

- Miniconference Call for Papers
- Publications Committee Seeks Editor

- Using Textbooks in Theory Courses
- Publishing Options: EJST Profiled

Section Officers

CHAIR

Morris Zelditch, Jr.

CHAIR-ELECT

Douglas Heckathorn

PAST CHAIR

Janet Saltzman Chafetz

SECRETARY-TREASURER

Murray Webster

COUNCIL

Jorge Ardití

Mustafa Emirbayer

Gary Alan Fine

Emanuel Schegloff

Margaret Somers

Robin Wagner-Pacifici

SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

EDITOR

Jonathan Turner

PERSPECTIVES

EDITOR

Joseph Hopper

Submit news and commentary to:

Joseph Hopper
University of Chicago
PRC, Room 340
1155 East 60th St.
Chicago, IL 60637

Phone: (773) 256-6298

Fax: (773) 256-6313

E-mail: jhopper@midway.uchicago.edu

DuBois Ascendant!

And Other Results from the Brint-LaValle Theory Section Survey

By Steven Brint and James LaValle

We sent a short survey to a 50 percent sample of the American members of the ASA's Theory Section asking them to discuss their views of theory and to name theorists they teach (or would teach) in classical and contemporary theory classes. We received 120 surveys back (a response rate of 52 percent). Six of these returned surveys included too few responses to be useful for purposes of tabulation. This report, therefore, is based on the 114 valid responses we received to the survey.

A high level of consensus existed among the respondents on the important figures from the classical period. Three figures—Emile Durkheim (110 mentions out of 114 returned surveys), Max Weber (110 mentions) and Karl Marx (108 mentions)—appeared on virtually every returned survey as theorists who are important to teach in a classical theory course. Two other figures—Georg Simmel (70 mentions) and G.H. Mead (47 mentions)—also appeared relatively frequently. After these five, our respondents showed much less consensus. Perhaps the most significant news is that W.E.B. DuBois is beginning to emerge as a canonical figure among theorists, while such stalwarts of the theory texts of a generation

See SURVEY on Page 3

Nominations Invited for New Editor of *Perspectives*

The publications committee of the Theory Section (Gary Alan Fine, chair, Morris Zelditch, and Janet Chafetz) is inviting applications and inquiries from section members interested in becoming the next editor of *Perspectives*, the section's newsletter. The current editor, Joe Hopper, will publish his last issue in July 2000, and the first issue under the new editor will be in October 2000. Term of appointment is three years. The newsletter has

been one of the central functions of the section, and has been recognized as one of the best section newsletters in the association. We hope to continue that tradition.

If you have any interest or wish to nominate a colleague, contact Gary Fine (g-fine@nwu.edu; 847-491-3495), Morris Zelditch (zelditch@leland.stanford.edu), Janet Chafetz (jschafetz@uh.edu), or Joe Hopper (jhopper@midway.uchicago.edu).

Theory in the Curriculum On Using and Not Using Social Theory Textbooks

Editor's Note. Over the last few months I asked a mostly-random sample of theory section members to offer ideas about using theory textbooks in the classroom at either the undergraduate or graduate level. I asked which textbooks they use, if any, and why they use them; if they eschewed such texts, I asked them to explain that as well. Further comments and dialogue are welcome!

Using Commentaries, Not Textbooks

Darin Weinberg, University of Florida

In my course I try to encourage students to appreciate social theorizing not only in terms of formal logic or empirical validity but also, and most centrally, in terms of worldly praxis. As much as possible I try to situate the work of major social theorists within the practical contexts in (and for) which I think their work was done. I have no principled objection to the use of textbooks but the one's I've looked at tend to give fairly short shrift to the historical and/or social organizational realities that give shape to our discipline's major theoretical projects. Instead they tend to reduce those projects to a series of propositions regarding the social world and highlight their contrasts and complementarities. I am inclined to suspect this less reflects the sensibilities of their authors and more the exigencies of publishing that all

textbook authors must face (in particular, demarcating the text's topic, in this case "theory," from the panoply of other topics that comprise the social science curriculum).

The books I now use are Levine's *Visions of the Sociological Tradition*, Calhoun's *Critical Social Theory*, and Wallerstein et al. *Open the Social Sciences*. I do like to use books in addition to articles because they combine breadth and brevity and I think students like the structure books give to a course. However, I do not consider the books I use textbooks so much as critical surveys/commentaries. They are a good deal more nuanced than books I would consider "textbooks," and more appreciative of the embeddedness of social theorizing in history.

