December 30, 2010

Qualitative Sociology Review

Volume VI
Issue 3

Available Online
www.qualitativesociologyreview.org

Editorial Board

Editorial Staff

Krzysztof T. Konecki
Editor-in-chief

Anna Kacperczyk
Slawomir Magala
Associate Editors

Lukas T. Marciniak
Patryk Zareba
Executive Editors

Steven Kleinknecht
Antony Puddephatt
Geraldine M. Leydon
Approving Editors

Kamil Glowacki
Anna Kubczak
Editorial Assistants

Dominika Byczkowska
Book Reviews Editor

Magdalena Wojciechowska
Newsletter Editor

Web Technology Developer

Edyta Mianowska

Cover Designer

Anna Kacperczyk

Consulting Editors

Patricia A. Adler
Peter Adler
Mahbub Ahmed
Michael Atkinson
Howard S. Becker
Nicolette Bramley
Marie Buscatto
Tanya Cassidy
Kathy Charmaz
Catherine A.. Chesla
Cesar A. Cisneros
Adele E. Clarke
Jan K. Coetzee
Juliet Corbin
Norman K. Denzin
Robert Dingwall
Rosalind Edwards
Peter Eglin
Gary Alan Fine
Silvia Gherardi
Barney Glaser
Giampietro Gobo
Jaber F. Gubrium
Tony Hak
Paul ten Have
Stephen Hester
Judith Holton
Domenico Jervolino
Benjamin W. Kelly
Robert A. Kenedy
Dave King
Hubert Knoblauch
Joseph Kotarba
Margarethe Kusenbach
Riitta Kyllonen
Staffan Larsson
Lyn H. Lofland
Jordi Lopez
Michael Lynch
Christoph Maeder
Barbara Misztal
Setsuo Mizuno
Lorenza Mondada
Janusz Mucha
Sandi Michele de Oliveira
Dorothy Pawluch
Eleni Petraki
Constantinos N Phellas
Susan Pickard
Jason L. Powell
Robert Prus
George Psathas
Anne Warfield Rawls
Johanna Rendle-Short
Brian Roberts
Roberto Rodríguez
Masamichi Sasaki
William Shaffir
Phyllis N. Stern
Antonio Strati
Joerg Struebing
Massimiliano Tarozzi
Roland Terborg
Victor Thiessen
Jan Trost
Jonathan H. Turner
Dennis D. Waskul
Shalva Weil
Fred Wester
Ingrid Westlund
Patrick Williams
Ruth Wodak

Note:
The journal and all published articles are a contribution to the contemporary social sciences. They are available without special permission to everyone who would like to use them for noncommercial, scientific, educational or other cognitive purposes. Making use of resources included in this journal for commercial or marketing aims requires a special permission from publisher. Possible commercial use of any published article will be consulted with the author beforehand.
It is forbidden to charge for access to this journal or to put any limitations on the accessibility of published papers.
The authors are responsible for obtaining the necessary permissions for publication of materials, which are protected by a copyrights owned by other persons.

©2005-2010 Qualitative Sociology Review
ISSN 1733-8077

Contents

Articles:

Ethnographic Trailblazers: Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon
by Robert Prus and Matthew Burk 3

Love, Friendship, and Disaffection in Plato and Aristotle: Toward a Pragmatist Analysis of Interpersonal Relationships
by Robert Prus and Fatima Camara 29

Explanatory Models of Illness and Psychiatric Rehabilitation: A Clinical Sociology Approach
by Robert Sévigny, Sheying Chen, and Elaina Y. Chen 63

Narrating student life in a time of risk
by Asta Rau, Jan K. Coetzee and Amy Vice 81

"Hey Mitch-elle, you need a shave!": The school days of hirsute adolescents
by Adie Nelson and Veronica Nelson 99

Book reviews:

Book Review: *Method meets art. Arts-Based Research Practice by Patricia Leavy*
Piotr Bielski 115

Book Review: *Understanding Education: a Sociological Perspective by Sharon Gewirtz and Alan Cribb*
Justyna Nowotniak 118

Contributors 126

Author-Supplied Abstracts and Keywords 128

Qualitative Sociology Review
Volume VI, Issue 3 – December 2010

Robert Prus and Matthew Burk
University of Waterloo, Canada

Ethnographic Trailblazers: Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon

Abstract

While ethnographic research is often envisioned as a 19th or 20th century development in the social sciences (Wax 1971; Prus 1996), a closer examination of the classical Greek literature (circa 700-300BCE) reveals at least three authors from this era whose works have explicit and extended ethnographic qualities.

Following a consideration of "what constitutes ethnographic research," specific attention is given to the texts developed by Herodotus (c484-425BCE), Thucydides (c460-400BCE), and Xenophon (c430-340BCE). Classical Greek scholarship pertaining to the study of the human community deteriorated notably following the death of Alexander the Great (c384-323BCE) and has never been fully approximated over the intervening centuries. Thus, it is not until the 20th century that sociologists and anthropologists have more adequately rivaled the ethnographic materials developed by these early Greek scholars.

Still, there is much to be learned from these earlier sources and few contemporary social scientists appear cognizant of (a) the groundbreaking nature of the works of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon and (b) the obstacles that these earlier ethnographers faced in developing their materials. Also, lacking awareness of (c) the specific materials that these scholars developed, there is little appreciation of the particular life-worlds depicted therein or (d) the considerable value of their texts as ethnographic resources for developing more extended substantive and conceptual comparative analysis.

Providing accounts of several different peoples' life-worlds in the eastern Mediterranean arena amidst an extended account of the development of Persia as a military power and related Persian-Greek conflicts, Herodotus (*The Histories*) provides Western scholars with the earliest, sustained ethnographic materials of record. Thucydides (*History of the Peloponnesian War*) generates an extended (20 year) and remarkably detailed account of a series of wars between Athens and Sparta and others in the broader Hellenistic theater. Xenophon's *Anabasis* is a participant-observer account of a Greek military expedition into Persia.

1 Robert Prus is a Sociologist at the University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G1. A symbolic interactionist and ethnographer, Robert Prus (prus@uwaterloo.ca) has been examining the conceptual and methodological connections of American pragmatist philosophy and its sociological offshoot, symbolic interactionism, with Classical Greek and Latin scholarship. Matthew Burk (mburk9912@gmail.com) completed his BA Honours degree in Sociology at the University of Waterloo and is presently developing a MA Thesis on "Being Managed: Experiential Processes, Problematics, and Resistances."

These three authors do not exhaust the ethnographic dimensions of the classical Greek literature, but they provide some particularly compelling participant observer accounts that are supplemented by observations and open-ended inquiries.

Because the three authors considered here also approach the study of human behavior in ways that attest to the problematic, multiperspectival, reflective, negotiated, relational, and processual nature of human interaction, contemporary social scientists are apt to find instructive the rich array of materials and insights that these early ethnographers introduce within their texts. Still, these are substantial texts and readers are cautioned that we can do little more in the present statement than provide an introduction to these three authors and their works.

Keywords

Ethnography, Classical Greek, Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Symbolic Interaction, Anthropology, History, Pragmatism, Generic Social Process

> One should not blind oneself to a recognition of the fact that human beings in carrying on their collective life form very different kinds of worlds. To study them intelligently one has to know these worlds, and to know the worlds one has to examine them closely. No theorizing, however ingenious, and no observance of scientific protocol, however meticulous, are substitutes for developing a familiarity with what is actually going on in the sphere of life under study… The person who perceives nothing of it can know essentially nothing of it. The person who perceives it at a great distance, seeing just a little bit of it, can have correspondingly only a limited knowledge of it. The person who participates in it will have a greater knowledge of it, although if he is a naive and unobservant participant his knowledge may be very restricted and inaccurate. The participant who is very observant will have fuller and more accurate knowledge… The task of scientific study is to lift the veils that cover the area of group life that one proposes to study. (Blumer 1969: 39)

While most scholars in the social sciences are apt to acknowledge the classical Greek roots of contemporary Western thought, comparatively few have had occasion to examine the literature produced in this era (circa 700-300 BCE) in any sustained manner.[2] Thus, while appreciating that the foundations of philosophy go back at least

[2] Whereas I (RP) have for some time designated the "Classical Greek era" as circa 700-300BCE as a convenient, practical reference point, readers may appreciate the insightful commentary provided by a classicist, Beert Verstraete. I have adopted it verbatim from a more extended set of commentaries he has kindly provided on my work:

A very general comment. You specify the time-span 700-300 BCE for the so-classical period of Greek civilization. Since the 19th century, classicists generally specify this period as 480-323 BCE—the former the date of the decisive naval battle in which the Greeks (mainly the Athenians) won a huge victory over the invading Persians, and the latter the date of the death of Alexander the Great, which is generally regarded as the beginning of the so-called Hellenistic period. This "Classical Age" is the period when the city-state of Athens enjoyed cultural pre-eminence in the Greek world, as well as imperial pre-eminence until the end of the Great Athenian-Spartan War of 431-404 BCE. However, your broader and more approximate dating has a lot of merit. By 700 BCE, literacy (albeit on a very small scale) had been reintroduced into the Greek world, with the introduction of a new alphabetic script unique to the Greeks. By this date, the works of Homer and Hesiod (probably composed originally in oral form) may have been already put into writing and were beginning to circulate as such,

to the time of Socrates (c469-399BCE), Plato (c420-348BCE), and Aristotle (c384-322BCE),[3] most social scientists seem inclined to envision the study of human knowing and acting as a much more recent, 19th and 20th century development.[4] Relatedly, although scholars in the humanities (especially in classics, philosophy, and religious studies), are generally much more familiar with the early Greek literature than those in the social sciences, those in the humanities seldom have drawn more substantial linkages between classical Greek scholarship and the social sciences.

