. The strains of the theory school approach are most clear in the (superb) chapters on Actor-Network Theory and the Sociology of Conventions, where the authors, despite their great erudition and lively writing, struggle to cobble together into theory schools a heterogeneous assemblage of French authors, none of whom are conventional "big men" (sic) theorists nor have developed conventional

theory schools. Instead, a few aspiring "classic" texts are recruited for this purpose but the effort falls flat.

I also argued (2014) that the only way to get the theory field moving forward was precisely to move away from theory schools and/or French (or German) theory saviors and toward sustained theorizing around core sociological "problematics." It is significant that it is here that one can identify *Now*'s core tension. It is almost as if *BKR* are grasping at the opening offered by the fluctuating theory field, but are being held back by rigid inertial forces of the dying theory school mold. Hence the hybrid "core questions" embedded in "traditions." But here the dead letter of the latter are weighing down the liveliness of the former.

The result is that *most* of the content of *Now* is taken up either with reviewing old (bona fide) traditions, or with the performative attempt to create traditions from work written by European scholars after 1980s. So my main criticism here is that unfortunately, the balance of "dead" over "living" theoretical labor (Lizardo 2014) (DTL and LTL), is way too skewed in favor of the former. For instance, one of the great ironies of *Now* is that the book contains relatively little theory work that would reflect the LTL style of theorizing of two of its blurbers (Abend and Swedberg).

Yet, there are whole contributions (and within some theory school chapters subsections) where one can see *LTL* (or "theorizing" in Swedberg's (2017) terms) come back up for air. Two of these chapters are written by the editors (*K* and *R*).

In Reed's chapter on culture, one sees little review of DTL. Instead, Reed tackles core definitional (what is culture not?) and analytical questions (e.g. the location of culture, the specificity of cultural explanation, the role of interpretation, etc.). The same can be said for Krause's chapters of fields, where after a brief review of DTL, we are immediately led to analytic issues of field location, scope, field-identification, autonomy and symbolic structure. Erikson's chapter of formalism and relationalism in network analysis contains its share of DTL, but also grapples with important analytic issues of the definition of social relationships, the extent to which we can say relations are "constitutive" of anything, and the role of networks and culture. Ermakoff's chapter is almost entirely composed of LTL and deals with fundamental features of what a "rational choice" explanation comprises and in what contexts it is most fruitful. Even Gross and Hyde's chapter, while containing its full complement of pragmatist DTL, also features some really creative ways of using the notion of imagery to rethink the process of norm conception and norm following.

So, appropriate for a field in flux, and to continue with the Marxian analogies, the core tension of *Now* is that the old theory school relations of production seem to have come into conflict with the new mode of theory production. While at some point (in the 1980s) the theory school framework was an aid to the labor of theorizing, it has now turned into its fetters. So if the dialectics point in the right direction, we may be on the cusp of a social theory revolution, where the new mode of theorizing bursts asunder the theory school fetters. But, as with the core contradiction in Marxism, we should not be caught just waiting for the forces of theoretical history to make it happen. So, with a full understanding of the irony of making future predictions after using Marxian analogies, I identify two things I think point to what theory may look like *tomorrow*.

One is already featured on the parts of *Now* that feature LTL, and this is that rather than listening to *BKR* (or *BKR* listening to their own introduction) and focusing on "grand" questions (social order, epochal change, etc.). The best theorizing in *Now* deals with *delimited* analytical problems (e.g. the "location" of culture). These questions are actually no less grand for being circumscribed; in fact, the better theorizing is made possible precisely because of that feature.

The other one is one that is not reflected in *Now* but which I hope a future volume will. For, while

BKR rectified the fact that the green book was more like a manbook, they reproduced what I think is an equally retrogressive feature of theory work: With two exceptions, every chapter is written by a lone author who valiantly, but solitarily, wrestles with the issues.

But I believe some of the best theorizing tomorrow will be done via collaborative ensembles of human (sociologists) and technological (Google Docs) actants (for a—biased—sampling of such theorizing today see McDonnell, Bail and Tavory (2017) and Wood et al. (2018)). For producing good LTL, two, three, four, or even five heads are better than one. In this respect, the humanistic model of the lone armchair theorist lost in thought is as obsolete as the social organization of theory schools centered on such (usually old, male, and white) theorists. If there will be a *Social Theory Tomorrow*, I propose that it combines these last two aforementioned qualities and takes the form of a *collaborative miniaturism*. Multiple heads collaborating in real-time on a web platform tackling targeted analytical problems.

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THE STAKES OF SOCIAL THEORY

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The intellectual and institutional landscape of sociological theory has changed dramatically in the two decades between the publication of *Social Theory Today* and its successor, *Social Theory Now*. In the introduction to *Social Theory Now*, editors Claudio Benzecry, Monica Krause, and Isaac Reed describe two major changes. First, sociologists are currently not the sole exporters of social theory. Some of the most cutting-edge and innovative theorizing is coming out of ethnic studies, science and technology studies, communications, and gender and sexuality studies, among other sites. Second, the triumph of post-positivism—and its many faces—has called into question the pursuit, if not possibility, of universal knowledge. Thus, sociology today can neither make sole claim to social theory nor presume or privilege a single standpoint on the social. Given these changes and growing intellectual fragmentation, does anything hold contemporary social theory together?

In their view, contemporary social theory may not exhibit much consensus or agreement over "first-order" issues but does show "some coherence around some second-order assumptions on what might be worth disagreeing about" (p. 2). Benzecry, Krause, and Reed organize the book around four such assumptions or themes: order, meaning, materiality, and practice. Along with these, they add two cross-cutting concerns: epistemology and history. But even though these themes and concerns appear to offer some connective tissue across diverse substantive and conceptual terrain, their answer is conditional; they recognize and remind that sustaining and generating shared questions and concerns, especially in times of dispersion and hyper-specialization, requires work. In short, the answer they give to the above question is a conditional yes.

Social Theory Now aspires to inspire more conversation—dialogue and debate—across theoretical approaches. Interestingly enough, most of the individual chapters focus exclusively on a particular tradition. Many readers will likely seek out specific chapters. For instance, those interested in network theory will turn to Emily Erikson's chapter and those concerned with the current utility of world-systems theory will seek out Ho-Fung Hung's contribution. Yet, although each of the chapters stand alone, they can and should be read together. It is only when set against each other, as the editors intend, do the similarities, differences, and stakes become evident.

Take, for example, the question of materiality, which appears in diverse ways—subtle and explicit—across several chapters, whether in discussion of the body and embodiment in Dorit Geva's chapter on gender and Claire Decoteau's chapter on post-structuralism, or in discussion of material objects in Javier Lezaun's chapter on actor-network theory and Claudio Benzecry and Daniel Winchester's chapter on microsociology. A diverse set of questions about materiality emerge from these chapters, such as how are elements of the physical world (e.g., bodies, cocktails, and audits) made discursively and emotionally meaningful, how are they constituted and configured in time and space, and how and under what conditions do they exercise agency? In this way, the book accomplishes its primary goal, namely, to facilitate dialogue across distinct approaches. Yet, as I read the book and reflected on the intellectual-normative aims of its editors, I think there are several tensions that deserve further discussion. Briefly, I'd like to flag three.

The first has to do with reflexivity, by which I mean the recognition that social theories, like all knowledge, are socially and historically situated. The chapters of *Social Theory Now* vary widely in their thematization of reflexivity. Among those that do, and do so most explicitly, are Dorit Geva and Julian Go's respective chapters. In her chapter, Geva charges that Northern feminist theory has largely failed to interrogate its "first principles," particularly what Geva describes as its "metaphysics of embodiment." Go argues for a

postcolonial sociology that examines and confronts the discipline's colonial unconsciousness. These authors call for sociologists to interrogate our conceptual categories, analytic operations, and substantive problems. This emphasis on the *conditionality* of social theory contrasts with chapters—the majority of the book—that imply or insist on the reach of social theories and concepts. The editors of the volume note that reach is what distinguishes "theories" from "topics." Neil Gross and Zachary Hyde's chapter, for example, does not take up the kinds of inward-facing inspection found in Geva and Go's chapters. It proposes an alternative (and I think generative) conception of norms based on mental images. Although the chapter traces the intellectual history of norms, the value and scope of their intervention is not located sociohistorically. Thus other ambitions, besides reflexive self-interrogation, animate most of the volume's contributions. For instance, Monica Krause's chapter sets out to clarify and extend the purchase of the concept of fields. It does not aim to ground the concept historically or politically. I do not raise this to prescribe or endorse a particular engagement with reflexivity, but rather to point out that there is little consensus on how—and to what extent—this epistemic stance should inform the discourse and doing of social theory now. There remains a tension between the rejection of what the philosopher of science Donna Haraway memorably characterized as the "the god trick of seeing everything from nowhere" and the search for theories and concepts that are, to some degree, transcendent.

Another tension I found in the book pertains to the normative stakes of social theory, particularly regarding social critique and social change. What is sociology good for, besides sociology? This is an old (and, for some, perhaps tired) question, one that resonates with, but is not reducible to the previous point on reflexivity. By and large, the contributions of *Social Theory Now*—as we should expect—stress the intellectual value of discussed theories and traditions. However, some chapters, a minority of them, do address the critical edge of social theory, particularly its capacity to challenge received wisdoms and the apparent naturalness of existing social relations and conditions. This is

evident, for instance, in Jörg Potthast's discussion of the "sociology of conventions and testing." Potthast argues that the sociology of conventions, inaugurated by Boltanki and Thévenot, has been taken up without its most critical and original aspect: testing. Given the hegemony of rankings, audits and evaluations, Potthast contends that the study of testing is essential for understanding the present. But social critique, as captured within this volume, is not limited to diagnostics, that is, an account of what is. It can also be prognostic. In his chapter on systems theory, Dirk Baecker argues that this tradition can help "describe the ecology of the next society" (p. 219). Drawing inspiration from Boltanski's challenge to "critical sociology," Baecker claims that criticism offers a "means to open the space for indeterminate alternative possibilities, which act like a mirror for actualities that are already determined" (p. 220). Recent work in and around actor-network theory (ANT) has begun entertain not only the envisioning of new worlds, but their material enactment. As Lezuan discusses, the past two decades has witnessed ANT shift away from its earlier "antinormative" stance and towards a willingness to make "normative discriminations." These chapters elaborate a broader understanding of the stakes of social theory. Efforts to combat fragmentation and to build communicative space on the terrain of theory will have to deal with and validate those that exceed purely intellectual or academic considerations.

