Book Reviews

Towards a Sociology for Childhood: Thinking from Children’s Lives
Berry Mayall
Open University Press, Buckingham, UK, 2002, 224pp., $49.95 (paperback)

The lack of a sociology of childhood has been a glaring omission: whereas the power relations between employers and employees and between men and women have been examined for many decades, little has been theorised about the power relations between the generations. Perhaps the fact that we have all been children, or perhaps the dominance of developmental psychology, cause us to believe that childhood is already adequately understood. However, developmental psychology focuses on children’s futures, says Mayall, on how children become adults, rather than focusing on their present, as does sociology.

Children are often regarded as “precious but burdensome” (p. 3) whereby they are seen to be in need of protection but at the same time have devalued status. In contrast, sociology sees them as active social participants who perform both paid and unpaid work – schoolwork and domestic duties – that contribute directly to their families and to their own futures. Mayall regards them as an oppressed group, principally because they inhabit worlds constructed by adults where they are expected to obey and subject themselves to adult surveillance and, particularly outside the home, have little opportunity to exercise their moral competence and independence skills. Having said that, the children whom Mayall interviewed in a series of studies accepted parental control that was aimed at ensuring their safety but were more resistant to adult guidance that placed a higher priority on their futures than their present.

This book extends a discourse that recognizes children’s active participation in and oppression by the established social order. The author makes a disclaimer that the book cannot present a complete study of such a fledging field. Indeed, the ground is so untrammeled that it is still too early for a coherent structure to have emerged. This is reflected in the sequence of content in this book that, to my mind, seemed not to flow clearly from one concept to the next. One of the reasons for this is the attempt to report on the findings from many separate studies of children and their childhoods; another could be due to the fact that the discourse would be more accessible to students of sociology than to members of other disciplines. This book will be of interest to childhood sociologists and feminists, and students of childhood studies.

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Family Provision in Australia
John de Groot and Bruce Nickel
Butterworths, Australia, 2001, 2nd edition, xxxvii+390pp., $143.00 (hardback)

This comprehensive legal text details the practice of family provision in Australia, that is, “those who are eligible to make a claim against the estate of the deceased.” (p.6). The book is structured into ten chapters– Historical Introduction, General Principles, Particular Applicants, Time Limits, Duties of the Personal Representative, Miscellaneous Considerations, Orders, Appeals, Costs and Procedure. Appendices contain forms and precedents, a family provision application checklist, and details of relevant State legislation.

According to the authors, the law of wills and succession to property on death began with Roman Law. Although application to the Court was originally limited to widows and children, the development of legislation since 1900 has led to an increased widening of eligible applicants, a change that reflects changes in community attitudes. In a time of evolving reproductive technology and genetic engineering no doubt this trend will continue. The book cites hundreds of cases to illustrate the author’s points. Chapter 2 (General Principles) provides the foundation of the book examining notions that include adequate and proper maintenance, applicant’s need and moral claim, competing claims and conduct disentitling. Interestingly, in the case of widows and widowers, conduct disentitling may include adultery, desertion, and separation, although each case is judged on its merits. The authors cite a clear case where a wife who killed her husband was denied benefits on the basis of disentitling conduct. On the other hand, if an applicant had good reason for not living with a spouse such as domestic violence this is unlikely to be considered conduct disentitling.

The text is written in legal language making it inaccessible to most readers, although it had curiosity value for this reader and highlighted the complexity of decision-making in this area for the courts. The book is clearly a legal text for practitioners in the field and would also be an essential text in undergraduate and postgraduate law faculties.

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Managing Problem Behaviours: A Practical Guide for Parents and Teachers of Young Children With Special Needs
Susan Dodd
MacLennan & Petty, Sydney, 1994 (Reprinted 1998), viii+216pp., $29.70 (paperback)

This practical guide focuses upon managing problem behaviours in preschool children with special needs. The book is structured in four parts. Part A seeks to define problem behaviour in a What, When and Why format including tips for setting up a behaviour management program. Part B focuses upon behaviour management procedures such as changing the situation in which a behaviour occurs or modifying the outcome or result of the behaviour. This section also makes suggestions for encouraging more appropriate or socially acceptable behaviours. Part C examines strategies for managing specific problem behaviours at home and at preschool, and Part D details management strategies for behaviours that the author claims are difficult to control, including head banging, obsessive behaviours, fears and phobias. The book includes a very useful glossary, which unfortunately omits any reference to "social worker", although reference to other professionals in the early intervention multidisciplinary team such as occupational therapist and physiotherapist are included. Since one of the book's intended audiences is parents, this is an unfortunate omission given that social workers may play a role in family support.

Dodd's book is unashamedly behaviourist and adopts the familiar social learning/behaviour therapy paradigm of an antecedent (event) preceding problematic or target behaviour and consequences that follow (the ABC paradigm). The book is replete with examples using this framework, which are presented clearly using labelled boxes throughout the text in a consistent way. The book tackles issues in the home and preschool including aggression, tantrums, eating problems, masturbation, teeth cleaning, stealing food, and destructive behaviours.

Many readers looking for strategies for managing specific behaviours will find Part C and Part D most useful, since they focus on what Dodd describes as common (e.g. fussy eaters at mealtimes) and severe behaviors such as self-injury (e.g., the child who bites her hand). These sections of the text present many practical strategies, which the author wisely cautions as suggestions rather than a recipe. Dodd is cognisant of context also and cites the example of a child who frequently bangs his/her head against a wall. This behaviour may require a comprehensive assessment, coupled with teaching the child alternative ways of communicating wants and needs.