Theory in Use

Stephen J. McNamee, University of North Carolina at Wilmington

In response to my particular audience of undergraduate theory consumers (combination of sociology and criminal justice majors in a midsize, midlevel, state university) the biggest change I have made over the years in teaching sociological theory is to shift from an emphasis on "theory in and of itself" to an emphasis on "theory in use." I would describe "theory in and of itself" as the passing on of an intellectual heritage. In this approach, theory is revealed

as a thing in itself, with a dizzying array of puzzles, nuances, and intrigue. A "theory in and of itself" purist can easily become immersed in the depths of theoretical intrigue and rarely feel the need to surface for any breath of real world application.

"Theory in and of itself" is typically organized by theorists, by theoretical perspectives, by the chronology of the history of ideas, or some combination of the above. As an undergraduate

I have come to realize that my more practically minded theory consumers simply don't care—about the intrinsic nature of the ideas in and of themselves or (especially) from whence the ideas came.

theory pup, I cut my theory teeth in this tradition absorbing Lewis Coser's *Masters of Sociological Theory*. Although I found it difficult at the time, I was fascinated and I was hooked. In mastering the masters, I felt smart. I felt like an intellectual. This was a heady experience for a working class kid from New Jersey. But I could not imagine assigning Coser's book to my undergraduate theory students now. And the reason is that I have come to realize that my more practically minded theory consumers simply don't care—about the intrinsic nature of the ideas in and of themselves or (especially) from whence the ideas came. As sociologists, we should know that the audience matters. For instance, if I were in a different setting (e.g. elite liberal arts college) teaching a different audience (e.g. academically oriented students bound for graduate study in the classics), then my approach would probably be more traditional. But in

Perspectives is the newsletter of the Theory Section of the American Sociological Association. It is published quarterly in January, April, July, and October. The deadline for all submissions is the fifth day of the month before publication. We welcome news and commentary as well as announcements about conferences, journal information, calls for papers, position openings, and any other information of interest to section members.

Send submissions to: Joseph Hopper, University of Chicago, Population Research Center Room 340, 1155 East 60th Street, Chicago, IL 60637; phone (773) 256-6298; fax (773) 256-6313; e-mail jhopper@midway.uchicago.edu

See **TEXTBOOKS** on Page 6

Survey Assesses the Theory Canon

SURVEY from Page 1

ago as Herbert Spencer and Auguste Comte are in danger of falling off the list. Both Comte (26 mentions) and Freud (20 mentions) were mentioned slightly more often than DuBois (19 mentions), but Spencer (19 mentions) was not. Three other near-canonical figures from the last generation—Tocqueville, Pareto, and Adam Smith—followed DuBois and Spencer. The responses also revealed that a search is underway for a female theorist or theorists to add to the classical list. The major choices at this time are: Charlotte Perkins Gilman (8 mentions), Jane Addams (6 mentions), and Harriet Martineau (6 mentions). These women were mentioned as often or nearly as often as G.W.F. Hegel, Karl Mannheim, Charles Cooley, W.I. Thomas, and Ferdinand Toennies.

Considerably less consensus existed among the respondents on the important figures from the contemporary period. In all, 154 theorists from the contemporary period were mentioned compared to 84 theorists from the period stretching between the ancient Greeks and World War II. Nevertheless, six figures received mentions from at least one-third of the respondents: Jurgen Habermas (62 mentions), Michel Foucault (57 mentions), Erving Goffman (55 mentions), Talcott Parsons (52 mentions), Pierre Bourdieu (49 mentions), and Anthony Giddens (41 mentions). Robert K. Merton followed these six with 29 mentions. Neither theorists associated with the conflict school nor those associated with social exchange/rational choice school fared as well as structural-functionalists, critical theorists, and poststructuralists. However, C. Wright Mills and Randall Collins from the conflict school and George Homans, Peter Blau, and J.S. Coleman from the social exchange/

Call for Nominations Awards of the Theory Section

The Theory Section announces a call for nominations for its two annual awards, the Theory Prize, which will be awarded for a recent outstanding book in theory, and the Shils-Coleman Prize, which will be awarded for an outstanding student paper.

