

## REVIEWS

### ■ Review

**Susan Stedman Jones**, *Durkheim Reconsidered*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001, 274pp. incl. index, £55.00/\$66.95, ISBN 0745616161 (hbk); £15.99/\$31.95, ISBN 074561616X (pbk)

**Mustafa Emirbayer** (ed.), *Emile Durkheim: Sociologist of Modernity*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003, 306pp. incl. index, £55.00/\$64.95, ISBN 0631219900 (hbk); £16.99/\$29.95, ISBN 0631219919 (pbk)

'The debates over Durkheim's work are, inevitably, arguments about the most basic directions of sociological thought' (Alexander, 1989: 123). One could add that this holds true for all debates about the classics of sociology. Let us consider, for example, the image of Max Weber we had up to thirty years ago: Weber was the author of *Economy and Society*, the political sociologist interested in bureaucracy and power, the author of the methodological essays on the idea of *avalutativity*. Subsequently, he was the author of the 'Religious rejections of the world and their directions' and for some a Nietzschean diagnostician of modernity. It was only after Wolfgang Schluchter's, Jürgen Habermas's and Hubert Treiber's (to name only a few) work of restyling that a deep shift in the history of interpretations of Weber's thought occurred, a shift that reflected the modern/post-modern debate and the hermeneutical mood of a substantial part of contemporary social theory.

One could say that the history of interpreting Durkheim is marked by a similar turning point. The classical interpretations – those offered by Talcott Parsons, Robert Nisbet and Lewis Coser among others – pictured Durkheim first of all as the champion of the primacy of society over the individual; second, as one of the most important forerunners of functionalism; third, as an ultra-defender of the social order against social conflict; and – last but not least – as the classical example of a positivist style of thought. Roughly speaking, he was considered basically as the author of the positivist manifesto *The Rules of Sociological Method* – the same set of rules he applied to his empirical study of suicide – and only in the second instance as a thinker who read modernity through the lens of his sociology of religion. Since Steven Lukes's impressive intellectual biography (*Emile Durkheim: His Life and Work*, first published in 1973), however, Durkheimian studies have received a new impulse; today, we are witnessing many efforts to 'urbanize' his thought in order to make it more akin to contemporary theoretical sensibility.

Susan Stedman Jones' *Durkheim Reconsidered* is a book worthy of the highest attention for many reasons. First of all, the book is a perfect example of both historical accuracy and theoretical depth. Second, it is one of the most complete defences of Durkheim's thought against all the charges that have been made against it. Third, it represents a systematic investigation of one of Durkheim's philosophical sources, concentrating on the relation between Durkheim's sociology and Charles Renouvier's version of Kantianism, throwing light on a point always mentioned and recognized but never seriously investigated before.

The first two chapters of the book are dedicated to a strict criticism of the 'vulgar

Durkheimianism' reflected in the Anglo-American sociological text-books (and not only in them, could one add). Defending Durkheim against the criticisms of being a politically conservative thinker, a proto-functionalist, a naïve positivist, Stedman Jones stresses again and again Durkheim's relationship with the Kantian philosopher Charles Renouvier and shows that these charges are completely inconsistent once the concept of 'collective representation' is understood correctly.

Furthermore, Stedman Jones reconstructs (Chapters 3 and 4) the political and philosophical context of Durkheim's France which is essential to a correct understanding of the meaning of Durkheim's vocabulary. Taken together, these chapters represent the *pars destruens* of the book. Stedman Jones's basic thesis is that the central role of the idea of representation in his thought disables Durkheim, on the one hand, to embrace a Comtean idea of science and to neglect categories such as 'meaning', 'action', and 'change', on the other.

The second part of the book (Chapters 5–11) is a long journey through Durkheim's main works, focusing on the concept of 'representation' and of the relation with the neo-Kantian philosophy of Renouvier. Coherently with the first part of her book, Stedman Jones tries to cast a new light on Durkheim's work, presenting him as a rationalist thinker who is perfectly aware of the symbolic dimension of the social life; as a humanist socialist and a republican committed to progressive political values; as a critical thinker worried by the social malaises of modernity that his new science permitted to point out. If we think of other 'post-Parsonian' and 'post-Nisbetian' readings of Durkheim – those offered by Stephen Lukes (1973), Mark Cladis (1992), Gianfranco Poggi (2000) and, above all, by the scholars associated with the British Centre for Durkheimian Studies such as William Pickering (1984) and Watts Miller (1996) – this intellectual profile in itself is not very original. Many scholars have already corrected the unbearable picture of a conservative or proto-fascist Durkheim, and of a 'realist' social scientist unaware of categories like action and meaning. What is original and important in Stedman Jones' book is the way she takes to reach the point that is the systematic emphasis on the link with the neo-Kantian philosophy of Renouvier.

The last chapter of the book shows how Stedman Jones's interests are not only historical but also theoretical ones. After defending Durkheim against the charges raised by the sociological tradition, she criticizes contemporary social theory in the name of a Durkheimian kind of sociology. In her view, what is wrong with contemporary social theory, which she sees as being completely absorbed by post-structural and Foucauldian approaches, is a sort of blind and totalizing hermeneutical self-reference that dissolves the reality of society and, consequently, the possibility of social criticism. In contrast to this postmodern intoxication, and against a 'purely aesthetic culture' that transforms science in 'a form of literature', the value of Durkheim – according to Stedman Jones –

is that he offers an escape from the code and the discourse and its internal logic, through an outwarding-going epistemology which does not thereby neglect the issue of sign, signification and symbol, or even ultimately the discursive when understood in terms of representations and relations. It offers a conceptual, as opposed to a narrowly linguistic, approach, but one that constitutes the basis of an empirical approach to society as a historical and structural reality. (Stedman Jones, 2001: 221)

To sum up: Stedman Jones's historical and sometimes almost philological worries merge with the purely theoretical interest for a social theory which is hermeneutically oriented but at the same time 'rationally controlled' and capable of orienting an empirical look at social life. Even if I feel basically sympathetic toward Stedman Jones's defence of a