The book's strengths lie in its clear articulation of a framework for addressing problem behaviours. However, readers hoping to discover insights into the role of the family, family-professional partnership, multidisciplinary teams, family support, and early intervention will be disappointed. In addition, I think it would have been helpful to emphasise the notion of relationship between the child and significant others in more depth, since any intervention depends upon a positive alliance such as genuineness, warmth, and empathy. The book is targeted at parents and teachers of young children with special needs and would be a useful practical text in any early childhood education course. Counsellors who work with families with children with special needs may also find some of the suggestions useful in supporting families.

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Managing Fragmentation: An Area Child Protection Committee in a Time of Change
Arian Barton.
Ashgate Publishing, Hampshire, UK, 2002, xii+161pp., $120.00 (hardback)

Child Protection seems to draw interest, experts, review, and multilevel distress. Barton (2002) called this fragmentation. In contemporary English Social Services, the fragmentation has peculiar aspects, with pressure from two different sorts of changes to the administration of Social Services and the conduct of Child Protection services. On the one hand there has been a 30-year history prescribing the benefits of inter-agency collaboration. On the other hand is 25 year history of managerialism.

This book appears to be the published version of doctoral research and looks toward the academic as the likely reader. The first half of the book is scholarly presentation of the history of the issues and the description of the methodology. The second half is much freer in style as the writer gives life to the words of his interviewees: a beleaguered bunch of frontline protection workers who want to serve the interests of the child, the collaborating agencies, and the dynamic ("heroic") managers of fiscally responsible service units. Qualitative researchers might be encouraged by the way the data is handled. Perhaps the reader of this review might see what's coming.
but there are some pleasant surprises worth the effort in finding in the verbatim accounts. Reading deeper one might conclude that despite all the obstacles, workers believe that Child Protection is necessary, possible, valuable, and rewarding; although the exhausted and exasperated Protection workers struggled, at times, to be positive. There is little doubt that with all the little managerially run groups around the place, constructive collaboration has been made more difficult.

Barton’s writing style has not been liberated from its academic purpose, but there is no doubt about his depth of analysis of the difficulties in historical, organisational, and personal/professional levels. One line that brought a smile is an abiding concern of anybody doing case study, qualitative research: “there seems little need to adopt an apologetic stance” (p.73) (“boom, boom”!). Anybody who has found a way out of this conundrum can direct his or her answer to this reviewer. A related problem to the case study question is that of context. Barton (2002) seems happy with what he has produced, but is clear that it applies to this situation at this time. The combination of the two changes to Child Protection practice have created a dynamic that promotes further fragmentation. However, despite Barton’s best efforts, it is not clear what to do next. The general lesson of less managerialism seems unlikely.

Perhaps, then, this is a cautionary tale for those who work and who try to manage Child Protection services. It would be nice if others could read how managerialism promotes competition and delimits collaboration. Children at risk, the world over, need collaborative, cooperative adults eschewing conflict; but at some level, the accountants enter the process. Sadly, counting emotional costs is not among a managerialist’s specialties.

Enhancing Early Emotional Development: Guiding Parents of Young Children

Jean W. Gowen and Judith B. Nebrig
Brookes, Baltimore, MD/MacLennan & Petty, Sydney, 2002, ix+388pp., $53.90 (paperback)

In my view, the title and subtitle of this book should be in reverse order, as its subject is how child health workers can support disadvantaged parents in their parenting role, so that their children’s emotional development is safeguarded. The focus is how health visitors can build supportive relationships with parents for the betterment of their children and family as a whole. This said, in separate sections, the book details the particular emotional needs of babies and infants and what families who are struggling to meet those needs. Meeting needs necessitates both describing the these imply for interventions with emotional needs of infants, and detailing skills for collaborating with parents. The final section draws attention to how parents’ skills reflect the degree of nurturing that they received when they themselves were children.

The material is thoroughly researched and clearly written. This makes for detailed and comprehensive reading – but the going is not difficult, as the concepts are expressed in clear and practical terms. The information is illustrated by case studies of child health workers supporting parents to understand and respond to their children’s individual needs. In my view, this book is particularly useful for those who visit and support disadvantaged parents. Its secondary audience is likely to be those seeking an in-depth understanding of the emotional needs of infants. As one of the few titles that relates directly to family visitors, and given the quality of its discussion of the issues involved, it deserves to become a well-used reference by this group of health professionals.

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Mothers, Young People and Chronic Illness

Clare Williams
Ashgate Publishing, Hampshire, UK, 2002, 138pp., $120.00 (hardback)

The impact of chronic disability on an individual, or their carer has traditionally focused on the issue of stress - more specifically, the aspect of physical burden. Drawing important links between care, feelings, and emotions, Williams introduces the enormously complex and multidimensional relationship that exists between mothers and young people when the latter has a chronic illness. In understanding the mother-child relationship, this emphasis on “emotional labour” is central, particularly so, when young people are navigating the stage of adolescence. How do mothers grapple with separation-individuation issues amidst the context of their child’s condition - a condition that can have fatal consequences? How can mothers let go? How do the children navigate the medical requirements of their condition? Can mothers trust their child’s management of the condition? Does the answer to these questions vary for sons or daughters?
Through edifying quotes, Williams provides tangible examples of the psychological struggle which surround these questions: the subjective experiences and impressions of male and female adolescents as they endeavour to "incorporate asthma and diabetes into their personal and social identities" (p.71).