Theory Prize. The Theory Prize is given to recognize outstanding work in theory. In even-numbered years it is given for a book, and in odd-numbered years it is given for a paper. In both cases, eligible items are those published in the preceding four calendar years. The Theory Prize to be given in August 2000 is for a book published in calendar years 1996, 1997, 1998, or 1999. Please send preliminary nominations to the committee chair by February 1, 2000 (formal nominations and copies of the book must subsequently be sent to all five committee members, reaching them by March 1, 2000):

David Knottnerus, Chair,
Theory Prize Committee
Department of Sociology, CLB 006
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK 74078-4062
jdk2307@okstate.edu

Edward Shils-James Coleman Memorial Award (Graduate Student Prize). The Shils-Coleman Award is given to recognize distinguished work in theory by a graduate student. The work may take the form of either: (a) a paper published or accepted for publication; (b) a paper presented at a professional meeting; or (c) a paper suitable for publication or presentation at a professional meeting. The winner will receive up to \$500 for reimbursement of her/his travel expenses to the 2000 ASA Meetings. The deadline is March 15, 2000. Please send nominations, including five copies of the paper to:

Jane Sell, Chair
Shils-Coleman Award Committee
Department of Sociology
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX 77843-4351
(409) 845-6120; j-sell@tamu.edu

rational choice school were mentioned as important contemporary theorists by more than 10 percent of the respondents. The leading feminist theorist from the contemporary period was Dorothy Smith, who received 17 mentions, followed by Nancy Chodorow with five mentions.

The survey asked respondents to indicate how they teach contemporary theory classes. Five choices were offered and respondents were encouraged to check more than one, if appropriate. The choices were: (A) I emphasize new trends in theory, such as poststructuralism, postmodern theory, and feminist theory; (B) I emphasize developments in the major theoretical

schools, such as structural functional theory, conflict theory, exchange theory, and symbolic interactionist theory; (C) I emphasize formal theory, concentrating on writers who have attempted to develop theory as a scheme of interlocking axioms, theorems, and propositions; (D) I emphasize the origins and causes of important social structures and social processes, independent of existing theoretical schools; and (E) other. The most frequent response to this question (with 53 mentions) was option B (developments in the major theoretical schools), but option A (new trends in theory) followed closely behind with 46 mentions. The other two

See DUBOIS on Page 7

Publishing Options in Social Theory EJST Seeks Theory from Varied Disciplines with a Contemporary Focus

By Gerard Delanty

The *European Journal of Social Theory* is a globally oriented peer-refereed journal in social theory, published by Sage Publications. It was founded in 1998 and is now about to enter its third year. Gerard Delanty (Liverpool) is the editor. The Deputy Editor is Peter Wagner (EUI, Florence/Warwick University UK), and Heidrun Friese (Berlin/Florence) is the Reviews Editor. The editorial board includes Professors Margaret Somers, Goran Therborn, William Outhwaite, Hans Joas, Loic Wacquant, Salvador Giner, Margareta Bertilsson, Birgitta Nedelmann and Piotr Sztompka. There is an additional wider International Advisory Board as well as a large number of referees.

The journal's conception of social theory is a broad one, including all varieties of contemporary thought stemming across the social sciences and philosophy, including sociological theory, political theory and cultural theory. The journal tries to be multidisciplinary and to give expression to innovating developments in contemporary European thought and beyond. Ideally articles should address some of the substantive concerns of social theory (for instance social change, the transformation of European societies, civil society, globalization, nature, identity, nationalism, power and social divisions, knowledge, modernity, nature, social movements and resistance, citizenship and democracy, gender) or recent theoretical debates dealing with more philosophical issues in modern European thought. Papers in the philosophy of social science are also welcome. Though not a journal that aims to specialize in the history of sociology or purely historical figures, re-interpretations of the classics will be very

welcome if they have a contemporary relevance.

The journal welcomes for its Viewpoints section short reflective pieces, replies to articles, and interviews. The policy on reviews is to have a small number of fairly substantial reviews, with an emphasis on non-English language publications. Regular review essays, and the occasional literature review are also features of the journal. A further feature of the journal is the regular feature of symposia. The first volume included a symposium on the work of Alain Touraine, featuring an article by Touraine, "Can We Live Together Equal and Different," three responses, and a reply by Touraine; the second volume included a symposium of six papers on Bourdieu's *Pascalian Meditations* (Paris, 1997) and an invited essay by Bourdieu. It also contained articles on a debate in contemporary French social theory relating to the work of Bourdieu and the approaches of Boltanski and Thevenot, who contributed an article. The journal has attracted some well established authors. Some recent papers include S.N. Eisenstadt on collective identities, Simon Critchley on friendship, Szakolczai on reflexive historical sociology, Nowotny on the culture of expertise, Outhwaite on modernity, Joas on Mead and postmodernity, Anton Blok on the narcissism on minor differences, Hindiss on citizenship, Eyerman and Turner on generations, Calhoun on nationalism, Fuller on social epistemology, Eder on collective learning, and Tom Burns on democracy.