In what follows, we will make the argument that three classical Greek scholars, namely Herodotus (c484-425BCE), Thucydides (c460-400 BCE), and Xenophon (c430-340 BCE) not only deserve to be recognized as ethnographers on a contemporary plane, but that their works also can contribute in direct and sustained manners to the development of concepts essential to the study (and knowledge) of human group life.[5]

These authors assume different methodological tacts and their texts are of differing emphasis and qualities, but each has much to offer to the students of human lived experience. For those who are not familiar with the works of these three authors, it is instructive to observe that the texts considered here (Herodotus, *The Histories*; Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*; and Xenophon, *Anabasis*) are complex, articulate, thoughtful, and extensively developed statements.[6]

---

although some classicists put the date of written composition and circulation much later, well into the 6th century BCE. By 700 BCE, too, most of the Greeks had adopted many of the other features characteristic of classical Greek civilization, above all the "polis" (city-state) form of political organization; the Olympic Games had already been founded in 776 BCE. 300 BCE is a good approximate date for the beginning of the Hellenistic Age, the end of which most classicists put in 31 or 30 BCE, when Octavian (later the first Roman emperor Augustus), with his decisive defeat of the Egyptian queen Cleopatra and her Roman consort (and arch-rival of Octavian) Mark Antony once and for all, at least for a period of more than four centuries, incorporated the entire Hellenistic world of the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East into the Roman Empire.

[3] As well, too, given the very uneven, often disjointed flows of scholarship over the millennia, amidst all sorts of political transitions, religious and moral emphases, and natural disasters, as well as wide ranges of intellectual intrigues, it would be mistaken to assume that scholarship has developed in a particularly consistent, cumulative, or effective manner in the intervening centuries. While some interim scholars (e.g., Marcus Tullius Cicero, Thomas Aquinas, Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes) have re-engaged the classics (particularly some texts from Aristotle) in ways that resonate with various aspects of contemporary pragmatist social science, these ventures do not match the contributions of classical Greek scholarship. Unfortunately, as well, these classical Greek texts have receded into the intellectual background amidst other fluxes and flows experienced by Western academics.

[4] There are some important exceptions. Thus, Bogardus (1960), Gouldner (1965), Becker and Barnes (1978), and Bryant (1996) all locate the roots of sociological analysis in classical Greek thought. For some more specific linkages of American pragmatist philosophy and the classical Greek literature (Prus 2003a, 2004, 2006, 2007a,b,c, 2008a,b,c, 2009a, 2010.

[5] This paper represents part of a larger pragmatist study of human knowing and acting from the early Greeks to the present time. The larger project traverses an array of scholarly endeavors including poetics, rhetoric, theology, history, education, politics, and philosophy (Prus 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007a,b,c, 2008a,b,c, 2009a; Puddephatt and Prus 2007).

[6] While this is an analytical paper in many respects, we attempted to approach the three authors in much the same way that one might approach other participants in an ethnographic inquiry. Although unable to make direct inquiries of our sources, we tried to listen to what Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon had to tell us in much the same way that we might listen to contemporary speakers. Fortunately, as well, the classical Greeks are exceptionally articulate on their own and frequently provide extended explanations regarding the matters at hand. Moreover, once readers begin to examine these materials in earnest, receptive terms they are apt to find that the texts of these three Greek authors may be read in ways that are not so different from the manners in which one might examine contemporary ethnographies.

It also may be instructive to appreciate that these statements very much appear to have been developed for the sake of sharing the products of one's scholarship with others. Hence, in contrast to those contemporaries who might engage scholarly endeavor primarily as a means of generating doctoral dissertations, producing publications for academic advancement, or pursuing financial compensation, these scholars seem primarily concerned about extending the parameters of human knowing.

At the risk of disappointing some readers, it should be observed that all three of these texts are substantial pieces of work on their own and we will be unable to provide adequate reviews of any of these texts within the confines of the present paper. Indeed, we can do little more at present than provide an introduction to these works. Nevertheless, in contrast to most other ethnographic material that is only available in an immediate text or paper of the sort published here, readers can more readily access translations of the three classical Greek texts featured here in most university libraries and on the Internet. Moreover, even though we worked with English translations, one can find translations of these texts in several European languages. Accordingly, we very much encourage readers, especially those who may be skeptical of our claims, to examine these materials at length, on their own.

In part, the more limited attention given to these texts in this immediate statement is prompted by the necessity of asking an important baseline question; namely, "*What is an ethnography?*" Or, relatedly, when and how might one define a statement as more, or less, ethnographic in essence. Although often taken for granted by those embarking on ethnographic research, this is an important consideration and is especially relevant to the present project if we are to establish the claim that three pieces of work developed over 2000 years ago deserve to be acknowledged as ethnographies on a more enduring plane. At the same time, this statement also provides consequential reference points for assessing the ethnographic viability of materials produced on a more contemporary plane.

Defining Ethnographic Ventures

Although social scientists generally have lost track of much of the Greek heritage from which the foundations of their own scholarship have been derived, it might be observed that the terms "ethnology" and "ethnography" are derived from the Greek; *ethnos* (people), *logos* (talk or thought), and *graphi* (image or representation), as are the related referents, *historien* (to inquire) and *historia* (the subject of inquiry).

Thus, while the term history is often invoked to refer to chronological accounts of things that have happened in the past, it may be appreciated that (a) the emphasis on inquiry is the more productive scholarly focus and (b) ethnographic works represent some of the most valuable historical documents to which future scholars have access.[7] As well, insofar as ethnographic materials are developed in ways that are explicitly and thoroughly attentive to human knowing and acting, these materials also lend themselves to (c) valuable transsituational and transhistorical comparative analyses.

Still, some people may be surprised, if not more overtly puzzled, to see the recognition accorded to three scholars who lived over 2000 years ago as ethnographers in a more contemporary sense. This is because of a pervasive

[7] One of the practical limitations of using ethnographies to develop more extended statements of particular (historical) eras pertains to the small number of ethnographic texts to which we have access from particular places and times.

tendency on the part of social scientists to envision or presume that ethnography is a much more recent methodology that developed more uniquely in 19th and 20th century anthropology.

Many scholars also may not realize that it was sociologists at the University of Chicago (Palmer 1928; Prus 1996) who, while exposed to some variants of early anthropology, actually articulated the methodology of contemporary ethnography more explicitly and extensively than their anthropological counterparts (Wax 1971).

It has been fairly conventional in anthropology and sociology to use the term "ethnography" to refer to the study of a way of life of a group of people, with the general understanding that researchers use observational, participatory, and interview materials to access and examine other people's life-worlds.

Within the social sciences more broadly, the term ethnography frequently is used somewhat synonymously with the term "qualitative", thereby referencing the very wide array of descriptive accounts of things that people might develop. These range from more fleeting journalistic reports to projects that are more pointedly developed from interactionist and ethnomethodological, constructionist, and phenomenological frameworks, as well as from functionalist, Freudian, Marxist (also feminist, cultural studies, and postmodernist) standpoints and all manners of mixes of the preceding approaches.

Still, *if* ethnographic research is different from other modes of inquiry, it should be possible to specify some criteria for defining things as ethnographies or at least distinguishing things considered ethnographic from other forms and emphases of inquiry. The development of criteria for characterizing ethnographic research is important for scholarship in the social sciences more generally, but it is of particular consequence for the present project since we are claiming that the ethnographic research tradition has its origins in classical Greek scholarship rather than in the social sciences of the 19th and 20th century as is commonly supposed.

If ethnographic research is the study of human group life or human lived experience, it behooves us to ask just what this might entail. At the onset, it is to be acknowledged that this statement clearly is *not* intended as a defense of anything that someone might identify as ethnographic.[8] Indeed, because we envision Chicago-style symbolic interactionist research as the most viable form of ethnographic research (Prus 1997: 191-247; Prus 2007c),[9] we are particularly concerned about attending to what would qualify as ethnographic research from a symbolic

---

[8] Those familiar with ethnographic research more generally will recognize the great diversity of orientations (e.g., functionalist, Freudian, Marxist, remedial) that qualitative researchers often assume, as well as the tendencies on the part of many academics to mix conceptual frames and/or ignore specification of their theoretical foundations.

