

to be a huge amount of empirical data. By presenting a large number of quotes from respondents, Thompson draws the reader into the publishing industry and makes him or her really understand how strange this business sometimes is. More importantly, it is highly suitable for any non-academic reader interested in publishing or any publishing professional.

If we view the work in a different light, say from the perspective of Bourdieu's (1996) *Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, it does leave the reader with a number of questions. While Thompson uses Bourdieu's concepts of field and capital, he fails to give an actual structural analysis of the literary field as Bourdieu (2008) attempted. Because there is no structural analysis, Thompson fails to make clear how cultural and economic capital are assigned to different actors. So while the descriptions of the processes and changes in the publishing industry are bliss to read, Thompson does not take these descriptions to a level of abstraction on which new theoretical ground can be breached. Also, he does not discuss the relationship between the two perspectives, neo-institutional and field-theoretical, that clearly influenced his work. Moreover, this leaves the question of how Thompson's analysis stands in relation to post-Bourdieuian sociology (Heinich, 2010; Hennion, 2007; Prior, 2011). In the end, Thompson's analysis seems under-theorized, while the mass of empirical material that he has collected suggests the opposite. That being said, Thompson's study is one of the most valuable studies on publishing in recent decades, and promises to be the new reference point for sociological research on the publishing industry.

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P. Vannini and J.P. Williams (eds)

Authenticity in Culture, Self, and Society

Ashgate, Aldershot, 2009, £60 hbk, 276 pp.

ISBN: 978-0-7546-7516-7

Reviewed by: Ian Woodward, Griffith University, Australia

The concept of authenticity lies, often unrecognized, at the heart of a good deal of cultural research and is a crucial ingredient of sociality. It is also a concept apparently straightforwardly undermined by simplistic barbs, centred on its supposed limited

applicability to varieties of subculture research. Perhaps more tellingly, its sociological utility and relevance are largely seen to have collapsed in the wake of the cultural and postmodern turn, as in the perennial rhetorical seminar question, 'what is authentic nowadays, anyway?' Such a query of course begs many more questions than it satisfactorily answers, and suggests the need for a serious theoretical and empirical treatment of the topic. In their introductory chapter Vannini and Williams make it clear that their approach to this collection seeks to advance a social constructionist theory of authenticity. For them, and their collaborating authors, authenticity is something tacitly organized, performed and ultimately agreed upon by members within particular cultural settings and scenes. All this is not exactly new for cultural sociologists, but it is in the empirical and conceptual details where innovations and discoveries are made, and in the championing of the authentic as a viable and indeed central conceptual dimension of any account of social life. Such a task is attempted in the first third of the collection, which succeeds in establishing the conceptual and theoretical bases of authenticity and contains some particularly instructive and erudite contributions, which situate the philosophical and theoretical bases of the concept in imaginative ways.

The collection convincingly demonstrates the need for a theory of authenticity to be at the centre of cultural theory. The frames of symbolic interactionism, constructionism and performance theory are emphasized to give the book intellectual direction, while questions of practices, emotion work, the self and reflexivity provide the dominant threads for interpreting the theoretical and empirical minutiae. Some of the empirical sites for exploring authenticity such as touristic practices, punk subcultures and pop culture are obviously not new sites for exploring the authentic; in fact, they are perennials in the field. This is not to single out these particular chapters, however, as Vannini and Williams have done an admirable job maintaining the quality and relevance of each paper within the collection, having obviously encouraged their authors to critically advance discussions in the broader field as well as to provide instructive case studies.

Richard Peterson's study of the manufacture of authenticity in the country music industry is an obvious point of inspiration for the editors. Highlighting his work as an exemplar, they suggest that, in challenging realist approaches, studies must take into account the boundary-marking work involved in negotiating the authentic, and understand its basis as a flexible, powerful scheme of evaluation having direct implications for shaping in- and out-group processes. As well as negotiating this relatively familiar territory, this collection attempts to go further in two interesting directions. The first is to show how authenticity is a resource for individuals to reflexively think themselves into the social – notions of the authentic become an essential resource for monitoring the self and an ideal which directs the chronic discovery of a true self. The middle third of the collection is devoted to this theme, through chapters considering lay understandings of authenticity, and notions of the authentic in contexts such as work, gender performance and relations with popular culture. The other direction of interest, which the final third of the book deals with, is expanding discussions of the authentic to consider how it is produced, exchanged and consumed within society, focusing on a variety of contexts, events, objects and processes using interpretive and ethnographic methods.

In terms of delivering both a serious treatment of the concept and being a collection of readings useful for the classroom, Vannini and Williams's collection is satisfying on a number of levels. It clarifies the dimensions and meanings of the concept of authenticity,

and explores how it is manifested and maintained in a range of social settings. In doing so, it may offer new material for scholars already interested in authenticity. It may also encourage culture researchers to think about their own work in ways which more explicitly engage the concept of authenticity. Given the range and quality of material and the book's clear division into theoretical, conceptual and empirical components, the collection may also provide helpful material for teaching in undergraduate courses related to identity and the self, cultural production and consumption studies.

Jean-Claude Kaufmann

Gripes: The Little Quarrels of Couples

Polity, Cambridge, 2009, £15.99 pbk, 224 pp.

ISBN: 978-0-7456-4362-5

Reviewed by: Rachel Hurdley, Keele University, UK

This monograph focuses substantively on the precise mechanics of how couples irritate each other, and tactics for resolving – or escalating – these everyday disputes. While the premise is simple, to argue that ‘irritation is never anodyne’ (p. 3), and elaborated through participants’ accounts, Kaufmann’s principal aim is to demonstrate that the resolution of minor rows requires the utter transformation of the individual through socialization by ‘the couple’. With the destabilization in institutionalized roles, and the assumption of an autonomous individual, negotiating coupledness and individual identity is central to the problem of life in late modernity.

The book is an anatomical analysis of the mechanics and tactics deployed in ‘irritation’ interactions, centring on housework, tidiness, cleanliness and manners. Divided into three sections, it focuses first on relations between the couple and the individual, second on the causes and mechanics of the outburst, and finally on tactics, sulking and resolution, with a short conclusion about life in late modernity. Irritation, Kaufmann argues, is a precise series of mechanisms, revealing the everyday micro-processes of conjugality and individual identity. The book draws upon the email communications Kaufmann undertook with around 30 participants from France, Belgium and Switzerland. Another 50 accounts are drawn from his earlier studies and others’ publications, including student theses. While the book is structured thematically, there is a loose narrative, tracing some participants’ squabbles from the build-up, to outburst, sulk and reconciliation. The concluding ‘Methodological Appendix’ also contains ‘stop press’ updates on the status of many relationships, inviting the reader to view the irritation ‘thesis’ within these ongoing biographies.

The author argues that ‘the couple’ assumes a shared culture between two individuals who each bring a deeply held ‘secret blue-print’, memory or culture (p. 14 and *passim*) which cannot be reconciled with that of the other. Thus, when one squeezes the tube of toothpaste in the middle, this irritates the other in her ‘quest for order’ (p. 42), causing ‘dissonance’ (p. 12 and *passim*). The ‘irritated’ party then uses a variety of tactics, such as an outburst, sulking, humour, revenge and reflection, by engaging in actions such as gestures, moving of objects and comments. These rarely produce the desired long-term solution – the change in behaviour by the ‘irritator’ – but this is not Kaufmann’s point. These minuscule events are, essentially, a conflict of cultures, conceptualized as inherited implicit rules, which challenge the concept of an autonomous individual agent. The