Three copies of a manuscript, designed for blind refereeing, normally circa 7000 words with references in the Harvard style, should be sent to the

See **EJST** on Page 8

Call for Papers:
Consortium's Inaugural
Conference

May 11-14, 2000. Social Theory 2000. University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

Over the past decade, social theory has reenergized contemporary social and humanistic thought in a variety of areas. The purpose of this conference is to organize the international social theory community. This call on behalf of The International Social Theory Consortium is addressed to scholars, faculty, and students who work in the various areas and traditions which social theory embraces (e.g. identity theory, political theory, social epistemologies, political economy, critical race studies, science studies, feminist theory, postcolonial theory).

The conference organizers invite 350 word essay abstracts, panel and session proposals that promise to address the concerns of this community, including the future of social theoretic research, improvement of scholarly communications, the place of social theory in the university curriculum, the social theorist as public intellectual, and other issues that bear on the present and future of social theory as a non-discipline-specific endeavor.

For further information about the consortium and the conference, see www.socialtheory.org. Send abstracts or queries to: Wolfgang Natter, Committee on Social Theory, POT 1445, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40506-0027, wnatter@pop.uky.edu.

Call for Papers:
International Conference
on Identity

September 3-6, 2000. Understanding the Social World 2: Constructions and Identity. The University of Huddersfield, United Kingdom.

See **CALLS** on Page 5

Upcoming Conferences

CALLS from Page 4

This conference will include themes on identity, subjectivity, sexuality, gender, post colonial identity, disability, feminist theory and identity, organisational and professional identity, nationalism, cyberpsychology and identity, and social movements. Invited speakers include Michael Billig, Mario Diani, Ken Hoover, Ken Plummer, and Margaret Wetherell. The conference seeks to draw together and highlight recent developments within the social sciences and related disciplines that offer an account of human activity that transcend purely individualistic or structuralist accounts of the human condition.

You are invited to submit abstracts by January 14, 2000 for individual papers, symposia, or posters. Organizers will consider other non-standard forms of presentation. Contact the conference organiser to discuss your ideas. For individual papers and posters please submit an abstract of no more than 250 words. For symposia (or other group presentations) please submit an abstract of 250 words per paper/item and an overall abstract (of 250 words). Contact: Linda Rice. School of Human & Health Sciences, University of Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, HD1 3DH. U.K. Telephone: +44 (0) 1484 472410; Email: L.Rice@hud.ac.uk.

Call for Papers:
Conference on Theory
and Method

July 5-7, 2000. *Knowing the Social World*. University of Salford, Greater Manchester, U.K.

The Institute for Social Research, University of Salford and the Department of Sociology, University of Plymouth, are jointly organizing an interdisciplinary conference on social theory, methodology and method. For many, social

Miniconference Call for Papers

Theory Growth in Sociology: Current Status and New Directions

The 2000 program will consist of a miniconference comprised of three sessions, an additional open topics session, and a roundtables session. Please submit papers for the open sessions to organizers by February 1, 2000.

Miniconference: Theory Growth in Sociology

(Invited Panels)

Three sessions are being organized by Morris Zelditch, section chair.

Topics in Sociological Theory

(Open Session)

Organizer: David G. Wagner
Dept. of Sociology, SUNY Albany
Albany, NY 12222

tel: (518) 442-4689

e-mail: d.wagner@albany.edu

Roundtables

Organizer: Robert Shelly
Dept. of Sociology, Ohio University
Athens, OH 45701

tel: (740) 593-1369

e-mail: shelly@ohiou.edu

theorists, methodologists and those engaged in the practice of social research often talk past each other unaware of the beneficial insights that each offers the other. This interdisciplinary conference aims to bring together social theorists, philosophers, sociologists, psychologists and geographers to consider problems of theory and method in social science.

The conference will be distinct in that its emphasis will be upon dialogue aimed at the clarification of issues within an inter-disciplinary framework. It is intended that the emphasis upon clarification and dialogue will provide a valuable learning experience for all, including postgraduates and those early in their careers. For this reason, organizers particularly welcome contributions from members of these groups and each of the roundtable sessions will be chaired with this ethos in mind.

