Book Reviews

Book Reviews

A Sociology of Mental Illness, by Mark Tausig, Janet Michello, and Sree Subedi. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1999. 240 pp. $42.00 paper.

Karen Glumm
Meredith College

A Sociology of Mental Illness argues that mental illness and its treatment is a social construction and, as such, also reflects broader social values and processes. Tausig, Michello, and Subedi stress that everyone's "chance" to be mentally ill is not the same. Rather, the frequency of mental illness varies by such factors as gender, socioeconomic status, marital status and work status. While some would explain these differences as due to biological predispositions, the authors successfully argue that these social factors themselves might cause mental illness. Therefor, the authors describe the common stresses and strains of everyday life that are the consequences of social stratification and social role configuration.

According to Tausig, Michello, and Subedi, social structures play a role in creating disorder. The treatment of the disorder as a socially organized response entails social constructions of the meaning of deviant behavior and socially agreed upon means of treating the disorder. Thus, the authors emphasize that structural inequalities (such as those related to gender, socioeconomic status, and race) are fundamental causes of distress. The authors stress that this does not suggest that other factors (i.e. biological, psychological) are not important. However, they do adequately press that societal arrangements (statuses, roles) are certainly related to feelings of distress that may subsequently be defined by society as mental illness. Their main push is that mental illness and its treatment is a social construction and, as such, also reflects broader social values and processes. The social causation requires the contextualization of risk, the societal reaction perspective requires the contextualization of treatment policy. Thus, the public and professional ideas about mental illness are related to one another. The contextualization of treatment policy means that mental health policy cannot be made without understanding the wider social, political, and economic contexts in which policy decisions occur.

63

At the onset, Tausig, Michello, and Subedi explicitly excluded discussions of biological/chemical/genetic, psychodynamic, cognitive, and behavioral explanations for disorder. The authors attempted to argue that such explanations of mental disorder are so widely familiar that contributions of the Sociological perspective might be obscured.

The first part of the book (chapters 2-8) focuses on the social origins of mental illness (stress; social status: gender, class, race, age; roles: spouse, parent, worker). In this area the authors argue that social life can cause mental disorder. In this section, Tausig, Michello, and Subedi demonstrate quite clearly that mental disorder can arise in the ordinary course of one's life as a direct result of the unequal distribution of life chances and resources.

The second part of the book (chapters 9-12) discusses societal reactions to mental illness (labeling deviant behavior as mental illness; public attitudes; professional labels; medicalization of deviant behavior as mental illness.) These chapters quite nicely describe the societal and institutional reactions to behaviors and thought processes that are defined as signs of mental illness. Tausig, Michello, and Subedi adequately argue that a sound perspective of broader social and political issues leads to an understanding of mental disorder and appropriate treatment.

Finally, the authors look at the challenge of community mental health (chapter 13.) The authors quite clearly describe the major debate bout community-based treatment of mental illness and the deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill. This chapter reviews the history and development of community mental health care in the United States to understand its current status and the change in the definition of and treatment for mental disorder. The authors clearly describe the current trends in community mental health. One of the main points was that large numbers of the severely or chronically mentally ill receive little or no psychiatric treatment. Thus, many are incarcerated in jails or remain homeless on the streets.

As a conclusion, Tausig, Michello, and Subedi inspire the reader to recognize the contribution of Sociology to the study of mental disorder. One contribution of sociology is the recognition that social structures play a role in creating disorder. Moreover, they described the treatment of disorder as a socially organized response. The contribution and place of sociological explanation is to realize that people are simultaneously psychological and sociological beings. Each individual holds unique personal histories and experiences. What is shared may lead directly to

feelings of distress but it can also be filtered through the concrete reality of one's life so that discrimination can lead to Public and professional ideas about mental illness are related to one another. The contextualization of treatment policy means that mental health policy cannot be made without understanding the wider social, political, and economic contexts in which policy decisions occur.

A Sociology of Mental Illness offers a strong addition to the study of mental illness in the field of Sociology. This book successfully discusses the social causes and reactions to mental illness. At this time I do offer a suggestion to enhance the authors' argument. It seems the authors may have overlooked that mental illness can be mis-diagnosed. For example, some research has indicated that private medical insurance patients may be diagnosed mentally ill. Patients without private health insurance may not be diagnosed as mentally ill. (my articles, Lyng). Thus, diagnoses can (at times) be socially constructed to enhance organizational profit.

A Sociology of Mental Illness can benefit those involved in Medical Sociology and Sociology of Organizations courses. This could be an excellent supplement for graduate courses and can be used in undergraduate courses (if faculty offer strong lectures.) This book would be an excellent source for those involved in research in Medicine and Complex Organizations.

Intersections: Readings in Sociology, **by Ralph B. McNeal, Jr., and Kathleen A. Tiemann, Eds. Boston, MA: Pearson Custom Publishing, 2001. 144 pp.** (Free desk copy).

Susan L. Schrader
Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Some things never change and then... This review focuses on a "create-your-own" textbook for Introductory Sociology. The "book" editors, McNeal and Tiemann, have taught introductory sociology and have been involved with the American Sociological Association Subsection on Undergraduate Education. From their teaching, research, and experience with ASA, these sociologists have worked with Pearson Custom Publishing to provide Introductory Sociology instructors with the tools necessary for crafting their own textbook of supplemental readings. Reviewing a "ready made" book and ordering it has been the standard procedure for many instructors preparing for each new term, but

this product alters the "unchangeable" pattern and provides a lot of creative flexibility to instructors.

The Intersections "book" came to me as a box containing a CD-ROM disk holding more than 300 full-text contemporary and classical readings, directions from the publisher on how to create a reader, and a small 5" by 8" book that offers an annotation of each reading and some examples of how the selected readings might appear in book form. As a reviewer (and potential user of such a product), I had questions in four areas. Allow me to address each of these questions briefly.

1. Are the selected articles ones teachers of Introductory Sociology would want to use?

Yes. The articles available for selection in Intersections are clustered in twenty areas typically covered in introductory sociology courses. For example, there are readings in categories such as "sociological perspective, "race and ethnicity," "deviance, conformity, and social control," and "stratification." Additionally, categories are devoted to various social institutions (e.g., education, religion, family, politics and religion, health and medicine) as well as other specialty areas some faculty choose to emphasize within the course (e.g., aging, population and environment, and social movements). In my opinion, the selections were familiar and potent choices that I would want students to read to understand more clearly what sociology is about. Having choices of classic or contemporary readings that present applied or abstract content is a very desirable dimension of the book-creating packet.

2. Is there flexibility within the flexibility?

Yes. The publishers seem to be aware that even though they are providing a great deal of choice, most of us would still want more choice and certainly the latitude to include our "favorite reading(s)" that may not be included among the 300+ selections. Many of us might wish to also include additional materials to a book such as a syllabus, list of additional readings or websites, or our own works. Within this "text creation" package, both options are possible. Those who wish to include materials of either kind are simply asked to provide a paper copy; for published materials, the faculty member is asked to provide a citation, and Pearson Custom Publishing does the "legwork" to obtain copyright permission for inclusion.

3. Is the process of crafting a text cumbersome?

No. The desired outcome is to have a text that carefully matches the individual instructor's style, goals, and sequencing of material while holding student costs down. All of the materials necessary for completing the project are available, and ordering may be done by fax, phone, mail, or e-mail. However, an order must be placed 8-10 weeks in advance of the term.

A bit of a skeptic, I tried to think through the various scenarios that would cause this "create-your-own" option to be more bother than it was worth to me as an instructor. For example, if I were to order 65 books and enrollment was less than what I anticipated, who pays for those extra texts? Reciprocally, if enrollment exceeded my expectations, what would be the possibility of getting my specialty texts quickly? I also wanted to know how much this tailored text was going to cost my students.

So, I went through the steps to create a text for my introductory sociology course. I selected 41 segments (14 topical prefaces and 27 readings) from the CD-ROM and included two articles of my own choosing. I accompanied the order form with a series of questions to Pearson Custom Publishing. I received an e-mail reply one week later. Based on my selection of <u>Intersection</u> readings (483 pages @ $.07/page) and outside readings, the total price for the text would be $48.36. The e-mail reply went on to explain policies allowing for return and/or reordering of texts. In short, I found the process of creating a text to be straightforward and simple, the publishing company's responsiveness to be timely and explanatory, and the guidelines for returns/additions to be fair. The student costs for the books, however, would probably be 30% higher due to the bookstore mark-up for similar textbooks in part because of the limits for resale; our bookstore manager also expressed worries about a 3-4 week wait for undersupply—a definite hazard during a term that passes all too quickly.

4. What elements of scholarship may be ascribed to McNeal and Tiemann for having edited this unique "book?"

In addition to assisting with the selection of readings, McNeal and Tiemann have developed prefaces for each of the twenty sections of readings and have crafted questions for discussion at the end of every reading. The prefaces may or may not be selected by the instructor, but they do provide a cogent context and introduction to the subfields in question. The questions at the end of each reading prove to be a useful

probing of key concepts and ideas. Generally, I found the provision of prefaces and questions to make the option of a create-a-text more appealing to me as an instructor.

In closing, Intersections provides instructors with another option in crafting their introductory sociology course. Given the alternatives (e.g., a ready-made supplemental reader or use of online full-text readings from databases such as JSTOR), the requirement of advanced preparation and limitations related to student cost, supply and resale may make the Intersections text less desirable. On the other hand, this option allows instructors the personal touch of tailoring a supplemental text to their preferences, and that's a plus.

***White Saris and Sweet Mangoes: Aging, Gender, and Body in North India,* by Sarah Lamb. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000. 323 pp. $55.00 cloth, $22.50 paper.**

Tracy B. Citeroni
Mary Washington College

Sarah Lamb's ethnography, White Saris and Sweet Mangoes, is a truly innovative contribution to the qualitative study of aging, gender, and the body. As Lamb simultaneously explores these three major themes and interrogates the borders between them, she successfully challenges static notions of aging, gender, and body that remain in anthropology (and, I would add, sociology) despite contemporary critiques. By choosing aging as the primary lens through which she views and understands other dimensions of the sociocultural world of one West Bengal village, Lamb is making an important theoretical contribution that should be noted by every qualitative sociologist studying aging, gender, and/or the body.

In laying the theoretical groundwork for White Saris and Sweet Mangoes, Lamb draws upon the literatures on culture, gender, aging, and the body. In particular, she focuses on recent shifts within the fields of anthropology and feminist studies (I would, again, include sociology) that emphasize the fluid and transitory character of such concepts. Previous research on gender and body, she notes, has been overly, if not explicitly, concerned with youth. This preoccupation has perpetuated the notion that gender and body are somehow fixed in time and place. In her own words: "Processes of aging (however defined) cut across all our

bodies and lives; they play a central role in how we construct gender identities, power relations, and the wider social and material worlds we inhabit – indeed, what it is to be a person." (p.9) Conceptions of gender and bodies transform with age. What it means to be female or male, as well as the symbolic meaning of different bodies, are constantly changing throughout the life course. Lamb gains this insight through her research in India and makes the dynamic and fluid representation of aging, gender, and body the thesis of her text.

Lamb conducted her research in the north Indian village of Mangaldihi. Despite her more general claims about the sociocultural world, personhood, and gender relations in this Bengali village, Lamb does position herself within and center her text on the daily lives of older women. This choice makes sense given the dearth of older women's perspectives and the absence of their voices in South Asian research, as Lamb describes in the introduction. Though she explicitly aims to treat men to the same extent as women, she simply devotes much less attention to their daily lives and bodies. One will gain only limited insight into the subjective world of men's daily lives and men's bodies from reading this book. I do not see this as a weakness of the book, but rather a consequence of the patriarchal social system and her own positionality within the village.