[9] Readers may appreciate that there are considerable affinities between Chicago style symbolic interaction (Mead 1934; Blumer 1969; Lofland 1976; Strauss 1993; Prus 1996, 1997, 2007c) and phenomenological (Schutz 1962, 1964), reality constructionist (Berger and Luckmann 1966), and ethnomethodological (Garfinkel 1967) approaches. Still, those working within the interactionist tradition place comparatively greater emphases on ethnographic research and comparative analysis.

This emphasis on interactionist ethnography, likewise, does not deny the development of some highly instructive field research by those in anthropology (e.g., Spradley 1970; Bartell 1971; Wolf 1991) or in the social sciences more broadly (e.g., MacLeod 1993; Ekins 1997). While those in anthropology generally would seem to accept interactionist assumptions (Mead 1934; Blumer 1969) the anthropologists have not explicated a comparative set (or sets) of assumptions on their own (Wax 1971; Whittaker 1994).

Those who know the anthropological literature also will appreciate how difficult it is to draw analytic comparisons across studies conducted by scholars who so often work with variable theoretical viewpoints and invoke diverse methodologies. Although one finds some variations among those who work within the interactionist tradition, there is a great deal more overall consistency among interactionist ethnographers.

interactionist perspective. In part, this emphasis is justified by observing that it is Chicago-style interactionism that provides the clearest specification of the premises of interpretive inquiry that can be found in the social sciences.

Insisting on a sustained interconnection of theory, methodology, and instances of research, the interactionists (following Mead 1934 and Blumer 1969) not only explicitly have sought to specify their base-line assumptions, but also have been comparatively systematic in their methodology and conceptually oriented in their analyses. As well, over the past century, the interactionists have accumulated an extended body of literature that addresses human knowing and acting in direct terms. Those who approach research in more generic terms (as opposed to pursuing particular research sites or substantive applications) may appreciate the value of this extended set of ethnographic resources.

While the premises which the interactionist more routinely work may be used to assess the base line viability of ethnographic approaches more generally,[10] we have focused more directly on a series of processes that seem basic to human group life more generally.

Working from an interactionist perspective, it is possible to address the question of "what is ethnography" by utilizing a set of generic social processes (GSPs) as a frame of reference. Building on the works of Blumer (1969), Strauss (1993), and an ethnographic base that is much too extensive to list here, Prus (1996, 1997) identifies eight generic social processes (GSPs) as basic to community life. These include *acquiring perspectives*, *achieving identity*, *accomplishing activity*, *making commitments*, *developing relationships*, *acquiring linguistic fluency*, *expressing emotionality*, and *participating in collective events*. Still, following Prus and Grills (2003), we would add *managing morality* to this set of fundamental processual features of community life.

If one accepts these GSPs as concepts that epitomize community life in the making, then these notions may be seen to provide a departure point for identifying the major parameters of ethnographic research. Even if some do not accept the viability of these particular GSPs, these concepts address matters of human knowing and acting in important respects and, thus, constitute consequential foils to those who might prefer alternative standpoints. Minimally however, if one is going to discuss ethnographies in a meaningful sense, some reference points are required.

Viewing these GSPs as central to human group life, one may use these concepts as focal points in assessing whether or not some instances of classical Greek literature should be recognized as ethnographies in more contemporary terms. Because this list of GSPs was developed much more recently, it may seem

---

[10] Building on the symbolic interactionist tradition (Mead 1934; Blumer 1969; Strauss 1993; Prus 1996, 1997, 1999; and Prus and Grills 2003) more generally, we identify eleven premises pertaining to human group life. Namely, *human group life is* (1) *intersubjective*; (2) *knowingly problematic;* (3) *object-oriented;* (4) *(multi)perspectival*; (5) *reflective*; (6) *sensory/embodied and (knowingly) materialized*; (7) *activity-based;* (8) *negotiable*; (9) *relational*; (10) *processual;* and (11) *realized in instances*.

Methodologically, a fuller appreciation of these assumptions would require that social scientists attend to (1) the ways in which people make sense of the world in the course of symbolic (linguistic) interchange, (2) the problematic or ambiguous nature of human knowing (and experience), (3) the object-oriented worlds in which humans operate, (4) people's capacities for developing and adopting multiple viewpoints on [objects], (5) people's abilities to take themselves and others into account in engaging [objects], (6) people's sensory-related capacities and [linguistically meaningful] experiences, (7) the meaningful, formulative, and enabling features of human activity, (8) people's capacities for influencing, acknowledging, and resisting one another, (9) the ways that people take their associates into account in developing their lines of action, (10) the ongoing or emergent features of community life, and (11) the ways that people experience and participate in all aspects of community life in the specific "here and now" occasions in which they find themselves "doing things."

inappropriate to expect that researchers from two millennia past would attend to all of these matters in particularly direct or focused manners. In this sense, the requirement that any examination of human group life developed within any time period would meet these standards may seem somewhat stringent in defining the essence of an ethnographic study.

Still, we will ask how researchers generally might attend to these GSPs and then apply these notions to the works of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon. It is not necessary that researchers deal with all of these matters in explicit, sustained, or equal manners in any particular study. However, insofar as more of these elements are ignored or discounted in particular works, it may be argued that these statements merit less recognition as ethnographies.

First, in reference to *acquiring perspectives*, we may consider whether researchers acknowledge multiple viewpoints on the part of the group(s) being studied, either within those groups or in comparison to other groups. We also may ask whether researchers attend to people's viewpoints as matters to be learned and subject to application, reformulation, and negotiation.

With respect to *achieving identity*, we may assess whether researchers attend to images, identities, labeling processes, selective presentation and deception, and the variable ways that people act towards others based on the ways in which they define these others (as in self-other identities).

Third, regarding *accomplishing activity*, we may ask if and to what extent researchers address the matters of people doing things; as in planning, adjusting, coordinating, engaging objects, performing, and influencing and resisting others.[11] We may ask if researchers focus on human agency and detail the developmental flows of activity, and all manners of participant interchange.

We also may ask whether researchers attend to the *relationships* or bonds, affiliations, or associational networks in which people find themselves. Are researchers mindful of ways in which people envision, approach, engage, and disengage from one another? Do researchers consider matters of intimacy and distancing as well as the many ways (as in cooperation, conflict, persuasion, and friendship) in which people act towards one another? Also, do researchers attend to the multiple dimensions and developmental flows of relationships?

Relatedly, we may consider whether researchers attend to the ways in which people more fully involve themselves in situations, as in *making commitments* or investments, developing loyalties, or experiencing obligations with regards to the situation at hand.

It also is important to assess whether researchers are mindful of the central and enabling features of *language* for all manners of human knowing and acting (see Mead, 1934). Are researchers attentive to the symbolic nature of language, to the variable terms of reference and meanings that people may assign to the objects of their awareness? Relatedly, do researchers acknowledge the processes and problematics of communication (as in participants achieving intersubjectivity with one another)?

As well, we may inquire whether ethnographers attend to the ways in which people *experience emotionality* or deal with affective states such as excitement and fear, happiness and disappointment, love and disaffection, or anger and calm. Do researchers give attention to the ways in which people express emotionality, instruct

[11] Because the interactionists sometimes have been criticized for neglecting the study of power, policy making, and related matters pertaining to public sociology, we refer readers to Prus (1999, 2003b, 2005, 2007c) and Prus and Grills (2003).

others on appropriate modes of emotional expression, and monitor and adjust their own practices and notions of emotionality.

In judging works with respect to ethnographic qualities, we also may ask about the extent to which researchers consider the ways in which people participate in *collective events*, how they form and coordinate instances of these jointly experienced realms of association. Do they give attention to the ways in which people establish groups, engage others in collective endeavors, and deal with outsiders?

Insofar as *managing morality* (Prus and Grills, 2003) draws attention to the problematics of maintaining the social order of the community (and the subcommunities within), the matters of "defining trouble" (deviance and deviants), "participating in deviant life-world," and "regulating deviance' also merit sustained instances of ethnographic inquiry and associated comparative analysis.

As well as considering whether researchers examine the life-worlds of those they study in terms of these sorts, we also may ask two other base-line questions. Do the researchers (a) provide extended detail on participants' lived experiences and (b) represent the positions of those whose life-worlds are being studied from the viewpoints of those people (i.e., do the positions conveyed by the researcher reasonably reflect those that those people would have adopted had the researcher not been present)?