Durkheimian model of sociology, her picture of contemporary social theory is – it seems to me – too severe and one-sided. Contemporary social theory is much more variegated than the Foucauldian profile she pictures, and post-modern approaches are far from exhausting the field. On the other hand, Stedman Jones's book seems a little one-sided from other points of view as well. Even if the investigation of the neo-Kantian sources of Durkheim's thought is a really precious contribution to Durkheimian studies, in my view, her position is pushed too far. Her thesis becomes one-sided insofar as in order to show Renouvier's influences on Durkheim she neglects any other possible sources of his thought. A really interesting question, for example, both from a historical and a theoretical point of view, regards the relation between Durkheim and Jewish thought and particularly the French-Jewish thinkers of his time. Within Durkheimian scholarship there is an ongoing debate about the origins of important Durkheimian concepts which can be linked to the Jewish tradition (see Strenski, 1997). What is demonstrated with this example is that even if it is quite correct to distance oneself from old-fashioned views which interpret Durkheim through the lens of Comte or the Traditionalists, Renouvier's influence cannot exhaust the spectrum of Durkheim's sources. Again, this is not only a historical problem. In her strong and one-sided stress on the centrality of the notion of representations (the importance of which I do not want to underestimate), Stedman Jones presents Durkheim's thought – from the *Division of Labour in Society* to *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* – as a perfectly linear and continuous intellectual development that owes its coherence to the concept of representations. Even if I am among those that side with the thesis of a basic continuity within Durkheim's work, Stedman Jones's book resets all the disputes and questions related to the fractures and/or shifts in emphasis that cross his work. Furthermore, given her exclusive concentration on the concept of representations and on the relation between Durkheim and Renouvier, insufficient attention is paid to those aspects of Durkheim's thought which do not immediately fit into the neo-Kantian frame. Discussing the idea of organic solidarity and the nexus between solidarity and differentiation, the Durkheimian idea that a healthy social life is a 'constrained' life – more precisely the idea that 'life is limitation' – is seen as the 'quintessential Durkheimian argument' (2001: 92). However, this important point is not discussed further and thus does not contribute to her aiming at a general reconsideration of Durkheim. Stressing this quintessential point, and investigating the sources of the idea of life as limitation, would have permitted the reader to see the *pathos* (see Poggi, 2000) that criss-crosses Durkheim's thought throughout his works (and not just the *Suicide* and the idea of anomie), and makes Durkheim's sensibility much more similar to those of Max Weber and Georg Simmel than is usually recognized. Stedman Jones rightly points to the usually neglected similarities between Durkheim and Weber by showing that Durkheimian sociology does not lack concepts of meaning and agency that characterize the Weberian approach. However, given that Durkheim is read exclusively through the lens of Renouvier and the concept of representations, other possible similarities are not seen. If normally Weber is considered 'useful' and Durkheim 'useless', then this is also because of the 'tragic' conception of life and modernity that Weber (and Simmel) had, against which the supposed naïve (that is, positivist and evolutionist) optimism of Durkheim is set. Reconsidering Durkheim is absolutely essential, a job that Stedman Jones does in a brilliant and very instructive way. But it is perhaps a job that needs to be done considering by a wider spectrum of categories and intellectual connections.

More than anything else, what makes Stedman Jones's and Emirbayer's books similar and ideally part of the same project is the idea of the 'usefulness' of Durkheim. Mustafa Emirbayer, in fact, is the author of an essay entitled 'Useful Durkheim', written in 1996

as a rejoinder to Charles Tilly's 1981 essay 'Useless Durkheim'. The recent volume edited by Emirbayer is another attempt to show this usefulness.

The book is the third contribution to a series (whose general editor is Ira J. Cohen) of Blackwell readers dedicated to the founding figures within the field of social theory. The interesting characteristic of this series is that every volume builds a bridge between a selection of classical texts by these founding figures and contemporary social thinkers, whose work represents the development of the work of the 'founding fathers' (the two first books were dedicated to Karl Marx (edited by Robert J. Antonio) and Max Weber (edited by Stephen Kalberg); a fourth forthcoming book (edited by Ira J. Cohen) is dedicated to the general theme of modernity and society). In this way, each volume aims at showing the richness and the fruitfulness of classics thought for contemporary social theory.

Emirbayer's volume on Durkheim reflects these general lines. The material is organized in four broad parts: the first one is dedicated to Durkheim's 'sociological methodology'; the second focuses on 'a topography of modernity'; the third is dedicated to 'the institutional order of modernity'; and the final one to 'morality and modernity'. Within the first section, he has grouped a selection of texts from the *Suicide* aimed at showing Durkheim's sociological methodology, and a few pages from Pierre Bourdieu's *La Distinction* that point out how a private faculty such as taste can be explained sociologically. The second section contains primarily a selection from *The Division of Labour in Society* which focuses on social structures, culture and collective emotions which constrain and, at the same time, enable social interaction. It also contains a selection from *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* on religious beliefs, on religious practices and on the centrality of the symbolic dimension. The parallel selections are taken from Basil Bernstein's works on the relation between the social organization and integration of British schools and the belief and moral order of the school itself. Another set of selections are from the work of Michel Foucault, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Marc Bloch, Mary Douglas and Kai Erikson, who engage in strongly Durkheimian cultural analyses of traditional as well as modern societies. The third section investigates Durkheim's analysis of the paramount institutions of modernity, from the State, the market to associations of civil society (occupational groups). The selections from Robert Bellah, Antonio Gramsci, bell hooks and others show the vitality and sometimes extraordinary relevance of Durkheim's ideas on democracy and democratic institutions which belie the traditional poor opinion of Durkheim's political sociology. Finally, the fourth section addresses the theme of individuality and autonomy within Durkheim's work. Erving Goffman and Viviana Zelizer are the contemporary thinkers chosen to show the relevance of the Durkheimian approach to this subject.