The book is divided into three parts. In Part I, Lamb introduces us to the people she studied and explores the meaning of personhood, the organization of family moral systems, and the nature of generational conflict in the village of Mangaldihi. The overriding theme of this section is social relations. Lamb explains that individuals in Mangaldihi exist within the <u>net of maya</u>, "or web of attachments, affections, jealousies, and love that in Bengali's eyes make up social relations." (p. 28) <u>Maya</u>, she tells us, is formed through everyday activities and links people not only to other people but also to places, animals, and objects in their everyday world. Bodies, female and male, young and old are tangled up together in this intricate web of <u>maya</u>. At the same time that <u>maya</u> binds the community together, it also presents particular problems. With Lamb's discussion of power in intergenerational relationships, we see that the ties of <u>maya</u> also provoke conflict. Consensus and contest are operating simultaneously in the everyday lives of the Bengali villagers. Thus, we discover that the web of and the binding force of <u>maya</u> are kept in place and reproduced not only by consensus and membership, but by contest and conflict as well.

Part II of the text focuses on the processes of aging and dying. Once the bonds of maya are formed, they are very difficult to break, which is ultimately important in understanding how people age and die in this society. Here Lamb suggests to us that her aged villagers are involved in a lifelong process of negotiating and then relinquishing ties with people, places, animals, and objects. She details the making and remaking of social relations and identity throughout the life course, as communicated to her by older women and men in Mangaldihi. As Bengalis age, their bodies "cool," they occupy a more peripheral social position, and they become concerned with how to reduce maya in preparation for their deaths. "…In the village of Mangaldihi, people tended to live their whole lives in households crowded with others; to sleep every night in large beds or on overlapping mats intertwined with siblings, parents, children, and neighbors; to think of and experience themselves as being substantially, as well as emotionally, part of others. And they thought, too, that such substantial-emotional interconnections tend naturally to increase over a long life rather than decrease. There it makes sense that the problem of how to loosen bonds in late life, and become separate enough to be able to depart in death, could be perceived as pressing." (p. 143) Dying and funeral rituals are designed to break maya and to let a person go, even though some bonds continue into death.

It is in the third and final section of her ethnography that Sarah Lamb revisits her thesis and fully develops it. Part III is devoted to gendered transformations throughout the life course and particularly in widowhood. Two themes predominate: women's bodies and women's social ties. The "bodily training" that women undergo in Mangaldihi is largely aimed towards "containing, controlling, and channeling women's sexuality toward a husband, marriage, and fertile reproduction," according to Lamb. (p. 183) Women were viewed as being more "impure" and their bodies more "open" and "hot" than men's, though there are pretty significant caste differences on this issue. As other researchers on South Asia have recently noted, Lamb discovers substantial evidence of women's resistance to these categorizations of their bodies/selves. She neither denies the oppressive forces of bodily control nor romanticizes their resistance; she simply recognizes that "…women in Mangaldihi did in many contexts reinterpret, play with, subvert, and critically evaluate the disciplining practices and ideologies that otherwise often served to control their bodies and lives." (p. 197) It

70

8

is here that Lamb's entire argument culminates, as she explores the ways in which women's bodies and identities "shifted in profound ways" throughout the life course. She pays particular attention to widowhood, which is an important cultural marker for women (though not for men) in the village and which means something quite different for younger and older women.

As a sociologist deeply concerned with issues of social inequality, I would appreciate more explicit and critical attention to the role of caste position as it intersects with the prominent themes of the book. This, as well as the relative lack of attention to men's daily lives and bodies throughout the life course, are limitations of Lamb's study, but they do not detract from her overall argument. After reading this ethnography, one will wonder how it is possible that anyone could study gender and the body without using age as a category of analysis. The insight we gain from examining gender and body through the conceptual lens of age so pleasantly complicates our understanding of the social construction of each that it seems almost crude to separate them.

White Saris and Sweet Mangoes is a vivid portrayal of the interplay between aging, gender and body. Sarah Lamb's writing is accessible and engaging, yet she presents stimulating and complex ideas. It will be an informative and provocative addition to the library of any sociologist of aging, gender, and/or body. It is also a challenging and beneficial addition to classes on similar themes at both the graduate and undergraduate levels.

Racist America: Roots, Current Realities, & Future Reparations, by Joe R. Feagin. New York, NY: Routledge Press, 2000. 296 pp. $25.00 cloth, $17.95 paper.

Michele Lee Chesser
Randolph-Macon College

Joe Feagin's new book, Racist America: Roots, Current Realities, & Future Reparations , primarily is a comprehensive review of the literature on racism in the United States. To end the book's description here, however, would be to greatly underestimate the value of this text. Today there are numerous books devoted to the subject of racism in the U.S., but Feagin's stands out from the rest due to two main characteristics that make it an unswerving and forceful critique of

America's racist system—the bold use of critical language combined with a very comprehensive account of the origins and history of racism and its contemporary consequences.

A disturbing aspect of race relations today is the growing belief that racism and discrimination are no longer serious problems in the U.S. This denial is supported by, and reflected in, a change in the way Americans talk about race today. In the media and the political and social arenas, race is discussed using benign terms such as "tolerance," "color-blindness," and "respect for diversity." Allen Johnson, in his book Privilege, Power, & Difference, points out the problematic nature of this language by stating "We can't talk about [the trouble we're in] if we can't use the words" (p. 11). If Americans are to have a meaningful and honest discussion of racism in our society, we must insist that words like racism, oppression, dominance, privilege, sexism, and classism be used in the discourse. Feagin not only supports this idea, but also puts it into action and, in turn, provides a scathing critique of U.S. society and the system of racism on which it is built. This bold and painfully honest language will most likely put many whites (especially white males) on the defensive, but unlike other texts which challenge those in privileged groups, Feagin provides ample support for his arguments which makes him and his ideas difficult to dismiss. Feagin clearly understands that blunt discussions of oppression and dominance are absolutely necessary to shake white Americans out of their complacency about racism.

Using this critical discourse, Feagin outlines the origins of racist ideology and the history of racism in the U.S. from the 1400's to the present. The importance of this historical discussion can not be overstated. By clearly explaining how racism is not a natural and inevitable human reaction to difference but instead is an ideology created by European colonists during the era of imperialism and the creation of capitalism, Feagin shows the connection between oppression and white privilege. White Europeans and European Americans created the ideology of white racial superiority for the specific purpose of justifying the enslavement, murder, and exploitation of millions of Africans, African Americans, and indigenous peoples. Acknowledging the historical, political, and economical basis for racism highlights the culpability of all whites as a group and compels us to consider the moral obligation that whites have to provide reparations to African Americans, as well as other minority groups that have been exploited in the past or present.

Racist America takes the reader from the beginning of slavery, through the periods of reconstruction and Jim Crow segregation into the present where inequality, discrimination, and racism still exist at high levels. Spotlighted is the continued presence of racism and discrimination in all facets of African American' lives. According to Feagin, the blatant to more subtle and covert racism and discrimination that still exists today can be found in the courtrooms and boardrooms across the United States. It exists in the schools and public spaces and in voting procedures and local battles of political representation. Racism is at the heart of segregated neighborhoods and segregated places of worship and is present in the actions of too many realtors, insurance agents, bankers, employers, and fellow employees. The disproportionate number of African Americans living in poverty, as well as the extreme concentration of wealth among whites, is directly tied to past and present discrimination and systemic racism. And at its worst, racism can be seen in gross acts of violence against minorities that still occur today. For African Americans, racism is a fact of life experienced on a daily basis.

In short, Feagin provides detailed evidence of how racism is not just a blemish on an otherwise clean American society. Racism is part of the foundation of the U.S. and it permeates all aspects and institutions of our society. Feagin uses the term 'systemic racism' to highlight the ubiquitous nature of racism and show how the culture of American institutions are interwoven with racism (as well as sexism and classism). Change toward equality can only occur by the restructuring of the distribution of power and privilege in societies and it is clear that the purpose of Racist America is to not only increase knowledge and understanding of racism but to compel the reader into action. Feagin clearly is in agreement with Karl Marx that "social philosophers have attempted to understand the world. The point, however, is to change it." Racist America is a step toward this goal and is recommended for all social researchers, upper-level students, graduate students, and agents of social change.

Environmentalism Unbound: Exploring New Pathways for Change, by
**Robert Gottlieb. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001. 396 pp. $32.95
cloth.**

Annette Prosterman
Our Lady of the Lake University

At last! American environmentalism had broadened its base of
participants and become more inclusive of the lower classes and
minorities by the early 1990s, once it had conceptually reframed the
movement to encompass not only issues of wilderness protection and
preservation and resource conservation and management, but also issues
of environmental justice. The movement could now take greater strides,
moving forward in unison with increased strength. Or so we thought.

Environmentalism was indeed more inclusive by the turn of the
century, but had remained fragmented by its constituents' varied
concerns. Thus the movement still has not been as effective in bringing
about social change as it potentially could be. How can the disparate
interests of the American environmental movement be brought together?
How can environmentalism be unbound from the differences that hold it
back? In Environmentalism Unbound, Robert Gottlieb, Henry R. Luce
Professor of Urban and Environmental Policy at Occidental College and
Director of the Urban and Environmental Policy Institute, proposes a
strategy that involves merging the vision and goals of the environmental
justice and pollution prevention movements.

Gottlieb argues that mainstream environmentalism has not gone
far enough in embracing issues of everyday life. It is bounded in large
part by its lingering, fundamental orientation toward the management
and consumption of nature and its resources. Environmentalism retains a
language—a discourse—that still separates the ecological from the
social; that still separates nature from the communities in which people
live, work, and go about their everyday lives. It must become more
oriented toward the development of livable communities. A linking of
environmental justice and pollution prevention approaches could be the
means through which this reorientation, both in conception and in
practice, occurs.

Considering the questions of whether a convergent community
could be formed between the interests of environmental justice and
pollution prevention and how that might happen, Gottlieb explores three

social contexts in which both of these interests are involved: the dry cleaning industry, janitorial services, and the food supply system. For each context, Gottlieb provides detailed, historical background and analysis. He delineates how the dry cleaning industry became dependent on the use of toxic chemicals in its cleaning process, and why it is difficult to shake its chemical dependence. He explains how janitorial workers came to use cleaning products that are hazardous to their health and to the health of people who work in areas where the products are applied, and why the workers, themselves, sometimes opt to use products that are the most hazardous. Finally, Gottlieb explores changes in how food has been grown and distributed as our food supply system has undergone the process of globalization, and why lack of access to good quality food is now a critical security concern in U.S. communities.

Gottlieb does not paint an overly optimistic picture with regard to social change. In each social context, he carefully outlines the factors that reinforce the status quo and that act barriers to change. He also discusses opportunities for change, however, and provides examples of occasions in which interested parties in the small business, evaluation research, and community organizing camps have worked together to bring about change in these areas. Although he does not make this a central theme of his book, I was struck by Gottlieb's indication that solutions often entail subtle changes in perceptions—perceptions, for example, that the cleaning of certain garments must, necessarily, involve the use of chemical solvents, that the most toxic products for cleaning buildings are the most efficient, or that food products from far-away places, which have been engineered to be consistent in color or shape, are superior to the produce that the local region may have to offer. Change in these contexts involves reeducating and retraining people, in transforming their thinking and developing new skills, and in the process, improving the quality of communities in which people live their daily lives.

Gottlieb's argument is ultimately convincing. For many people, the environment seems like a distant place—therefore, environmentalism seems like a distant concern—distant even to those who are actual participants in efforts to bring about social change related to environmental issues. Bringing the discourse of environmentalism home, to the level of everyday experience, makes good sense. And the linking of environmental justice and pollution prevention as a means to translate discourse into unified action seems viable. Certainly, the possibilities for

doing so are well documented in Environmentalism Unbound, which leads me to mention the single weakness I have found with this book.