Based on doctoral research involving grounded theory, Williams draws on in-depth interviews with 20 individuals (10 females, and 10 males) and their parents. The young people, aged between 15 and 18 years, were experiencing chronic illnesses of asthma or insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus (IDDM). Imposing high levels of self-management, these two conditions allowed Williams to explore gendered notions of dependency, responsibility, and caregiving. The material in this book is organised into seven chapters. Following an introduction, Chapter two provides an overview of the construction of adolescence, health behaviours, the clinical nature of the two chronic conditions (i.e., asthma and IDDM), and their related treatment regimes. Chapter 3 explores "gendered caregiving" and "gendered dependency". This chapter reveals blatant and interesting differences between mothers' perceptions of the illness behaviour of their sons, as compared to the illness behaviour of their daughters; expectations of their child's ability to manage are similarly divided according to gender. This makes thought-provoking reading, particularly if you are a female. Chapter 4 examines the dilemma of responsibility and autonomy as young people with chronic conditions enter adolescence: How much confidence can a mother have in her child's ability to manage her/his chronic condition? Chapter 5 and 6 explore the collision between identity and illness management. A useful summary and conclusion is provided in Chapter 7.

The doctoral work that underpins this text has been adapted well to provide an informative, easy-to-read text, which introduces two crucial perspectives: (a) the nature of the maternal-child relationship as it moves into the stage of adolescence, and (b) insight into the perspectives of mother and adolescent. Any health professional working with young people who are managing chronic conditions will find the blend between psychological and sociological perspectives useful in fine-tuning insight into the complex contexts that surround adaptation to chronic illness. The writer has done an extraordinarily important piece of work. I recommend it to anyone who intends to work in this often-unrecognised traumatic area.

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The Importance of Fathers: A Psychoanalytic Re-Evaluation
Judith Trowell and Alicia Etchegoygen (Eds.) Susan Budd (General Ed.)
Macmillian Academic and Reference, Victoria, 2002, xvi+256pp., $59.00 (paperback)

This book identifies the intrapsychic influences of the father on the developing child. Psychoanalytic interests in the importance of mothers and early bonding relationships have replaced Freud's seminal views on the role of fathers of one 100 years ago. Psychoanalysts such as Melanie Klien, Donald Winnicott, and John Bowlby in Great Britain, and Margaret Mahler and others in the United States during the postwar period, transformed the emphasis of child sexuality in the developmental process, and began to recognise and develop a theory of object relations, attachment processes, and bonding relationships in psychic development of the child. It would seem, however, that the historical development of a more advanced technological and consumerist society from the 1960's onwards, in which the needs and rights of women and other economic interests have affected the old social and economic structures of the past, has created a climate which has led to the role of fatherhood decreasing in significance. There is increasing research evidence to demonstrate that, more than just fulfilling the role of potential sperm donors, the diminished emphasis on the role of effective fathering in the child's development "may be a factor in the current apparent increase in the mental distress and the more severe mental and psychological problems" (p.17).

In an economic report for the President in 2000, Baily, Lawrence, and Shaw found that 36% of American children did not live with their natural fathers and by age 18, more than half of the children in America will have spent "a significant portion of their childhood living apart from their fathers" (p.243). Further evidence from the USA suggests that:

"Children under age 6 who live apart from their fathers are about five times as likely to be poor as children with both parents at home. Girls without a father in their life are two and a half times as likely to get pregnant and 53% more likely to commit suicide. Boys without father involvement are 63% more likely to run away and 37% more likely to abuse drugs. Children without father involvement are twice as likely to drop out of high school, roughly twice as likely to abuse alcohol or drugs, twice as likely to end up in jail, and nearly four times as likely to need help for emotional or behavioural problems than those with father involvement." (pp.243-244)
With these highly alarming trends there has been a resurrected interest in the role of fathers and fathering for psychoanalysts, after a long preoccupation with the role of mothers and the bonding relationship. The aim of the book is to convey the importance of fathers in the internal and external development of the child's world.

The book develops a theoretical and a clinical strand, and also provides some case study illustrations, from various psychoanalytical writers developing their themes around the impact of fathers on the child's development; the impact of severe maternal mental illness on baby and father; understanding the role of fatherhood from ancient and modern eras; the role and impact of grandfathers; missing fathers; fatherless boys; adoptive fathers; and fathers with a disability. The book provides reflection on what it means to become a father, and the impact of transgenerational loss on fathers and their ability to parent effectively. It also explores the development of a sexual identity in the child, with a particular emphasis on boys. The authors have pointed out that they have not included discussions on assisted parenting and gay/lesbian parents, as they feel that these topics merit an in-depth analysis and discussion which they will cover in a subsequent publication. They also acknowledge that they have been unable to cover fathers and their older adolescent children more fully, but have focused rather on the early experiences of fathers and their young children. Key concepts identified from the book include the triangular relationship of the primal family, which provides the child with a separate link to each parent and a link between the parents that excludes him. If the child can perceive and tolerate the link between the parents, which is perceived by him or her with love and hate, it provides him with a prototype for an object relationship in the third position of witness rather than of participant. This facilitates observation and of being observed, and provides a capacity for seeing ourselves in relation to others, and for entertaining a different point of view while we still retain our own; for being able to observe and relate to others, while still being ourselves.

Fathers provide physical and psychic support to mothers "in mind". Fathers represent the "law of the father" (Lacan), in which he is the agent of castration of the symbiotic relationship with the mother. The father also plays a key role in the oedipal complex. After successful resolution of the oedipal complex, boys and girls are then able to appropriately identify with their same sex parent in order to develop their own identities, a process which must be mastered again during adolescence. However, this description of normal development is impeded by the various factors described in the book. In particular is the concern of the absent, abusive, or both, father on the psychic development of their children, and on boys in particular.

I found the book particularly interesting and informative. Some chapters were more descriptive and could only introduce a topic, which would provide greater stimulus for further exploration. Other chapters provided the topic in more depth. I was particularly interested in the themes of loss apparent in psychic development, and of the need to work through this effectively. Also included was the effect of a father with a disability on his child's development, as this is a topic usually viewed from the reverse perspective. The study of fatherhood and the role of males in the 21st century is a topic that has pressing relevance for all today, and I welcome this introduction and re-evaluation of the importance of fatherhood, and recommend it to those who are working in the field of child and adult psychotherapy and education, whether in academia or in clinical practice.