The final tension I'd like to highlight has do with the relationship between social theory originating in sociology and social theory emanating from elsewhere. By adopting the label "social theory," the editors of the volume wish to not "draw a boundary between sociological theory and social theory" (p. 7). But, as they acknowledge, the majority of contributors are sociologists, by training and/or appointment. Consequently, most chapters are situated squarely within the sociological tradition and speak directly to sociological theorists. For instance, Isaac Reed's chapter strives to get at "what is at stake in the very idea of cultural sociology." Though Reed draws from a wide well-spring of cultural theory (e.g. Saussure, Geertz), the audience and primary interlocutors are in sociology. Some chapters engage in significant translation work, aimed at rendering non-sociological work legible to sociologists, such as in Go's and Decoteau's chapters. Among the exceptions to this focus on sociology is Ivan Ermakoff's chapter on rational choice theory, which seems written to social scientists, writ large. In this context, what does it mean to collapse the distinction between "social" and "sociological" theory? What are the implications of this move for how sociology relates and engages other, more interdisciplinary sites of social theory? The lines separating some of these sites are blurring, such as with science and technology studies, but remain quite strong in others, such as ethnic studies. The picture becomes even more complicated in light of the fact that, as the volume's editors note, sociologists themselves are increasingly working in non-sociology departments and interdisciplinary fields.

To conclude, *Social Theory Now* deserves wide readership, not only for the top-rate substance of its chapters, but also for the reflection it stimulates on themes and tensions that animate contemporary social and sociological theory.

SOCIAL THEORY NOW REVIEW

Robin Wagner-Pacifici
New School for Social Research

The invitation to contribute to the Culture Section Newsletter's symposium on *Social Theory Now* included the following prompt "[W]hat do you think are the questions that hold the conversation together (if at all), what do you think are the most distinctive approaches? what did we leave out? or what else did we miss?" These questions ignited the discourse analyst in me, and I set about to discern common themes running through and across the 13 chapters (and Introduction) of this important and (re)foundational volume of essays on the state of social theory now. Further, as an analyst of ruptures and breakdowns and interstices, I was also interested in discovering if and how the

authors locate social theory's thematic fault-lines and vicissitudes. That parenthesis in the prompt "(if at all)" regarding the possibility that the conversation about social theory may *not* actually be held together by certain core questions caught my hermeneutic attention. Why *should* our questions about social theory be held together by common concerns? What is at stake if the questions fly off into different directions? Might the social be understood so differently by different theoretical approaches that it loses its ability to provide conceptual grounding for a discipline like sociology or loses its ability to be meaningful? Well, the short answer, for this reader, is that this collection both illuminates the often radically, sometimes diametrically, distinct ways that the social is understood by social theory now and provides a reaffirmation of the core themes that hold it—and us—together (even with an ultimate uncertainty about its questions and its very nature). And that uncertainty is what holds us together. Let me explain.

At first glance, each chapter in *Social Theory Now* takes up either a different substantive focus (globalizing gender, world capitalism, the postcolonial, fields) or an analytical approach (microsociology, rational choice, systems theory, poststructuralism, actor-network theory). But it quickly becomes clear that this distinction is illusory—the substantive chapters are as much about analytical approaches as the analytical chapters are about substantive entities and identities. For example, while Dorit Geva's "Globalizing Gender" chapter explicitly describes contemporary theories of the body, sexuality, and gender, an exquisitely relevant mobilizing scene of gender-making in Claudio Benzecry and Daniel Winchester's "Varieties of Microsociology" chapter, in which a woman in a bar refuses a drink proffered by a male stranger, ends up drawing gender through multiple theoretical approaches to the social throughout the book. As well, Julian Go's chapter on "Postcolonial Thought as Social Theory," makes a strong case for thinking about the "postcolonial" as less an essential identity and more of an interdependent relationship and goes on to reconfigure postcolonial theory itself as "postcolonial relationalism."

So if the substantive/analytical approach distinction doesn't grasp the structural outlines of the book, what reading might be more illuminating? My proposal is to read the book thematically, to ask which common themes move through the different chapters and, in them, take on different values and valences. Here then, are some themes of contemporary social theorizing that stand out, and that created "ah ha" moments of enlightenment (and uncertainty) for me, in *Social Theory Now*.

My first theme is one I would characterize as *relationality as substance*, already indicated above in reference to the postcolonial. This theme appears in connection to relationality at the macro-level (among capitalism, hegemony, and empire in Ho-Fung Hung's chapter on "World Capitalism, World Hegemony, World Empires"), in connection to relationality at the middle range levels of *fields* (Monika Krause notes (p. 220) that: "field theory tends to conceive of its objects relationally, that is, the focus is on relationships, not on entities," in "The Patterns in Between: "Field" as a Conceptual Variable,"), *networks* (Emily Erikson devotes a good part of her chapter, "Networks and Network Theory" to relationalism, noting that; (p. 280) "it is through relations (which may be considered interactions or transactions) that those objects of analysis that we recognize as units (be they people, organizations, or nations) take on recognizable properties"), and *systems* (Dirk Baecker's analysis of "Systems in Social Theory" specifies that: "systems in social theory define meaning by relative and reflective differences, not by essential or substantial identities" p. 202). It goes without saying that relationality and intersubjectivity is at the heart of multiple strands of micro-sociology detailed in the book (phenomenology, ethnomethodology, dramaturgy). While alternatives to relationalism(s)' apparent hold on contemporary social theorizing do appear in the book—for example a Simmelian-inspired formalism of à priori structures and forms—even they are presented as ultimately map-able onto multiple structural orderings of dualities (à la Ronald Breiger's foundational writings on duality of persons and groups). Here, as for so many of the

social theorizing themes, it all depends on one's angle of theoretical vision.

My second identified theme can be alternately understood as the *nature and role of situations,* or as the *nature and role of contexts* (with necessary caveats about collapsing the concepts of situation and context, they do seem to be conceptual cognates in much of social theorizing). Are situations and contexts the sites for interactions, for system bounding, for meaning making? Are there any extra-situational social lives or interactions? Are situations, rather than the individual agent or the collective society, the ground zero for theorizing the social? Opinions on these questions vary. Nevertheless, situations are a recurring focus and several characterizations and outright definitions of situation are offered in the book. For example, Ivan Ermakoff defines situations as: "dynamic configurations of relations shaping incentives and informing actors' understandings of their options," (p. 175) in his chapter "On the Frontiers of Rational Choice." The dynamic—and disruptive—nature of situations and their relevant relations is highlighted in this chapter as posing one, among several, problems for the rational choice approach. The more controversial the better, it might seem, for other theoretical approaches, viz. in Jorg Potthast's discussion of "The Sociology of Conventions and Testing," and its general preoccupation with situated legitimations, he writes (p. 350): "It is by observing how objects are brought to controversial situations that different configurations of testing may be distinguished." Of course, people don't just find objects in, or bring objects to situations. They also bring norms and images, images that "might be rendered relevant for contemplating concrete situations," (p. 378) according to Neil Gross and Zachary Hyde in their chapter on "Norms and Mental Images." While the focus in this chapter is on the underappreciated role of images and the aesthetics in social theorizing (and I adamantly agree), this aspect of the analysis raises the theme of temporality of situations and the degree to which they operate in the present and the degree to which they pull in the past and the future. And this is one theme that is rather under-examined in the collection of essays. I would have appreciated more explicit reflection on

contemporary theorizing of temporality, projectivity, memory, and events. Nevertheless, Dirk Baecker's systems approach to situations incorporates a fascinating temporal element when he writes that social systems: "gain their individual peculiarity from so-called 'residues' which are logical or nonlogical derivations from earlier situations awaiting, so to speak, their bearing on a new situation. Residues make sure that with respect to human beings' participation, no social situation is ever in control of its own conditions" (p. 206). There's an interesting convergence here with micro-analytical social theory when, referring to the work of Gary Alan Fine, Benzecry and Winchester note that for him, "situations are not enough, as they ignore the sedimented history and the collective understanding of action beyond the immediate context" (p. 55). Thus do contexts expand and contract, in time and in space, and depending on the angle and motivation of analytical or practical approach. It is in considering the oscillation and meanings of contexts of action and interpretation that Isaac Reed, in his chapter, "On the Very Idea of Cultural Sociology," proposes a critical role for a hermeneutic cultural sociology in contextualizing seemingly acultural acts of, for example, economic exchange or eye twitching.