In the first case, we may be concerned whether researchers provide more extended descriptive materials on the experiences of the people whose life worlds are under consideration. Is sufficient detail given so that those reading the materials developed by researchers can achieve a more comprehensive sense of the viewpoints and practices of the people in the setting? Do readers have a sense of being there in ways that do not seem to have been unduly embellished or diminished by the researcher in the field? Does the text enable readers to achieve intersubjectivity with the ethnographic other? Somewhat relatedly, one may assess ethnographic research by asking whether the materials presented in particular studies are sufficiently detailed within to foster more precise transcontextual comparisons, as with the use of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967) or generic social processes (Prus 1996, 1997).

The second question asks whether authors endeavor to present the viewpoints and practices of those studied in as sincere and authentic ways as possible or whether authors use the setting to promote other agendas in dealing with the people in the setting (e.g., as in trying to reform, educate, or otherwise change those people's lives) or use the text as a device with which to promote moralist viewpoints with respect to audiences. Likewise, do the researchers dramatize aspects of the research setting in order to enhance their own personas or entertain readers?[12] All of these practices would detract from the value of an ethnographic research project.[13]

---

[12] A critical commentary developed by Lucian of Samosata (circa 120-200 [see Prus 2008c]) who addresses practices of his contemporaries who developed ethnohistorical accounts of human group life very much resonates with the practices of many present day qualitative and ethnographic researchers. Also see Schwalbe's (1995) commentary on the failings of "sociological poets."

[13] Having defined the parameters of ethnographic research in this way, one may ask about instances of ethnographic research on a contemporary plane that might qualify as exemplars of the criteria listed here. While necessarily partial (for a more extended topic contextualized listing of related ethnographies, see Prus 1997), some noteworthy monographs include: Cressey's (1932) *The Taxi-Dance Hall*; Lofland's (1966) *The Doomsday Cult*; Wiseman's (1970) *Stations of the Lost*; Bartell's (1971) *Group Sex*; Prus and Sharper's (1977, 1991) *Road Hustler;* Haas and Shaffir's (1987) *Becoming Doctors*; Fine's (1987) *With the Boys*; Schneider and Conrad's (1983) *Having Epilepsy*; Prus and Irini's (1980) *Hookers, Rounders, and Desk Clerks*; Prus' (1989a,b) *Making Sales* and *Pursuing Customers*; Sanders' (1989) *Customizing the Body*; Charmaz' (1991) *Good Days, Bad Days*;

Classical Greek Ethnohistorians

Although virtually all of the texts of the early Greek era may be seen to provide some materials pertinent to a fuller understanding of classical Greek life-worlds, and some authors such as the poets (Homer c700BCE; Aeschylus c525-456BCE; Euripides c480-406BCE; Sophocles c495-405BCE; Aristophanes c450-385BCE; Menander c344-292 BCE) and the philosophers Plato (c428-348BCE) and Aristotle (c384-322BCE) contribute notably to a broader ethnographic appreciation of Greek lived experience through their portrayals and analysis of human knowing and acting, we will be focusing more directly on three historians who examine people's life-worlds in more immediate and sustained terms.

The three scholars, Herodotus (c484-425BCE), Thucydides (c460-400BCE) and Xenophon (c430-340BCE) worked independently of one another and although Thucydides and Xenophon were aware of the writings of their predecessors, they all approach their subject matters and develop their texts in significantly different manners.

As with the Greek literature more generally, Homer's (c700BCE) *The Iliad* and *Odyssey* may be seen to set the stage for subsequent developments in Greek history and ethnography. While *The Iliad* and *Odyssey* are highly fictionalized, both texts provide extended accounts of people's life-worlds, viewpoints, thoughts, activities, relationships, and interchanges. Still, the two books attributed to Homer represent dramatic forms of entertaining literature rather than more scholarly examinations of human relations. We can only conjecture about how the ethnohistorical tradition may have developed in Greece. Still, it is important to recognize that the early Greeks not only had developed a highly sophisticated phonetic alphabet but also (following Homer) had become accomplished producers of literary texts as well as scientists and philosophers of note by 600BCE.

While not the first Greek historian of record, Herodotus provides us with the first (preserved) substantial analysis of Greek and nonGreek Mediterranean civilizations.[14] In the intervening centuries to the present time, the works of Herodotus and Xenophon have been overshadowed by Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*. However, all three authors are exceptional scholars in their own right and each of the three studies discussed here does much to contribute to our understanding of human group life. Whereas our discussions of these three texts are highly abbreviated, the full texts are readily available in published as well as Internet sources. Beyond opportunities to assess the claims we have made, readers are likely to find these texts extremely worthwhile for the rich array of observations and insights that they provide into another set of life-worlds.

Wolf's (1991) *Rebels*; MacLeod's (1993) *Club Date Musicians*; Karp's (1996) *Speaking of Sadness*; and Fine's (2001) *Gifted Tongues* and (2006) *Authors of the Storm*.

[14] Whereas Homer's *The Iliad* may be seen as a historically informed statement in certain respects, Homer (circa 700 B.C.E.) is much more appropriately acknowledged as a poet rather than a historian. Thus, although only a few fragments of his work remain, Hecataeus of Miletus (c525BCE) is generally considered the first person to provide more sustained ethnographic and geographic accounts of his travels in Greece, Egypt, and Asia Minor. Other historians writing before Herodotus include Charon of Lampsacus, Dionysius of Miletus, and Hellanicus of Lesbos (Mytilene). As Marincola observes in his introduction to Herodotus' *The Histories* (1996), Herodotus appears aware of several of these earlier histories (also see Sinclair 1934; Freedman 1946). Still, in the absence of substantial portions of these other people's works, it should *not* be supposed that Herodotus essentially copied or duplicated earlier studies.

> For if anyone, no matter who, were given the opportunity of choosing from amongst all of the nation's in the world the beliefs which he thought best, he would inevitably, after careful consideration of their relative merits, choose those of his own country. Everyone without exception believes his own native customs, and the religion he was brought up in, to be the best... (Herodotus, III: 38)

Although little is known about Herodotus' (c484-425BCE) own life we may begin by observing that Herodotus' *The Histories* is a highly articulate, massive, and multifaceted volume with extensive relevance to the social sciences -- particularly to scholars in anthropology and sociology.

While the most central theme of *The Histories* appears to be that of *providing Greeks with a Persian perspective on Persian-Greek conflicts* (c650-479BCE) of which the battle of Thermopylae (480BCE) is probably best known, Herodotus' *The Histories* is a great deal more encompassing than this (still considerable) theme suggests.

In the process of accounting for the development of Persia as a military force in the eastern Mediterranean, Herodotus provides extended series of accounts of the many peoples that he encountered in his expedition(s) into the Mediterranean (broader Egyptian and Persian) arena. In addition to acknowledging the considerable diversity of the peoples whose places he visited and describing their environments, life-worlds, and practices in some detail, Herodotus also develops ongoing comparisons of other people's activities with Greek practices and Greek notions of other peoples.[15]

While attending to the wondrous things he encounters and focusing disproportionately on some of these more exceptional matters, Herodotus intends his work to enable the Greeks to better know and understand the nonGreek or barbarian world.

The task that Herodotus has undertaken would be enormous even with all of the advantages of travel, communication, and literary resources available to contemporary scholars. That he was able to accomplish so much under severely limited circumstances indeed is a tribute to his exceptionally focused scholarship, analytic abilities, personal resourcefulness, and incredible perseverance.

Herodotus' *The Histories* has encountered considerable criticism over the centuries, ranging from his accounts of extraordinary matters, to claims that he presents selective, judgmental portrayals of particular peoples, to suggestions that he did not actually travel the Mediterranean as he says he did. Still, given what Herodotus has accomplished in this text, much of the criticism directed toward this volume is notably marginal in nature.

Thus, there appears to be much authenticity in the materials that Herodotus introduces, and considerable skill and care has been taken in the ways in which he pursues and records his subject matters, the way he orders this extended array of materials, and the considerable, thoughtful analysis that he provides in the process.

Herodotus provides only limited explicit commentary on his methodology, the obstacles he encountered, and his own skepticism of the materials encountered. However, it should be appreciated that Herodotus is an astute and highly

[15] Herodotus provides materials (the likes of which have been preserved nowhere else) on the Babylonians, the Massagetae, the Indians, the Scythians, and the others. Notably, too, in developing his commentary on these other peoples, Herodotus invokes comparative references to various (and notably diverse) Greek states.

accomplished scholar. Clearly, he is a persistent inquirer and discerning student of the human condition. He expects somewhat similar qualities of his readers, particularly those of a more scholarly sort.

Intending to provide readers with an authentic account of the things he encountered, Herodotus assumes the position of an observer, an inquirer, and a listener. He reports what he has seen and what he has been told. Relatedly, on several occasions he pointedly notes that he is recounting what he has been told rather than confirming or asserting the viability of particular materials he has received from other sources. At other times, he provides two or more differing accounts of things, leaving it to the reader to choose between (or, as always, to question or reject) the things people have told him.