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Starting at Home: Caring and Social Policy
Nel Noddings
University of California Press, Berkeley, 2002, 34pp., $39.95 (paperback)

This book continues Nel Nodding's work on caring, drawing on her vast experience in education and child development to successfully "explore the questions of why people fail to care adequately for other people and why they so often harm both themselves and others" (p.110). Noddings utilises philosophical debate to provide insight into the issue of caring, focusing on the nurturing environment of the family home. The influences of social ideologies such as liberalism versus communitarianism, the social acceptance of harm, and the implications for education are explored in an effort to examine the contexts that influence caring. The morals and virtues that inform the genesis of caring provide a recurring theme throughout the book. Noddings proposes the need for social policies to enable people to care effectively.

The book comprises 14 chapters and is divided into three sections, care theory, our selves and others, and towards a caring society. In the first section Noddings critiques several theorists' discourse on care as it relates to keeping safe and fulfilling human need. She discounts care as consequential, suggesting instead
that care is dynamic and relational arising out of intrinsic virtues experienced and modelled throughout life and informed by continuing reflexivity. The ability to care for self and others is a moral virtue arising out of the lived experiences of nurture and trust found in the family home. The second section focuses on more tangible issues surrounding the care and nurture provided to children. Noddings suggests that the baby's sense of self is informed by the response of the parents. Social policy is needed that supports the health of the baby and the mother and provides the knowledge needed by parents and society to succeed in appropriate caregiving. Sense of place contributes to the positive nurture and trust found in the family home. The third section of the book discusses social policy needs in relation to transforming society's understanding of the home, homelessness, social acceptability, and the role of education. Noddings questions current practices suggesting the need to reconsider the individualistic nature of American society, promote a willingness to assist those in need, review the absolute nature of rules, and seek more flexible supportive processes. In chapter 11 the philosophy of shared responsibility is argued, drawing on health service provision, domestic violence, euthanasia and abortion. The need for social policy to support those at risk of homelessness and provide for the homeless reiterates the earlier arguments concerning the role of the home in developing a caring society. In the final two chapters, the caring society comes under scrutiny through discussion of issues surrounding coercion to conform, drug usage, the question of rights, and the need to support effective education in the home.

Noddings has created a useful resource that will initiate debate among those who facilitate growth and development in caring. Noddings' reasoned critiques of philosophical approaches to care and caring behaviour provide insight into people's relationships. Her contentions relating to the influences of contextual issues on a person's ability to care about themselves and others sheds light on the dilemmas surrounding personal neglect and self-harm and provides impetus for new ways of enabling people to develop a positive sense of self. The continual emphasis, on what the "best homes" achieve and the comparison with practices that belong to another generation, creates an exaggerated divide between the negative and positive influences on self and the ability to care. Further analysis of contemporary family situations would provide a more balanced critique of relational issues. The overt nature of the author's personal values about euthanasia and abortion bias the discussion in chapter 11. The book would be useful for tertiary students studying social work, education, community nursing and psychology. The level of philosophical debate in the first section of the book provides detailed evidence of the competing discourses around the philosophy of caring, but may be difficult for undergraduate students to comprehend.

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Mixed Matches: Interracial Marriage in Australia
June Duncan Owen
University of New South Wales Press, 2002, vii+177pp., $34.95 (paperback)

This is one of the first books to provide a deep understanding of what can happen among couples, children, and in-laws when interracial marriages occur. Duncan Owen brings her own experience of interracial marriage into more than 100 interviews with partners and children involved in interracial marriages. According to Charles Price, the author's personal input encourages the interviewees to speak in real depth about themselves (p.viii). More importantly, the depth of the interviews reveal that no two interracial relationships are the same: some couples adopt aspects of both cultures, some adopt aspects of one culture, and some create their "own" culture. These decisions about the relative influence of each culture's language, customs, religion, and behaviour are unique to interracial marriage; however, these decisions concerning cultural influence also bring pressures to these relationships. While some couples and families interviewed in the book successfully survive the pressures of interracial marriage, other relationships are not so resilient.

The spark that began this book was an insulting remark by Peter Davis, the Mayor of Port Lincoln, that children of mixed-race marriage were "mongrels" (Leech, 1996). This sort of blatant prejudice is still prevalent in some parts of Australia and contributes further to the pressures of having a successful mixed-race marriage. As Duncan Owen states, these are the daily difficulties that parents and their children have to face "within a not-always-welcoming society" (p.x). The author further states that she wants to highlight that interracial families seem to have been forgotten in Australia's rush towards multiculturalism. To some extent this observation is...
true. If society as a whole could learn from couples in an interracial marriage on how they “accept”, “tolerate”, “adapt”, and “adjust” to cultural difference, (all words commonly used by interviewees in this book), then Australia’s transition into multiculturalism would be a more smooth and genuine one. Thus a second, but equally important issue evaluated in this book is that of the racial difference and indifference (all words commonly used by interviewees in this period) that continues to pervade Australian society.

A further dimension to the book is Duncan Owen’s historical expertise that emerges in her organisation of each chapter into salient historical periods of treatment in Australia of interracial marriage over the last 200 years. The integration of historical and cultural references would be appealing to a broad audience of readers interested in modern Australian history, social policy, and social psychology. More importantly, Duncan Owen’s clear writing style and articulate group of interviewees add tremendous detail to the issue of race in Australia, from both a minority and majority perspective. This balanced perspective is a true asset of the book. Finally, the overarching message of this book is that despite the appearance that attitudes have become more favourable toward interracial marriage, Australians still have much work to do in order to feel comfortable with the notion of multiculturalism. One way forward is to read Duncan Owen’s book and feel the cultural experiences of our fellow modern Australians.