The lengthy historical accounts of the dry cleaning industry, janitorial service products, and the food supply system are interesting, and the research that must have been involved is admirable. The historical details presented by the author are sometimes overwhelming, however, and for this reason, I hesitate to recommend this book for an undergraduate class. The book, or perhaps some of its chapters, may be appropriate for graduate students in the areas of environmental sociology, social change, or social movements, depending upon related course content. However, I consider the book a "must read" for any social researcher, project director or evaluator, community organizer, or social activist working with any one of these three, or related, areas of concern. For such individuals, Gottlieb offers a rich and comprehensive view of the historical background and greater social context for the environmental justice and pollution prevention issues involved, and sociological insight into the barriers and opportunities for change in these, and in related, areas.

Tripping on the Color Line: Black-White Multiracial Families in a Racially Divided World, **by Heather M. Dalmage. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000. 192 pp. $50.00 cloth, $20.00 paper.**

Jack Niemonen
University of South Dakota

In the curious world that constitutes the race relations industry, bad books are celebrated and good books are ignored. Tripping on the Color Line is no exception. Praised as "one of the most brilliant and provocative books yet written about the politics of multiracial identity" (Michael Eric Dyson), it is in fact a mediocre and tendentious piece of work despite what could have been a worthwhile thesis. Based on her experiences as a white woman married to a black man, as well as on a set of interviews conducted with multiracial families, Dalmage argues that the institution of the family is a primary means through which "a racially divided and racist society" is maintained (p. 2). Multiracial individuals and families are forced into prescribed categories, experience the world differently from non-multiracial individuals and families, and apparently

aren't fully accepted by either the black or white communities (pp. 2, 5-6). Forced to confront race in ways others do not, their accounts of race reproduce the shortcomings of essentialist and "color-blind" (read: class-based) arguments (pp. 16, 33). Furthermore, society effectively prevents them from doing otherwise (p. 25). All actions, large and small, protect "white supremacy" and "a system of whiteness" that "acts to terrorize" blacks, as well as whites married to blacks (p. 68). By examining this predicament, Dalmage believes that it is possible to evaluate race in "a more sophisticated and progressive way" (p. 16). She is correct to note that the language of race is inadequate to the task of understanding racial complexities today (p. 173). However, her promise to construct an alternative is not delivered.

Multiracial families living near the "color line" inevitably encounter "borderism:" a form of discrimination faced by those who would cross the color line and the product of a racist society intent on "safeguarding whiteness" (pp. 40-41, 44). Racial segregation in housing is example of borderism. However, Dalmage ignores the complex motivations that underlie the racial structuring of housing markets (not all of which are racially based) in favor of an argument that working class whites are either racists who scapegoat blacks as the cause of their property devaluations or dupes in the service of "racist ambassadors," including realtors, lenders, landlords, and "racist white neighbors" (p. 78). Here Dalmage relies primarily on Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton's American Apartheid (imparting a flavor to the book that the authors probably would not appreciate) and does not discuss the wide variations in residential segregation patterns that exist across the United States. In fact, as recent research has shown, extreme segregation appears to be limited to a small number of major metropolitan areas that have a unique set of sociohistorical, political economic, and demographic characteristics.

Dalmage does not make clear whether or not borderism is analytically distinct from localism--an orientation to the social world that distinguishes working class members from their upper middle class counterparts. Among other characteristics, this orientation includes suspicion of, and hostility toward, outsiders Without appropriate statistical controls, it is impossible to determine--despite the author's claims to the contrary--that borderism is the result of (1) essentialist thinking on the part of blacks and whites alike, and (2) society's

determination to maintain racial categories. Borderism could reflect a variety of other possibilities.

At this point, the book goes from bad to worse. Throughout, Dalmage is unable to use the term "society" without prefacing it with racially-divided, racist, or white-supremacist. (Indeed, she often uses these qualifiers in combination.) By page 50, this mantra is wearying and by the end of the book it is downright annoying. Furthermore, it encourages a framework that is static, ahistorical, one-dimensional, and reductionist. Recent developments in the sociology of race relations, particularly the empirical debates with William Julius Wilson, are absent from the author's analysis. Rather, in her view, the system functions purely at an ideological level, protecting "white privilege" at all costs (p. 64). Dalmage reduces the post-1970s race-class debate that now exceeds 500 refereed articles to one paragraph (see p. 15); obviously, one paragraph cannot do justice to a complex and nuanced controversy. She ignores the widespread changes that have occurred in American society since the 1960s; indeed, the debate on the declining significance of race is altogether absent.

The literature review of essentialist and social constructionist views on race is hardly much better. Dalmage cites without evaluation or critique the highly controversial and ontologically problematic argument promulgated recently by Joe Feagin that only whites can be racist (p. 44); furthermore, that if blacks appear to be racist, it must be of a different kind. (This argument is similar to the epistemologically problematic claim that a history of oppression has made the concept of social class irrelevant to blacks.) Yet, the author claims simultaneously that white women may suffer the effects of so-called "rebound racism" (a concept that defies operationalization if the author's definition is accepted; see p. 63). On page 66, Dalmage argues that she, herself, was a victim of rebound racism as she and her husband were pulled over on a New Jersey interstate for no apparent reason. As she speculates on the potentially racist reasons why, she notes in passing that prior to this incident she had been "pulled over several times while alone" (p. 66), each time receiving a warning, which she attributes to "white privilege." Perhaps her driving record had prompted the officer to pull her over (she was out of state), and that the presence of her husband was coincidental. In this example, it is her word against alternative interpretations of the situation.

78

Most of the author's conclusions are derived from data based on qualitative interviews; however, the book is absent any methodological overview or data quantification. No controls are introduced, including socioeconomic status; for example, on page 52 Dalmage assumes ipso facto that power relations between white men and black men are mediated <u>primarily</u> by race. The use of quotes, the primary source of evidence for the author's claims, seems contrived and anecdotal. Some quotes appear to have been taken out of context. One of the most egregious examples appears on page 51. A white man, who was married to a black woman and who did not share apparently the author's obsession with race, argued that race was not central in his life. Dalmage dismisses his observations by claiming that he was "proving masculinity through a show of strength, rugged individualism, and disinterest and thus verbally disregarded border patrolling and racial images." She imputes that he did not "recognize the privilege associated with whiteness," nor did he recognize the problem of power generally; nevertheless, Dalmage alleges that he used his power as a white man to divert the discussion. Reading between the lines in this book suggests that any white man who disagreed with the author's interpretations would be summarily dismissed. (This problematic raises the question of whether a white male reviewer who found the author's framework sorely lacking also would be dismissed as a case of someone attempting to preserve white male privilege.)

Another egregious example appears on page 128. A couple consisting of a white woman and black man who tried out a mattress in a department store complained that "'these salesmen would come flying up to us'." Dalmage interprets this observation as reflecting "threatening images of interracial sexuality," presumably to be dispatched by the salesmen. However, the reader does not know if in fact the salesmen were working on commission and could not care less whom they sold mattresses to so long as they sold them to somebody.

Throughout this book, the author's conclusions are prone to over-statement and rhetoric; for example, whites appear in this book as a monolithic category devoid of social class, cultural, or power differences. This problem is observable in phrases such as "the invisibility and terror of institutionalized white supremacy" (p. 26) and the repeated claim that whites are granted "privileges" (not specified or defined) on the basis of skin color alone (pp. 26-27; 174). In Dalmage's framework, white or racial privilege replaces the concept of social class interest altogether

(see p. 38). Without offering any substantive supporting evidence, Dalmage claims that whites in American society are consumed with a desire to maintain--alternately--racial identities, "purity of whiteness," or racial superiority. For example, in a commentary on transracial adoptions where the parent is black and the child appears to be white, the author makes the audacious statement that "the black parent is undermined as white society attempts to keep its privileges by maintaining the 'proper order of things'" (p. 164).

On page 54, Dalmage claims that increasing economic insecurity (the causes of which the author has nothing to say) encourages whites to "cling to images that promote feelings of superiority," which in turn requires a "racial hierarchy and a firm essentialist color line." This claim is a gross simplification of an extraordinarily complex phenomenon. Ignoring evidence to the contrary, the author promulgates the idea that the United States is an irredeemably white supremacist system; even attempts to create multiracial categories on the U.S. Census are construed as evidence of white efforts to "fine-tune identities grounded in notions of superiority" (p. 150). Indeed, Dalmage goes so far as to suggest that as whites become a numerical minority, they "may encourage greater divisions within communities of color" (p. 151).

Despite recent efforts to construct a more objective and less value-laden sociology of race relations, racial politics are alive and well-- evident not only in the personal experiences of the multiracial families interviewed (which is perhaps one of the strengths of the book), but also in the "anti-sociology" of the author herself. The dilemma posed between essentialist and materialist arguments is not resolved in this book, even though important insights are promised. Nor does the conclusion state anything definitive; it meanders through transracial adoption and other issues, all of which have been discussed in greater depth elsewhere. Even contemporary multiracial organizations are dismissed as social organizations that do not advocate an "antiracism agenda" (p. 139); therefore, they don't challenge "the unjust color line" (p. 141). The author's claim that "the best way to reproduce white supremacy is to struggle for color-blind policies that ultimately mask inequality under a facade of meritocracy" (pp. 132-133, 156) (1) slights the important issues raised by William Julius Wilson in When Work Disappears and The Bridge Over the Racial Divide, (2) is offered without supporting evidence, (3) ignores one of the great structures of inequality (social class), and (4) does not address a substantial research literature published

in recent years that demonstrates that Wilson was more than partially correct in his thesis on the declining significance of race, if measured by educational, occupational, and income attainments. Dalmage concludes that race "is a cage [read: caste] to which people are assigned at birth" (p. 156). Racism and white supremacy continue unabated (p. 157), as if history has stood still since the plantation era. Masquerading as sociology, this book is in fact little more than a poorly argued polemic. Consequently, I cannot recommend it.

***Colonizing Hawai'i: The Cultural Power of Law*, by Sally Engle Merry, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000. 364 pp. $62.50 cloth, $19.95 paper.**

· Scott London
Randolph-Macon College

Hawai'i is arguably the least understood corner of the United States, occupying a nearly invisible spot in the (mainland) American imagination. Hidden behind romantic travel poster images of exquisite scenery and joyful natives, Hawai'i also represents a serious gap in America's comprehension of its own cultural history. While displacement of indigenous peoples on the continent hovers in the periphery of our consciousness, the American origin myth centers on the liberation of oppressed colonies, not our own colonization of others. The field of cultural anthropology has developed an elaborate critique of European colonialism and its impact on non-Western peoples, but U.S. colonialism has received inadequate attention. Sally E. Merry, in her book <u>Colonizing Hawai'i: The Cultural Power of Law</u>, becomes one of a handful of anthropologists to "repatriate" this critique by examining America's role as a colonizing power in the Pacific, and by detailing how the colonial project shaped the 50th state. A leading scholar in the anthropology of law for the last two decades, Merry, Professor of Anthropology at Wellesley College, examines law's contribution to the cultural transformations of the 19th century leading to Hawaiian annexation and statehood. She describes the process by which the Americanization of Hawaiian law changed behavioral norms and the "cultural logic" of everyday life, especially in the areas of sexuality and marriage. But legal change itself was forged through complex interactions among indigenous power structures, foreign missionaries

81

and merchants, and the international trade system. Merry provides a detailed and persuasive picture of how local and global processes intersected in the cultural, legal, and political re-invention of Hawai'i.

The core of Merry's study is an historical ethnography of the town of Hilo on the Island of Hawai'i. Methodologically, she relies on close analysis of court records from the 1830's through the turn of the century. Much of the book is devoted to connecting case content to both the town's social history and to the international political-economic context. A quantitative analysis of these documents enables Merry to chart patterns of change in marriage and divorce, as well as the criminalization of sexual activity. As qualitative data, court records constitute a genre constrained by the conventions of the local legal culture. Nevertheless, they provide an indispensably rich view of law in everyday life in Hawai'i. The author supplements case narratives by interviewing elderly individuals who recall the plantation era, albeit subsequent to the period in question. Ethnographic research conducted in Hilo throughout the 1990s will form the basis of a new book on contemporary Hawai'i.