My final found theme is that of *uncertainty and ambiguity*. Uncertainty and ambiguity are everywhere in social theory now. They are at the heart of the sociology of testing according to Jorg Potthast who declares that that approach posits the "fundamental uncertainty of social interaction" (p. 345). It is at the heart of much of systems' approaches to social theory, according to Dirk Baecker, who writes: "dealing with systems means dealing with issues of ambiguous or equivocal communication" (p. 201). It even lives in the apparently ambiguity-antithetical world of rational choice theory, according to Ivan Ermakoff who notes that: "Goal ambiguity is more than likely when the decision problem involves multiple types of outcomes and when the actor views these types as incommensurable" (p. 179). More explicitly edgy social theoretical paradigms like poststructuralism and actor-network theory explicitly highlight the role that uncertainty and ambiguity play in their worlds. Claire Laurier

Decoteau's chapter, "Poststructuralism Today," asserts poststructuralism's rallying cry that meaning is always relative, multiplicities and play (rather than binaries) deconstruct hierarchies and established systems of power, and structures and systems of meaning are always historically contingent. Finally, Javier Lezaun's chapter on "Actor-Network Theory" pivots around the concept of "device": "understood, in the Deleuzian sense, as a tangle or ensemble of heterogeneous elements that creates a particular sort of order (or sedimentation) while opening up trajectories of resistance and flight (or creativity)" (p. 315).

As I suggested at the outset, it is one of the strengths of this rich, challenging, and illuminating collection of essays on contemporary approaches to social theory that a recognition of our existential and analytical uncertainty holds our conversation about the social together. Are we best understood as individual agents, as congeries of agents and objects, as dually and co-constituting agents and groups, as situations occurring in the present or in a trans-temporal contingent space of interaction? Read the book and decide!

FOUR QUESTIONS FOR RANDALL COLLINS

Dustin Stoltz (University of Notre Dame) interviews **Randall Collins** (University of Pennsylvania, Emeritus) on the past, present, and future of cultural analysis and sociology

Dustin Stoltz: How did you become interested in sociology and the study of culture?

Randall Collins: In two ways: At Berkeley, I started working in the sociology of science, as a T.A. for **Joseph Ben-David**. As this area blossomed into the ethnographies of laboratories and other situated knowledge, I stretched my analysis of the means of cultural production into philosophy, mathematics, and eventually literature. The other route was via Weberian theory of the three dimensions of stratification—economic class, political power, and cultural lifestyle and identity. Since cultural status groups are often organized by religion and ethnicity, this led into some of the major forces for conflict and social change.

DS: What work does "culture" do in your thinking?

RC: As I suggested in the previous point, there are several sociological programs in this area. Cultural sociology can study the means of cultural production. I did this since early in my career. I currently have a blog, [Creativity via Sociology](#), which pursues this into areas like the beatniks, adult/children crossover fantasy literature, and Shakespeare's networks. But also culture can be

lifestyle. I have worked on this by using photographs of people's demeanor and manners over the 20th century, tracing the shift to informalization and testing what caused it. Between lifestyles and deliberately produced culture, there is a lot to study and these have been flourishing areas for our field.

On the critical side, there is a theoretical approach that holds "culture is everything"—i.e. all social institutions are shaped by an overarching set of schemas and tacit rules. This was the anthropologists' view of culture, from the British school to Levi-Strauss, and it was adopted by Parsons with the Freudian link that culture gets internalized into children's superego as they grow up. I don't favor this approach because of its propensity for lumping everyone together under a label (American Culture, the Hopi Indians' culture, etc.), and because it makes it difficult or mysterious to study change.

Foucault adopted the concept of "ruptures" to indicate that one culture changes into another, but we can do better than this. Another way to put it: we know a lot about mechanisms by which behaviors and beliefs get reproduced over and over; we can call these mechanisms "culture"—or

more complicatedly, habitus plus field. But all these theorists—Parsons, Levi-Strauss, Foucault, Bourdieu—have a lot of trouble explaining social change, either on the individual or on the macro level. For Bourdieu, *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose* ("The more things change, the more they stay the same.")

But although this is true to a degree, it also misses the big changes of history: rise of religions, ideologies and social movements, and all the things that they cause. And as political policy it is pessimistic: there is nothing anyone can do, we are all puppets of our habitus. It is ironic that Bourdieu is so influential in schools of education, since his message implies there is nothing anyone can do to overcome educational inequality. But shifting to the micro level gives a new slant on this.

"Dynamism is always possible on the micro level. Want a culture to die out? Stop assembling, stop paying attention to the old focal points; divert attention and shared emotion to some other assembly."
~Randall Collins

DS: How does your approach to culture shape your choice of research topics, settings, or methods?

RC: The key for me is combining Durkheim and Goffman, so that Durkheim's analysis of religious and political rituals can be seen as an interactional achievement. If the ingredients click (emotional entrainment and mutual awareness of a focus of attention), rhythmic intensification and collective effervescence happen to people jointly, and they generate cultural symbols that convey of feelings of membership and morality, as well as marking our opponents and dislikes. The crucial step beyond Durkheim's functionalism is that rituals fail as well as succeed, become stronger in intensity to the level of fanaticism, or fade away into indifference.

This is a dynamic theory of culture in everyday life, in the chains of interaction that make up the totality of the social world. (An echo of Garfinkel here.) Dynamism is always possible on the micro level. Want a culture to die out? Stop assembling, stop paying attention to the old focal points; divert attention and shared emotion to some other assembly. Studying fields like sports or popular culture has a deeper meaning, since these are laboratories for how cultures change, often deliberately, but above all via how they click or fail as interaction rituals.

DS: What most excites you about the future of cultural theory and analysis?

RC: Once we see that the micro-mechanisms of group solidarity are carrying the symbols we think with, we have a tool of analysis, a microscope to analyze where the action is all over the place. Religions are really interesting, both because people love them or hate them, and because they change so frequently that we can see the mechanisms in action. Politics and social movements can be interesting in the same way. Although there is a caveat here—for sociologists, being a strong advocate of a movement or strong opponent of a political faction tends to create blinders. A theory made out of activists' insults is not a very good theory; usually the bad guys have some kind of Durkheimian mechanism working for them. But if you are tuned in on theory, everything is interesting.

What fields in sociology have made a lot of discoveries in recent years? Social movements, religion, networks; visual sociology (including online videos) as a tool for analyzing micro-emotional mechanisms, conflict, and violence. The tools and topics of cultural sociology crosscut much of these. As a piece of career advice, it is useful to have at least two different research areas. It's both career backup, and it generates creative cross-connections. Sociology of culture is a good one to combine with almost anything.

Randall Collins completed his doctoral work at Berkeley ('64) under the direction of Harold Wilensky—an expert in the sociology of professions. Collins' dissertation, published as *The Credential Society* (1979, Academic Press), examined the nexus of education and occupations, arguing that the rise in "educational credential inflation" outstripped the need for skilled workers produced by technological change. Credentialism, Collins found, was fueled by high-status organizations. An important influence on Collins was his undergraduate teacher while at Harvard, Talcott Parsons—specifically his expositions of Durkheim and Weber, rather than his broader structural-functional program. At Berkeley, Collins again encountered Weber's historical-comparative work through Reinhard Bendix, alongside the "militant micro-sociology" of Erving Goffman and Herbert Blumer, as well as the students of the Harold Garfinkel. But rather than denigrate or dismiss the insights of macro-sociology, Collins sought to bring together the micro and the macro. His recent work includes *Interaction Ritual Chains* (2004, Princeton) and *Violence: A Micro-Sociological Theory* (2008, Princeton). The University of Pennsylvania's Sociology Department hosted the conference "Social Interaction and Theory" in early 2016 in honor of Collins' retirement. Papers presented are forthcoming in a festschrift edited by Elliott B. Weininger, Annette Lareau, Omar Lizardo: *Ritual, Emotion, Violence: Studies on the Micro-Sociology of Randall Collins* (Routledge).
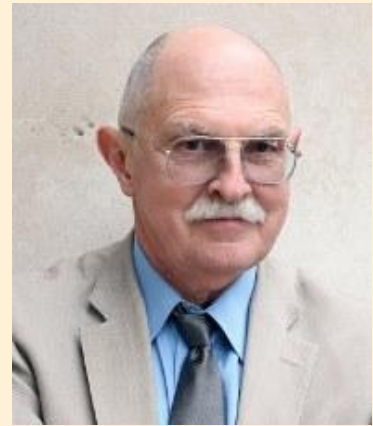
From the Archives

Toward a Sociology of Cyberspace: A Symposium

(Excerpt, Volume 11, No. 3-4, Spring-Summer 1997)

The newsletter of the Culture Section provides a rich repository of knowledge about cultural sociology and the sociology of culture. Its pages, which span from the 1980s to the present, index major debates, movements, and shifts.

To contribute to our collective memory, the next several newsletters will feature an article or feature from an earlier newsletter. The previous newsletter featured a 1996 symposium on The Arts and Politics, edited by Stephen Hart.

We hope these reprints will stimulate reflection on theoretical, methodological, and substantive changes and continuities in our community of practice.

Editor's Introduction
Karen A. Cerulo
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"All of a sudden, this morning, I realized that I was old. That's just it. I never noticed it before, not really. But this morning, I realized that there is no longer any given week in which I don't have a doctors appointment. I thought about my diminishing energy . . . about how much more difficult it is to hear, to see, to endure long walks, the cold, the heat; I thought about how much more difficult it is to walk my black lab on a leash. . . . My children are angry with me. They want me to be vital, helpful, present. They simply can't accept that I just can't do it."[1]

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[1] Taken from a *Compuserv* chat group and quoted in Katz, J. 1994. The Tales They Tell In Cyberspace Are A Whole Other Story. *New York Times* 1/23/94:A 1; 30.

The words above are difficult to read; they represent intimate, personal feelings. It is likely that most who review this testimony would identify it as a very private disclosure a confidence shared between two close friends, or perhaps a sober exchange between a client and her/his therapist. Yet, the testimony is neither. We know the narrator of this message only by a pseudonym, and the message is addressed to individuals that the narrator has never, and probably will never meet members of an online discussion group. This interaction, one that most would automatically assume to be the product of an intense, copresent encounter, is really the stuff of a strange new realma borderless, bodyless cyberspace of action.