Although Herodotus often is ignored by contemporary anthropologists and other social scientists, those who carefully examine Books I-IV of *The Histories* cannot miss the rich descriptive, cross-cultural, and comparative anthropological analysis that Herodotus develops.

Thus, Herodotus is explicitly attentive to matters of cultural relativism, interchange, and transmission with respect to matters such as religion,[16] language, family relations, morality and deviance, death, trade, technology, military ventures, entertainment, in-group and out-group relations, and so forth. Herodotus also recognizes that each group of people both constitute life-worlds unto themselves and are amenable to ideas, technologies, and practices associated with specific other groups with whom they have more sustained or focused contact. Despite the highly enabling descriptions and analytical insights on human group life that Herodotus provides in Books I-IV, Books V-IX address the humanly engaged world in ways that yet more extensively approximate contemporary symbolic interaction. It is here that Herodotus addresses human knowing, acting, and interacting in more extensive and detailed manners.

When focusing more centrally on Persian political and military concerns and their contacts in conflicts with the Greeks, Herodotus develops these materials with an overall humanly engaged, processual flow. Books V-IX are noteworthy for their extended attention to: multiple viewpoints on the part of the participants; people's capacities for reflectivity, anticipation, and deliberation; activities of both more solitary and collective natures; and tactical interchange, as in trust, deception, influence work, resistance, negotiation, and overt conflict; as well as the formation, maintenance, and dissipation of alliances.

In addition to those people and things that were more accessible to immediate inquiry and observation on his part, it should be appreciated that Herodotus also was studying people and events that predated him. Accordingly, he was not able to speak in direct terms with many of the principal actors. At the same time, he is intent on presenting things from these people's viewpoints. In their absence, he attends carefully to those contemporaries who are best able to represent the positions of these earlier individuals and uses other opportunities and materials to ascertain the viability of his information. Although parts of his database clearly are more problematic, contemporary scholars might appreciate that the people and events with which Herodotus was dealing in these latter chapters were matters of great consequence and immediacy to the Persians and others with whom he had contact.

Readers may be skeptical of certain features of the accounts that Herodotus recorded from what was told to him by the Persians and others. However, it should

[16] Religious studies scholars and others interested in the sociology of knowledge may appreciate the explicit debunking of Greek theology (associated with Homer and Hesiod) that Herodotus (Book II: 52-53) provides in the midst of a much more extensive account (Book II) of Egyptian life-worlds.

be appreciated that Herodotus still developed a highly detailed, articulate, and sustained set of accounts of the various peoples he encountered in the eastern Mediterranean area. Indeed, he provides some very compelling descriptions of people's life-worlds and practices that would have otherwise never been available to the academic community. As well, despite some limitations, Herodotus' *The Histories* not only represented a foundational reference point for other "ethnohistorians" and analysts of the human condition but his text also serves as valuable resource for comparative analysis in the study of a great many processual aspects of community life.

Thucydides -- History of the Peloponnesian War

> As to the speeches that were made by different men, either when they were about to begin the war or when they were already engaged therein, the words actually spoken, both for me as regards that which I myself heard, and for those who from various other sources have brought me reports. Therefore the speeches are given in the language in which, as it seemed to me, the several speakers would express, on the subjects under consideration, though at the same time I have adhered as closely as possible to the general sense of what was actually said. But as to the facts of the occurrences of the war, I have thought it my duty to give them, not as ascertained from any chance informant nor as seemed to me probable, but only after investigating with the greatest possible accuracy each detail, in the case both of the events in which I myself participated and of those regarding which I got my information from others. And the endeavour to ascertain these facts was a laborious task, because those who were eye-witnesses of the several events did not give the same reports about the same things, but reports varying according to their championship of one side or the other, or according to their recollection. And it may well be that the absence of the fabulous from my narrative will seem less pleasing to the ear; but whoever shall wish to have a clear view both of the events which have happened and of those which will some day, in all human probability, happen again in the same or a similar way -for these to adjudge my history profitable will be enough for me. And, indeed, it has been composed, not as a prize-essay to be heard for the moment, but as a possession for all time. (Thucydides – Book I: xxii)

In presenting his study of the Peloponnesian War (431-404BCE), Thucydides provides a detailed, humanly engaged, chronological account of a series of confrontations and treaties between Sparta and Athens (and various other states in the Greek world). Although Thucydides' account ends somewhat abruptly in 411BCE, he intends that his statement will have enduring relevance for people interested in intergroup relations.

Whereas Herodotus built on other people's accounts of their situations and tales of the past, blending these with his own observations and investigations of the present in developing *The Histories*, Thucydides (c460-400BCE) wrote primarily as a contemporary who not only participated in some of the events on which he reports, but who also talked at some length with others (Spartans, Athenians, and other Greek representatives) about their experiences with these and related matters.

As a scholar particularly intent on providing a careful, reliable, and enduring account of the events and human interchanges that took place in the wars in which Athens and Sparta, and their respective but shifting sets of allies and antagonists became embroiled, Thucydides explicitly distances himself from poets and popular

chroniclers. Thucydides also intends, explicitly and openly, to represent as many sides and aspects of specific engagements (battles, alliances, home-front matters) as he is able, without endorsing or condemning any of the parties (or their viewpoints) in these exchanges.

The History of the Peloponnesian War is an extended study of human enterprise and human relations in the political arena. It is a study of intergroup relations as well as the study of people's relations within groups. Further, because Thucydides was not mislead by the artificial macro-micro structuralist distinction that sociologists and political scientists would invoke 2000 years later, he examines an assortment of political life-worlds in ways that directly and compellingly illustrate the relevance of enacted human relations and interchanges for wide ranges of social order in community life and intergroup relations more explicitly.

Attending directly to the humanly known and engaged world, Thucydides, explicitly and at some length, addresses the matters of war and peace; alliances and treaties; morality and condemnation; conquest and defeat; sincerity and deception; loyalty and betrayal; self-interest and community emphases; good fortune and unforeseen hardship; honor and disgrace; anticipation and surprise; planning and confusion; confidence and fear; compassion and revenge; resourcefulness and destruction.

This is not a study of personalities or personality types nor is it an attempt to reduce human affairs to structuralist factors. Instead, Thucydides attends, with great care to people's viewpoints, definitions of situations, deliberations, identities, activities, relationships, and a wide range of encouraging.

While Thucydides clearly acknowledges the developmental flow of community life and the implications of earlier activities and events for setting the various stages on which people subsequently find themselves, Thucydides very much appreciates the situated and enacted nature of human conduct. Relatedly, the emphasis is on the participants, their viewpoints, their activities, interactions, and adjustments.

In attending to the great many theaters of operation and the varied participants in the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides envisions people as agents who have capacities for reflective activity, deliberation, and wide arrays of strategic interchange.

Those who read Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* will find an extended collection of speeches that directly address *political* (civil, military, and intergroup) matters. The instances of rhetoric (as influence work and resistance) on which Thucydides reports include things such as: issues of leadership, support and morale; the making, avoiding, and stalling of war or peace; the development, severance and reconstitution of alliances and treaties; the problems of preparing for, coordinating, and adjusting to troublesome situations; the development and revision of policies; the task of negotiating events with multiple parties, including those on the home front; the problems of defining sanctions for defeated enemies; and concerns with deception, loyalty, and responsibility.[17]

Spanning a twenty-year period, Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* provides some of the most compelling sets of rhetorical interchanges available in the literature. In the process, he makes a great many insightful observations regarding people's tactical deployments of speeches, auditor assessments of these speeches (including recollective memories, anticipations, concerns with motivations and

[17] Readers familiar with the writings of Cicero and Quintilian will recognize that these later Roman rhetoricians not only benefited from Thucydides' treatment of rhetoric, but also had great respect for Thucydides' scholarship.

deceptions), and auditor counter responses and adjustments. Indeed, it would be difficult for careful readers not to be amazed at the extensive and detailed array of speeches that Thucydides presents in this volume.

Thucydides is acutely mindful of the multiplicity of viewpoints and interests that people may invoke in their relations with one another across situations and overtime. Likewise, he goes to some length to establish the particular viewpoints that different parties may take with respect to one another and acknowledges the sorts of uncertainties and deliberations with which they approach situations -- as well as in the limited time-frames in which people so often operate.

Thucydides deals with group relations at great length and is highly attentive to people's relations with a variety of outsiders (with shifting interests and alignments) as well as their relations with a wide assortment of insiders. Relatedly, Thucydides openly considers the reputations and images that people associate with one another, both as insiders and outsiders. He explicitly addresses the collective memories and stocks of knowledge that people develop with respect to outsiders, including the ways in which particular outsiders have dealt with them and with other people.