As the narrative moves back and forth between micro-level cultural changes and the macro-level conditions that brought missionaries, merchants, laborers and legal reformers to the islands, the author draws on postcolonial theory to elucidate the convergence of religious, economic, and political interests in the domination of the Kingdom. The colonial project was not scripted in advance, however, and rule was never total. Merry tells a nuanced story of domination in which resistance and ambivalence play an important part. A particular strength of this book is its close attention to the role of "serendipity" in Hawai'i's metamorphosis. For example, New Englanders had a disproportionate influence on the islands, and a Harvard trained judge re-made the Hawaiian criminal law according to the Massachusetts model.

Another strength is the identification of conflict and ambiguity among the actors on both sides of the colonizing drama. Missionaries and merchants were often at odds over the treatment of the Hawaiian population, although their outlooks ultimately converged in the disciplined native body promoted by the law: sexually restrained, hard-working, confined within the bourgeois family. The leaders of the Kingdom initially perceived enough continuity between American and Hawaiian law that the threat to local authority and culture appeared nominal. Indeed, the Americanization of the legal system was embraced

by the leaders as a protection against outside interference because they saw that "civilized" nations were accorded sovereignty in the European nation-state system, and nothing symbolized civilization better than Western law. Merry describes the sad irony by which this strategy backfired. Rather than earning independence for Hawai'i, the law came to define Hawaiians as undisciplined, immoral, and unable to govern themselves, providing a legitimating ideology for the political annexation it was meant to prevent. Nonetheless, Merry takes pains to demonstrate that the law is not a unilateral tool. For example, even as legal reform dramatically increased patriarchal control inside the family, women began using it against battering husbands.

The role of law in the colonial project was not simply to change the economic and political landscape, but to instigate a cultural transformation that would make economic and political control more effective. Nowhere is the power of law more central to colonialism than in the domain of sexuality and family. Outraged by what they saw as the lascivious nature of the Hawaiians and chaos in their family relationships, missionaries campaigned against local sexual and marital norms. What had been flexible but well-regulated practices were soon criminalized and mis-labeled as prostitution, fornication, and adultery. The nuclear family gained a privileged status in law. The right to divorce was all but nullified. Women were hit hardest as their property rights contracted and freedom of movement was restricted primarily to the domestic arena. Within a few decades the patriarchal, property-owning bourgeois family had become the new norm. The traditional extended Hawaiian family, along with the political and economic structures designed around it, was in tatters. The result was a new order of gender identities and family arrangements that could be assimilated readily into American society.

As the theoretical, methodological, and geographic lines between the work of anthropologists and sociologists continue to blur, this book illustrates the value of bringing an anthropological framework, more familiar in research on the non-Western world, to the study of the U.S. Merry brings the critique of colonialism home, providing insights into American "domestication" of a foreign culture, and the role of the 19th century colonial project in the development of American society. The book also maps out the complex ways in which American law can be used to pursue, and resist, a particular political or economic agenda.

Great Plains Sociologist

        Those interested in a broader sampling of recent work in legal
anthropology should review Contested States: Law, Hegemony and
Resistance (Mindie Lazarus-Black and Susan F. Hirsch, eds. New York:
Routledge, 1994). Colonizing Hawai'i would serve as an excellent text
for graduate courses on either the anthropology or sociology of law.
Theoretically complex but lucidly written, individual chapters may be
considered for advanced undergraduate courses as well. Teachers of
undergraduate courses and those interested in Americanist
anthropological contributions to the law and society field may want to
review Merry's Getting Justice and Getting Even: Legal Consciousness
among Working-Class Americans (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan
Press, 1990).

***Thinking About Social Problems: An Introduction to Constructionist
Perspectives*, by Donileen R. Loseke, New York: Aldine de Gruyter,
1999. 227 pp. $39.00 cloth, $20.00 paper.**

Jeanne Mekolichick
Radford University

        Donileen R. Loseke is currently Associate Professor and Chair at
the University of South Florida, co-editor of the Journal of
Contemporary Ethnography, and advisory editor of Social Problems.
Recent book publications include Current Controversies on Family
Violence, 1993 Edited by Richard J. Gelles and Donileen R. Loseke.
Newbury Park: Sage, and The Battered Woman and Shelters: The Social
Construction of Wife Abuse. 1992. State University of New York Press.
Dr. Loseke was the 1994 recipient of the Charles Horton Cooley Award
for recent contributions to Symbolic Interactionism, from the Society for
the Study of Symbolic Interaction.
        Loseke's aim in writing this book was to provide an introductory
text using the social constructionist perspective to examine social
problems that functioned as an overview of social constructionism for the
novice reader using current, concrete examples. The result is a clearly
written primer on the social construction of social problems accessible to
the introductory student as well as a resource for those more
knowledgeable in the area.
        The text is divided into three parts. The first part, "Issues in
Studying Social Problems," introduces the reader to the objectivist and

84

constructionist perspectives of social problems. The author contrasts the two perspectives emphasizing the importance of both objective conditions and subjective definitions (the contextual constructionist perspective). Loseke then presents a "game" metaphor that she uses throughout the book to examine the claims-making process. The reader is introduced to the "goals" of the game, the "players" in the game, the "activities" that make up the game, as well as the "strategies," "motives," and "competitions" involved in the "social problems game." She also introduces the phrase "social problems work" which she uses to emphasize how we construct the categorizations of people and conditions used in the social problems game.

The second part of the primer, "Constructing Successful Packages of Claims," examines the content of claims. Included here is an investigation of how moralities are drawn upon to construct claims, how conditions and people are "created" in claims, and how solutions are constructed based on the moralities used and how the conditions and people are typified. These elements -- moralities, people, conditions, and solutions -- are problematized, highlighting the issues of competition among claims-makers and "social problems work."

The final part, "From Social Constructions to Social Actions," ties together the chapters of part two by examining how "claims-making packages" function in daily life from the perspectives of the "practical actor," social service workers, and their clients. This section also revisits the questions posed in the first section regarding the examination of objective conditions and subjective definitions, as well as challenging the reader to evaluate his or her performance as a participant in the social problems game. She ends with a list of suggestions on how to "become a good consumer of social problems claims and a good user of social problems images" (p. 186).

Loseke includes a theoretical appendix focusing on both objective and constructionist theories used to examine social problems as well as a discussion of debates within the constructionist perspective itself. While both of these issues are briefly reviewed in the body of the text, this appendix provides a more in depth discussion of these topics.

There are several themes that permeate this book. First, in each chapter Loseke addresses the contrasts between the complexity of social life and the typifications used by claims-makers in the social problems game. As such, the reader is continually reminded of the range of individual people with specific problems, the necessity of the claims-

85

makers to categorize and typify these people and their conditions for presentation to audiences, and the complications that arise from this predicament. Likewise, the reader is reminded of the "work" that is involved in the creation of social problems. Second, throughout the text the role of various players in the "social problems industry" are highlighted and examined, including the media, politicians, audiences, and scientists. Third, while a game metaphor is used, Loseke emphasizes the seriousness of the game. She discusses the tangible consequences of successful claims for those both directly involved in the game and for those indirectly affected. Fourth, the text contains numerous endnotes in each chapter providing the reader with further information on topics addressed and directs the reader toward supplementary readings. Finally, there is an activist tone to the text, urging its readers to become engaged in the social problems game as claims-makers, audience members, and consumers of social services.

Overall, the text is successful in achieving its goal. It provides an accessible discussion of the constructionist perspective, invites its readers to critically examine the process of social problem construction, gives readers tools to evaluate social problems claims and "packages" that are presented to them, and highlights their role(s) in the "social problems game."

This book is ideal for a lower division, introductory Social Problems class where the instructor is seeking something other than the "social problem of the week" approach to the course. As such, this primer fills a void in the array of texts for teaching undergraduate Social Problems. I see this as the most important contribution of this book. If used for a Social Problems class, it would probably be best supplemented with a reader or selected articles to give students more content and application of the concepts and examples presented in the primer, and I would not recommend assigning the theoretical appendix for lower division classes.

Mind the Gap: Hierarchies, Health and Human Evolution, by **Richard
G. Wilkinson, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001. 74pp. $9.95,
Hardcover.**

Steve Blanchard
Our Lady of the Lake University

Sometimes is seems that sociology has been too long in a state of
denial over its essential episteme: social context. If we have not been
outright busying ourselves attempting to prove that ecological effects are
somehow fallacious, we have, at the least, commented knowingly to one
another at conferences on quantitative research methods that contextual
variables must really be misspecified effects that truly operate at the
level of the individual. Oh sure, there are a few among us who pursue the
value of exploring the 'natural' hierarchical character of social
phenomena (witness the recent development in statistics of hierarchical
linear modeling). But, generally, context is left to the residual of the
equation in both concept and practice and contextual analysis is
something we re-discover, almost in passing, every 10 or 15 years.

But, contextualists, take heart: the British have arrived and their
name is Richard G. Wilkinson. Actually, Wilkinson is something of a
harbinger of the long and rich British tradition in social research on the
use of ecological variables. Whereas our research epistemology in the
U.S., at least since World War II, has been to avoid an ecological fallacy,
the British have recommended turning that fallacy on its head. They
argue in favor of recognizing that analyses that are specified solely at the
individual level may be subject to the 'atomistic' fallacy when the
research effort is to determine social environmental influences on
outcomes.

Wilkinson is part of that larger British influence in recent years
on population-based epidemiology in the U.S. from which has arisen the
hypothesis that the higher the level of a community's social cohesion, the
higher the level of its health status. Although expressed in terms of
community health, the underlying assumption ought to have a familiar
ring to sociologists. If you follow the trails set out in the Wilkinson's lists
of references on the literature on social cohesion, you will eventually
come to social area analysis, systemic models of community, social
network analysis, and, in the 1990s, social capital discussions in the
social theory of James Coleman.

Wilkinson's thesis is expressed in a nearly trivial statement, "socioeconomic factors are what make some societies, and some groups within societies, healthier and longer-lived than others" (page 1). Unless you are a sociobiologist, you might be alarmed that he makes this declaration in a publication in the Darwinism Today series on evolution. Actually, don't be alarmed and do take notice that it is in a series on evolution. It is, as you will see reading the book, exactly Wilkinson's point. Our biological response to inequality produces ill health.

We know that, because of such things as the development of public health infrastructure and the expansion of pharmacology, we can and have overcome the adverse effect on health produced by insufficiencies in the material environment. That's the epidemiological transition. Differences in life expectancies now have less to do with material scarcity than they do with how the material is distributed. Social environment has replaced material environment as the critical influence on human health. It is differences and changes, the fragmentation and divisions in the social environment that have the greatest potential for producing inequality of health status. Populations with greater material wealth inequality have poorer overall health status. The inequality is not a dichotomous variable of rich and poor. Wilkinson cites studies of population health that have demonstrated that wealth (SES) and health are co-related gradients with implications not just for health, but for survival. At any point along the gradient, those above have a lower rate of mortality than those immediately below.

As Wilkinson explains, the adverse consequence for health of inequality has a biological link to traditional evolutionary theory as well. There is a psychosocial pathway that extends from the external social environment to health outcomes and that has its basis in our human physiological responses to stress. We all know of instances of fright or danger when we have felt a cold chill run through our bodies or like the hair on the back of our necks is standing up. That is the central nervous system's response of fight or flight that is embedded in our evolutionary development as human beings. There is another kind of stress, one that is more insidious. It is chronic, keeps our central nervous system's response of fight or flight activated and has the consequence of impairment of our immune system: the stress associated with a hierarchical distribution of wealth.

There is a hope in Wilkinson's social determinant take on population health that suggests we are in control of our health destiny.

The solutions Wilkinson advocates are traditional Marxian. Socially cohesive societies tend to be ones with greater equality and as a consequence better health status overall. Policies that promote a more equitable distribution of resources are likely to become more societal cohesion and, consequently, a better population health status.