Such cyberspace eavesdropping should raise a red flag for sociologists. These data make clear that recent strides in communication technologies, with all that those strides have come to meane-mail and faxes, satellite transfers, internet chat groups, web sites, teleconferencing, etc.are challenging us to rethink issues at the very heart of sociological discourse. The new communication technologies (hereafter called NCTs) are forcing us to revisit basic sociological concepts: the definition of interaction, the boundedness of collectives, the nature of social ties, the scope of experience and reality. For better or for worse, NCTs are expanding the social field; they are amending and altering a host of taken-for-granted social processes.

In the face of such a transition, one might guess that sociologists, sociologists of culture in particular, would be deeply entrenched in the study of NCTs and the socio-cultural phenomena that these technologies spur. Yet for some time, the sociological voice on such matters has registered as a mere whisper relative to the utterances of communication, psychology, and anthropology scholars. Happily, the past five years suggests a change in this course of affairs. The 1995 and 1996 meetings of the American Sociological Association saw two special sessions devoted to technologically generated communities. During the same period, several special collections and journal issues have addressed NCTs and social life. Currently, a growing number of sociological books and research articles are probing the social consequences of NCTs.

Not all of those writing in this area view NCTs as a positive occurrence. While some see NCTs as a tool for increasing social ties, others view these technologies as the stimulant of increased social isolation. Similarly, while many believe that NCTs will re-democratize society.[2] others view NCTs as weapons of authoritarian control. Clearly, sociologists disagree on the functions and potential effects of NCTs. Yet amidst conflicting views, one point draws consensus: NCTs are making a noteworthy impact on the very nature of social life.

This symposium brings NCTs to the sociology of cultures center stage. In this regard, my contribution rests in a beginners bibliography a starting point for those who wish to tap new and relevant literature in the area. Two provocative and important essays precede my reference list; those pieces represent the true highlights of this symposium. In Ecce Homo, Clifford Nass reflects on NCTs and the definition of humanness. Joshua Meyrowitz explores the flip-side of this issue in What Are Media?

ECCE HOMO
Clifford Nass
Stanford University

It's hard to be a person these days. I don't mean that daily life is somehow harder for homo sapiens than it is for canis familiaris (dogs) or felis domestica (cats). Instead, I'm concerned with the ability of someone (or something?) to say, "I'm a person and everyone agrees that I'm a person."

There is no more consequential label with which to be endowed than that of human or person. Imagine that one day you are labeled not a person.

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[2] Bill Gates expresses some interesting views on this matter in an interview with John F. Kennedy Jr. See Of "Mouse and Man" in *George* February 1997: 78-81; 101-102.

The consequences are dramatic. It no longer is a crime to take away your life or liberty. You no longer possess any rights or privileges. Once you are dehumanized, others have a license to perform almost any act upon you.

I am not worried about students of philosophy they can take care of themselves. I was once explaining the idea of solipsism to a class of undergraduates. One of the students said, "I really like solipsism, because it means that I wrote all of Shakespeare's plays." Another student replied, "Yea, but you're the only one who thinks they're any good."

I do, however, worry about the rest of us. The challenges to claims of being human come from many quarters. Supporters of abortion rights frequently distinguish a fetus from a person, because the argument becomes much harder when the two are equated. Post-modernists argue that humans are fragmented into a number of variously-elaborated personae, each with a problematic claim on personhood. Anti-vivisectionists challenge the dichotomy of human/ non-human as a way of undermining the argument: were human; they are not; tough luck for other animals. As a more general challenge, deconstructionist thinking question the very idea of dichotomies like human/non-human (although even deconstructionists would likely hold fast to their own assignment to the category human).

It is perhaps ironic that the ideas that make it most difficult to claim humanity comes from an area that historically has little interest in people: the world of computing. While a number of recent writers have taken on the ways in which computers force us to think differently about ourselves (most notably Bolter [1984], Friedman [in press], Turkle [1984], and Weizenbaum [1978]), the root of the challenge is the Turing Test (Turing, 1981[1950]). The Turing Test asks the question, When should a computer be classified as a person? In the Turing Test, an evaluator sits at a terminal in front of a curtain. On the other side of the curtain is either a person or a computer. The evaluator has a free-wheeling five-minute interaction with the person or computer via the terminal. If the evaluator cannot determine whether he or she has been interacting with a computer or a person, then if it is a computer on the other side, then the computer deserves the label human. (Pedants have argued that Turing was speaking about intelligence rather than humanity, but it's clear that Turing equated the two).

There is much that is appealing about the Turing Test: It is objective; it focuses on language, a trait that seems unique to humans (indeed, encyclopedias in the 1950s used to define humans as the language-using animal); its proven to be a very tough standard, as no computer has even come close to passing the Turing Test; and no test for accepting a seemingly non-human entity as human has gained greater credence.

Although the Turing Test was posed as a way to determine whether a computer should be admitted into the human fraternity, it is revealing to think about how well actual humans would do behind the curtain in the Turing Test. Imagine that you are the judge in the Turing Test and you type in the question, "How are you today?" On your terminal appears the following: "*Je regret que je ne parle pas anglais*." You then say, "There must have been a problem with this terminal. Could you please repeat your comment?" On the terminal, the following appears: "*Je regret que je ne comprend pa*s." You confidently conclude, "Not only is this a computer, it is obviously broken!" In a single stroke, the person from France has been dehumanized. In a similar vein, imagine that you are the judge, and you ask about baseball. The entity on the other side replies, "I'm sorry, I don't know anything about baseball." You then ask about an event on the news, and you receive the reply, "I'm sorry, I don't really follow the news, either. However, I am intrigued by the proof of Fermat's little theorem." You might relegate this person, too, to the domain of the non-human, a victim of a lack of common ground.

What is remarkable about the acceptance of the Turing Test is that it has gained great sway despite its obvious inability to address cultural differences like the one above. It seems clear that we would want to include people from other cultures as human (although this is not always the case in

human history), yet we have a test that fails to meet this basic criterion.

Even tests that seem acultural are not. For example, consider the Shakespeare Test. In The *Merchant of Venice*, Shylock proposes the following test for humanity: "Hath not [I] eyes? hath not [I] hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? . . . If you prick [me], do [I] not bleed? If you tickle [me], do [I] not laugh? If you poison [me], do [I] not die?" (Shakespeare, 1975, p. 215). Despite its seeming objectivity, it is almost certainly the case that the assessment of whether an entity has "affections" and "passions" is culturally specific. Furthermore, this test excludes people with prosthetics and those born with various handicaps, and probably includes many non-human animals (depending on the definition of "laugh" and "passions").

I have developed a test that seems to be culturally independent and has a high rate of accurately identifying those that one would conventionally consider as human (the Nass Test): An evaluator stands in front of a curtain with his or her feet poking out through to the other side of the curtain. On the other side of the curtain is either a person or a computer. For five minutes, either a computer or a person is dropped on the person's foot. If the evaluator cannot determine whether the entity on the other side is a person or a computer, then it deserves the label "human." The Nass Test seems to have many positive characteristics. For example, it would not exclude people from France, nor would it rely on common ground. One would also be more likely to include as "human" babies, people who can't type, the blind, etc., all of whom would have a dismal fate under the Turing Test. Unlike the Shakespeare Test, it is objective and would likely exclude all non-human animals.

If we use the standard measurement criteria of greatest level of face validity (i.e., identifying humans as humans) and greatest level of agreement among judges, it would seem that the Nass Test is clearly superior to the other two. With that said, it is likely that all of us feel that the Nass Test is the most unsatisfactory of the three. But I suspect that the dissatisfaction would, to some extent, apply to the other two tests as well, as well as any other test one could come up with. (I have never seen a test that is as diagnostic as the Nass Test and that does not exclude babies, people with artificial limbs, people who are uncommunicative, etc., and that does not involve unverifiable characteristics, such as possession of a soul or passions.)

Now assume that you have found a test that is consistent with a particular set of societal values. Now imagine that a computer or a person from an ethnic group you wished to exclude passed your test. The entity then said, "I now have my bona fides. I am clearly a person now and deserve full human rights and privileges." What would the societal reaction be? We can turn to The *Merchant of Venice* for an answer. It's quite clear that the people in the play were willing to grant that Shylock passed the Shakespeare Test, which seems an extraordinarily high standard. Indeed, he passed a test that many entities that they would like to consider human would not pass (e.g., those who lost eyes). As the play progresses, however, it becomes obvious that the society has no qualms about dehumanizing Shylock; that is, the passing of the test was irrelevant to his acceptance as a human.

How does each society resolve this apparent contradiction? There are two key mechanisms. First, despite the seeming clarity and firmness of the dichotomy, the assignment of "humanness" is an essentially arbitrary, societal decision. While societies might promulgate various checklists, there is an important sense in which decisions of humanness are made on a case-by-case basis. During periods of genocide, a particular group is dehumanized in what is basically an ad hoc fashion. Certain characteristics may become more or less relevant at various times, but the great degree of fuzziness is ruthlessly resolved for each entity who might make a claim to humanity. Although it might seem that there are hard and fast rules, the reality is that one day you're in, one day you're out; societal excuses aren't needed. The label "human" is essentially fragile.

The fluidity of the label "human" can be illustrated with the following thought experiment

I present to my undergraduates. Imagine that you have known your best friend almost all of your life. You have shared numerous good times and bad times, have confided in each other, and have developed bonds that you will likely form with no one else. One day your friend comes to you and says, "I have a confession to make. It turns out that I am a robot see, here are my internal workings." I asked the class, "How free would you be to turn the robot on and off at will?" The vast majority of students said that they would have no problem with this once they knew it was a robot, it would become perfectly acceptable to even "kill it" (him/her?). While I am mindful of the distinction between attitudes and behaviors and the problem of hypotheticals, and while I feel confident that most of the students in the class would not have dealt so harshly with their friend regardless of ontology, it was a quite worrisome response.