Even if Emirbayer's choices of texts could be disputed (this is the case in the fourth and last section, the importance of which perhaps deserve a more accurate attention in the choice of contemporary texts), the volume manages pretty well to communicate the vitality of Durkheim's sociology and of contemporary Durkheimian approaches.

Emirbayer's introductory essay contributes to strengthen this impression further. Emirbayer reconstructs in a few pages and in a maybe too schematic way the most salient conceptual loci of Durkheim's thought without omitting his inconsistencies and shifts in emphasis and locates his insights within the philosophical and historical context of the Third Republic. As in Stedman Jones's case, Emirbayer disproves the most frequent criticism of Durkheim's thought. First, arguing against those who accuse him of being a sort of 'idealist' thinker – above all in the late works, such as *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* – Emirbayer stresses the continuous emphasis Durkheim put on 'social morphology'; second, against those who, on the contrary, accuse him of being a sort of disguised Marxist materialist using a base/superstructure scheme, he stresses the importance of Durkheim's

later turn toward cultural analysis (and here Emirbayer rightly emphasizes the difficulty in finding an equally well equipped cultural theory in the other founding fathers of sociology, from Marx to Weber and Tocqueville); further, against those who advance the criticism that Durkheim overshadows – above all in his analysis of extra-institutional processes – the role of collective emotional factors in the historical process, Emirbayer reminds us of Durkheim's inquiry into the emotional foundation of interpersonal relations conducted primarily in his 1912 masterpiece. Third, Emirbayer addresses the long-standing 'line of interpretation' that views Durkheim as the champion of 'social equilibrium' against 'social change'. Once again, it is in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* that, according to Emirbayer, we can find a reply to this misreading, since it is there that Durkheim shows the dyogenetic and potentially creative and dynamic force of collective rituals and ceremonies in traditional and modern societies. Finally, Emirbayer takes into consideration those interpretations that committed above all an 'error of omission', blaming Durkheim for a substantial disinterest in politics or for a conservative attitude in political affairs. On the contrary, in the wake of Anthony Giddens's (1986), Mark Cladis's (1992), Roger Cotterrell's (1999), and – one could add to Emirbayer's list – Frank Pearce's works (2001), Emirbayer recalls Durkheim's critical analysis of the market disequilibrium, his distinctive conception of 'communicative' and 'reflective' democracy and above all his analysis of civil society and of the integrative role of associations 'in between' the State and the capitalist economy, an analysis which – again – is difficult to find in Marx and Weber.

As already mentioned, Emirbayer's and Stedman Jones's books share a common intention. As books written by Durkheimian scholars they try to show, point by point, and with an analytical style, the limits and inconsistencies of former interpretations and they try to cast a new light on Durkheim's social theory. But they also share a common spirit and the all too understandable wish for a strong critical social theory, a theory capable of reading the pathologies that affect modernity without falling into desperation and apocalyptic visions, which preclude any possibility of inspiring transformative cultural and political actions. According to Emirbayer, Durkheim's sociology 'will remain a crucial source of ideas to help us chart their [modern societies'] development and will shed important light upon their dynamics, emergent problems, and future possibilities' (Emirbayer, 2003: 25). For Stedman Jones:

whilst Weber's black vision offers no hope from the dark cage of modernity, Durkheim's shows that humanity's belief in itself can generate new forms of relatedness and new institutions to carry us forward. He shows possibilities for change through the tension between new forms of collective thinking and established powers. And he shows that we need a sense of hope in the possibilities of the future, and how human action can build these. This is significant now, with the sight of ancient cultures being ground under the boot of both economic liberalism and political oppression – the genocide and political and religious oppression in Tibet being only one recent example from the catalogue of the twentieth-century disasters. (Stedman Jones, 2001: 226)

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## ■ Review

**George E. McCarthy**, *Classical Horizons: The Origins of Sociology in Ancient Greece*.

Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2003, 202pp. incl. index, \$65.50, ISBN 0791455637 (hbk); \$21.95, ISBN 0791455645 (pbk)

There have been signs of renewed interest – it is too small to be considered a resurgence – in the classical foundations of modern social and political thinkers and theorists. The age of Enlightenment in European social thought was, in many ways, framed by the context of classical Greek thought. It was characterized by a reclamation of Greek rationalism and the political and historical writings of Roman writers and orators. One thinks immediately of Winkelmann in aesthetics, the infusion of classical themes in Rousseau's political and social thought, and the idealization of the Athenian *polis* in Schiller and Hegel, among others. All these thinkers and their ideas took the backdrop of Greek philosophy – whether it was aesthetics, ethics, political science and logic – as an essential 'wisdom', a prism through which the modern world could be viewed and understood and the modern age and the Enlightenment critiqued and extended.

What is perhaps less emphasized is the extent to which those figures who we consider to be the pillars of modern sociology were also influenced and formed by the ideas of Greek thought. The analysis of this aspect of the thought of Karl Marx, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim is skillfully brought to the surface in George E. McCarthy's *Classical Horizons: The Origins of Sociology in Ancient Greece*. For McCarthy, the birth of classical sociology is grounded in a project of reflection on classical Greek thought. Although this manifests itself quite differently in each of the three thinkers, McCarthy's project is to show how each of them connected an emerging interest in social scientific analysis with an ethical project of maintaining and fostering a notion of the public good in the face of atomizing effects of modernity. The implication that McCarthy attempts to draw is that from these three thinkers we not only glimpse a new avenue for interpreting their own

work, but also how each of them rejected what McCarthy sees as narrower approaches to social analysis and ethics – such as positivism and utilitarianism – in favor of a richer conception of society and the role that social science must play in promoting the public good. McCarthy's claim is that these three thinkers longed for 'dreams of the ancients' (*Griechensehnsucht*) where, lacking the perspective given by Hellenic thought, the institutions of the state, society and the market can be seen only as producing 'a reified and oppressive society unrestrained by transcendent ethical principles' (p. 4).