Minding the Gap is a tidy little book of some 70 pages. It's a hardback of the size that easily fits into your coat pocket. And, conveniently, it has a number of blank pages following the list of references that you can use to write down your thoughts. If you are interested in pursuing Wilkinson's theme, the book's list of references is a select group of readings on social capital and the determinants of health.

Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America, by Barbara Ehrenreich. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2001. 240 pp. $16.10 cloth, $10.40 paper.

Elizabeth G. Gill
Randolph-Macon College

Despite the enactment of a number of anti-poverty policies including, most recently, welfare reform, millions of Americans are unable to make ends meet working full-time and year-round. The social sciences have long played a major role in the analysis of the causes and consequences of poverty, but very few of us have experienced first-hand the deprivation, fear, anonymity, and hopelessness said to characterize the lives of those who exist at or below the poverty line. In her book, Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America, cultural critic, best selling author, and essayist Barbara Ehrenreich documents her attempt to crawl into the life-worlds of the working poor by temporarily surviving on the $6 - $7 an hour wages of the unskilled.

Armed (somewhat unrealistically) with her education, health and health insurance, a car, laptop, and money for first month's rent, Ehrenreich entered into the world of the invisible working poor, with the aforementioned advantages, determined to make ends meet. Ehrenreich's brand of participant observation with a safety-net led to her employment as a waitress in Florida, a cleaning woman and nursing home assistant in Maine, and a Wal-Mart sales clerk in Minnesota. The book is an account of Ehrenreich's middle-class perspective of the nuts

and bolts survival strategies required of a voluntary transitory member of the working poor.

What methodological and sociological substantive lessons can be gleaned from Ehrenreich's journalistic account of her temporary and fairly safe existence on the workforce's bottom rung? Methodologically, two lessons can be gleaned from Ehrenreich's foray into the world of the working poor -- one could be taken as an admonishment of the social scientific approach to the working poor; the other, a cautionary tale of perspective and voice.

It is widely known that sociologists, particularly in the area of poverty studies, have fallen short of capturing the multi-faceted life-worlds of the working poor and the complex interaction between the systems and policies directly impacting them. The consequences of our often short-sided, overtly empirical approach to the study of poverty is that many of the most interesting and relevant research questions have been left unasked and unanswered, pointing up the need for methodological development and research in the area of poverty and public policy. Our ability as social scientists to conduct meaningful research designed to offset and overcome the problems of poverty and deprivation depends upon the extent to which we understand the nature of these problems from the bottom-up. To her credit, Ehrenreich's account provides much needed individual-level data, beyond the flawed economic statistics, including detailed information on income and economic resources, family interaction, policies of the workplace, and medical needs and insurance coverage -- all from the perspective of someone struggling to make ends meet.

But is *her* perspective the appropriate point of departure for attempting to understand the lives of the working poor? Critics of the book have charged that the workers encountered by Ehrenreich would have better been served if she had allowed their voices to take precedent over her experiences. I believe this is an important cautionary lesson for all social scientists determined to study not only low-wage workers, but all disadvantaged groups of individuals as well. A model of this approach can be found in a recent book by Harvard anthropologist Katherine S. Newman (2000) entitled *No Shame in My Game: The Working Poor in the Inner City.* Although somewhat lacking in the participatory dimension found in Ehrenreich's book, Newman's book documents the lives of inner-city workers and job seekers in Harlem, giving voice to the working poor through interviews, surveys, and

observation, thus providing a nice counterbalance in Ehrenreich's one-sided experiential monograph.

Substantively, two themes emerged from Ehrenriech's experience that are of particular import for readers unfamiliar with the plight of the working poor: the ongoing indignity and powerlessness of those living on the edge of subsistence and the precarious availability of affordable housing. Because Ehrenriech chose to live the life of an unskilled worker, she embarked on the well-trod path of looking for a job and a place to live, working that job, and just trying to get by. The employment search proved to be a lesson in humility taught through pre-employment tests laced with trick "character" questions, constant surveillance of her work by those bound by efficiency and suspicion, and the examination of bodily fluids produced under duress for the purposes of drug testing. With humor edged with outrage, Ehrenreich points out the less than human existence she experienced as just another expendable employee at the mercy of profit driven, often corporate, employers. The search for a place to live proved to be a sobering, often frantic, quest for an affordable abode in a market of shrinking rental housing availability and skyrocketing rents. Her brief existence among the invisible, borderline homeless population of the working poor highlights the desperate situation of those who offset the reality of stagnant wages and rising rents with additional low-paying, no benefits jobs just to make ends meet.

Despite the fact Ehrenreich struggled to express the pitfalls of working at jobs at or slightly above the minimum wage, the author's privileged background challenges the validity of her account. We are reminded, as social scientists, of the difficulty of playing the role of an "insider" when one's true identity is that of an "outsider." On numerous occasions Ehrenriech's background comes to the fore, making the temporary despair more bearable, saving her in the event of insurmountable trouble, and embracing her upon her return to the middle class from the world of the working poor. It is not my intention to imply that Ehrenreich was on a vacation during the course of her research; on the contrary, she is honest that her experiences were a mere reflection of the working class experience. It is also not my intention to write off the potential importance of this book in acquainting students and the general public to the struggles of the working poor. In point of fact, I know several colleagues who have successfully used the book as a supplemental monograph in introductory courses. The value of the book

goes beyond its content and raises important methodological questions about how we study the working poor.

References

Newman, Katherine S. 2000. <u>No Shame in My Game: the Working Poor in the Inner City</u>. Vintage Books.

***Problem of the Century: Racial Stratification in the United States*, by Elijah Anderson and Douglas S. Massey, eds. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation, 2001. 470 pp. $42.50.**

Erica C. Zelinsky
University of Minnesota

In an effort to honor W.E.B. Du Bois a century after <u>The Philadelphia Negro</u> was written, prominent race scholars Elijah Anderson and Douglas Massey compile 16 exceptional studies by University of Pennsylvania sociologists in a book that addresses what Du Bois predicted would be the problem of the twentieth century – the color line. Academics with unique substantive interests, methodological approaches, and theoretical frameworks review the current status of the color line and create a collection that contributes remarkably to race literature. Anderson and Massey state: "we seek to develop a new sociology of race that uses diverse methods and theories to describe racial stratification as a multilevel process in which individual behavior is shaped by social structures that are firmly rooted in space" (12). This book accomplishes just that; <u>Problem of the Century</u> is a tremendous volume of sociological research that clearly reflects the University of Pennsylvania Sociology Department's strength in race and social ecology. This work sets the tone for race scholarship in the twenty-first century.

The editors initially introduce a diverse collection of theoretical and conceptual approaches to race. Randall Collins and Ewa Morawska address the historical construction of racial and ethnic groups and the manner in which historically grounded judgments play a predominant role in ethnic conflict. Robin Leidner and Ivar Berg then address contemporary issues such as collective movements and affirmative

92

action. The sound development of both historical and contemporary theories and concepts is essential to the understanding of the subsequent chapters.

Following the establishment of a strong conceptual foundation, the social demography of race is tackled with strong methodology and firmly grounded theoretical frameworks. Tufuku Zuberi, as well as Irma T. Elo and Samuel H. Preston, use census data to trace historical trends in racial composition and investigate the effect of classifications on stratification. Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr., who utilizes a longitudinal study to explore the decline of marriage in the inner city, and Linda H. Aiken and Douglas M. Sloane, who investigate the health gap between races through the model of AIDS care, further study the social demography of race. The unusual, yet triumphant, grouping together of such different methodological studies in this section illustrates the distinction of this project.

The focus on the social ecology of race, a particular specialty of the Pennsylvania department, offers explanations of the causes and analyses of the characteristics of segregation. Camille Zubrinsky Charles and Janice F. Madden both provide analyses of the racial composition in metropolitan areas and attribute the cause of segregation to discrimination rather than socioeconomic factors. Douglas S. Massey follows by linking segregation to violent crime in poverty-stricken areas. This particular section exhibits the ecological strength of U-Penn scholars without marginalizing sociologists not specifically trained in social ecology.

The collection is completed with a study of race at work and school. The authors discussing employment, Jerry A. Jacobs and Mary Blair-Loy, Kathryn Edin and Timothy J. Nelson, and Elijah Anderson, provide data showing that race continues to effect work experiences; people of color still face discrimination and biased hiring practices, differences in opportunity, and stigmatization in particular roles. Grace Kao concludes the section and the book with a study of differences in peer influences on educational achievement between racial groups. By considering the current role of race in the institutions of work and school, the authors not only reaffirm the existence of the color line, but also reveal its daily implications.

My sole reservation about Anderson and Massey's volume is the manner in which it abruptly ends. While Kao's chapter is not weak in itself, its role as the concluding chapter lends a sense of futility to the

93

entire book. The compilation creates an urgent need for further scholarship in the area of race and action in the social arena, yet provides insufficient direction. The editors do not wrap up previous arguments and do not pay last respects to Du Bois' work, to which this collection is dedicated. The final paragraphs of the chapters by Collins and Massey would serve as effective and powerful concluding remarks in a book that intends to break ground in the sociological area of race. However, if the reader reflects upon the entirety of the book and remembers the goal of the editors, the central messages retain their value.

The strength of this collection lies in its ability to represent multiple methods and diverse substantive areas. The research draws from a wide array of sources including census data, historical records, and original research and uses methods ranging from regression models to ethnography to historical-comparative studies to form a volume that reads rather easily and produces strong findings. Each chapter demonstrates knowledge of the vast race literature and bestows updated and fresh analyses upon the current status of the color line. Anderson and Massey, as well as the other accomplished authors, have a clear understanding of race, both in its historical construction and its future implications. The cutting edge nature of this collection would benefit all scholars in the area of race, ethnicity, and inequality and would be appropriate for both advanced undergraduate and graduate level courses. Although some chapters are perhaps too empirical for the mainstream audience, the thought provoking ideas embedded in this book could open the eyes of those ignorant to race problems and inspire the action of those dedicated to making changes in society. In Problem of the Century, the sociologists at the University of Pennsylvania ultimately succeed in their attempt to pay tribute to W.E.B. Du Bois and create a unique sociology of race that is faithful to the traditions of their department.

***Doméstica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows
of Affluence,* by Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo. Los Angeles, CA:
University of California Press, 2001. 309pp. $50.00 cloth, $19.95
paper.**

Sarah M. Flood
University of Minnesota

In her latest book <u>Doméstica</u>, Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo makes
important contributions to the literature at the intersection of gender,
immigration studies, and work. The University of Southern California
Associate Professor has authored several pieces on gender and
immigration. In <u>Doméstica</u>, Hondagneu-Sotelo combines surveys of
paid domestic workers, mainly Mexican and Central American
immigrants, with interviews and ethnographic observations of domestic
workers and their middle- to high-income white employers in the Los
Angeles area. The cleaning and care work these women do is often
characterized by low pay, no benefits, and dehumanizing treatment. The
reader hears the voices of the domestic workers as they talk about their
experiences cleaning homes and caring for the children of their more
privileged employers, while also encountering the perspective of
employers. Neither employees nor employers recognize paid domestic
work as employment; this, as well as the ways in which domestic work is
organized, contributes to the informal standards and undesirable
conditions of paid domestic work.

The reader learns that social reproduction—what it takes to
maintain homes and people— is problematic for the situation of domestic
workers. It has traditionally been the responsibility of mothers and wives
in the home and has not been valued as unpaid work. Although
immigrant women have been hired to ease the burden of social
reproduction in private homes, the invisibility of domestic work remains.
Employers, mostly female, expect high quality work from the women
they hire, but are reluctant to pay them decent wages, which reflects a
lack of recognition for the domestic workers and the work they do.
Hondagneu-Sotelo argues that this practice by privileged employers
contributes to and maintains the devaluation of care work and is felt
globally by the families of the paid domestic workers who stayed behind
when the women emigrated from their countries of origin.