I then proposed the following: "Imagine that you are living in South Africa in 1960. One day your best friend comes to you and says, 'I have a confession to make. It turns out that I am black and have been 'passing' for all these years.' I then asked the students how comfortable they would be with throwing their friend out of their school, forcing them to move, etc." Of course, all of the students insisted they would never do such a thing, but one wonders what the frequency of genocide and the previous example tells us.

The dramatic consequences of losing one's claim to "humanness" lead to the second key mechanism by which dehumanization is facilitated. Imagine that a dehumanized entity mounted a protest to his/her/its status. In Shakespeare, this would involve Shylock protesting his subhuman treatment. In U.S. history, this would be a slave wanting to argue before the court that they should not be treated as property. In science fiction, it could be a robot arguing that to exclude it would logically necessitate the exclusion of many other entities that the society would like to retain as human. The elegant, though alarming, point is that once labeled "non-human," the entity (no longer a person) would have no legitimate standing to protest its status. The arguments can be dismissed

because only humans can make arguments. That is why Shylock could not move the society to grant him full human rights, and that is why the challenges to slavery were never brought by slaves they did not have standing before the court.

It is a very scary world when the most consequential thing that can happen to you—receiving the label "human"—is also one of the most unreliable and fragile. Of course, computers and other advanced technologies have not created the problem of dehumanization. It is clear that at least by the time of Shakespeare, the problem was well understood. What does make it harder to be a human these days is that before computers, people could talk about Shylocks moving speech without thinking about the fact that it did him no good. We are now surrounded by technologies that mimic virtually every human capability, reminding us every day that the line we draw between human and non-human is an arbitrary one. This makes for a very scary world, as one's claim to humanity can be dismissed simply and quickly.

Rather than present an unabashedly pessimistic view, there is one key reason for optimism: People are evolved to be extremely liberal in their assignment of "humanness" (Reeves & Nass, 1996). For example, over the past ten years, colleagues and I have performed a series of over 35 experiments that demonstrate that people apply a wide range of social rules and expectations to computers and other technologies (Reeves & Nass, 1996). Even though people deny they are doing so and consciously believe it is inappropriate, people are polite to computers (Reeves & Nass, 1996, chap. 2) and will respond to computers as teammates (Nass, Fogg, & Moon, in press). Individuals will gender stereotype computers based on whether they have a male or female voice (Nass, Moon, & Green, in press) and will reciprocate when the computer does them a favor (Fogg & Nass, in press). People will even respond to a face on a television screen as if the person were physically present (Reeves & Nass, 1996, chap. 3).

Similar research by others demonstrate that we see people almost everywhere (e.g., an electric

outlet looks like a face (McCloud, 1993), headlights are the eyes of a car (Norman, 1992), and people have no problem responding to a ventriloquist's dummy as an independent actor). All of these studies and others suggest that it is quite automatic to respond with a very broad and deep definition of "human." Thus, people are evolved to take the stance that everything is human unless proven otherwise. If our old brains can overcome societal tendencies, it may not be so hard to be human after all.

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What Are Media?
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What are media? In a culture where TV is even more ubiquitous than indoor plumbing and there are more radios than people, this question seems too simple to deserve explicit response and debate. Yet our conceptions of media of communication, like other conceptions, are themselves mediated by mental constructs (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). In particular, we rely often subconsciously on metaphorical thinking to simplify and clarify what media are. I argue that there are three core metaphors that have operated silently and simultaneously beneath the surface of research on communication technologies and lead to confusion and misunderstanding among those drawing on different metaphors. The three metaphors are: medium-as-vessel/ conduit, medium-as-language, medium-as-environment. This essay very briefly outlines these three images of media.

Medium-as-Vessel/Conduit

The most common media metaphor is that a medium is like a vessel or conduit. The medium-as-vessel/conduit metaphor looks at media as holding or sending important stuff that deserves attention and analysis. This leads to a variety of ways of studying the content of media. Broadly speaking, the medium-as-vessel/conduit metaphor leads people to ask: What is the content? How did the content get there? How have patterns of ownership and control affected media content? How accurately does media content reflect reality? How do people interpret the content? What effects does the content have? The vessel/conduit metaphor is so common

because content is the most obvious part of both our mediated and unmediated interactions. We all have a sense that a message that someone loves us has power and meaning apart from whether we receive it in face-to-face interaction, by letter, by phone, by e-mail, or by videotape. There is something different about each of those conveyors, but we still react to the message first. Few would dispute that a message of love is different from a message of hate regardless of how it is conveyed. Within the vessel/conduit metaphor, content is analytically separated from the particular presentation of it in a particular medium. Although one could define media content more broadly, this narrow view of content has experiential reality. Many people are concerned with media violence, sex- ism, and sexuality regardless of the medium that conveys them. Indeed, much mainstream media research and criticism falls into these areas. Similarly, we should be troubled by government disinformation regardless of whether it is disseminated to us through live speeches, radio, television, newspaper, or the Internet. It is commonly believed that a movie can be made of a book (faithfully or unfaithfully), and researchers act as if they can record and then transcribe an oral interview and somehow retain something of the same interview in all three forms (live, tape, transcript). These examples suggest that we often believe that there is some content essence that can be transported unchanged from medium to medium and from live interaction to medium. If you miss you favorite television program and you ask a friend to tell you what happened, generally what you are told about is the content. Of course, analysis of content can be much more sophisticated than a friends description of a missed TV show. One can look beyond manifest content to the latent, underlying structure or form of the content. One can look, for example, at genres and genre codes, at unconscious or psychoanalytic motivations of producers of content, at implicit value systems, at the ways in which content is shaped by media industry structure and by ideological, economic, and political forces. One can explore the ways in which various audiences differ- entially interpret media content. One can also examine correlations between media content and reality or explore the potential effects of content. Content data can also be quantified and analyzed statistically. But even in these more complex approaches, one is still looking primarily at the content. The medium of delivery is typically viewed as significant only in so far as people receive its content. The vast majority of media studies focus on some aspect of content and thereby ignore at least two other dimensions of media.

Medium-as-Language

A very different metaphor is that a medium is like a language. The medium-as-language metaphor looks at each medium as having a unique range of expressive potential. This leads to the study of the grammar choices (for production variables) within each medium and how their manipulation alters the resulting message even when basic content elements, such as those discussed above, are held constant. Broadly speaking, grammar questions ask: What variables can be manipulated within each medium? What are the roots of the grammatical code both within the nature of the medium and in the structural codes of face-to-face communication? What are the effects of grammar manipulations in terms of perception, comprehension, emotional reaction, and behavioral response? Grammar variables include size and style of type in print or computer fonts, camera angle and selection of focus in photography, pickup patterns of microphones in audio. Television and film incorporate all the variables of still photography and audio plus such variables as dissolves, fades, cutting speed, zooms, dollies, tilts, pans, and changes in focus. Unlike content elements, which are often identical to objects, actions, and events in non-mediated interactions, grammar variables are particular to media. While a person can exhibit violence or sexism in real life, for example, it is impossible for us to cut to a close up or dissolve to the beach in everyday interactions. And we cannot change type- faces in oral speech. Grammar variables are more difficult to perceive than content variables. Indeed producers often consider it part of their professional responsibility to hide the impact of production techniques. Newspapers rarely

acknowledge the role that typeface and layout play in establishing their image and level of credibility. Similarly, television news programs do not highlight their use of those grammar conventions that give news sequences a documentary rather than fictional tone. Yet such directorial decisions are very significant in terms of creating all images and stereotypes in television and film. The main character in a movie, for example, is almost always the first person seen in prolonged closeups. Closeups thrust a character into our vicarious intimate space. Viewers rarely have a particularly strong response either negative or positive to characters who are only shown in long shots. Unless one sees characters in medium shots or closeups, one usually responds to them only in terms of the social role they are portraying (secretary, jury member, soldier, etc.). Such grammar variations are almost always used to encourage us to take sides in war movies, crime dramas, westerns, space adventures and even in news and documentaries. In most war movies, the camera places us next to our soldiers. We stand in their midst (as if we are their teammates); the other side fires at us. We rarely see prolonged closeups of the enemy. While a content analyst exploring womens images in media may be concerned with the roles held by the women (e.g., housewife vs. executive), a media grammar analyst might examine whether women in a film regardless of role are framed in intimate space, made to look weak through high angle shots, or sexualized by voyeuristic shots of their body parts. Although grammar variables are typically out of the awareness of media audiences, they are there for all to see once attention is called to them (Meyrowitz 1986). The third aspect of media, however, is even more elusive to the average consumer and researchers of media.

Medium-as-Environment

The third media metaphor is that each medium is a setting or environment or context that has characteristics and effects that transcend variations in content and override manipulations of production variables. This metaphor leads to what I call medium analysis (Meyrowitz 1985:16; 1994). I use the singular medium because those

who draw on this metaphor examine the relatively fixed features of each medium. Broadly speaking, the medium-as-environment metaphor leads one to ask: What are the relatively fixed characteristics of a medium that make it physically, psychologically, and sociologically different from other media, regardless of content and grammar choices?

Environmental features of a medium include:

- the *type of sensory information* the medium can and cannot transmit;
- the *speed and degree of immediacy* of communication;
- *unidirectional vs. bidirectional vs. multidirectional* communication;
- *simultaneous or sequential interaction*;
- the *physical requirements for using the medium*; and
- the relative *ease or difficulty of learning to use the medium* to code and decode messages and whether one tends to learn to use the medium all-at-once or in stages.

