



## Editor's Introduction: Classic Theorists, Disciplinary Deficiencies and Purposeful Leisure

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The wide-ranging papers presented in this issue defy easy pigeonholing. Several focus on major thinkers or key ideas, while others express concern about the state of sociology, including intellectual blind spots and gender-based injustice, and they advocate strategies for the field's improvement. One article examines the quantity of work that sociologists do, while another addresses the challenge of purposeful leisure in a post-academic phase of life.

Nadav Gabay traces the career of Harriet Martineau, with particular attention to her involvement in government-sponsored research and public awareness campaigns. The argument is presented that the “scientization” of British politics, in which Martineau played a prominent role, did much to promote the development of social science in the Victorian era. Gabay also considers ways in which Martineau's serious hearing disability might actually have facilitated the process of scientization, which emphasizes visual products rather than the spoken voice.

Russell Schutt and Jonathan Turner take up another topic that was pervasive in nineteenth century thought, namely evolutionary theories of societal development. In the authors' view, sociology as a field suffers from a deficiency of evolutionary models. They note the virtual disappearance of evolutionary theories in the 1930s, and they argue that this was largely due to distorted understandings of works by key figures, especially Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer. Schutt and Turner feel strongly that it is time for sociology to reconnect with evolutionary researches in peer disciplines, and to make new contributions of its own.

Sandro Segre considers the question of whether Howard S. Becker, who resisted being type-cast within sociology, might be regarded as a symbolic interactionist. Segre notes that, consistent with the symbolic interactionist perspective, Becker consistently focuses on processes by which meaning is assigned to behavior within particular situations. Further, in accord with the Chicago tradition and the work of Herbert Blumer, Becker places much emphasis on participant observation as a knowledge strategy. Becker, however, departs from standard symbolic interactionism by applying

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ideas of his own, including the social world, structures of interaction, conventions and interpretive communities.

Gary Jaworski explores the relationship between Erving Goffman and game theorist Thomas Schelling in terms of three logical possibilities: one-sided influence, mutual independent discovery, and intellectual convergence. Jaworski examines the dialogue between Goffman and Schelling that appears in their published works, and he probes in detail Goffman's participation in a 1964 conference on strategic interaction and conflict that was conducted by the U.S. Department of Defense and the RAND Corporation.

Lynn McDonald presents the argument that “enormous sexism” persists in textbooks of sociological theory and in the academic courses that utilize these sources. In support of this view, McDonald examines works on “classical theory” that have been widely used during the past quarter-century. This analysis indicates that women are more frequently included in more recent editions, but that they often receive scant attention and that their ideas are not systematically compared with those of peer male thinkers. McDonald provides a listing of relevant theoretical works by women and argues that it is time for the discipline to address this imbalance and exclusion.

Jerome Braun focuses on a particular work, namely, Christopher Lasch's 1979 book, *The Culture of Narcissism*. In the author's view, Lasch's analysis remains highly relevant, especially for sociologists who seek to apply psychological ideas or who wish to develop the study of morality. Braun believes that Lasch was correct in viewing recent cultural changes as stimulating and condoning narcissism, and he notes that this diagnosis has been supported by a range of other investigators including Eva Illouz, Richard Sennett, Michael Mann and Pitirim Sorokin. The author also expresses the opinion that recent technological developments have created a fantasy-oriented environment that is highly conducive to further narcissism.

Esther Isabelle Wilder and William H. Walters consider how scholarly output in sociology is usually measured, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of two dominant methodologies. Contribution studies begin with a list of publication outlets and then record all works in that literature. Productivity studies, by contrast, begin with a list of authors and proceed to record their published output wherever it appears. The authors classify twenty-five recent studies of output, noting that twelve fall in the productivity category, and nine in the contribution category, while the remaining four cannot be clearly classified. They conclude by commenting on problems that arise when only contribution studies are used to measure scholarly output.

Philip Manning, using the metaphor of “currency exchanges,” examines how the increasing “monetarization” of universities affects the field of sociology. The author feels strongly that sociology needs to adapt to this changing context, and he recommends strategies for increased grant-getting that have proven successful in the natural sciences.

Robert Stebbins, finally, looks at the challenges of retiring from an academic position. The loss of professional networks can lead to feelings of disconnection and loneliness. Stebbins considers three possible strategies for recovering from this anomic state, including serious leisure, casual leisure and project-based leisure. The author presents the view that immersion in the social world of serious leisure activity is the most effective way to recover a positive social identity in a post-academic phase of life.