The sessions will comprise four papers of approximately 10 minutes duration, the aim of which is to enable constructive dialogue within a supportive atmosphere. This also enables most of those attending the conference to present a paper so it is as participatory as possible. In addition to five roundtable

sessions, the conference will include three plenary sessions where each of the speakers will consider issues raised in philosophy, social theory and methodology, respectively. These talks will be given by Rom Harré, John Holmwood, and Mary Maynard.

To contribute to a paper to one of the roundtable discussions, please send a typed abstract of around 100 words to Malcolm Williams. His e-mail address is: m.williams@plymouth.ac.uk. E-mail is a preferred method of submission, although his postal address is Malcolm Williams, Department of Sociology, University of Plymouth, Drake Circus, Plymouth, Devon, PL4 8AA.

Contributors should address issues of method and theory and how one might inform the other, or indeed where the limitations may lie. This, of course, may include reference to the author's own experiences in conducting research. Presentation of these contributions will be informal, but participants should make copies of their paper available to participants. Selected papers will be published in either a conference volume, or a special edition of a leading journal.

See **MORE CALLS** on Page 6

MORE CALLS *from Page 5*

The suggested themes for the roundtable sessions are the following: issues in generalisation and explanation; lay and professional interactions, reflexivity and the validation of knowledge; policy, evaluation and the relevance of research; social constructionism and realism; empowerment and ethics; discourse analysis; power, statistics and social transformation; teaching research and the role of theory; feminist research and theory; the place of the material and the social in knowing the world; complexity and networks; new interpretations in the relations between science and social science.

Call for Nominations:
The George Herbert Mead Award

The George Herbert Mead Award is presented annually by the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction to an individual whose career contributions to the advancement of the study of human behavior and social life best exemplify the tradition and spirit of George Herbert Mead's work.

Previous recipients of the Mead Award include Herbert Blumer, Kenneth Burke, and Erving Goffman, among others. Members of this year's award committee are Gary Alan Fine (chair), Joel Best, Candace Clark, and Leslie Wasson.

Send four copies of your nomination and any documentation by April 1, 2000 to: Gary Alan Fine, Department of Sociology, Northwestern University, 1810 Chicago Ave., 1st Floor, Evanston, IL 60208-1330. E-mail: g-fine@nwu.edu.

THEORY SECTION DAYS

The Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association will take place August 12-16, 2000 in Washington. Our sessions, meetings, and reception will be held on Saturday, August 12 and Sunday, August 13.

Theory in the Curriculum**TEXTBOOKS** *from Page 2*

response to my current audience of theory consumers, the vast majority of whom have no interest whatsoever in becoming either theorists or sociologists, I have shifted my emphasis to "theory in use;" that is, how theory can help students practically "make sense" of contemporary social life.

I have found that the best way to organize the presentation of "theory in use" is not by theorists or theories but by topics (e.g. the tension between "me" and "us;" who is in charge around here; what's real and what's fake, etc.) to which relevant theory is brought to bear. To do that, I have lately been using Peter Kivisto's topical *Key Ideas in Sociology* as a central organizing text, supplemented by selections from Kivisto's accompanying reader, *Illuminating Social Life*, as well as excerpts of materials pulled from the internet (especially Larry Ridener's Dead Sociologists web site—some of which include excerpts from Coser's book), and a few hard copy materials on room reserve in the library. I have found that this combination works best to capture and sustain student interest and still do justice to the intellectual tradition. The theorists, theories, and history of ideas are still there but they are presented through the side door rather than the main entrance.

Original Sources Only

Allan Silver, Columbia University

I never use textbooks or secondary accounts in theory courses at any level, graduate or undergraduate. There is no substitute for grappling with the ruggedness of original sources, which are more suggestive than any secondary treatment. True, some of their historical and topical allusions are not understood, and they often present expository difficulties. This requires careful excerpting and often careful contextualization in the form of docu-

mentary material on the intellectual and political setting. For example, material from Gordon Wright, "France in Modern Times" and Robert Locke, "French Legitimists and the Politics of Moral Order..." offer a vivid sense of Durkheim's setting and programmatic purposes. Another advantage of thick contextualization is that the so-called "classics" are less likely to be carried uncritically into the present in a spirit of misplaced veneration.