Medium questions operate on two levels: the micro and the macro. On the micro level, the key issue is how the choice of one medium over another influences a particular situation or interaction. On the macro level, the primary medium question is how the addition of a new medium to the existing media matrix may alter social interactions and social structure in general.

On the micro level, for example, one could argue that there is a big difference between choosing a telephone call over a letter to end an intimate relationship. On the phone, one's verbal message may be overwhelmed by one's own emotional vocal overtones, and one is interrupted by the words and sounds of the other person. Also, one often conveys a hesitant and rambling phone message; you cannot completely erase what you have said thus far and then start again. For many people, a Dear John telephone call is inherently paradoxical. Since the telephone is bidirectional and intimate, it maintains an informal, intimate, and fluid relationship, even as one tries to end it. A Dear John letter, in contrast, allows one to strip away ones vocalizations and have ones say

without any interruption or response from the other party. Further the nature of letter-writing allows the sender to write and rewrite a letter until it has a formal and polished form. On the macro, societal and global level, those who use the medium-as-setting metaphor to study the telephone might ask questions such as: How has the use of the telephone altered the texture of social relationship in general? How has the phone affected the speed and style of business interactions? How has it changed the frequency and function of letter-writing? How has it affected social hierarchies by changing the ratio of vertical to horizontal patterns of information flow? How has it restructured the boundaries of psychological vs. physical neighborhoods? On the micro-level, a medium analyst might ask how the presence of a camera and/or microphone affects the specific behavior of a particular politician. On the macro-level, one might ask how electronic media alter political styles and our perception of politicians and world leaders in general. Macro-level medium theory is often the most distinct from analyses of media content. A medium perspective might suggest that distinct roles for people of different sexes and races are supported by live and mediated contexts, such as books (which tend to segregate the experiences of the sexes and races), while electronic media such as television (which tend to integrate experiences for people of different races and both sexes) tend to have an egalitarian influence. Thus, it could be argued that television, in spite of its often repressive content, is a potentially liberating medium. The same content in different media has different effects. Books for parents about what not to tell children tend to reinforce parental power, while a television show with the same content would undermine it. After all, with television, thousands of young, pre-literate children are typically there, learning about the very topics that are being recommended for secrecy, as well as learning about the secret of secrecy the fact that adults conspire over what to tell and not tell children. Similarly, sexist content in one medium might reinforce sexism, while sexist content in another medium might undermine it. The use of new media changes who knows what about whom and who knows what compared to whom.

Television, in spite of its often conservative and reactionary content, perhaps even more so because of it has made many people less willing to stay in their old place physical and social. For there is nothing more infuriating than being exposed constantly to activities, adventures, and excitements that you are told are reserved for another type of person. The medium-as-environment metaphor has traditionally been the least understood and least employed by social scientists. Indeed, this metaphors most famous advocate, Marshall McLuhan, has been the target of many dismissive attacks within the academy. In the last few years, however, the widespread talk of cyberspace has brought new attention to the idea that media research should focus less on the messages and more on communication technologies as types of social environments.

INTEGRATING THE METAPHORS

The separate consideration of media content, grammar, and medium is, in many ways, an analytical fiction. Any communication through media encompasses all three simultaneously. Nevertheless, in analyses of media, the metaphors usually operate in relative isolation. Although some media observers draw on more than one image, the overwhelming majority of popular and scholarly examinations of media, including my own, draw primarily or exclusively on only one of these metaphors. And yet a full exploration of any topic related to media children and media, gender and media, politics and media, media and culture, hegemony, ideology, semiotics, and so forth requires as unified an approach as possible. A unified approach involves considering all three images of media, either simultaneously or sequentially within a research community, rather than across communities that rarely, if ever, speak to each other. Such bridging of typically competing metaphors will allow for a true meta-connection among those who will be studying media of communication in the next millennium.

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TOPICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY
Karen A. Cerulo

Cerulo offers a remarkably detailed bibliography, covering how "new communication technologies" relate to community, identity, interpersonal interaction, and spatial/temporal boundaries. Find it in the 1997 Spring/Summer Newsletter at: https://asaculturesection.org/newsletters

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BOOK REVIEW

## THE WORK OF ART: VALUE IN CREATIVE CAREERS (STANFORD, 2017)
by Alison Gerber

Reviewed by:
Whitney Johnson
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Midway through [*The Work of Art: Value in Creative Careers*](#), **Alison Gerber** (Uppsala University) delivers a clever metaphor for the looming threat that some artists might be forced to quit making art altogether. Like the people of the Netherlands who constantly fight the sea with expensive, inconvenient, and sometimes failing systems of dikes, sluices, and spillways, many artists engage in lifelong battles to maintain their lives and practices. Alongside detailed depictions of artists' aesthetic and everyday activities, Gerber pulls apart four dominant accounts of value in artists' talk about maintaining their careers. Some demonstrate instrumental rationality in a *pecuniary* account. Work must be made to sell and turn a profit. Yet, these accounts tended to be less a precise ledger of costs and returns and more a fungible negotiation within themselves regarding the appropriate balance between time, expenses, personal relationships, and the value of their works. Though one might
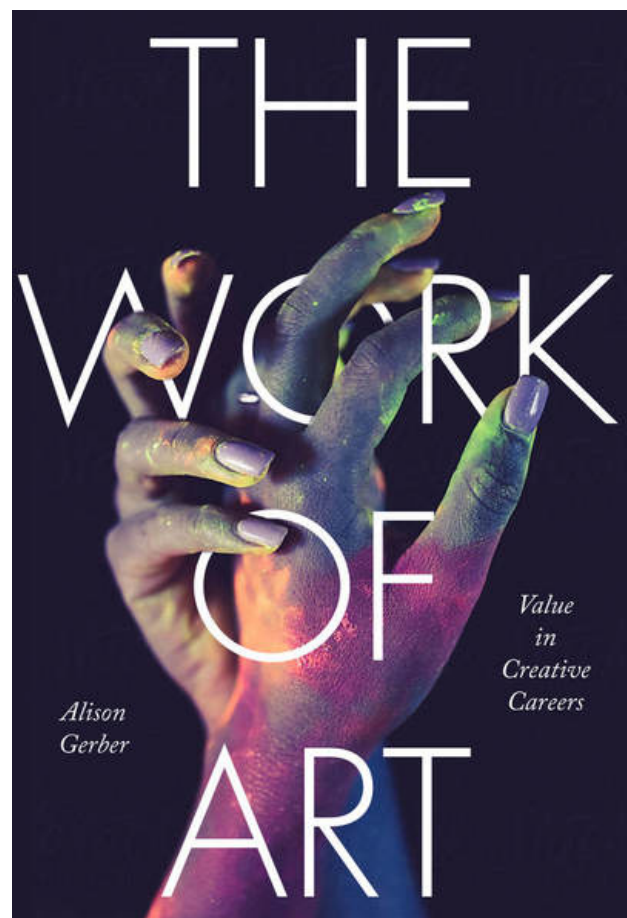
assume that artists are reticent to talk about money, Gerber did not find that to be so. On the other hand, they were often hesitant to describe their art practices in terms of *credentialing*, a second account of value in which artists exhibit their own art as a means to paid work as teachers or in commercial production. The often-cited *l'art pour l'art* ethic was incompatible with art making as a means to other ends, yet respondents

hesitantly admitted that they had to develop exhibition histories on their vitae in order to continue in other paying roles.

Beside these instrumental accounts, artists also thought of their lives in *vocational* terms: an unavoidable calling, irresistible muse, or ingrained penchant for risk-taking endeavors. Considering themselves unable to do anything else, artists reframed their skills in expanded terms, recontextualizing them as valuable MacGyvers in other professional fields. Although they couldn't resist making art, they evaluated the artistic personality as part of a vital cultural tradition. Finally, some artists valued their practices in terms of the *relational* benefits they gained. Whether collaborating, encouraging, or engaging in activism, relationships with other artists were intrinsically valuable, and these orders of worth in artistic practice were found to be on the rise. Alongside a decline in object-oriented art careers, value in praxis was achieved with relation to other artists in local fields.

Were it not that these reports were recognizable in other careers, industries, and economic forms, one might wonder about the categorization of these four types of accounts. Indeed, Gerber admits that interviews were at times self-contradictory and inconsistent. Yet, she does not allow these faulty internal logics to suggest that the accounts were fragile, temporary, or ambiguous, as claimed by Boltanski and Thévenot's 2006 *On Justification: Economies of Worth* (Princeton). Instead Gerber finds that these accounts were remarkably stable aspects of a multidimensional field of practice.

I was curious to read more about the features and ontology of this field. Though an endnote pointed the sociological reader in the direction of field theory, those informative details left me wanting more. For instance, despite their seeming logical compatibility, *pecuniary* and *credentialing* explanations almost never coexisted in a single interview, while others that seemed logically incompatible, such as the *pecuniary* and *vocational* accounts, came up in different moments of the same conversation. Confounding the logical expectations of a sociological reader,

these artists demonstrated tension, contradiction, and complexity in these multiple dimensions of a single understanding of value.

Perhaps the most provocative chapter, "This Way Be Monsters," took form as a methodological rumination on the nature of face-to-face interviewing and its explicative power in qualitative social science. Though artists might account for their lives more coherently in print documents and public address, these accounts were also reductive, adjusted to compose a legible narrative that other stakeholders might appreciate and value. Yet, Gerber's long and loosely structured conversations in artists' studios and homes opened up the semantic range of "value" to artists' streams of consciousness, and their propensity to choose contextually appropriate accounts for action felt familiar to my own mind. At once explaining, legitimating, and questioning our own acts, such unscripted accounts of behavior reveal multivalent and sometimes contradictory logics. Why would an accountant invest her own money to choreograph a movement piece at a loss? Why would a sculptor downplay her more lucrative work as a screen printer? Why would a multidisciplinary artist be so worried about the fragmented identity that might come across in his career narrative?