Reference:
Leech, G. (1996, October 25). A nation gripped by madness? *The Australian*, p.13.

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### Helping Parents in Dispute

**Greg Mantle**

*Ashgate Publishing Limited, Hampshire, UK, 2001, 188pp., $168.00 (hardback)*

This book investigates Family Mediation, a relatively new approach to helping families in conflict. The text is partly based on the Essex study, which was a written survey mailed to disputing parents who had reached a full agreement during mediation. The author focused specifically on the initial consulting session between the parents in dispute and family court officers. The goal of the research was to evaluate the consumers’ perspective of the implications of those agreements. This book explores some of the major issues that make agreement in mediation not only difficult to attain, but also hard to quantify by a researcher. It points out that most disputing parents referred for mediation are likely to have strong negative feelings about their ex-partners which effect their ability to enter into “fair” agreements. Also relevant is the fact that both the professionals and the participants could potentially differ in their definition of a successful agreement. Additionally, it is noted that agreements can change over time with the capricious attitudes and life circumstances of the parents and their children.

Inherent and perceived differences between how fathers and mothers are regarded during the negotiation process are included in the literature review. Other gender-related issues like domestic violence and the sex of the mediator(s) are included in this analysis as well. All these factors serve to highlight the challenge for mediators to remain neutral toward the two parties, while also ignoring prevailing social trends related to parenting. The expertise and knowledge bases of the mediators are viewed as having tremendous influence on the course of the session. Mediation is also examined from a legal-judicial standpoint. The impact of judicial representatives on referrals to mediation is acknowledged. Court officers could, in theory, perpetuate biased attitudes regarding the efficacy of mediation, thus promoting or inhibiting the agreement process. Furthermore, differences in financial costs incurred with traditional legal services versus informal mediation, becomes another matter for discussion.

This text provides valuable information on an emerging form of court-sanctioned mediation. Key concepts are clarified; related studies are presented, as are a number of significant facts and figures. The book concludes with an easy to read summary of the main findings of the Essex Study and six case studies for use in classrooms or training sessions. Although the author’s focus is limited to the Essex Court system, this book has pertinent information that could benefit those interested in developing policies and methods for facilitating efficacious family mediation for the benefit of children and their disputing parents.

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### Listening in the Silence, Seeing in the Dark: Reconstructing Life after Brain Injury

**Ruthann Johansen**

*University of California Press, Los Angeles, 2002, 236pp., $49.95*

This book is the product of a mother’s yearning to “story” her son’s life in the face of his silence. In this sense, it is the chronicle of the clear, present, trauma and grief of a mother who is living through her worst
nightmare; the massive brain injury of her 15-year-old son following a horrific car accident. With an academic background in literature, the eloquence of the author's written word offers the reader no relief from the intensity of her loss; through a juxtaposition of timeframes, pre-and post accident, Johansen's powerful metaphors relentlessly capture her shifting realities and the pain of grieving. What was and what is - the "lostness" of her son, Erik - the ephemeral aspects of "self"- "consciousness" - "non-beingness", all central aspects of brain injury, form a continuing theme in this story. Naturally for Johansen, to "engage Erik in his lostness" (p.122), to help him to "reassemble pieces of his mental house" (p.138), and "feel his own consciousness" (p.138), become intransigent goals. In this endeavour, it is clear why the unidimensional and compartmentalized approach by the medical professionals (i.e., their representation of her son as a purely medical case and subject of mechanistic protocols) are offensive. Inevitably, these medical approaches discount her son's "being" and former social context. Against this malalignment, a driving force of the book - and this would certainly align with the author's psychical need - is to restore and protect the essence of who her son is. In the ensuing rehabilitation process she depicts, particularly on her part, an arduous struggle between control and surrender. At the same time, and I believe this is yet another strength of the book, Johansen manages to acknowledge and introduce the parallel realities that coexist with this force: the "crumbling despair" felt on the part of herself and her husband, the every-day life demands, complexities of the sibling experience, and the significant part played by friends.

This book is divided into nine parts. Beginning with an introduction, seven following chapters are depicted as thresholds that symbolize the movement and aspects of Johansen's symbiotic journey with her son through personal crisis: Threshold One: The impact of vulnerability; Threshold Two: Waiting in crisis; Threshold Three: Uncertain deliveries; Threshold Four: Becoming again; Threshold Five: The scattered self; Threshold Six: Improvisational selves; Threshold Seven: Accepting vulnerability. The final chapter, the epilogue, is entitled Crossing the threshold.

The complexity of the emotions and the experience of shifting realities intrinsic to the process of adapting to trauma and loss are incredibly difficult to capture in narrative. Not only does Johansen potently capture her experience, she allows the reader to gain invaluable insight into the experience of her son. In providing frequent references to factual material related to brain injury and the restoration of functions, importantly Johansen leaves the reader in no doubt as to the complexity of the recovery process. The reader is left with enormous respect for the victim. Before you read this book, take heed, Johansen's writing is piercing and she leaves it abundantly clear "that traumatic brain injury abruptly ends any real control, or the illusion of it, that one has over her own or her loved one's lives" (p.186). For any health professional unfamiliar with the intrapsychic world of victims of brain injury and their carers, this book would be one of the first to be read and critically discussed.

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Sexuality and Society: An Introduction
Gargi Bhattacharyya

Macmillan Academic Reference, Victoria, Australia, 2002, 193pp., $56.00 (paperback)

In what appears to be a text directed at serious scholars, Bhattacharyya makes an ambitious attempt to unearth layers of taboo surrounding sexuality and intimacy at a social, political and global level, with a pledge to bring "our most familiar world back ... as foreign lands" (p. 4) since "sexuality shapes the possibilities of what it is to be human" (p. 5).