If the original sources are taught as if they are self-evident and self-contained, a large part of their richness fails to reach students. The burden of contextualization falls heavily upon the instructor. Excellent secondary

. . . no book about a book is as good as the book itself . . .

discussions—like those by Aron, Giddens, Coser and Poggi, which I suggest as background reading, provided they are not substituted for the originals—rightly and necessarily offer partial interpretive approaches. They are useful not as starting points, but after students have worked with the originals themselves. The original sources cannot be subsumed without loss. Gianfranco Poggi, addressing this issue, cites Italo Calvino's comment about literary classics: no book about a book is as good as the book itself—a classic keeps throwing off comments about it. The sources of social theory are not "classics" in this sense, but they are sufficiently so that this wisdom applies.

Providing the Framework

Karen Albright, New York University

Understanding the intricate arguments of social theory is often difficult for

See CURRICULUM on Page 7

Members Offer Ideas on Social Theory Textbooks

CURRICULUM from Page 6

undergraduates. This is problematic, for not only does a firm grasp of various theoretical perspectives aid the advancement of the social sciences in a general sense, it also assists the student in better comprehending the social phenomena in his/her everyday life. Thus, though at first students often resist delving into the seemingly abstract realms of theory, it should be our goal as instructors to find ways of making social theory seem relevant and practically applicable.

Using textbooks to introduce theoretical perspectives often does just that. Initial exposure to social theory through a textbook provides a basic framework of knowledge from which the instructor can then build through lectures, discussions, and exposure to more detailed analyses of the theory, including the original work itself (or selections thereof). It should be stressed, however, that textbooks are best used only as introductions. Ideally, they would not provide the sole exposure to theory, but only the initial orientation to it so that the student can better identify and situate the various perspectives that abound in the social sciences before taking on the more rigorous task of dissecting the theoretical arguments involved. Two

textbooks that I have used to provide initial orientation in this manner are *Sociology*, by Calhoun, Light and Keller, and *Mapping the Social Landscape*, by Susan J. Ferguson. Each presents sociological theory as both interesting and palatable to the undergraduate reader, and thus serves as an excellent springboard for a more engaged and detailed theoretical exploration to follow.

Stimulating a Broadly Sociological Imagination

Barry Johnston, Indiana University Northwest

I teach in an urban, multicultural undergraduate program in the industrial northwest corner of Indiana. Our majors have theory integrated into their core courses in social organization and social change. The capstone is a one semester theory course. There I teach a broad, but selective, umbrella of ideas that originate from classic and contemporary thinkers. If students conceptually and methodologically retain from this course a good working sense of the Sociological Imagination, then the practical goal of the course is met.

To stimulate this I use Jonathan Turner's 6th edition of *The Structure of Sociologi-*

cal Theory, selections from Charles Lemert's reader *Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classic Readings*, and his book *Social Things*. Turner's book is the core and is introduced and fleshed out using Lemert's works. Clearly I am doing a balancing act. Turner combines pioneers with contemporaries to demonstrate the transformation and evolution of the mainlines of thinking in sociology. Although I favor a textbook, I doubt that many professors use one as the stand alone focus of the course. Lemert's reader allows students to "hear the voices" of major thinkers and appreciate the power and nuance in their work. *Social Things* demonstrates how theory and society play themselves out in the ordinary and not so ordinary lives of individuals and communities.

Turner's book is the core. It gives a good sense of the depth and breadth of current sociological thought. From it students harvest a set of concepts and models to see the world in more dynamic and subtle ways. It stimulates reflection, imagination, and ingenuity. More importantly it demonstrates for students a variety of expressions of the Sociological Imagination. From these they may pick the one or ones that have

See **IMAGINATION** on Page 8

Dubois is Hot, Formal Theory is Not

DUBOIS from Page 3

options—(C) formal theory and (D) structures and processes—received 10 and 24 mentions, respectively. Respondents were also asked which of the choices was *least* like the way they teach contemporary theory. Here the findings were reversed, but formal theory stood out as particularly unpopular among those who responded; 72 respondents said it was the least like the way they teach theory, compared to 24 for struc-

tures and processes, 21 for new trends, and 10 for developments in the major schools.