The answers to many of these questions arrive in the final chapter, a case study of performance artist and musician Venus Demars. Despite her prolific and successful career, an IRS audit deemed her a "hobbyist," demanding impossible back taxes and even more insulting re-identification. Though the entire debacle may have been due to transphobia on the part of the auditor, Demars struggled to live as an artist despite massive legal fees and out-of-pocket medical expenses that were barely offset by the pecuniary rewards for her work. Though this bureaucrat delegitimated her credentials and ultimately denied her vocation, it was the relational value of her art practice that found fans and supporters carrying her through her battle against the state. As I closed the book, I recalled Gerber's metaphor of Dutch maritime infrastructure fighting the encroaching sea.

Though American artists often described their hustling careers as atomized struggles for survival, the state intervenes to help or hinder in patterned ways. When Gerber points to a field model of the art world, I have to imagine it embedded in the broader constellation of political economy, where not only do constraints silence the voices of so many artists but scant support also constructs our understandings of valuable cultural practice.

BOOK REVIEW

UNDER THE COVER: THE CREATION, PRODUCTION, AND RECEPTION OF A NOVEL BY (PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS)
by Clayton Childress

Reviewed by:
Anna Michelson
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In [Under the Cover](#), **Clayton Childress** (University of Toronto) traces a novel from inception to afterlife in the hands of readers, deftly demonstrating the interrelated nature of creation, production, and reception. Traditionally studied separately, Childress makes the case for creation, production, and reception as three interdependent fields that should not be studied in isolation. Though others have studied two or more of these fields together (e.g. Wendy Griswold's *Bearing Witness*), Childress goes further to analyze the process of translation as an object passes between fields. "If creation, production, and reception all matter," he argues, "what is lost by independently studying these processes and the transitions between them is actually most things" (p. 4). He explores the inner workings of each field as well as boundary-spanners at each point that translate the object into the next field.

Childress follows Cornelia Nixon's *Jarrettsville*, a novel published in 2009 by Counterpoint Press. *Jarrettsville* is historical love story-cum-courtroom drama based on the true story of Nixon's ancestor. It is a tragic love story, but because it is set in Maryland just after the Civil War it also a story about race and Southern identity. He tells *Jarrettsville*'s story, and the story of the publishing industry more generally, by drawing on an impressive variety of data sources, including ethnography and interviews at Counterpoint Press, interviews with authors and publishing professionals outside of Counterpoint, annotated manuscripts and memos from the author, book club observations, and reader surveys.

Starting with the field of creation, Childress complicates the popular image of the writer as a solitary genius. Far from being an isolated enterprise, he shows that Nixon is embedded in a community of writers whose conversations and constructive feedback help shape the novel. After the initial creation process, literary agents are the "primary boundary-spanners" that move the novel into the field of production. Agents must both

understand the author's vision and be able to translate it into market terms that appeal to an editor. Since personal interest and taste play a large role in how agents and authors are paired, this process is a type of cultural matching where agents tend to take on authors with similar experiences and backgrounds. Childress presents some sobering statistics on this point (only 6% of literary agents are nonwhite), suggesting that lack of diversity among literary agents has a detrimental effect on the diversity of stories that make it to publication.

Childress, through observations and interviews, gives the reader a detailed inside look at publisher decisions like cover design, back cover photo, catalog position, and hardcover versus paperback release.

He emphasizes that "every book must be sold twice," first to retailers and then to readers (p. 115). This initial sales process happens through industry events and direct sales calls between publisher reps and retailer buyers. Reviewers provide a link between retailers and readers. *Jarrettsville* was negatively reviewed in the New York Times, in part because it reviewed by a historian rather than a literary fiction author. Categorization was a persistent challenge for *Jarrettsville*—it was literary fiction but also historical fiction with commercial potential; it was a love story but also a courtroom drama.

In the field of reception, readers categorized and interpreted *Jarrettsville* in a variety of ways, primarily through the genre conventions readers most preferred. Some readers interpreted it quite differently than Nixon intended, though they enjoyed it less than those readers whose interpretation was more aligned with authorial intent. Perhaps most interesting, Childress shows (through book club observations and pre- and post-discussion surveys) that interpretations often change through interaction.

Jarrettsville was not a hit but it broke even financially; the Counterpoint CEO called it a "typical publishing story." However, there are lingering questions about how "typical" this case is. Counterpoint is a Berkeley-based independent publisher of literary fiction, and as such has a particular identity. Would the process look the same at a New York-based imprint of a large corporate publisher? What about publishers that specialize in commercial genres like mystery or romance? While Childress does interview industry professionals outside of Counterpoint (and addresses this issue in the Methodological Appendix), the subtleties of different publisher types might have been further discussed in the main chapters. At the same time, he seems to equivocate on the general applicability of the tripartite interdependent field structure. Childress cautions that this field structure may be more visible in publishing than other areas (music, art, etc.) because of the geographic separation of the components, calling it an open empirical question that a traditional production of culture approach, attuned to a range of industries, might address. These closing statements come across as rather vague – if fields are more condensed in other cultural arenas, what is the significance for interfield translation processes? This was one of the few unsatisfactory elements in an overall excellent book.

Under the Cover is a refreshing contribution to the sociology of culture. Childress utilizes a variety of data sources to give readers an inside look at the life stages of a novel (creation, production, and reception) and successfully demonstrates the interdependence of these fields. He balances the particular case with general background on publishing, such as the (lack of) diversity among publishing professionals. He successfully shows that throughout the process art and commerce are more in translation than in tension. *Under the Cover* is an essential read for any scholar of creation, production, or reception, and its insider look at the publishing industry holds appeal for general readers.

Announcements

BROWN-SARACINO, JAPONICA. 2017. *HOW PLACES MAKE US: NOVEL LBQ IDENTITIES IN FOUR SMALL U.S. CITIES*. CHICAGO: UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS.

DEPELTEAU, FRANCOIS (ED.). 2018. *THE HANDBOOK OF RELATIONAL SOCIOLOGY*. NEW YORK: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN.

FERNÁNDEZ L'HOESTE, HÉCTOR AND PABLO VILA (EDS.). 2017. *SOUND, IMAGE, AND NATIONAL IMAGINARY IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF LATIN/O AMERICAN IDENTITIES*. LANHAM, MD: LEXINGTON BOOKS.

HALLEY, JEFFREY A. AND DAGLIND E. SONOLET (EDS.). 2018. *BOURDIEU IN QUESTION: NEW DIRECTIONS IN FRENCH SOCIOLOGY OF ART*. LEIDEN: BRILL.

In *Bourdieu in Question: New Directions in French Sociology of Art,* Jeffrey A. Halley and Daglind E. Sonolet offer to English-speaking audiences an account of the very lively Francophone debates over Pierre Bourdieu's work in the domain of the arts and culture, and present other directions and perspectives taken by major French researchers who extend or differ from his point of view, and who were marginalized by the Bourdieusian moment. Three generations of research are presented: contemporaries of Bourdieu, the next generation, and recent research. Themes include the art market and value, cultural politics, the reception of artworks, theory and the concept of the artwork, autonomy in art, ethnography and culture, and the critique of Bourdieu on literature. Contributors are: Howard S. Becker, Martine Burgos, Marie Buscatto, Jean-Louis Fabiani, Laurent Fleury, Florent Gaudez, Jeffrey A. Halley, Nathalie Heinich, Yvon Lamy, Jacques Leenhardt, Cécile Léonardi, Clara Lévy, Pierre-Michel Menger, Raymonde Moulin, Jean-Claude Passeron, Emmanuel Pedler, Bruno Péquignot, Alain Quemin, Cherry Schrecker, Daglind E. Sonolet.

JANSEN, ROB. 2017. *REVOLUTIONIZING REPERTOIRES: THE RISE OF POPULIST MOBILIZATION IN PERU*. CHICAGO: UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS.

Politicians and political parties are for the most part limited by habit—they recycle tried-and-true strategies, draw on models from the past, and mimic others in the present. But in rare moments politicians break with routine and try something new. Drawing on pragmatist theories of social action, Revolutionizing Repertoires sets out to examine what happens when the repertoire of practices available to political actors is dramatically reconfigured. Taking as his case study the development of a distinctively Latin American style of populist mobilization, Robert S. Jansen analyzes the Peruvian presidential election of 1931. He finds that, ultimately, populist mobilization emerged in the country at this time because newly empowered outsiders recognized the limitations of routine political practice and understood how to modify, transpose, invent, and recombine practices in a whole new way. Suggesting striking parallels to the recent populist turn in global politics, Revolutionizing Repertoires offers new insights not only to historians of Peru but also to scholars of historical sociology and comparative politics, and to anyone interested in the social and political origins of populism.

KOTARBA, JOSEPH A. 2018. *UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY THROUGH POPULAR MUSIC.* (3RD EDITION). NEW YORK: ROUTLEDGE.

MILLER, LAURA J. 2017. *BUILDING NATURE'S MARKET: THE BUSINESS AND POLITICS OF NATURAL FOODS*. CHICAGO: UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS.