He also is mindful of the different images that people may have with respect to themselves, their associates in the field, the people on the home front, their allies, and adversaries. Likewise, Thucydides is attentive to the many different roles (as well as the more central and marginal manners) in which people may engage one another in their various theaters of operation. He also recognizes that people in political and military spheres face the task of operating in multiple theaters (as in dealing with enemies, allies, one's own supporters, and insider opposition) on a more or less simultaneous basis.

Accordingly, in addition to acknowledging the ways that people interact with one another and anticipate the activities of particular others, Thucydides also discusses the ways in which people might assist, promote, disrupt, and discourage the objectives and activities of others in their broader theaters of operations. Thucydides is well aware that people have the capacity to define and redefine the things with which they deal. He is highly cognizant of the particular forms of language or terms of reference that people may use in defining the objects of their awareness and concern as well as promoting their preferred definitions of things to others.

To his credit, as well, Thucydides is highly attentive to the formation and coordination of associations. He attends to preparations regarding matters of funding, supplying, and staffing groups. He addresses planning and negotiated deliberation on the part of the participants, as well as the ways that people engage, assess, and adjust to situations (and other people).

Thucydides' considerations of the alliance-making process (as in formation, continuities, dissolution, and resurrection) also are highly remarkable. In addition to indicating the ways in which various parties may assume roles as insiders and outsiders with respect to one another across a range of contexts, he also indicates the importance of people's alliances for the degrees of freedom that they may assume in acting towards others. Thus, depending on people's affiliations with other parties, they (political figures, states, and alliances) may get drawn into things that they had not intended. They also may attempt to use their affiliations with particular others as levers in dealing with insiders as well as outsiders.

Relatedly, Thucydides reminds us that any changes in personnel, policy, governments, resources, or problems in some area, that involve one's allies, oneself, or other parties can be highly disruptive to the situations of particular groups and can radically redefine the value of particular alliances.

Thucydides' work on the negotiation of terms between hostile parties represents another highly compelling aspect of his work. Because his material is so detailed, it offers exceptional insight into the ways in which agreements are developed, sustained, readjusted, disregarded, scuttled, and possibly renegotiated.

Xenophon – Anabasis (The Persian Expedition)

> Soldiers, you must not be downhearted because of recent events. I can assure you that here are as many advantages as disadvantages in what has happened. First, you have the assurance that the men who are going to act as our guides are genuine enemies of those whom we have to fight. Then there is the fact that those Greeks who neglected to stay with us in their positions, and considered themselves capable of having the same success with the natives as they have under our command, have been taught a lesson, and will be less inclined on another occasion to leave the post where we have put them. What you have to do is to conduct yourselves in such a way that you will appear to the natives, even the ones on our side, as better men than they are, and make it plain to the enemy that they will not have to fight now with the same sort of people as they did when you were not properly organized. (Xenophon 1972:235)

Whereas Herodotus and Thucydides are known for the single texts they produced, Xenophon (c430-340BCE) wrote a number of different works, several of which have survived. Although some other texts that Xenophon developed have significant ethnographic qualities (including Hellenica, The Cavalry Commander, and Oeconomicus),[18] we will be concentrating primarily on Anabasis (or The Persian Expedition).[19]

As a participant-observer account of a Greek military expedition (401-399BCE) into Persia, *Anabasis* has much more of a journalistic flow than do the statements developed by Herodotus and Thucydides. Although Xenophon's *Anabasis* does not achieve the extended detail or analytical rigor of Thucydides' *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, Xenophon is a sustained participant in a comparatively more contained set of collective events.

By attending to the interchanges involving an assortment of military personnel from different Greek communities and the various outsiders that the Greeks encountered on their expedition, *Anabasis* provides extensive insight into the obstacles, dilemmas, interchanges, and adjustments that the Greeks experienced in dealing with one another and the peoples they encountered both on their journey deep into the heart of the Persian empire and during their subsequent struggle to return to Greece.

Xenophon began his journey with "The Ten Thousand" (Greek mercenaries) not as a military officer or soldier but as a traveling companion of sorts (on the encouragement of a friend who planned to introduce Xenophon to Cyrus the Prince of Persia -- the brother of Artaxerxes II, the King of Persia). Following a complicated

[18] Albeit seemingly intended as a concluding sequel to Thucydides work on the Peloponnesian War, *Hellenica* is a much less thorough and adequate account than that provided by Thucydides. *The Cavalry Commander* represents an insider-based set of instructions on the management of military campaigns and the objects of deployment. *Oeconomicus* deals with the management of estates (property) but is developed in considerably more generic terms.

[19] Of the three classical Greek ethnographies addressed herein, Xenophon's *Anabasis* is by far the easiest to read. However, Xenophon's *Anabasis* is much better appreciated as an instance of analytic scholarship after studying Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War.* This is probably because one can situate Xenophon's account within the conceptual set of background materials that Thucydides provides. This allows one to more fully appreciate some important aspects of group relations that Xenophon presents in seemingly more casual manners.

set of military deceptions that changed the course of the intentions of those who had originally signed up to fight another group of people, the Greek expedition subsequently realized that they would be fighting on the side of Cyrus who intended to militarily overthrow his brother as king.

After a series of disasters, including a successful treacherous plot to deprive the Greek army of their generals, captains, and some trusted soldiers, the remaining members of the Greek militia found themselves near the King's capital city, a thousand miles deep in Parisian territory, without any central leadership and in the midst of communities of people who defined the Greeks as their enemies.

While desirous of regaining lost Greek honor and benefiting personally from their hapless expedition in whatever way they could on their own, the Greeks also recognized that short-term survival and a longer term objective of returning home safely were matters of considerable concern.

In the void created by the deaths of all upper echelon Greek military personnel, Xenophon was selected as one of the leaders of the expedition. With Xenophon assuming this new, somewhat precarious management role, *Anabasis* depicts the day-to-day circumstances that the Greek expedition encountered and the ways that they dealt with these situations.

For the Greeks, the expedition consisted of an ongoing series of life-and-death challenges involving an often-hostile geographical climate and the wide array of encounters with those populating the various sectors of the Persian Empire into which the Greeks trod. Xenophon provides an account of the collectively experienced and engaged life worlds in which the members of the Greek expedition found themselves.

In addition to the ambiguities, obstacles, and points of the diversity encountered from various Persian peoples (often with notably differing concerns, moralities, and loyalties), the Greek expedition also faced many instances of internal confusion and dissension, as well as struggles for leadership and allegations of disloyalty.

Clearly mindful of the multiple viewpoints of the participants involved in the setting, Xenophon also is highly attentive to people's capacities for reflectivity, deliberation, influence work and resistance, as well as people's involvements in overt conflict and more covert deception and treachery. In many respects, *Anabasis* is the study of management in the making, but it also is an account of people's reactions to the management endeavors of others.

While one might hope for more detailed accounts of many of the situations that transpired, Xenophon gives considerable, often highly insightful, attention to the decision making process and provides some particularly valuable material on the ways that people endeavor to influence and resist one another. This is especially evident in the speeches that people make to the assemblies they face and in the ways in which Xenophon deals with people's concerns and activities as they strive for particular images and identities with respect to the Greeks and others in the environment -- as they try to maintain and promote enthusiasm in the face of difficulty and loss, and attempt to achieve direction and sustained focus in their collective ventures.

Xenophon does not achieve the overall depth or analytical rigor that characterizes Thucydides' work. Nevertheless, *Anabasis* remains a valuable, focused and instructive account of human group life and his particular relevance for the study of intergroup relations, management, and collective behavior.

In Perspective

In concluding this paper, we ask about the viability of the works of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon as ethnographic resources that are relevant to contemporary studies of human knowing and acting. The answer to this question will be developed in several ways. First, we return to the GSPs we identified essential to the ethnographic study of human group life, asking to what extent Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon address these matters.

Next, we consider how these early Greek texts compare with materials developed at the juncture of 19th and 20th centuries by North American scholars who also embarked on instances of ethnographic research.[20]

Subsequently, the comparison is extended to include the ethnographic research done to the present time. We then raise the standards even higher and ask about the place of the Greek texts with respect to the interactionist quest for more distinctive analytic ethnographies.

Finally, we ask about the value of these three Greek texts as a set of resources pertaining to the study of political life, management, and collective behavior more generally. Mindful of these objectives, readers may appreciate that these discussions necessarily will be highly compacted.

Since we are unable to represent these texts in greater detail, it will be necessary to assume some liberties in the claims that we make with respect to the works of Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon. Still, because these texts are widely available, readers may readily assess our claims by examining these materials in more sustained detail.