Drawing upon an extensive reference list, the underlying premise of this book is that through an examination and analysis of sexuality, sensuality, and underlying premise of this book is that through an examination and analysis of sexuality, sensuality, and issues of intimacy, insight will be gained into the new modernity or the "The Third Way"; an era free from the constraints of traditional assumptions about gender, roles, relationships, and sexuality. Simultaneously, an analysis of the Karma Sutra is interwoven throughout the text, which endeavours to explore the interface between body and society at large. The ideology of heterosexuality, gender, identity, exoticism, pornography, and sex education are all examined from a sociological perspective, encouraging the reader to make connections between historical changes and present day assumptions about sexuality. Essentially, this book contains a heavy dialogue that does little to explore the humanness of sexuality at an emotional level. The text does briefly come to life with an illuminating critique of the Clinton/Lewinsky affair and again when comparisons made between the archetypal man outlined in Machiavelli's The Prince become the antithesis of the teachings of the Kama Sutra.

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What About the Boys? Issues of Masculinity in Schools
Wayne Martino and Bob Meyenn (Eds.)
Open University Press, Buckingham, UK, 2001, xiv+242pp., $47.95 (paperback)

Based on a quantity of empirical research, What About the Boys? covers various issues of heterosexuality or homosexuality, race, class, and ethnicity, and analyses their effect on masculinity and boys' lives at school in contemporary society. More specifically, the prime object of this book is "to develop further understandings about masculinity within the context of current debates about the boys ... given the continued moral panic that persists about boys [and] their disadvantaged status relative to girls" (p. x).

What About the Boys? is a collection of 16 chapters dealing with the issues concerning masculinity at school, and in a broader context, how this affects boys' achievements at school. As a former youth worker, I find some chapters particularly interesting and some of the ideas conveyed, stimulating and thought-provoking. Chapter 1 overviews the major debates regarding boys' under-achievement, "failing boys", "problem of boys" and the real boy crisis in three nations, namely, Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom. While it is highly critical of the current debates on boys' underperformance at school and the construction of boys as "new disadvantaged", especially in the media, it suggests that most of the current debates are too simplistic and miss the point because of their overemphasis on biological explanations of masculinity and boys' natural propensity for violence. Instead arguing that "biology alone cannot answer [the] question, and claiming that boys will be boys only leads us to abandon our social and political responsibility" (p. 18). Chapter 2 discusses three key interrelated elements: social-political and cultural change, modern schooling, and the making of masculinities. The broader social and cultural changes such as privatisation of schools, and the emergence of managerialism and an entrepreneurial curriculum not only impact on issues of teaching practices and schooling, but also are central to the construction of masculine subjectivities and sexual identities. Chapters 3 to 6 address the issue of masculinity from different angles. Chapter 3 discusses how boys are currently "incited to adopt certain practices of masculinity and to display themselves as particular kinds of boys" (p. 44) and examines the effects of curricula and peers on a boy's development over the course of his life at a particular school. Martin Mills, in chapter 4, has successfully explored the reasons why boys are so often involved in various forms of risk taking behaviours in trying to achieve a macho masculinity. This masculinity is thought to be important for success within a boy's career. However, in reality it is more likely to be those who are not involved in a lot of risk-taking activities at school who succeed in a given career. Trying to refocus a boy's risk taking behaviour into more positive areas is also talked about. Chapter 5 gives case studies of three boys with different backgrounds and the effects of these backgrounds on their development. The first two failed to achieve as well as they should have at school, while the third faced the difficult situation of being a homosexual. The major emphasis was on the importance, especially for the wellbeing of the students, of "addressing masculinities within a gender equity framework that is committed to exploring the ways in which hegemonic heterosexual masculinity impacts on boys" (p. 78). Chapter 6 highlights the positives of getting boys to interrogate and define their masculinity, and gives some practical advice to help teachers and schools to foster a positive way to promote the abilities for self-exploration. Another intriguing chapter is chapter 8, "Learning to laugh", which gives an ethnographic study of humour in a typical English middle-class school, placing emphasis on its importance to the development of sexuality and masculinity. Three main types of humour were studied, including "cussing matches", "formulistic insults", and "classic stories". However, the discussion could benefit greatly from a broader base of study, looking at humour within various schools, with different groupings of ethnicity and class. Chapter 10 is concerned with the African American boys' formation of their masculinity in school in the United States. These boys are found to have many outside pressures on them to try and grow into a narrow predefined type of black macho masculinity. Problems about finding their masculine identity arise from "a traditional notion of masculinity that inadequately informs boys about what success in school means" (p. 150). The research done in this chapter suggests that more emphasis needs to be placed on helping these boys with issues of masculinity and thus may help some of the other problems faced by African American boys. Learning lessons from this empirical study reminds us of the great importance of studying the issues of masculinity among the Indigenous young people and those from the non-English speaking...
backgrounds in a multicultural society like Australia (see also chapter 11). Finally, the last four chapters examine how engaging various subjects such as science, language, mathematics, and physical education and sports structure are structured by norms of masculinity. For instance, chapter 14 illustrates how learning school mathematics involves learning its masculinity. For instance, chapter 14 illustrates how physical education and school sports tend to reinforce characteristically male patterns of “precise, concise, factual and authoritative way[s] of speaking” (p. 200), thereby explaining how types of masculinity can be formed. In a similar vein, chapter 16 considers that physical education and school sports tend to reinforce and even promote one main type of masculinity, which stresses “the expectation of power and superiority over femininity” (p. 223). Drawing extensively from the author’s experiences teaching physical education, Michael Gard suggests ways to broaden the scope of physical education: “Put simply, I am suggesting that we need to help boys and girls feel that it is ‘OK’ to use their bodies in ways which do not conform to gender stereotypes, and that very often this will involve more than simply doing physical activity during class time” (p. 231).