The critique of the Enlightenment and its vision of science and a perfectly ordered and understandable world is in many ways the point of reaction for the social theories of Marx, Weber and Durkheim. For each of them it is necessary to go back to a conception of a cohesive moral community based on the way that the *polis* was discussed and conceptualized in classical Greek thought. McCarthy sees the critique of the Enlightenment and the rejection of its ideas as central to interpreting each of the thinkers and it is this that characterizes their return or at least embrace of classical Greek thought. What these 19th-century thinkers were aware of was the way the Enlightenment seemed to sidestep the substantive qualities of ethics and morality at the expense of individualism and the instrumental character of modern science. For the Greeks, the core function of political philosophy was its ability to utilize reason in a practical way to bring about the 'good life' (*eudaimonia*). Political philosophy was the road to this end, but it merged ethics (a theoretical science) with political science (a practical science). It was this synthesis of ethics and science that McCarthy sees as the distinguishing characteristic of the thought of Marx, Weber and Durkheim.

It is in Marx that McCarthy sees the most intense intersection between modern social science and the themes of classical Greek thought. Marx's project fuses together the ethical concerns of the public good that he saw in Aristotle's political science and ethical philosophy with the emerging methods of political economy in order to analyze the structures of power that prevent what he saw as the fulfillment of true democratic ideals derived from Aristotelian thought. In this sense, Marx's grounding in Greek thought served as the paradigm for a new conception of humanism, social values and morality. McCarthy sees Marx's project as stemming from his Greek-inspired conception of freedom which was 'defined in terms of self-realization and rational deliberation within a moral community of mutually caring friends and active citizens' (p. 15).

Marx's move toward the analysis and critique of capitalism is therefore not difficult to discern. Instead of abstract philosophical analysis, Marx sees that only the critique of the concrete institutions of modernity – specifically capitalism – which obfuscate the realization of freedom is capable of overcoming a form of social organization that prevents the realization of human freedom. Of course, this is generally seen as a radicalization of Hegelian philosophy, and this is the case; but McCarthy shows that this move – the emphasis on social analysis, on the concrete over the abstract – is something derived from Greek thought as well. Marx's social critique is inherently tied to an ethical foundation, one based on an Aristotelian conception of justice. This is not simply an application of ethics to social reality, it is more importantly a realization by Marx that the only ways to make ethics and ethical prescriptions concrete is to tie them to social institutions. This is the project that drove Marx's critique of capitalism as a system that 'destroys the moral basis of community; undermines the family, friendship, and citizenship; and causes alienation in the workplace, thus denying the possibilities for self-realization, freedom and democracy' (p. 42).

Through this reconstruction of Marx's ethical and social thought, McCarthy is able to present us with an interpretation of Marx that is insistent on political democracy, who

embraces ethics as a guide toward social and human freedom, and rejects the possessive individualism of modernity that eschews transcendental political ideals. Of course, such an interpretation of Marx runs counter to the materialist, anti-metaphysical philosopher and political economist ingrained in the canon of western social theory. Indeed, this is precisely McCarthy's point: the re-evaluation and re-interpretation of Marx as grounded in the ethical and political ideas of Greek thought – specifically of Aristotle – mean a Marx that can rejuvenate a critical theory of society. Freed from both dogmatic and hostile interpretations alike, Marx is brought to life as a thinker whose essential project was the realization of the ethical ideal of free human self-realization.

Turning to Weber, McCarthy argues that Nietzsche's radicalization of Kant and Schopenhauer, on the one hand, and his critique of Platonic rationalism, on the other, serve as the core of Weber's understanding of modernity and the Enlightenment. Through the lens of Nietzsche, Weber incorporates a view of Enlightenment science as domination. This, according to McCarthy, is derived from Nietzsche's distinction between the Apollonian and Dionysian in *The Birth of Tragedy*. For Weber, modern science is nothing more than a *Herrschaftswissen*, a knowledge of domination which was derived from Nietzsche's interpretation of classical Greek culture: the Apollonian drive to control life in Greek culture led to the suppression of the Dionysian drive to creativity, art and culture. Weber's view of modernity as an 'iron cage' where instrumental rationality and bureaucracy are the norm echoes this interpretation of Greek culture given by Nietzsche and, as opposed to Marx, provides a much more negative interpretation of modernity and more pessimistic appraisal of our ability to transcend it.

Of course, in addition to this, Weber also embraced a form of science that was in stark opposition to the positivist current in the social sciences. The social and cultural sciences had as their task, however, the study of history, of the past in order to learn about the dynamics of society and its various institutions, it was not to have a predictive power. Here McCarthy deals with the issue of the separation of fact from value in Weber's methodological writings. Contrary to how Weber is commonly interpreted – as advocating a strict separation between the analysis of facts and the proposition of values – McCarthy argues that Weber's conception of social science never veered away from Heinrich Rickert's contention that all knowledge is preconditioned by values. Weber's argument in his 1904 essay "Objectivity" in *Social Science and Social Policy* is therefore not that there should be a separation of fact from value, but that the type of science one chooses is accompanied by an implicit choice in value judgments. Weber's point was to prevent the colonization of the cultural sciences by the methodology of the natural sciences, not to insist on a sterile separation between values and social science. What is important for Weber is therefore the correct set of values needed to understand society insisting on a 'value relevance' (*Wertbeziehung*), not scientific method separated from ethical values.

This leads Weber back to the critique of modernity and what he saw to be the distinction between a formal, instrumental rationality (*Zweckrationalität*) concerned with the technical means of achieving specific ends, and a substantive rationality (*Wertrationalität*) that was focused on social and political values such as equality, freedom and justice. For the Greeks, such a distinction did not exist, and McCarthy argues that only by seeing Weber as rooted in this classical context can we see the more normative aspects of his thought as well as put his pessimism about modernity into perspective.