When defining the criteria (GSPs) for more adequate ethnographies we said that it was essential that scholars in the field attend to the matters of *acquiring perspectives*, *achieving identity*, *accomplishing activity*, *making commitments*, *developing relationships*, *acquiring linguistic fluency*, *expressing emotionality*, *participating in collective events, and managing morality.*

Even though we have been making judgments about the extent to which each of these authors has addressed or dealt with these GSPs throughout this project, the immediate assessments represent little more than a rudimentary overview of these matters. We begin by observing that Thucydides offers an ethnography that not only has exceptional scope and depth, but also is compelling in all of these areas.

Still, all three authors are notably strong with respect to the matters of multiple perspectives, the enabling qualities of speech (linguistic fluency), and the coordination of collective events (including intergroup relations and conflict).

The GSPs pertaining to people's identities and reputations, activity as a pragmatically constructed set of pursuits, commitments and obligations, the development of relationships, and people's experiences with emotionality are especially prominent in Thucydides text, but they also are strongly evident in Xenophon's volume. These GSPs receive noteworthy, but considerably less attention in Herodotus' *The Histories*.

The matter of managing morality also receives considerable attention in each of these texts. Not only are each of these authors aware of the diversity and relativity of viewpoints that communities and groups within may invoke it dealing with insiders at

[20] Judging from Emile Durkheim's (1912) *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, some very competent ethnographic materials had been developed by some European ethnologists around the turn of the 20th century. This also is suggested by the extended commentary on ethnography developed by Marcel Mauss (2007) who had been very centrally involved in establishing a center for ethnological inquiry at the University of Paris in 1925. Unfortunately, we are not in a position to develop any viable comparisons of these materials with the works of Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon.

the outsiders, but all three scholars are highly attentive to the problematic and processual nature of human interchanges where matters of morality are involved.

Using these GSPs as a criterion, the three Greek texts clearly qualify as ethnographies. However, because the Greek scholars approach their studies in different ways among themselves, develop extensive and complex statements, and discuss human group life in places and times that are less familiar to us, it is important that contemporary scholars be prepared to approach these texts with somewhat greater patience than when they examine ethnographic materials of a more contemporary nature.

When one invokes the second criterion, using the ethnographies developed by sociologists at the juncture of the 19th and 20th centuries (Hallet and Fine 2000) as a comparison point with which to judge the ethnographies of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon, there is no close approximation. Although the 19th and very early 20th century materials offer some descriptive material and instructive insights into aspects of North American city life, the classical Greek accounts of human group life are vastly superior in virtually every other category of scholarship that one might reasonably apply more generally and in reference to the GSP criteria just considered more specifically.[21]

If we next ask how the Greek materials compare with those subsequently developed in the balance of the 20th century and into the 21st century, the answer may be somewhat more pleasing to those who insist that that which is latest is the best.[22] Quite directly, as a descriptive methodology, North American ethnographic research had improved a great deal by the 1930's (e.g., see Palmer's 1928 statement on research methodology). However, the subsequent attentiveness to the close sustained examination of human lived experience on the part of those defining themselves as ethnographers or qualitative researchers has been far from even or consistent in its development.

As a result, not an inconsiderable amount of contemporary qualitative research (often with postmodernist emphases) can be pointedly faulted for its scholarly inadequacy (e.g., moralistic, poetical, shallow, superficial, prescriptive, disregard of activity) Still, if one defines extended Chicago-style ethnography as among the very best available (as related to theory, methods, and substantive as well as conceptual depth) on a contemporary plane, the ethnographies of Herodotus and Xenophon look less remarkable.

However, there still are no ethnographies that can match Thucydides' *The History of the Peloponnesian War* in terms of sheer sustained, multifaceted ethnographic coverage of their subject matters. As an ethnographic statement, Herodotus' *The Histories* is notably less developed than Thucydides text. Nevertheless, *The Histories* still is a most remarkable compilation of ethnographic materials. The closest approximation to either of these works that one encounters in contemporary anthropology may well be Malinowski's (1922, 1926, 1929) work on the Trobriand Islanders of the West Pacific.

---

[21] We are not saying that the early American ethnographies lack merit. Despite their limitations, these early American ethnographies represent important trailblazers of sorts.

[22] Because of their tendency to reduce human group life to textuality where they do not also combine their analysis with variants of the oppression thesis and remedial strategies thereof, we are inclined to not include "postmodernist analysis" (as in so called, "postmodernist ethnography") among authentic ethnographic materials. While some of this research is more pluralistic and/or openly attentive to human lived experience, it is often interfused with other agendas. Readers may refer to Prus (1996, 1999) for fuller considerations of the inadequacies of postmodernist and related analytic genres in the social sciences (also see Schwalbe 1995; Prus 2008c).

Among the early Chicago sociologists, the most comparable studies are Anderson's (1923) *The Hobo*, Thrasher's (1927) *The Gang*, and Cressey's (1932) *The Taxi-Dance Hall*. Among more recent ethnographies, the closest comparisons are Wiseman's (1970) *Stations of the Lost*, Prus and Irini's (1980) *Hookers, Rounders, and Desk Clerks*, and Prus' (1989a, b) *Making Sales* and *Pursuing Customers*. Still, while the contemporary works cited here are among the most sustained, multifaceted, and pluralist studies of community life worlds, they do not achieve the scope and depth of Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* or the coverage of Herodotus' *The Histories*.

Because Xenophon's *Anabasis* is considerably more limited in scope than the texts of Herodotus and Thucydides, there are many more contemporary ethnographies that offer compelling comparisons. In addition to the works just listed, other early Chicago ethnographies that compare favorably with *Anabasis* include Shaw's (1930) *The Jack-Roller*, Waller's (1930) *The Old love and The New*, and Sutherland's (1937) *The Professional Thief*. The anthropological studies of Bartell (1971; *Group Sex*) and Wolf (1991; *The Rebels*) also surpass *Anabasis* in various respects as ethnographic productions more general terms as also do many of the more extended Chicago-style ethnographies, such as Lofland's (1966) *The Doomsday Cult*; Emerson's (1969) *Judging Juveniles*; Prus and Sharper's (1977) *Road Hustler*; Schneider and Conrad's (1983) *Having Epilepsy*; Fine's (1986) *With the Boys;* Haas and Shaffir's (1987) *Becoming Doctors*; Charmaz's (1991) *Good Days, Bad Days*; MacLeod's (1993) *Club Date Musicians*; Karp's (1996) *Speaking of Sadness*; and Fine's (2001) *Gifted Tongues* and (2006) *Authors of the Storm*.

Each of these studies also represents important ethnographic ventures into lesser-known territories. Still, despite the viability of the contemporary ethnographies listed here (and others developed more directly in the Chicago tradition; see Prus, 1997),[23] it should be acknowledged that these works are better viewed as supplementary to, rather than replacements of, Xenophon's *Anabasis*.[24]

Another way of assessing ethnographic research from the classical Greek era, as well as that produced on a more contemporary plane, is to ask about the relevance of these materials in reference to *analytic ethnography*.[25] This is a much more stringent criterion, since it requires that ethnographers also assume more direct

---

[23] Readers may appreciate that it is not our concern to defend contemporary ethnographies or ethnographers. As indicated elsewhere (Prus 1996, 1997, 1999, 2007c), we place great value on contemporary, especially Chicago-style, ethnography and envision this mode of research as the key to developing a genuine social science pertaining to human knowing and acting. Likewise, we have great regard for those scholars who venture out into the world of the other in more sustained, inquisitive, open, and pluralistic manners. Still, our more immediate task revolves around the question of whether the texts of Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon qualify as ethnographies.

[24] Clearly there are weaknesses in the Greek ethnographies under consideration. Indeed, Herodotus' *The Histories* is much more diversely focused and considerably more difficult to appreciate in more unitary terms than are many of the better contemporary ethnographies.

Likewise, it simply was not possible for Herodotus to obtain firsthand accounts of many of the events he discusses. Xenophon's *Anabasis* would have been strengthened notably had he provided more sustained detail on the events he describes, made greater use of supplementary (participants) sources from the expedition, and developed his material in more pointedly analytic terms. Still, both of these volumes are remarkable accomplishments and to us it seems unwarranted to assign substantial fault to these texts without generating feelings of intellectual pettiness.

This is especially the case for Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*. It is not the perfect study, but it is such a massive undertaking and is developed so effectively that one truly cannot ask more of anyone.

[25] The quest for an analytic ethnography is closely interconnected with the development of "grounded theory" (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss 1993) and "generic social processes" (Blumer 1969; Lofland 1976; Prus 1996, 1997, 1999, 2003b, 2007c; Prus and Grills 2003).

and engaged roles as assessors and generators of theory pertaining to the human condition.

As formulated by Blumer (1969) and Lofland (1976, 1995), the pursuit of analytic ethnography means asking to what extent the authors involved in the production of particular ethnographies also used their inquiries as settings with which to assess existing concepts and to develop more precise conceptualizations of human group life. The task for researchers is to use their data to dialogue with existing concepts and other studies of parallel sorts (i.e., to engage in sustained comparative analysis) as a means of assessing and extending existing conceptual notions. Although this viewpoint is often encouraged by interactionist and other social scientists at a pedagogical level, in practice this is generally achieved only in limited degrees.