In so far as respondents to this survey are representative of the membership in the section, the results lead us to conclude that members of the ASA's Theory section are more comfortable with traditions in sociology that have emphasized the interpretation of modernity (and now postmodernity)

and the critique of empirically-existing societies than they are with those that have emphasized scientific explanation of empirically-existing social structures and social relations. These findings will please some and disturb others. They will raise particularly troubling questions for scientifically-inclined theorists—and indeed for scientifically-inclined sociologists in general. We plan to explore some of the issues raised by the survey in a longer scholarly article.

IMAGINATION *from Page 7*

most meaning and utility for their lives and work. Turner facilitates this by giving them a broad and dependable map of the sociological landscape. This is part of the power of a good textbook. It gives you what you need to think competently and explore your discipline. It does this effectively for students who have limited time, competing demands for their energy and attention, and non academic pressures that may be more pressing than sociological theory.

Optional Reading

Katherine Walker, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

My teaching background is that I want to teach theory someday, but haven't yet had a chance, as I am a doctoral student. Thus far I've taught intro classes on race/gender/social class, sociology of popular culture, sexuality, and junior-year writing-in-sociology. I think that textbooks are useful supplements—they can help students assemble pieces of theory and data into a sociological perspective. However, I never use textbooks as either the first or final word on any given topic.

I plan to have my classes learn theory from the primary sources. My favorite theory readers are Lemert (1993) and Collins (1985). As for theory textbooks, I do and don't want to use them. One reason that I don't want to use theory textbooks is that I'm leery of asking my students to read a book that tells them exactly how to understand a particular theorist or theory. I believe theory is consequential in itself and students should learn the substance of major sociological theories. But I believe that theory serves multiple purposes. Students also need a solid grounding in theory in order to learn how to construct their own theories and think critically about the theories of others. I believe that students who read and wrestle with primary sources will be more likely to both understand and

to use theory, while students who rely only on textbooks might grasp the substance while missing out on the rest. There are two reasons why I do want to use theory textbooks, however. First, I assume (from experience) that most undergrads have gaps in their knowledge of history. Theory textbooks can partially remedy this because they provide students with an intellectual and socio-historical context in which to place the theorists. Second, while I don't want my students to read books that tell them exactly what a particular theory means, I never want to frustrate them needlessly. I'm just as apprehensive about leaving my students without a book that helps them understand a particular theory or theorist, as I am about leaving them with such a book. To get around this dilemma I plan to require the primary readings and suggest optional, supplementary reading in textbooks. My favorite textbooks are Collins and Makowsky (1993) and Coser (1971); both of these will probably be on my recommended list.

More commentary on textbooks will appear in the April 2000 issue of Perspectives.

EJST *from Page 4*

editor, Gerard Delanty, Dept. of Sociology, University of Liverpool, Eleanor Rathbone Building, Bedford Street South, Liverpool L69 7ZA, UK. E-mail: delanty@liv.ac.uk. Contributions from all over the world are welcome. Turn-over time is normally three months. The acceptance rate is approximately 20-25% of all papers submitted. Articles are refereed by at least two referees. In certain circumstances and by prior agreement with the editor, non-English language papers will be refereed (French, German, Italian, Spanish) and if accepted will have to be translated into English by the author.

Call for papers: we would like to receive articles as well as shorter pieces for the following symposia: (1) The

New Books of Interest



Sociology after Bosnia and Kosovo: Recovering Justice by Keith Doubt, January 2000, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers. This book provides sociological account of the events in Bosnia and Kosovo, such as the ethnic cleansing, mass rape, the role of political journalism, and the UN involvement in the war. Drawing upon a diverse group of theorists, such as Merton, Garfinkel, Goffman, Weber, and Baudrillard, Doubt constructs sociological understandings of the experiences of people in Bosnia and the response of Western leaders to these experiences. Looking at the reasons for these events from a sociological perspective, rather than a political and psychological vantage point, the book sheds light on why Bosnia has been largely ignored by sociologists and makes the case for why it is imperative that it be addressed by sociologists.



Three Faces of God: Society, Religion, and the Categories of Totality in the Philosophy of Emile Durkheim by Donald A. Nielsen, SUNY Press. Offers a new interpretation of Durkheim's social philosophy. It challenges the current view of him primarily as a scientific sociologist who identified sociology with the study of collective representations. Nielsen argues that Durkheim was a sociological monist who developed a concept of social substance and a theory of society, religion and the categories of understanding strikingly similar to Spinoza's philosophy.

Émigré Experience: The Disembedded Self. (2) Fin-de-Siecle Violence: Reflections on Kosovo (3) The University and The Transformation of Knowledge.