Similarly with Durkheim, McCarthy argues that on its foundation the new science of society, sociology, was strongly based on the need to diagnose what Durkheim saw as a move from Hellenic solidarity to modern anomie. From Montesquieu and Rousseau,

Durkheim gains the insight – one which they themselves had obtained from the study of classical political society – that society was itself more than the sum of its parts. For Durkheim, the discussion of ‘social facts’ was therefore premised on the idea that society was ‘no mere aggregation of its members as in utilitarian liberalism and classical economics’ (p. 121). These sociological ideas lead Durkheim in his later work toward the concerns of ethics and social morality, but they were buttressed by his understanding of social solidarity in Greece and Rome. Returning to the Greeks, Durkheim derives his ideas about pedagogy, morality and political citizenship basing his ideas on the Athenian ideal of social justice. Montesquieu is the central figure that bridges the classical and the modern for Durkheim, holding ‘to the classical principle of universal necessity and formal natural law and to the modern goal of scientific observation and description of social types’ (p. 116).

It must be admitted that McCarthy’s analysis provides us with a remarkable framework for analyzing the work of Marx, Weber and Durkheim. The problem, I think, is in the way he positions these thinkers and their relation to the Enlightenment. To argue that these three central figures in social thought had their foundations in classical thought provides us with a broad similarity that masks crucial differences between them. McCarthy sees each of these thinkers as going back to Greek and Roman thought and culture as a reaction to the Enlightenment and its notion of science and society. But the Enlightenment was also a great source of political and ethical ideals and its notion of science was not something totally disparaged by the classical sociologists. Modernity effects a change in human reason, but the ways that these sociologists reacted to it are quite different. McCarthy argues that ‘[m]odernity transforms human reason into a mechanical and deterministic science. Science, in turn, creates its own forms of objectivity as it measures the immediate present and reduces individual potential and human possibilities to that which is articulable from within the limits of the present social system’ (p. 161). But it was not the view of Marx that modernity and the Enlightenment were distortions in human freedom, even though this may have been the case for Weber. Marx’s critique of political economy still made use of what were at the time modern methods of scientific investigation. His project was not to create a new science of society, but to reveal the way that bourgeois political economy serves to legitimize capitalism and is therefore not a critical science in the Kantian sense. Marx’s relation to the Enlightenment is critical in the sense that he seeks to expand its notion of freedom and democracy.

In this sense, McCarthy fails to draw out the important differences between Marx and Weber and their critiques of modernity and rationality. Weber’s pessimism about the likelihood of human beings to free themselves from the ‘iron cage’ of modernity is partially understood by his implicit notion that objectification – as in science and technology – and reification are essentially the same thing. Marx located the problem of modernity in the institution of capital itself and not in a form of cognition. In this sense, the Weberian position leads to an indictment of the Enlightenment *à la* Adorno and Horkheimer’s *Dialektik der Aufklärung* whereas Marx holds that human reason is a constant source of potential freedom, not alienation as in his understanding of the Greek conceptions of *praxis* and *poiesis*.

But McCarthy’s larger argument in reinterpreting Marx, Weber and Durkheim in the light of classical philosophy is to reorient modern sociology and social science more generally away from its positivist inclinations and to move it back toward an integrated methodology where ethics, morality and politics are integrated into a comprehensive science of society with moral and political goals. And this, it must be said, is a dearly needed argument. At a time when the social sciences and social theory are moving away from a

consciousness of their political and, even, moral purpose, McCarthy's account of the origins of sociology is timely. This book should be read by anyone concerned with the withering sense of purpose in the social sciences and social theory as well as those interested in classical sociology and the intentions of its founders.

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## ■ Review

**Ulf Hedetoft**, *The Global Turn: National Encounters with the World*. Aalborg: Aalborg University Press, 2003, vi + 184pp., 195Dkr., ISBN 8773076848 (pbk)

The relationship between the nation-state and the global order at the beginning of the new century has intrigued scholars in various disciplines. Processes of globalization, in particular, have attracted the attention of economists, international relations specialists, and cultural studies theorists. Danish professor Ulf Hedetoft's collection of essays belongs to this last category – both the least represented and the most controversial in the burgeoning literature on globalization. The paucity of entries in this category notwithstanding, it has spawned several notorious futuristic general theories – 'Jihad vs. McWorld' may be the best known conceptualization – which have in some measure stigmatized all culturally grounded approaches to understanding globalization. Political economy will not willingly yield its self-ascribed role as the bedrock of globalization research.

Yet since 2001 we have steadily become aware of the cultural divide that has come to replace the ideological – and strategic – contestation of the Cold War. The war on terrorism that shapes both the contemporary international political system and the global economy has civilizational underpinnings that no amount of denials by Western political leaders can shake. Most political scientists insist that the current international conflict – as fluid and amorphous as it may be – is about power, just as economists maintain that creating a stable long-term environment for global markets to operate efficiently is the goal triggering current and short-term dislocations. Many observers have a sneaking suspicion, though, that this conflict really is about different types of values, cultural pathways, and identities – not just about political and economic resources.

*The Global Turn: National Encounters with the World* offers an analysis of the interconnectedness of cultural, political, economic, and even military processes in the world today. It inquires, for example, into the process in which democracy promotion and economic liberalization, spearheaded by the USA, have within a decade led to globalized American military activity. Hedetoft frames the critical questions succinctly: 'Is globalization a cultural leveler but an economic differentiator, widening the economic gap between the developed and the less developed world while obliterating the historical specificities of the same disadvantaged countries in the process?' Moreover, 'is globalization a word which at bottom conceals a new form of worldwide empire, engineered and organized by the global hegemon, the USA?' (p. 3).

The impression that this is indeed the case has fueled countless anti-globalization protests in recent years. Hedetoft's valuable contribution is to advance subtle theoretical argumentation around this perspective. Based on far-reaching, occasionally colorful

evidence about many cultures, it makes clear how simplistic equating globalization with Americanization is.