Generally speaking, this book is well written, and is very easy to read and understand. It covers a lot of important issues of “about the boys”, modern schooling and masculinity, and sets the scene for further research in these areas. As this book makes many good points and clarifies several hot topics such as boys’ under-achievement at school and male sexualities, it is recommended for any teachers wishing to review their teaching styles and curriculum development, and for school policy-makers hoping to promote better access and quality of education. The book aims at a wide readership, namely, student teachers, teachers, school administrators, counsellors, psychologists, child and family welfare workers, curriculum writers, and those who are interested in learning how we address the challenge of educating boys for life in the 21st century.

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Youth in Transition: Housing, Employment, Social Policies and Families in France and Spain

Teresa Jurado Guerrero

Ashgate Publishing, Hampshire, UK, 2001, xviii+358pp., $170.00 (hardback)

This book is based on Guerrero’s doctoral research thesis, and takes a sociological approach to understanding the current social and economic trends of young people in France and Spain to stay home longer in the parental home. It seeks to investigate which factors facilitate or hinder their transition into adulthood, as they seek to establish their own independent households. The data that forms the study is based on a French survey “Enquête Jeunes 1992” conducted by the French Statistical Office in March 1992 on “10,000 young people who were leaving the general French Labour Force Survey sample, after having been interviewed for three consecutive years” (p. 299). This specific information about young people aged 18 to 29 complements the general census statistics of the French Labour Force Survey, which is conducted by the French Statistical Office (INSEE). The Spanish data used in this study is the “Encuesta Sociodemográfica 1991”, “conducted by the Spanish Statistical Institute during October, November and December 1991” (p. 300). The survey is based on the Spanish Population Census of 1991 and includes information collected via personal interviews with one interviewee from each of 159,154 dwellings. As in the French survey, only individuals aged 20 to 29 were selected for the Spanish sample.

The research was interested in exploring current European trends in the late nest leaving behaviour of young people, and the sociological factors influencing transition into adulthood and independence in France and Spain. To do this, the author explored the living arrangements in both countries, as in the formation of two and one generation households with each formation having variations in dependence and independence. The type of household formation was therefore affected by financial transition, social independence transition, employment crisis and labour market risks, social rights for young people, the housing market and availability, family values, religiosity, and marriage. The book also utilises a macro-micro model to explore possible forms of young people’s choices for staying at home or leaving home. A cross-sectional approach was selected for analysis of the retrospective data in order to keep the historical context as constant as possible. The timing of the transitions for leaving home and the context differences between the two countries, were also explored. In the latter: differences between being a student or nonstudent; male or female; employment opportunities - with higher unemployment and lower educational levels more unskilled and agricultural workers being found in Spain as well as less rental properties, higher home ownership; and less State Welfare provision for young people. Other chapters look more specifically at unemployment; social class; economic activity; low expectation and early school-
to-work transition; low quality of life; labour market
difficulties; and income differences. The study also
examined regional differences between France and
Spain, social rights in the form of welfare assistance
to young people; how government regulation of youth
labour markets affect youth employment through
subsidies; how government assists youth through
housing subsidies for rental or purchase; and how this
all impacts on early or late home leaving by young
people in France and Spain. The author contends that
popular beliefs about why young people tend to stay
home longer in West-European countries since the
1980's are based on ad hoc explanations driven by
personal experience (p 287). She describes these
personal beliefs as Catholicism being strong in Spain,
which means that young people in Spain tend to leave
home when ready to marry. Young people also tend
to stay home longer due to employment insecurities
and housing shortages. Universities all over Spain make
it unnecessary for young people to leave home, while
French students receive more public benefits, which
assist them with earlier home leaving. The author
points out that these ad hoc explanations are mono-
causal, and her research analyses provide a statistically
driven result with which to falsify or expand
explanations. The main findings from this study were
that it is in the main employment shortages, and in
particular the lack of long-term employment, as well
as the high cost of housing, which are the main
variables associated with late-nest leaving in Spain.

In Australia, the Australian Bureau of Statistics
(2002), reports that in 1999 "almost one in four 15-
29 year olds where living arrangements had changed
in the previous year had moved out of their parents
home, though not necessarily for the first or last time"
(www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs. p 3). Professor of
Housing Studies at Swinburne Institute for Social
Research, Terry Burke, states that the tendency of
young people to live at home longer in Melbourne,
Australia, reflects the constraints of the housing market,
of high private rents, and costs of home purchase.
Other factors contributing to late home leaving in
Australia include tertiary study requirements and an
unstable job market (Herald Sun, Saturday 4 January,
2003, p 17).

I found the book to be a tedious volume,
crammed with facts, figures, and statistics. Although
the author applied a sociological and statistical
framework to the interpretation of the data, the end
product did not result in a great deal of new
knowledge that general experience has not already
confirmed. I think that the book would provide the
greatest interest to academics and students of sociology,
people living in France and Spain, and anyone wishing
to understand more about economics, employment,
education, welfare, and housing assistance in these two
countries. Great book for insomniacs.

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Suicidal Behaviour, Bereavement
and Death Education in Chinese
Adolescents

John Tse and Christopher Bagley (Eds.)
Ashgate Publishing, Hampshire, UK, 2002,
210pp., $120.00 (hardback)

The eight articles presented in this book provide some
important, grounded evidence on the routine stressors
faced by Chinese youth in both their schools and in
the family system. Suicidal ideation and practice is
treated in a number of chapters, exploring the cultural
context and possible contributors to youth suicide in
the pressures for school achievement, family
disruptions and separation; relationship and sexuality
issues; and loss of friends at a crucial stage of
development (e.g., for Chinese students whose families
had moved from Mainland China to Hong Kong.
Five chapters are briefly outlined here.