From the beginning of the American natural foods movement in the early nineteenth century up until the 1980s, natural foods were widely seen as embodying philosophical and political ideals far from the mainstream. These ideals were vigorously condemned by the medical establishment and government authorities. Advocates were commonly regarded as kooks, quacks, and faddists, and sometimes even faced jail time for their activities. Based on extensive research utilizing interviews and archival sources, Building Nature's Market shows how the meaning of natural foods was transformed from a culturally marginal, religiously inspired set of ideas and practices valorizing asceticism to a bohemian lifestyle to a mainstream consumer choice. Laura J. Miller argues that the key to understanding this transformation is to recognize the leadership of the natural foods industry. Rather than a simple tale of cooptation by market forces, Miller contends that the participation of business interests encouraged the natural foods movement to be guided by a radical skepticism of established cultural authority. She challenges assumptions that private enterprise is always aligned with social elites, instead arguing that profit-minded entities can make common cause with and even lead citizens in advocating for broad-based social and cultural change.

MILLER-IDRISS, CYNTHIA. 2018. *THE EXTREME GONE MAINSTREAM: COMMERCIALIZATION AND FAR RIGHT YOUTH CULTURE IN GERMANY.* PRINCETON: PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS.[3]

MOSS, GEOFFREY. 2017. *ARTISTIC ENCLAVES IN THE POST-INDUSTRIAL CITY: A CASE STUDY OF LAWRENCEVILLE PITTSBURGH.* NEW YORK: SPRINGER PUBLISHING.

This book clarifies, builds on and amends Richard Florida's comment that bohemian artists have become part of a larger creative class. The book defines a new heuristic type, the artistic creative class enclave, and presents an elaborate typological analysis of the similarities and differences between artistic creative class enclaves and other types of artistic enclaves

Moss discusses the benefits and limitations of artistic creative class enclaves for communities, cities, and postindustrial society. He demonstrates that Lawrenceville's artistic creative class enclave, unlike the relatively bohemian enclaves described in previous studies, and the artistic enclaves briefly described by Florida, has achieved long-term sustainability within its postindustrial urban context. The book makes policy suggestions designed to help those who wish to promote sustainable artistic enclaves.

STEVENS, MITCHELL, CYNTHIA MILLER-IDRISS, AND SETENEY SHAMI. 2018. *SEEING THE WORLD: HOW US UNIVERSITIES MAKE KNOWLEDGE IN A GLOBAL WORLD.* PRINCETON: PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS.

VILA, PABLO. 2017. *MUSIC, DANCE, AFFECT AND EMOTIONS IN LATIN AMERICA.* LANHAM, MD: LEXINGTON BOOKS.

VILA, PABLO AND CARLOS MOLINERO. 2017. *CANTANDO LOS AFECTOS MILITANTES. LAS EMOCIONES Y LOS AFECTOS EN DOS OBRAS DEL CANTO FOLKLÓRICO PERONISTA Y MARXISTA DE LOS '70.* BUENOS AIRES: ACADEMIA NACIONAL DEL FOLKLORE.

WAGGONER, MIRANDA R. 2017. *THE ZERO TRIMESTER: PRE-PREGNANCY CARE AND THE POLITICS OF REPRODUCTIVE RISK.* OAKLAND: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS.

JOURNAL ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

Brocato, Billy R. and **Oi-man Kwok**. 2017. "Competing Institutional Logics And Teaching Effectiveness In Traditional And Online University Classrooms." *The Journal of Public and Professional Sociology* 10(1): Art. 5.

Darwin, Helana. 2018. "Omnivorous Masculinity: gender capital and cultural legitimacy in craft beer culture." *Social Currents.* DOI: 2329496517748336.

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[3] More Information https://press.princeton.edu/titles/11142.html

Delano, Daisha L. and **J. David Knottnerus.** 2018. "The Khmer Rouge, Ritual and Control." *Asian Journal of Social Science* 46 (1-2): 79-110.

Fridman, Daniel and **Alex Luscombe**. 2017. "Gift-Giving, Disreputable Exchange, and the Management of Donations in a Police Department." *Social Forces* 96(2): 507–528.

Jasso, Guillermina. 2017. "Inequality in the Distribution of a Good Is a Bad, and Inequality in the Distribution of a Bad Is a Good." *European Sociological Review* 33(4): 604-614.

This article presents a theorem connecting the goodness or badness of a thing with the goodness or badness of inequality in the thing's distribution. The theorem, which applies to cardinally measurable things like income, debt, years in prison, disease risk, and risk of unemployment, states that if an observer regards the original thing as a good (bad), then that observer regards inequality in the thing's distribution as a bad (good). The proof uses three inequality measures and two fairness measures embedding observer framing of things as goods or bads. The theorem touches many themes in the sociological literature, not only goods and bads, inequality and stratification, the Weberian life chances, values, and attitudes toward inequality, but also, via its proof, fairness and moral development. Further, the theorem and its proof raise questions that provide new directions for theoretical and empirical research. For example, empirical tasks ahead include (1) learning more about inequality in bads (especially about their frequency distributions and inequality measures, to match the growing knowledge about differences across subgroups), and (2) studying both just rewards and justice evaluations, in both goods and bads, to assess the scope of justice concerns between earned and unearned things and between additive, transferable possessions and nonadditive, nontransferable characteristics. Finally, this work contributes to the growing understanding of the connections between inequality, justice, and the vast behavioral and social outcomes which inequality and justice, separately or together, generate.

Joosse, Paul. 2017. "Weber's Disciples: Theorizing the Charismatic Aristocracy." *Sociological Theory* 35(4): 334-358.

Joosse, Paul. 2017. "Expanding Moral Panic Theory to Include the Agency of Charismatic Entrepreneurs." *British Journal of Criminology*. Advance Access: [doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azx047](doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azx047) .

Jourdan, Julien, **Rodolphe Durand** and **Patricia H. Thornton**. 2017. "The Price of Admission: Organizational Deference as Strategic Behavior." *American Journal of Sociology* 123(1): 232-275.

This paper links the social psychological literature on deference and symbolic interaction theory, inspired Irving Goffman, to cultural differences in the relationships among market organizations. It explains how financial bankers and artistic directors in the film industry cooperate and co-produce films when they have conflicting goals and values and can't authentically cross these symbolic boundaries and abandon their goals and values that continually reinforce their differences. It demonstrates the sources of organizational deference giving and its role in cultural and social capital conversion and the maintenance of organizational relationships in conflicting institutional environments.

Saguy, Abigail C. 2018. "Europeanization or National Specificity? Legal Approaches to Sexual Harassment in France, 2002-2012." *Law & Society Review* 52(1): 140-171

Savelsberg. Joachim J. 2018. "Punitive Turn and Justice Cascade: Mutual Inspiration from Punishment and Society and Human Rights Literatures." *Punishment and Society* 20(1): 73–91.

Savelsberg, Joachim J. 2018. "Criminology in the United States: Contexts, Institutions and Knowledge in Flux." In: *The Handbook of the History and Philosophy of Criminology*, edited by Ruth Triplett. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 437-452.

Scarborough, Roscoe C. 2017. "Risk a Lot to Save a Lot: How Firefighters Decide Whose Life Matters." *Sociological Forum* 32(S1): 1073-1092.

Scarborough, Roscoe C. 2017. "Making It in a Cover Music Scene: Negotiating Artistic Identities in a 'Kmart Level Market.'" *Sociological Inquiry* 87(1): 153-178.

Surak, Kristin. 2017. "Rupture and Rhythm: A Phenomenology of National Experiences." *Sociological Theory* 35(4): 312-333.

van den Scott, Lisa-Jo K. 2017. "Time to Defy: The Use of Temporal Spaces to Enact Resistance." *Oppression and Resistance: Structure, Agency, Transformation - Studies in Symbolic Interaction*. 48:137-155.

Xu, Xiaohong. 2017. "Dialogic Struggle in the Becoming of the Cultural Revolution: Between Elite Conflict and Mass Mobilization." *Critical Historical Studies* 4(2): 209-242.

Awards & Distinctions

Julie C. Abril received the Bonnie S. Fisher Victimology Lifetime Career Achievement Award from the Division of Victimology of the American Society of Criminology (ASC) during the 2017 Annual Meetings of the ASC in Philadelphia, PA. This award goes to the scholar who has made a significant contribution in the area of victimology over the course of their lifetime. Dr. Abril has studied victimization among Native Americans throughout her career. Her work has centered on cultural differences in the meaning of and responses to victimization among Native Americans within the context of criminological theory. Based on her research and lifetime achievements, the committee felt that she has made a significant contribution to an area that is core to victimology and has shed light on an under-examined topic in the field.

Media Spotlight

Francesco Duina's 2018 book, *Broke and Patriotic: Why Poor Americans Love Their Country* (Stanford University Press) has received a lot of media coverage! An entire segment of Maine Public Radio's *Main Calling* was dedicated to the book.[4] Duina also wrote a related op-ed piece for the *San Francisco Chronicle.*[5]

Guillermina Jasso co-authored an August 4th, 2017 op-ed for the Ideas section of Time.com, "How Donald Trump's New Immigration Plan Could Harm the American Workforce."[6]

Abigail C. Saguy was quoted in these recent news articles on sexual harassment:

Los Angeles Times. February 9 2018. "Sexual misconduct accusations against California assemblywoman twist gender dynamics of #MeToo movement." By Melanie Mason.[7]
New York Times. February 8 2018. "The 'Manly' Jobs Problem." By Susan Chira.[8]
New York Times. January 26 2018. "Why Did Hillary Clinton Let This Happen?" By Susan Chira.[9]

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[4] Listed to the full segment here: http://mainepublic.org/post/broke-and-patriotic#stream/0
[5] https://www.sfchronicle.com/opinion/article/Poor-Americans-are-so-patriotic-because-the-12460682.php
[6] Available at http://time.com/4887558/legal-family-immigration-skilled-workforce/
[7] Available at http://lat.ms/2G5TMYS
[8] Available at http://nyti.ms/2skeZwi
[9] Available at http://nyti.ms/2EpcoU0