95

The relationships involved in domestic labor are an important piece of the puzzle in understanding why domestic workers are underpaid and undervalued. Both employees and employers rely upon networks of women for referrals. The reader quickly discovers that employer relationships go beyond organizing the job of paid domestic workers; in their relationships, employers also structure the job of domestic workers. Referrals from other employers allow for more customized work and trust than employers might get if they found domestic workers through an agency. By exchanging information about the tasks domestic workers perform and the wages they earn, employers contribute to setting a "going rate" of pay for domestic work.

The final, and perhaps most consequential set of relationships, is the relationship between employee and employer. The reader learns that neither employee nor employer regard paid domestic work as a job. Often employee and employer expectations of the work and work relationships are contradictory. Employers tend to view themselves as consumers of a service rather than employers; they seek to avoid managing reproductive labor and thus value an employee who takes initiative in her work. On the other hand, employees look to employers for specification of the jobs they want done. This ambiguous work arrangement creates problems.

Employees who care for children in addition to cleaning often experience a discrepancy between the care work they do and the personal contact and recognition they long for from their employers. For the most part, employers are reluctant to provide the "personalism" (172) employees desire because they already see their time as being spread thin and in high demand. When employers deliberately avoid the relationships their employees seek, paid domestic workers experience their work as degrading and dehumanizing. As one employee remarked, "You're useful to them only because you clean, wash, iron, cook—that's the only reason. There is no affection. There is nothing" (197).

Hondagneu-Sotelo's goal in writing this book is emancipatory. She unveils the harsh reality of domestic work. Yet, in the end she argues for upgrading rather than abolishing paid domestic work. Immigrant women depend on it as a source of employment, while many individuals and families rely on it to minimize the reproductive labor they do. Federal regulations for protecting paid domestic workers are in existence but currently do not cover those who do private care work. Where regulations are in place, employees and employers are typically

96

unaware of them and enforcement of existing laws is rare. The author argues that employment regulations need to be formalized, which entails regarding all domestic work as employment. Further, upgrading domestic labor includes addressing the most frequently desired change by domestic workers—that they be treated with respect and dignity—as human beings.

Doméstica is Hondagneu-Sotelo's most recent work that stretches across a myriad of substantive areas in Sociology and Women's Studies. Issues of race, class, gender, immigration, work, and family are intertwined throughout this story of immigrant women who provide invaluable, yet devalued, services to middle- and high-income women and families. She exposes the reader to a world that is seldom seen in a way that is insightful and thought provoking. Her depth and clarity are remarkable. Although at times this piece may be rigidly academic, ultimately, a mainstream audience would find this work readable and eye-opening. Doméstica is well worth the read; this reviewer would recommend this qualitative study to undergraduate and graduate students who are interested in inequalities of class, gender, and immigrant status.

***Religion in the Modern American West*, by Ferenc Morton Szasz. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000. 249 pp. \$35.00 cloth, \$19.95 paper.**

Thomas C. Langham
Our Lady of the Lake University

A large task is taken up in exploring religion in the modern American West. Morton Ferenc Szasz, a historian who has authored works on the scientific, cultural, and religious history of the American West, has taken up this task in his Religion in the Modern American West. As important as religion is in a general sense and specifically for the development of the American West, this topic has been one that scholars have shown little interest in examining. Szasz suggests that this might be so for several reasons. The constitutional separation of church and state seems to have resulted in political matters becoming a central concern while religion has been marginalized. The many religious faiths in the West have made dealing with religion in a single storyline difficult to do. Scholars have largely remained indifferent to religion as a topic of possible inquiry and have instead chose to examine themes such as race,

class, and gender. Finally, the most probable reason, according to Szasz, is that to focus on religion demands a realignment of all previous explanations of the emergence of the American West. Beyond these several explanations, still another reason might be offered as to why religion in the American West has not been much studied, that is, this is a complex and difficult topic that only a very brave or foolhardy author would dare to tackle.

Szasz treats religion in the West as three somewhat distinct historical periods. The West for Szasz includes the geographical area west of the Mississippi River, a region that only began to become significantly populated after the mid-1800s. The first period extends from the 1890s until 1920s, a time in which organized religion played an important part in the construction of the institutional infrastructure for religion itself as well as for education, health care, and welfare assistance. The years from the 1920s to 1960s form a second period during which religious forces clashed over cultural issues (e.g., evolution, parochial schools, and gambling), church-based social welfare programs developed in response to the Great Depression, Pentecostalism emerged as an important religious power in California and the Pacific Northwest, a great church building campaign got underway after World War II, and, more generally, Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and Mormons all came to be viewed as mainstream religious groups. The third period from 1960s through 1990s revealed a decline of the mainline Protestants faiths, a new appreciation for Native American religions, and the emergence of New Age religions. Szasz concludes that no religious faith has come to dominate the American West, and that this reality perhaps signals that there may be room for still additional religious possibilities.

For each of the historical periods, Szasz not only discusses key developments but also key religious personalities. Among those individuals whose contributions are noted for the 1890s to 1920s are Charles Fletcher Lummis, the person largely responsible for the preservation of the Spanish missions in California, and John Muir, the world renowned naturalist. Szasz comments that Muir's respect for the environment may well emerge as the most important ecumenical position of the twentieth century. No doubt the most interesting religious leader who preached during the 1920s to 1950s period was Aimee Semple McPherson, the founder of the Pentecostal-influenced church called the Angelus Four-Square Temple. McPherson used a combination of vaudeville, Hollywood, Broadway, outdoor revival preaching, and

98

charismatic sex appeal to deliver her message. Szasz comments that
McPherson through using these techniques became the first "superstar"
of American religion and a forerunner of televangelists who would later
follow her. For the period from the 1960s through 1990s, a number of
additional important religious figures came to prominence. Cecil
Williams, the pastor the Glide Memorial Methodist Church in San
Francisco, came to be a leading West Coast African-American minister
who preached what he called his "theology of recovery". Maulana
Karenga, a seminary-trained minister and the chair of the Black Studies
program at California State University, Long Beach, introduced the new
holiday Kwanza to celebrate African-American heritage. Episcopal priest
Alan Watts started the Academy of Asian American Studies in San
Francisco, which was instrumental in making Buddhism a viable
religious alternative on the West Coast. And, Robert Schuller, the author
of more than thirty books, the minister for the televised "Hour of Power",
and builder of the Crystal Cathedral, has become the most widely known
minister in late twentieth-century America. While these are only some of
the religious figures that Szasz mentions, they do certainly give a sense
of the very diverse nature of religion in the modern American West.

The upper Great Plains lay west of the Mississippi River. Szasz
gives attention to this region. He notes that churches on the upper Great
Plains served the needs of various ethnic communities from their
founding late in the 1800s. The most important religious faiths were
Catholicism and Lutheranism, but Szasz notes that churches in the region
also reflected an ethnic biblical culture. Churches from the start formed
around specific ethnic groups and served as the social centers for rural
immigrant life. Some of the most important early upper Great Plains
religious leaders included Episcopal bishop William Hobart Hare, a
national voice for the cause of Native Americans, Methodist itinerant
minister William Wesley Van Orsdel, a minister to miners, ranchers,
homesteaders, politicians, and Native Americans, and Rabbi David Lesk,
known far and wide for his assistance in helping parishioners to secure
funds and credit. Szasz points out that religion has continued to be
important on the upper Great Plains even up through the present. Author
Kathleen Norris, who moved back to her family home in Lemmon, South
Dakota, published the highly acclaimed book Dakota in 1993. Norris
celebrates the mystery of life in the face of the overwhelming geography
of the Dakotas and explores how this led her to the mystery of the

99

Scriptures. Norris has become recognized as the most important western religious writer of the 1990s.

Szasz closes his book with several observations about the nature of religion in the modern American West. He states that Judeo-Christian morality no longer holds the same cultural dominance as it did a century ago, but that does not mean that it has completely given way to a kind of nihilistic and hedonistic secularism. Szasz also comments that although the importance of organized religion may have slipped, religion, especially in the case of emergencies, remains vital to local communities in the West. The Mormon Church, Szasz adds, has also emerged as an international force over the past one hundred years and as the embodiment of traditional American middle-class Judeo-Christian values. He further states that Asian and Near Eastern religions, such as Buddhism and Islam, are here to stay. And, the West has also become home to a vigorous neoevangelism rooted in Pentecostalism, which shows no signs of decline and may well provide a model for churches of the future. Since the West never produced a single mainstream religious faith, Szasz concludes, it will also likely continue to allow individuals to select from various religious options. If you are interested in religion and how it has influenced the American West, you will want to read this book. Szasz has done an excellent job of providing an overview of an extraordinarily complex and difficult topic. If you are a university professor, this book would make an excellent text for either an upper division or graduate course that focuses on the intersection of religion and history in the modern American West.

***The Context of Youth Violence: Resilience, Risk, and Protection*, by Jack M. Richman and Mark W. Fraser, eds. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group. 2001. 198 pp.**

Kathy A. Smith
Motlow State Community College

Jack W. Richman is Professor of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His teaching areas for Ph. D. and MSW students are in social work theory and practice with individuals, couples, and families as well as preparation of doctoral students for university teaching roles. His research is focused in the areas of at-risk students, social support, and violence and trauma in childhood. Mark W.

Fraser holds the John A. Tate Distinguished Professorship for Children in Need at the School of Social Work, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He directs the Carolina Children's Initiative, an early intervention research project for children with aggressive, anti-social behavior. Both Richman and Fraser have contributed to the professional literature.

The intent of Jack M. Richman and Mark W. Fraser, editors of Context of Youth Violence, is to convince the reader that a correlation exists between risk, protection, and resilience and such social problems as poor school achievement and youth violence. As a result, their prose blends the language of social researchers with that of advocates for a theory of resiliency. The book's three major objectives are to understand the salience of resiliency, to offer intervention strategies, and to suggest ways to reduce toxicity in the social environment.

The Context of Youth Violence is divided into two parts. The first two chapters serve as a theoretical base. Michael Rutter and J. Eric Vance, from a biopsychosocial perspective, discuss risk, protection, and resilience. The primary focus of Rutter is psychosocial variables related to the resiliency perspective. From examination of research dealing with factors that inhibit or produce resiliency, Rutter notes differences between "risk indicators" and "risk processes," a clarification that he claims is useful with attempting to depict specific protection factors and risk factors that could affect child development. Vance extends the concepts of risk, protection, and resilience into the realm of biological research. From the examination of factors that inhibit or produce resilience, the authors argue that resilience in children may manifest in some adversities and stresses yet not others and that some sorts of psychopathological sequelae may be resisted while others may not be. The implication appears to be that a particular child might become stressed by human designed disasters while suffering no stress from natural disasters. Hence, resilience does not constitute a single attribute or quality.

The four chapters that focus on practice apply the framework for risk, protection, and resilience, to different aspects of violence. Contributors to this part include James Garbarino, Deborah Prothrow-Stith, Scott Henggeler, Stephanie Hoyt, Lawrence Rosenfeld, Mooli Lahad, and Alan Cohen. The authors offer discussions of toxic environments, issues of community violence and youth, the impact of disasters on youth, and practice applications. Contributions by authors in

this section demonstrate how a framework of risk, protection, and resilience can be applied by social scientists as well as applicable institutions to different aspects of violence.

First, through persuasive qualitative research, Garbarino discusses five "dark secrets" that violent youth know. Garbarino discusses toxicity in a social environment framework, offering ways in which we can better understand youth violence and ways to reduce social toxicity. The eventual goal is to detoxify the social environment and provide a more supportive setting, particularly for psychologically vulnerable individuals.

Prothrow-Stith points out a new interest of researchers and violence prevention activists in understanding what motivates "resilient youth." She discusses risk factors such as race, poverty, witnessing violence, exposure to media violence, and availability of firearms. Finally, Prothrow-Stith suggests the involvement of individuals, families, and ecological systems to develop effective intervention strategies.