The volume is divided into three parts: Part One, theory and history; Part Two, cultural identities (including examinations of the global–national dialogue on sport and cinema); and Part Three, political identities (the case studies are of Germany and of immigrants and their host societies). Over the past decade the author has established a reputation as a leading European cultural theorist of identity, so it is not unexpected that thought-provoking theorizing runs through the entire study.

The unifying theme is the triangular relationship between politics, identity, and culture. For Hedetoft, culture recently is ‘assuming a more central, proactive role, because the putty that “politics” used to provide is coming unstuck at the seams’ – the result of the ‘waning or diluted mental significance of politics in the mental geography of peoples’ (p. 33). Drawing on examples from Europe, the author discusses contrasting patterns of cultural identity that range from cultural localism to cultural renationalization. Refocusing an identity has an impact on how the nation and state, as well as masses and elites, are connected. The globalization of culture triggers a re-examination of and introspection about one’s own identity, but what imperceptibly occurs in the process is that culture takes on a causative and foundational significance. Globalized culture becomes ‘mostly linked with imagined apocalyptic consequences for national cultures and identities and certainly with nostalgia for a past of authentic identifications’ (p. 33). At the individual level, identity is handled in a strategic socio-psychological way, driven by the need for nationals to develop intercultural competencies valuable in a global environment.

Hedetoft underscores two important differences, first, the difference between globalization and internationalization, and second, the difference between the global order and an international order. Sovereign national units anchor the international system, but they are the targets of globalization. As Hedetoft evocatively puts it:

the international system is having a new global order superimposed on it, one that does not do entirely away with it, but makes it and its units dependent on, functional for and subservient to the interests, rules and normativities of ‘globalization’ and its leading composers and conductors. (p. 7)

So how are nation-states and the nationalisms that cement them faring? Nationalisms ‘today are faced with a potential, structurally defined loss of functionality in terms of the trajectories of the global order’ (p. 18). Even ‘eurationalism today . . . is full of self-doubt, sentimental cliché and ritual, and external/internal scapegoats – whether in the form of Islamic immigration, incompetent national politicians, or the wildly exaggerated “EU bureaucracy”’ (p. 29). Yet that is not the whole story. ‘[T]he very nationalism that is perceived to be threatened in fact reimagines and reforges itself, bracing itself for survival in new circumstances’ (p. 21). Of special concern to the author, who is director of the Academy for Migration Studies in Denmark, is nationalism’s scapegoating of immigrant groups.

Europe has been developing its own nationalism that has not been immune to pathologies. For Hedetoft, ‘it is both nostalgic and extremely functional, both “cosmopolitan” (the discourses of high politics) and “exclusionary” (the “low” politics of culture, migration, and so forth)’ (p. 48). The inference is that nationalist, populist, xenophobic impulses exist not just among right-wing movements in Austria, Denmark, Holland, and France: they have percolated to a transnational, European level. As a result, the EU’s nascent nationalism mixes norms that are both good and bad, which is reflected in the

fact that ‘there is no clear-cut dichotomy between the “cultural relativism” of the cosmopolitan elites and the “national exclusivism” of the new–old nationalists’ (p. 57).

The chapters on sport and cinema, about which Hedetoft has written a great deal elsewhere, provide illustrations of the confrontation between the national and the global. Sport is ‘a decisive (f)actor both in the production and signification of nationalism, because it situates itself at the intersection of “culture” and “identity”, between national and international meanings and practices’ (p. 78). Important international victories in sports are invariably interpreted as the triumph of the national, as the author chronicles from the 1992 Danish European Cup victory – a vindication of the ‘wild paganism’ and courage of the Valhalla Vikings – to France’s World Cup win in 1998 – a product of multi-ethnic cohesion and the soul of France, in President Chirac’s interpretation (pp. 76, 80).

In a section on sport and war, Hedetoft foreshadows upcoming US propaganda about Iraq. Referring to the first home soccer match played by a Palestinian team in 1993, he cited an American newspaper report which patronizingly asserted that the Palestinian team had already won – politically – before the game had begun. An almost identical report was carried shortly after the US occupation of Iraq began when US Marines engaged in a match with a ‘Free Iraq’ team. ‘The soccer event becomes the signifier for the signified of “identity”, which can here – like any normal/normative nationalism – be relocated from the space of hostile confrontation . . . to the symbolics of a “soccer friendly”’ (p. 74).

The example employed by Hedetoft to highlight different national interpretations of a cinematic work is Steven Spielberg’s *Saving Private Ryan* (Hedetoft again appears prescient: the ‘Private Jessica Lynch rescue’ seems to be loosely based on a similar motif). Paradoxically, the author found on the basis of analyzing film reviews, ‘it is the American critical reception of the movie which most comprehensively accepts the transformation from “American” to “global-universal”’ (p. 105). By contrast, both in Denmark and France critics engaged the film as American, though the French inevitably pointed to its ludicrous flagism and pompous idealism while the Danes put greater emphasis on its transatlantic internationalism and celebration of freedom. However, in the world of cinema, as in that of international politics, not all views are of equal weight. Hedetoft’s theoretical bottom line about how cultural globalization engenders a hierarchization of national cultures is presented in the chapter on cinema: certain nationalisms, certain cultures, certain ideas, certain interpretations are more transnationally powerful, assertive, and successful than others. Where the less influential ones are not necessarily less self-congratulatory, they are certainly more inward-looking and always carry the label of national specificity. The more powerful ones (actually or in the making), on the other hand, tend toward a universality of meanings, impact and acceptance, as their national-cultural currency becomes transnationally adopted, mixes and mingles with more long-standing cultural legacies, syncretizes with them, is explicitly welcomed as a positive admixture to the culture and identity of other nations, or is treated as an admirable (role) model for emulation (p. 91).