Tse and Bagley report that suicide remains the
major cause of death for youth in Hong Kong. In the
first chapter, they cite the case of a 10-year-old boy
who jumped to his death from his 19th floor bedroom
after writing a class paper on "the hardship and
happiness of studying" (p.8). In chapter 2,Tse, Bagley,
and Mak discuss the role of suicide prevention
programs using peer counselling, in particular their
HIT-MAN approach (Health Intervention Training
Manual Aid Network). The program - yet to be
evaluated - appears to offer some promising support
in schools as a preventive educational resource. In their
assessment of self-esteem issues for Chinese
adolescents (chapters 3-4), Tse and Bagley emphasize
the importance of healthy family connections in
developing resilience, along with a less restrictive and
more student-centered learning approach in schools
(p. 46). Their study of family and community stress in
reducing resilience for Chinese adolescents (chapter
4) provides some further insights into pathways of
suicidal ideation. Tse's argument for death education
(chapter 8) as a helpful educational tool for helping
children and adolescents understand death, cope with
grief, and to assist in suicide prevention will resonate
with many counsellors/therapists, clinicians - and
some teachers - in Australia. He is less clear about how such a program might be implemented in the more restrictive parental contexts and educational settings of Hong Kong schools.

The book clearly fills a gap in knowledge about loss-related issues for Chinese students. It has particular relevance for teachers and counsellors in secondary schools at a time when state education departments in Australia are considering a "whole-school, whole-health" approach for student resilience. It will also prove a helpful guide for counselling and faculty support staff in tertiary institutions, given the high percentage of international students currently studying in Australia.

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Housing and Home in Later Life
Frances Heywood, Christine Oldman, and Robin Means
Open University Press, Buckingham, UK, 194pp., $79.00 (paperback)

This book provides the reader with information on an important issue facing older citizens, housing and home. In chapter one, the authors offer a thorough explanation of the goals of the text as well as definitions for common terminology used in the investigation of this topic. A brief overview of how past and current social trends have affected the experiences older people have related to housing, sets the foundation for the rest of the text.

Part One reviews the prevailing assumptions held about housing and later life. Social theories and political policies are discussed. Health care and community care trends are evaluated for their effectiveness in meeting the needs of the older population. Perhaps most importantly, the personal perceptions and preferences of a variety of senior citizens are introduced for consideration.

The second half of the text presents several studies related to this matter of elders and housing. Issues such as moving, maintaining independence, and communal housing are explored. The reader may find these chapters quite useful if developing guidelines for assisting older people with making decisions about housing. Descriptors like push factors, positive factors, and pull factors will make it easy to identify the major themes to be addressed by those considering relocating. If independent living is an option, principles for evaluating subjects like finances, safety, assistance with homemaking, and residential accessibility is provided. If a communal setting is the choice, an informative survey of the pros and cons of this type of living arrangement is also presented. Lastly, an innovative model of collaboration between social, medical, and governmental entities is suggested. The idea is for all concerned agencies, professionals, and clients to work together to prudently identify and address the myriad of housing issues facing the older population.

Fair attention is given to the challenges and benefits of developing joint ventures with workers from different organizations. Thoughtfully, the authors include practical mechanisms for successfully implementing effective partnerships.

This text would be a valuable addition for those seeking to educate students, policy-makers, or care-providers about the multifaceted implications of housing for the older person. The information presented greatly addresses contemporary and developing theories and policies impacting on a growing population of senior citizens. The straightforward layout of the book makes it easy to locate specific subject matter. Also quite helpful are the summary sections found at the conclusion of each chapter, which makes it an appealing reference tool for professionals and laymen alike.

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Postmodernism and Social Research
Mats Alvesson
Open University Press, Buckingham, UK, 2002. xii+200pp., $52.95 (paperback)

The topic of postmodernism is complex. Its transitional orientation and philosophical complexity makes it difficult to grasp at the best of times and even more difficult to pin down and apply to what has been a fairly static entity - social research. Academic opinions still hover between those who hope that postmodernism is a passing phase which will soon die, relieving them of the chore of having to grapple with it and allowing them to retreat back to the safe haven of the methods we have all been accustomed to in the past, while at the other extreme there are expressions of great joy that postmodernism has infiltrated every corner of the more modern research scene and is now so embedded that separation is impossible and undesirable. Mats Alvesson places himself somewhere in between these two positions, taking a cautious and rather skeptical approach and attempting "partial and pragmatic use of some ideas from pomo, in order to produce more thoughtful, interesting and creative social research" (p.14).
caution is understandable – the lack of cohesion in this field means that whatever position an author takes there will be a substantial body of critics waiting in the wings ready to pounce.

The main emphasis in this book is an attempt to link philosophy and practice within a focus on qualitative approaches. The early chapters provide an overview of post modernism and identify five major themes: the centrality of discourse; fragmented identities; a critique of the idea of representation; the loss of the foundations of grand narratives; and the power-knowledge connection. The remaining chapters look at the impact of these five themes on language and discourse, concepts and categories, interviewing, interpreting, and writing. Finally, an attempt at drawing these all together is made through an illustrative example from Alvesson's own field, that of organisation studies.

The text raises a number of the major implications of the philosophies of postmodernism and poststructuralism for the field of social research. The rather cautious and critical approach taken by the author serves to illuminate one particular position and this is done clearly and accessibly. The negative outcome of this caution inevitably is that much of that which can be celebrated with the advent of postmodernism is not highlighted and the full implications of the resultant freedoms and the new and creative options, which these philosophies encourage, and which can now be widely seen in many publications, are barely indicated and rarely demonstrated. Despite this, the book provides a good starting point on this topic for late undergraduate and postgraduate students, academics, and other social researchers.

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