Henggeler and Hoyt offer determinants of serious antisocial behavior exhibited by youths, then offer protective factors than enhance the resilience of those exposed to risk factors. They, then, discuss how Multisystemic Therapy (MST), a community and family based treatment, has reduced long-term recidivism rates for chronic and violent juvenile offenders and improved functioning of adolescents and families. Their primary argument is that therapists can often successfully treat serious clinical problems of adolescents when certain risk factors are comprehensively addressed.

Finally, Rosenfeld, Lahad, and Cohen examine disaster, trauma, and resiliency of children. These authors look at three types of disasters, natural, technological, and those of human design, focusing on the psychosocial aspects of each. Rosenfeld, Lahad, and Cohen argue that, not only is the salience of a disaster for children based on her or his developmental stage, which affects one's ability to cognitively understand the impact of the event; a child's age and sex also shape his or her notions of and reactions to a disaster.

In the concluding chapter, the editors, Fraser and Richman, reiterate the permeation of a resilience to practice throughout the book. The core concept of The Context of Youth Violence is that "children who overcome adversity and function at normative or higher levels are often described as resilient" (p.186). Since addressing individual psychological issues alone is not enough, professionals must take as a

central task of their professions the detoxification of psychologically harmful social environments. By understanding this premise, the effectiveness of services offered to at-risk children may be improved. The suggestion is made that local authorities, community services, volunteers, workers, education systems, and families can combine efforts to intervene when children suffer from disasters and their ensuing trauma.

Will this book achieve the level of success desired by the editors? Frankly, I am not sure. On one hand, academia can benefit highly from a book such at this. On the other hand, some professionals outside the academic world might find material offered to be somewhat overwhelming and perplexing. Therefore, I would recommend this book only to professors who teach graduate courses. Moreover, I would suggest that those interested in resiliency read the following books by David Pelzer, A Child Called "It," The Lost Boy, and A Man Named Dave.

From the book's title, The Context of Youth Violence, I expected to find more discussion of youthful offenders in the context of what leads them to commit violent acts. Little is offered regarding research and writing of types of violence (other than disasters) that young people face in today's society. Instead, I found more discussion relating to and expanding the resiliency theory. The editors would have readers believe that disruptive behavior, petty criminality, aggression, and antisocial behavior, are synonymous to youth violence, rather than to violent youth. Nevertheless, Richman notes that the concept of resilience is salient to the understanding and intervention of mental disorders, implying a purely psychological orientation. Hence, resilience, not youth violence, appears to be the focus of the book.

The Stranger Next Door: The Story of a Small Community's Battle over Sex, Faith, and Civil Rights, by Arlene Stein, Boston: Beacon Press, 2001. 267 pp. $27.50 cloth, $16 paper.

Kathleen A. Tiemann
University of North Dakota

In The Stranger Next Door sociologist Arlene Stein describes how discussions of homosexuality and lesbian/gay rights entered public life in rural "Timbertown," Oregon, its effect on how "ordinary" people

talked about sexuality and how friends and neighbors were recast as strangers. Stein set out to resolve two questions. The first question was why small-town folks found homosexuality so confusing and troubling in a place where lesbians and gays were barely visible. Secondly, she wondered how residents of small towns defended lesbian and gay rights in the absence of any visible gay community. To answer these questions, Stein talked to activists from the right and the left, city officials, teachers, students, housewives, lumbermen, religious leaders and other citizens over a two year period. She studied what people said about homosexuality in newspapers, in audiovisual media and organizational literature that was distributed in the community. She interviewed people who participated publicly in these debates to understand what homosexuality symbolized for them on a deeper level.

Stein's skills as an ethnographer and story-teller result in an engaging book. The journey she takes us on answers many questions including why small towns like Timbertown were targeted by conservative activists. In the early 1990s antigay groups in Colorado and Oregon initiated ballot measures designed to deny civil rights protections to lesbians and gays. After Oregon voters defeated these measures in 1992, activists shifted tactics. They targeted rural areas where residents had overwhelmingly supported the initiative and drafted amendments to local ordinances that would prevent city councils from ever passing "special" gay rights measures.

To clarify who these activists are, Stein gives an overview of the history of the Oregon Citizens Alliance (OCA) and why it found support in rural areas. Like many towns whose economy was dependent on the lumber industry, Timbertown experienced the loss of family wages and reduced opportunities in an industry that had supported families for generations. This not only made it difficult for families economically, but threatened the masculinity of blue collar workers whose self esteem was tied to being the family wage earner. In addition, Timbertown had an influx of new residents who wanted a quieter, less expensive place to live and who brought unfamiliar values and ways of life with them. The result was a community on the verge of turmoil. Christian conservatives found something they lacked when OCA leader Lon Mabon and came to town–a public voice and sense of unity. He promoted the stereotype that all lesbians and gays are affluent and don't need "special rights" to rally the support of residents who were economically distressed and thought they deserved protection themselves. By clarifying the context in which

104

community turmoil began, Stein reveals why OCA claims were attractive to members of right-wing churches even though they had peacefully coexisted with their lesbian and gay neighbors for years.

But not all residents agreed with the OCA and its views. Many liberal, better educated residents were against the antigay amendment. They had previously mounted a successful campaign to keep Wal Mart out of the community and knew how to organize. To address this new threat, they formed the Community Action Network (CAN). CAN members tried to educate people to appreciate diversity and difference and showed how they contributed to community betterment. By focusing on each group's tactics and by listening to their members, Stein exposes the role of education and social class in the battle that ensued, how the battle forced people to take sides against friends and neighbors and the resultant costs to the community. She concludes the book by describing the outcome of the antigay ballot measure and an ACLU lawsuit that charged that the amendment violated state and federal constitutional rights to free expression. She also leaves us with two questions for which she offers no answers: "How do we live in a contested moral order? And how do we live with the strangers in our midst?" (227).

This work is more than the recitation of events that gripped Timbertown–it provides thought provoking analysis. The work of academics like Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Kai Erikson and Georg Simmel are skillfully incorporated throughout Stein's analysis. She does not do this to impress us with the breadth of her reading, but to clarify the significance of the lessons that we can infer from what happened in Timbertown. For example, Stein uses Erikson's observation that "By defining certain people as deviant, we guard the cultural integrity of the community. By declaring who is strange, we come to know who is familiar" (215). By sharing this observation, Stein explains why lesbian and gay neighbors who had peacefully coexisted with their "ordinary" neighbors, were necessarily turned into strangers by the OCA. Similarly, she uses the work of Sennett and Cobb to clarify the "hidden injuries" of class experienced by Timbertown residents and how that made them vulnerable to OCA claims of special rights.

This book is appropriate for use in classes on social change, rural sociology, gender and sexuality, religion and research methods. Those who teach methods will especially like Stein's appendix on methodological notes in which she discusses her concerns about entering the field, how she presented herself to her subjects and the challenges she

faced. For those of us who are "strangers" due to our urban roots, our faith or our sexual orientation, this book provides a way to address related issues without seeming to judge the lives of our students. Another plus for The Stranger Next Door is that it is written in a lively and accessible manner. Because no background in sociology is necessary to understand Stein's arguments, it is appropriate for use with lay-readers. However, seasoned sociologists will also find this a useful and interesting book. I strongly recommend it.

***Victims, Perpetrators or Actors?: Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence*, by Caroline O. N. Moser and Fiona C. Clark, eds. New York: Zed Books, 2001. 243 pp. $59.95 cloth, $19.95 paper.**

Kristin Marsh
Mary Washington College

Editors Caroline Moser and Fiona Clark compile an impressive inter-disciplinary collection of articles that both contributes to our understanding of women's experiences in armed conflict and enhances the accessibility of that growing body of literature. Moser, social anthropologist with the Overseas Development Institute, London, and until 2000 at the World Bank, specializes in Latin American and Caribbean development. An independent researcher, Clark's recent scholarship has focused on gender and the life cycle in Peru. Their collection represents published proceedings of the World Bank's conference on "Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence" held in June 1999 in Washington, D.C.

Taken together, these articles illustrate the complexity and diversity of women's roles in political violence. The collection is organized into nine sections, reflecting the breadth of substantive issues and geographical representation. In the introductory section, Caroline Moser, Cynthia Cockburn, and Fiona Clark, respectively, outline a contextual framework for understanding gender in armed conflict. Contextual analysis recognizes the variable sources of power, the role of human agency, and the resulting multiplicity of experiences of both women and men. A focus on human agency avoids essentializing assumptions pervading early discourse on political violence; further, it problematizes the dichotomous statuses of perpetrators (as men) and victims (as women) in warfare. Women's adaptations to war are shaped

106

by gendered power relations, and they continue to be variously shaped by the trajectories of politics and war. The decision to bear arms, for example, is made within a range of alternative expressions of movement support and strategies for survival.

Victimization. Moser points out that recognizing victimization within warfare represents a significant improvement over women's long-standing invisibility; nevertheless, specifying the complexity of the victimization experience poses a potentially more daunting task. Meredeth Turshen's political economic analysis of sexual violence in Rwanda and Mozambique moves beyond ideas of rape as expressions of cultural violence. In an expansion of Cynthia Enloe's (2000; see recommended readings in the final paragraph of this review) emphasis on the institutional basis of militarized rape, Turshen argues that rape is a method of confiscating enemy assets. Where women are defined as property (e.g., bridewealth constitutes legal exchange in Mozambique), rape effectively substitutes for marriage, providing access to property rights.

Further challenging misconceptions about militarized rape, Dubrovka Zarkov uncovers the interplay of ethnic, gender, and sexuality politics in Croatian media reports during war in former Yugoslavia. Not only do Croat newspaper accounts under-report male rape, they characterize victims as Muslim and perpetrators as Bosnian, with no apparent role in such incidents for Croatians. Why? Zarkov argues that lack of involvement allows for a construction of male Croatian identity that confirms a correspondence of heterosexuality and power, while denying the same to Muslim men. Victim status denies Muslim men power and masculinity.

Women as actors in the context of political violence. Chapters by Simona Sharoni, Uvashi Butalia, Ana Cristina Ibáñez, and Donny Meertens comprise three separate sections, but they share the contribution of forcing us to rethink narrow, male-modeled conceptions of power and agency in the context of conflict. In her comparison of women's political involvement in the Israel/Palestine and Northern Ireland conflicts, Sharoni argues that redefined community needs within military escalation enhanced the legitimacy and particular sources of power found in women's activism. The heightened fluidity between public and private spheres affords women an expanded role in the community and permanently enhances their sense of purpose. Butalia takes this reconceptualization of women's agency one step farther as she

107

Great Plains Sociologist

recounts the sobering realization for Indian feminists that not all women's activism is positive or emancipatory for women as a whole. From within India, where conflict between increasingly fundamentalist Hindu communities (the majority) and Muslim communities (the minority) has provided women an increasingly visible, active role, women are encouraged to participate directly and indirectly in mass actions—including attacks, assaults, and lootings—on Muslim communities.

Ibáñez and Meertens also consider the link between the nature of pre-conflict social roles and responses to the experience of conflict. Ibáñez turns our attention to the challenges facing women who opt to join military struggle as guerrillas in El Salvador. And in focusing on rural-to-urban displacement in Colombia, Meertens explains that gender roles in rural community life paradoxically led a higher proportion of displaced women than men to focus their energies on day-to-day challenges of material and physical survival.

Out of Conflict. In the final two sections, Isabel Coral Cordero, Marie Mulholland, Caroline O.N. Moser and Cathy McIlwaine, and Antjie Krog turn to the opportunities and constraints experienced by women and men attempting to rebuild social institutions and stable peace (whether in the context of "post-conflict" transitions or in the context of continued conflict). Again, we see the fluidity of social roles and their gendered nature. Meertens illustrates the ability of women—as a previously excluded sector in public life in Peru—to work collectively, building alternative institutional models toward a viable civil society. Similarly, Mulholland finds that the needs of transitional societies, in this case Northern Ireland, can be advanced through the courage of women who come to see their common interest in a politically inclusive and stable peace as much more powerful than the sectarian divisions that continued to threaten that peace. Through use of methodology that gives voice explicitly to the people of a community, Moser and McIlwaine's comparison of Guatemala and Colombia affirms the gendered experience of violence, fear, and trust in social institutions. Finally, and in the powerful concluding article in the volume, Krog focuses on the experiences of women victims of apartheid during the post-war transition. With particular attention on female rape victims, she poignantly identifies the gross limitations of the truth and reconciliation process in a society attempting to heal.