The strength of this book is the ease with which it goes from the particular to the general and then back again. Inevitably the author is compelled to address the clash-of-civilizations debate, and he deftly fleshes out the assumptions embedded in it. He points to ‘a revival of a grander narrative in the form of legitimate discourses of civilizational clashes’ (p. 59), which has more recently expanded to include reflections about the terrorist threat to so-called universal democratic values. The author suggests that the debate has invoked a red herring: ‘this does not make much sense – a near-global hegemon with

matching resources can hardly be seriously endangered by “civilizational” encounters, even in their most violent form’ (p. 166).

Written on the eve of the US attack on Iraq, Hedetoft warns of the return of empire and perpetual war and reaches for a dialectical argument: ‘Whereas the Clash rhetorically spearheads an effort to bring reason, sense and humane values to the entire world, it simultaneously bases itself on and co-produces the very barbarism it purports to fight’ (p. 168). He pessimistically concludes that the battle for democratic values, which requires the non-western world’s acceptance of western universalism, cannot be resolved peacefully because: (1) modernity’s expansionism engenders dissatisfaction with it; and (2) the instrument used for democracy promotion – war – ‘belies the allegedly peaceful and humanitarian objective’ (p. 168).

This book provides a topical and at the same time nuanced treatment of the future of civilizational conflicts. The critique of globalization and its intended and unintended effects is highly persuasive and merits a wide readership. Few theorists can take on such a grand task and not disappoint. Hedetoft is one who does not, even though he does not propose a general systematic theory relating the national to the global. But that caution may be well justified, given the pitfalls that others who have tried to do this have fallen into. There is death by a thousand cuts and there is creation by a thousand insights. It is the second that is the singular achievement of this volume.

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## ■ Review

**Ira Katznelson**, *Desolation and Enlightenment: Political Knowledge after Total War, Totalitarianism, and the Holocaust*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003, xvi + 185pp. incl. index, £19/\$27.50, ISBN 0231111940 (hbk)

At the outset of Ira Katznelson’s new book *Desolation and Enlightenment* stands the quest for a new defence of Enlightenment. Enlightenment in the book’s title denotes a blend of the ‘original values of toleration, reason, rule of law, free inquiry, and opposition to despotism’, which Katznelson holds as values worthy of preserving (p. 153). But, continues Katznelson, only Enlightenment entwined with a deeply disturbing experience of desolation is capable of defence against the conservative challenges denouncing its lack of content and creed as well as the post-modern accusations that it rests on hypocrisy and exploitation. However, this book is not designed as a direct interrogation with Enlightenment’s past and present critics. Based on the Leonard Hastings Shoff Lectures Katznelson delivered at Columbia University in 1997, *Desolation and Enlightenment* examines in the first place the point in intellectual history when desolation joined Enlightenment. The four chapters of the book, written in elegant, essay-like, but by no means simplifying style, explore how desolation took away the earlier progressivist, optimistic, and objectivist side of Enlightenment and replaced it with a matured, disillusioned, sceptical search for the best social and political organization.

Desolation describes an intellectual condition aroused by anguish in the face of Europe’s ‘season in hell’, that is, the years 1914–45. This is also the rough time-span of

Katznelson's study in intellectual history. The scholars of this period, whose work stand at the centre of Katznelson's analysis, include *émigrés* Karl Polanyi, Hannah Arendt, and Franz Neumann, together with American academics, and almost all members of the Columbia University's 1950s' Seminar on the State. These include Gabriel Almond, Daniel Bell, Robert Dahl, Richard Hofstadter, Harold Lasswell, William Leuchtenburg, Charles Lindblom, Seymour Martin Lipset, Robert Merton, C. Wright Mills, David Truman, and Karl Wittfogel, of these most attention is given to Lasswell, Truman, and Hofstadter. Katznelson calls this group 'political studies enlightenment', although the name is better suited to describe only the American part of it. Arendt's preference for Enlightenment over antiquity is at best ambiguous.

Admitting some hesitation to include in one group Arendt, whose work is typically denounced in mainstream social science, with the well-established personae of American departments of sociology, political science, and history, Katznelson succeeds in defending his unusual selection. This proves to be one of the most successful and original elements of the book. Katznelson persuasively depicts Arendt as a social scientist who developed a strikingly similar method of historical institutional analysis to that produced in America's best social science departments of the time. In turn, he also shows how the normative aspirations among the American scholars brought them close to the work of the philosophically trained Arendt.

Unlike most authors in the history of ideas and history of social science who tend to trace threads of theoretical knowledge developing over time, Katznelson identifies the origins of the political studies enlightenment fully in the experience of desolation among European and American social scientists. These scholars were confronted with evil they perceived as radical and, due to its 'detachment from the advancement of traditional motives of normative or material gain', previously unknown (p. 83). They analyzed the historical antecedents, the 'causal elements' of the regimes and social structures that disseminated the evils of totalitarian terror, the Holocaust and total war – which in particular Polanyi and Arendt helped to conceptualize (p. 89). They came to understand that, for a substantial number of Europeans, Nazism and Bolshevism had offered attractive alternatives to liberalism. Instead of simply rejecting these attractions as tied to a particular time and place or ridiculing them as beastly or irrational, they expanded their understanding of human possibilities. Simultaneously they sought to identify elements of social and political organization that prevented such attraction in some Western societies. Their preventive institutionalist project was based on the analysis of especially American political and social institutions and the ties between these institutions and individual citizens.

An understanding of the inclination to totalitarianism and the analysis of its historical antecedents did not mean that totalitarianism and liberalism were placed on the same level of rationality. Some form of democratic liberalism remained an unchallenged preference for all members of the multifaceted group. What they lacked, in contrast to earlier Enlightenment thinkers, was a measure of rationality and objectivity that was independent of historical experience. Their dilemma resembled the one Karl Mannheim faced two decades earlier, writing his book *Ideology and Utopia* in the aftermath of the First World War. Katznelson identifies in Mannheim's work an early articulation of the group's programme, challenges and difficulties (pp. 162–8).

Yet, this was in no way a sign of a relativist turn. Liberalism won as if by default. Within the group's limited area of consideration, the Euro-Atlantic zone, the grave record of totalitarian atrocities in Europe sufficed to bring the need for a serious philosophical inquiry into the grounds of their value judgment. The American members of the group,

in particular, understood their social scientific inquiry as tied to and in the service of the values of liberal democracy 'marked by the appreciation for how the dark side of human possibility might be restrained . . . by effective analysis and capable institutional design' (p. 127). The experience of desolation during their productive age made some of them, most notably Lasswell, give up their earlier value-free social science and embrace the promotion of the liberal democratic values.

The worry that social knowledge based on horror at one type of experience is in danger of lapsing into an uncritical espousal of other experiences remains unattended until the very last section of the book. Rather than addressing this worry, Katznelson lists the limitations of scholarship produced by the political studies enlightenment group. An uncritical celebration of Anglo-American political institutions, including the two-party system, on the part of the *émigré* scholars and an inclination to elitism together with the neglect of racial inequality on the part of the American scholars, are mentioned as the most regrettable shortcomings. Suddenly, the examining, probing, and questioning author changes into a dispassionate historian who describes the past 'as it really was'.

Awareness of these shortcomings does not prevent Katznelson from the final positive appraisal of the scholarship that originated from the mixture of historical institutional analysis and value-oriented social science that emerged from the liberal imagination roused by the experience of anguish and desolation. He advises that contemporary social research should learn from past scholars not to divide 'description and analysis from judgment and normative purpose' (p. 161). Otherwise, our scholarship is unable to address the dark, ugly side of human possibilities. Even if this finds positive resonance among many readers, it does not dismiss the fact the political studies group was more seriously uncritical toward American social and political organization than Katznelson is ready to admit. Under-estimation of social segregation and the political under-representation of African-Americans in the post-war USA or an unquestioned use of the category of national security are not innocent neglects, but serious moral and methodological failures.

If the book is to be taken not only as a historical study but also as a blueprint for a theory of social research – and I understand this to be Katznelson's intention – several additional critical points have to be mentioned. First, one needs to ask how desolation contributed to the conscious effort to foster Enlightenment's principles and methods on the part of the political studies group. The group is distinguished from their contemporaries precisely by their pro-Enlightenment position. Other scholars, whether in the United States or elsewhere, espoused radically different, mostly very critical judgments of the Enlightenment's role in the evil age. Existentialism, post-structuralism, or conservatism can be taken as responses to desolation on the same level as that of the political studies enlightenment. What in the experience of desolation makes some seek reinforcement of Enlightenment's methods and values while others reject them assertively? Katznelson does not address this issue, nor does he speculate about other, exclusively intellectual or philosophical reasons why the same historical events brought about also other responses than the one he focuses on. In this sense Katznelson's book is as much a monologue as is Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987), which asserts a similar, though opposite thesis – that American academia reacted to the 20th-century horrors by an almost unchallenged espousal of existentialist and post-modernist anti-Enlightenment.

The second point concerns the issue of reproducibility of knowledge. A theory – especially one aspiring to fortify Enlightenment's values and methods – informed by a particular historical experience, perceived as unprecedented and radically evil, needs to explain how this knowledge is to be intellectually reproduced. The only suggestion

concerning such a process of reproduction Katznelson gives is his repeated emphasis on historical analysis, thus placing the locus of knowledge reproduction onto memory and commemoration. Remembering and commemoration are at best very unorthodox means for a method based on Enlightenment. Moreover, the oppressive tendencies of commemorative education are well known and were duly used by the totalitarian regimes.

The political theorist Judith Shklar, whom *Desolation and Enlightenment* mentions in passing, as someone who 'synthesizing her European and American experiences' stands intellectually close to the group of historically oriented social scientists, struggled precisely with the need to balance historical memory with an analytical (and normative) instrument that would be freed from dependence on first-hand experience of desolation (p. 159). Shklar's solution was to break the social life into single exchanges and identify in each such exchange a relationship of power (while burdening the powerful actor with the moral responsibility not to commit cruelty on the powerless one). Katznelson neither shows a similar theoretical quest among the scholars he studies – although Arendt's work on the status of Jews in 19th-century Germany clearly demonstrates such aspiration – nor does he ask whether the Enlightenment he seeks is conditioned by either a first-hand experience or reproduction of memory, most presumably through education.

Shklar sought an alternative to historical memory also because she was a student of (social) psychology. She held that cruel behaviour is our ordinary, everyday choice, but one intensified by feelings of fear, injustice, resentment, and anger. Emotional reactions to historical memory often include these; thus, the chances of cruel behavior may be enhanced. Katznelson's account reduces the role of psychology and the psychological powers of mass mobilization, hysteria, manipulation, resentment or anger and their role in the origins of totalitarianism. He does call totalitarian alternatives 'seductive', but never spells out the psychology of seduction (p. 56). In this sense, he reproduces the political studies group's exclusive orientation on institutions. Both their historical analysis of totalitarianism and their public policy-oriented social science are exclusively institutional. But were there really such radical institutional differences between Soviet Russia in the era of organized economy building and the New Deal United States? Katznelson obviously thinks so. A comparative analysis of these two sets of institutions might suggest that merely institutional analysis does not bring a sufficient explanation.

Katznelson's book is an excellent study of one episode in the history of social sciences, an episode that is by no means interesting only to historians. Historical institutionalism is still a very productive approach and *Desolation and Enlightenment* helps to identify the strengths and limitations of this approach that may be hidden to its contemporary advocates and critics. European readers will especially benefit from the carefully researched and meticulously footnoted material on the subject – which is, rather erroneously, thought to be more a part of American intellectual heritage than that of Europe. Katznelson's work shows how real the dilemmas of the political studies enlightenment group are to all of us.

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