Concluding comments. With such a wide-ranging collection of analyses, the greatest strength of this book is conceptual. The long-

108

standing body of social science literature addressing violent political conflict is vast yet plagued by an inability to break beyond male-dominated conceptions of power, agency, and war; naively, this literature has mistaken its own gender biases and assumptions for gender-neutrality. This volume shows us the specific ways in which our tendency to ignore questions of gender has led to misunderstanding and false knowledge. Further, it warns us against making assumptions about the content of a gendered analysis. And perhaps most importantly, it provides us with several specific examples of how the limitations of previous research can be overcome—how we can begin to reconceptualize the complexities of warfare to include all persons and experiences involved. What questions must we ask? What methods of analysis might we usefully employ? The scholarship represented in this volume can help open a whole new chapter in the study of political violence.

In sum, Moser and Clark have brought several pieces of scholarship together in a refreshingly cohesive volume. This collection may hold somewhat muted interest for those already familiar with the cutting edge work being done at the intersection of political sociology and gender studies. Nevertheless, I recommend it highly for interested scholars at all levels, including graduate and advanced undergraduate students; further, I consider it required reading for any graduate student specializing in violent political conflict. Recommended related readings include scholarship informing this volume, such as C. Enloe's Maneuvers: The International Politics of Women's Lives (2000, University of California Press, Berkeley) and C. Cockburn's The Space Between Us: Negotiating Gender and National Identities in Conflict (1988, Zed Books, London and New York). Other works by contributors include U. Butalia's The Other Side of Silence (1998, Penguin, New Delhi), S. Sharoni's Gender and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (1995, Syracuse University Press, New York), and M. Turshen and C. Twagiramariya's (eds.) What Women Do in War Time (1998, Zed Books, London and New York).

109

Bobos in Paradise; The New Upper Class and How They Got There,
**by David Brooks. New York; Simon and Schuster, 2000. 276 pp.
Hardback and Softcover.**

Elizabeth E. Williams
Adjunct, South Dakota State University

Although it is not a sociology book per se, Bobos in Paradise is
certainly a sociological book. Journalist David Brooks has taken a
qualitative approach to arrive at the thesis that the previous bohemian
and bourgeois classes in American culture have fused to form a new
elite, which he calls the Bobos. He contends that this new elite replaces
the longstanding WASP elite that dominated American culture and
public life for much of the 20th Century.

The author is a senior editor at the Weekly Standard and a
contributing editor to Newsweek. His experience also includes time
abroad as a European correspondent for the Wall Street Journal.

In fact, it was upon coming home from this time abroad that
convinced Brooks that America had a new elite. The bourgeois had been
the square and practical members of society while the bohemians, who
came into ascendancy in the 1960s were the free spirits who broke with
convention and tradition.

The fusion of these two apparently contradictory cultures into
Bobos defines our age, Brooks says. They have created an educated
elite, whose ideology, manners, and morals Brooks sets out to explain.
In the process, the author, himself a member of this new elite, cites both
plusses and minuses for this perceived shift in the American scene.

An example of Brooks' qualitative approach is his comparison of
wedding write-ups in the New York Times in the 1950s and the 1990s.
The earlier stories emphasized the pedigrees and important forebears of
the bride and groom, along with mention of the prestigious Eastern
colleges they had attended. Brides were not listed as having careers.
Today, the emphasis is quite different with the unions of two-career
couples and there is now more emphasis on the quirkiness or unusual
avocational interests of the couple.

The shift to have America's elite based on education has been
underway for some little time as college admissions officers have
broadened and diversified the pool of students admitted to universities.

110

Today's students are probably brighter and of greater educational standard, Brooks says.

"People gain entry into the establishment by performing a series of delicate cultural tasks: they are prosperous without seeming greedy; they have pleased their elders without seeming conformist; they have risen to the top without too obviously looking down on those below; they have constructed a prosperous lifestyle while avoiding the old clichés of conspicuous consumption," Brooks writes. (p. 45)

After the opening chapter that describes how this new elite emerged, complete with its own hierarchy, in the subsequent chapters Brooks details the consumption patterns, business and intellectual life, the pleasure seeking, the spiritual life and the politics of the new Bobo elite.

The author presents an intriguing list of rules of consumption for his new elite, one being that "only vulgarians spend lavish amounts of money on luxuries. Cultivated people restrict their lavish spending to necessities" (p. 84). So it would be all right to spend copiously on a bathroom in your house but vulgar to spend a like amount on a wide screen TV and sound system. In effect, the Bobos have become counter cultural capitalists.

Today's intellectual class, Brooks maintains, is much more engaged with society than were the intelligentsia of the past who disdained the middle class as low brow. Bobos bring intellectual and cultural capital to the marketplace, he says, citing the work of sociologist Pierre Bourdieau.

There are also changes in what is regarded as pleasure or fun as a new sort of morality drives Bobos to health clubs and workouts. Our society is now more intolerant of ethnic jokes but accepts sexual jokes that previously would not have been told in mixed company—all very "complex and confusing" the author says (p. 197).

It is in the spiritual and political realms that Brooks is most critical of his newly discovered elite. At the core of the Bobo search for spirituality is the dilemma of the quest for freedom and flexibility on one hand and rigor and orthodoxy on the other. The current widespread interest by many sociologists and others for an increased sense of community reflects that tension. Brooks fears that Bobos may be losing their sense of belonging.

When it comes to politics, the Clinton Administration (not the personal scandals) in its movement and action in the political middle

exemplifies the Bobo approach. The new elite tends to be centrist and independent, unlike the Republican bourgeois of old. The criticism that Brooks makes is that we now live in an age of complacency. The challenge for Bobos is to "rebuild some sense of a united policy, some sense of national cohesion, without crushing the individual freedoms we have won over the past generation: (p. 272).

Both the book and its thesis are open to come criticism. The book would have been greatly strengthened by a listing of sources. Brooks has obviously read the major historians, philosophers and sociologists of the past 50 years, and these should be listed.

As for the thesis of this book, the author clearly has not spent time on the northern Great Plains is collecting data for his book for much of life here does not quite fit his pattern. Even in Fargo and Sioux Falls, while there are Bobos to be found, there seems to be a lot of other things driving society.

And how do you explain the Bush victory, electoral fluke though it was, in terms of a triumphant Bobo class? Even though George Bush had far fewer popular votes than Al Gore, he was still able to prevail in the Electoral College, assisted by the Supreme Court. The widely disseminated maps of the 2000 election show a profound split in the country between the more urban and the more rural areas and this suggests something less of a Bobo triumph than Brooks presents.

On the whole, though, this readable and generally persuasive book should provide a basis for continuing discussion about our American culture early in this new century.

***Working Hard and Making Do: Surviving in Small Town America*, by Margaret K. Nelson and Joan Smith. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999. 279 pp. $45 cloth, $16.96 paper.**

Samantha K. Ammons
University of Minnesota

In a Post-Fordist U.S. economy, characterized by job instability, declines in manufacturing, and the proliferation of "bad" jobs with few benefits and low wages, how do working class families "make do?" Using interview and survey data from predominately white, two parent families in rural Coolidge County, Vermont, Margaret K. Nelson and Joan Smith attempt to answer this question by exploring the effects of

economic restructuring on the household economy. In their book,
Working Hard and Making Do: Surviving in Small Town America, they
find that families use a complex array of patchwork "survival strategies"
not only to survive, but also to create a sense of meaning and stability in
their lives.

Nelson and Smith begin by drawing a distinction between "good"
and "bad" job households and the strategies employed by each. While
good job households have at least one or more members employed in a
relatively stable, full-time, year round job with benefits, Nelson and
Smith classify bad job households as having at least one member whose
wage work tends to be the opposite-- part-time, seasonal, or temporary,
unstable, and without benefits. For most of the 87 households they
interviewed, one salary was not sufficient to sustain the family, even
when a good job was present. All used combinations of different
strategies to "make it" economically. These included: self-provisioning
(gathering wood, gardening, and building their own homes),
moonlighting, inter-household exchange, and dual earners. However,
usage of strategies differed in good and bad job households.

Dual earner, entrepreneurial moonlighting, self-provisioning, and
inter-household exchanges were more extensively found in good job
households. A relatively stable job with benefits allowed them to better
afford short-term costs, such as a second car, associated with having a
second earner. Having a steady income also helped them accumulate and
maintain resources. They were able to afford "extras" and tools and
equipment associated with having a side-business. With predictable
schedules, they also had time to repair and add onto their homes, plant
gardens, and exchange favors and services with other households.
Further, as a result of these strategies, good job households often had
extensive and richer social networks than bad job households and were
able to weather unpredictable events; in other words, because of their
good jobs they could afford to capitalize on these strategies.

Without a steady, year-round job with benefits, wages fluctuated
more in bad job households than in good job households, thereby making
it "impossible to construct the kind of predictable, orderly pattern of
family life enjoyed by those with labor market advantages" (pp 64-65).
Family emergencies, lay-offs, and unpleasant work environments set the
stage for frequent unemployment. Due to their low wages, lack of
resources, and job instability, bad job households were less likely to have
dual earners, especially in families with young children. They were,

however, likely to do routine self-provisioning, waged moonlighting, and some inter-household exchanges. However, while good job households were able to moonlight for "extra" money, bad job household members worked additional jobs out of necessity; they needed additional money to meet basic expenses. They also had to decide whether to save money by gathering wood and planting a garden or to exchange services with other households; limited resources did not allow them to pursue both. While one strategy would cut household costs and directly benefit the family, the other involved reciprocal exchanges with others that were not always dependable. As a result, social networks tended to be less developed among bad job households and an otherwise minor set back could have a large impact on the household's economic situation.

Nelson and Smith also discuss the effect these strategies have on the meanings individuals attach to their work and on gender relations within each type of household. Not surprisingly, strategies, such as moonlighting and self-provisioning, served an important function besides generating income; they enabled men and women to reassert gendered roles and identities that had been disrupted by economic restructuring. The authors argue that these activities were especially crucial for men whose wages were lower than in the past, could no longer count on "bringing home the bacon" by themselves, and might be working in more sex integrated workplaces. Through side businesses such as auto repair, men in good job households were able to bolster their sense of masculinity and perceive themselves as dominant breadwinners; trading served a similar function in bad job households. Women's economic roles were also downplayed and "naturalized." Activities such as making Christmas gifts for the family and trading babysitting services were not seen as "skills" or products easily converted to cash value thereby giving more prominence to men's financial contributions.

Interestingly, Nelson and Smith also explore how strategies and role fulfillment affect participation in domestic and household labor. They provide readers with an interesting insight into the complex interaction between gender, work, and household division of labor. When men in bad job households felt secure and worked more than their spouse, they were more likely to contribute to housework and childcare. However, in good job households, the opposite was true; they helped out less when they worked more hours than their wives. Work, therefore, results in more than monetary compensation. As the Nelson and Smith's work explains repeatedly throughout, the nature and quality of jobs has

implications for informal and formal economic strategies, gender roles, and social relations in general.

The authors note that many of the strategies employed by both types of households served psychological purposes; they were an "alternative source of satisfaction and meaning in their lives" (p181). "Survival strategies," therefore, not only helped them "make do" but to "make better" the damaging impact caused by economic structural changes. While it would have been interesting to learn about children's roles and perspectives within these households, Nelson and Smith's work does provide deep and rich insights into how families actively resist and create meaning in the face of larger structural forces. <u>Working Hard and Making Do</u> would be a useful text for undergraduate and graduate students studying work, family, inequality, economic sociology, gender, or rural sociology.

115