Part of the reason for such little overall progress in this area is that many ethnographers become "area specialists" and develop only limited familiarity with studies outside of their substantive domains or fields of inquiry. Because most of the material available in particular substantive fields is of minimal value in developing more viable analytic comparisons of human lived experience, scholars who lack familiarity with research of a parallel nature in other substantive fields are apt to have little overall material with which to work in pursuing more sustained comparative analyses. As well, because ethnographic research is so highly labor intensive and time consuming, few researchers seem willing or able to embark on what is an additionally challenging line of scholarship.

Given the trailblazing nature of their own work, the classical Greek ethnographies do not fare particularly well on the criterion of analytic ethnography. Still, it should be acknowledged that Herodotus, Xenophon, and especially Thucydides introduce a number of conceptual standpoints that clearly foster the development of theory in the areas of political and military endeavor, management, and intergroup relations. In this respect, the three Greek ethnographers continue to do well in general terms, but (like most contemporary ethnographies) will achieve greater analytic potential when more explicitly compared (similarities and differences) with other instances of ethnographic research along particular conceptual dimensions (e.g., the earlier GSPs referenced earlier). That these three Greek texts have been under appreciated in the social sciences much more directly reflects the limitations of contemporary students of the human condition than the works of the early scholars who produced tham.[26]

Hence, whereas the works of Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon often are valued for their contributions to a fuller comprehension of an earlier era of Western civilization, the major conceptual payoff of these materials will be achieved, instead, by using this material to learn more about the human condition through more sustained comparative transcontextual and transhistorical analysis.

Because of their highly detailed contents and analytical insights, the Greek texts referenced here have great value as resource materials for developing theory about human knowing and acting not only in the past but also with respect to the present and the ever-unfolding future.

To this point, the works of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon generally have been discussed as separate entities. Our last question is, "What value do these texts have as a set or collection of scholarly works?"

---

[26] Although Xenophon was a contemporary of Plato (and also a student of Socrates), neither Herodotus nor Thucydides would have been in the position to benefit from the writings of Plato. Certainly, none of the three ethnographers considered here would have been able to benefit from the exceptionally rigorous analytical texts produced by Plato's student, Aristotle.

While neither Thucydides nor Xenophon make much direct reference to their predecessors and, in that respect, lose some of the advantages associated with analytic ethnography, we have the advantage of having access to all three pieces of work and being able to consider them as a set in ways that none of these earlier authors could have done.

Taken together, these three studies provide an incredible wealth of materials on collectively engaged activity. Given their shared emphasis on political and military matters as these develop in actual practice,[27] the works of these three Greek scholars have exceptional relevance for considerations of political interchange, management, intergroup relations, policy making, group related motivation and enthusiasm, influence work and resistance, and the forming and coordinating of associations.[28]

Although the value of these instances of classical Greek scholarship will be greatest when contextualized within the broader interactionist tradition, there is little in the interactionist literature or in any of the contemporary realms of political science, management studies, or organizational behavior (Prus 1999) that examines political and military interchanges in comparable, highly sustained, directly enacted and collectively engaged terms.

As ethnographers and social scientists seeking to achieve more enduring and accurate conceptualizations of the human condition, we have much to gain from a careful examination of the remarkable legacy left to us by three early Greek ethnographers Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Lorraine Prus, Tony Puddephatt, and Beert Verstraete for their thoughtful comments on earlier drafts of this paper. The thoughtful assistance of Lukas Marciniak, Krzysztof Konecki, Anna Kacperczyk, and the *Qualitative Sociology Review* staff in preparing this manuscript for publication also is very much appreciated.

References

Anderson, Nels (1923) *The Hobo*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Aristotle (1984) *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. Edited by Jonathan Barnes, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Bartell, Gilbert (1971) *Group Sex*. New York: Signet.

Becker, Howard S. (1963) Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance. New York: Free Press.

Becker, Howard and Harry Elmer Barnes (1978) Social Thought: From Lore to Science (3rd. ed.) Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith.

[27] We know virtually nothing of Herodotus' personal involvements in political and military matters, but Herodotus displays considerable insider familiarity with political and military ventures in his analysis of the Persian Empire and the conflicts that Persia had with Greece. It is apparent that both Thucydides and Xenophon had participated extensively in the arenas they discuss in their texts.

[28] For more extended considerations of "power as a humanly enacted essence," "policy as a social process," and the "canons of public sociology," see Prus 1999, 2003b, and 2007c, respectively.

Berger, Peter and Thomas Luckmann (1966) The Social Construction of Reality. New York: Doubleday-Anchor.

Blumer, Herbert (1969) Symbolic Interactionism. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Bogardus, Emory (1960) The Development of Social Thought (4th ed.). New York: McKay.

Bryant, Joseph M. (1996) Moral Codes and Social Structure in Ancient Greece: A Sociology of Greek Ethics from Homer to the Epicureans and Stoics. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Charmaz, Kathy (1991) Good Days Bad Days: The Self in Chronic Illness and Time. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Cressey, Paul (1932) The Taxi-Dance Hall. University of Chicago Press.

Durkheim, Emile (1961) Moral Education. Translated by Everett K Wilson and Herman Schnurer. New York: Free Press (Reprinted 2002; Mineola, NY: Dover Publications).

------ (1977) The Evolution of Educational Thought. Translated by Peter Collins. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul

------ (1915) The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life. Translated by Joseph Ward Swain. London: Allen and Unwin.

Ekins, Richard (1997) Male Femaling: A Grounded Theory Approach to Cross-dressing and Sex-changing. New York: Routledge.

Emerson, Robert M. (1969) Judging Delinquents. Chicago: Aldine.

Fine, Gary Alan (1987) With the Boys: Little League Baseball and Preadolescent Culture. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

------ (2001) Gifted Tongues: High School Debate and Adolescent Culture. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

------ (2006) Authors of the Storm: Meteorologists and the Culture of Prediction. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Freeman, Kathleen (1949) The Pre-Socratic Philosophers. (2nd ed.). Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell.

Garfinkel, Harold (1967) Studies in Ethnomethodology. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Glaser, Barney and Anselm Strauss (1967) The Discovery of Grounded Theory. Chicago: Aldine.

Gouldner, Alvin (1965) Enter Plato: Classical Greece and the Origins of the Social Theory. New York: Basic.

Haas, Jack and William Shaffir (1987) Becoming Doctors: The Adoption of a Cloak of Competence. Greenwich, CN: JAI.

Hallett, Tim and Gary Alan Fine (2000) “Ethnography 1900: Learning from the Field Research of an Old Century.” Journal of Contemporary Ethnography 29: 593-617.

Herodotus (1996) The Histories. Translated by Aubrey de Sélincourt. New York: Penguin.

Karp, David A. (1996) Speaking of Sadness: Depression, Disconnection and the Meanings of Illness. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lofland, John (1966) The Doomsday Cult: A Study in Conversion, Proselytization and Maintenance of Faith. New York: Irvington Publishers (

------ (1976) Doing Social Life. New York: Wiley.

------ (1995) "Analytic Ethnography: Features, Failings, and Futures." Journal of Contemporary Ethnography 24: 30-67.

MacLeod, Bruce A. (1993) Club Date Musicians: Playing the New York Party Circuit. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Mauss, Marcel (2007) Manual of Ethnography. Translated by Dominique Lussier. Edited by N. J. Allen. New York: Durkheim Press / Berghahn Books.

Mead, George H. (1934) Mind, Self and Society. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Palmer, Vivian (1928) Field Studies in Sociology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Plato (1937) The Dialogues of Plato. Translated by Benjamin Jowett. New York: Random House.

----- (1961) The Collected Dialogues of Plato. Edited by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

----- (1997) Plato: The Collected Works. Edited by John M. Cooper. Indianapolis: Hackett.

Prus, Robert (1989a) Making Sales: Influence as Interpersonal Accomplishment. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

------ (1989b) Pursuing Customers: An Ethnography of Marketing Activities. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

----- (1996) Symbolic Interaction and Ethnographic Research: Intersubjectivity and the Study of Human Lived Experience. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

----- (1997) Subcultural Mosaics and Intersubjective Realities: An Ethnographic Research Agenda for Pragmatizing the Social Sciences. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

----- (1999) Beyond the Power Mystique: Power as Intersubjective Accomplishment. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

----- (2003a) "Ancient Forerunners." Pp. 19-38 in Handbook of Symbolic Interactionism, edited by Larry T. Reynolds and Nancy J. Herman-Kinney. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira.

----- (2003b) "Policy as a Collective Venture: A Symbolic Interactionist Approach to the Study of Organizational Directives." International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy 23 (6): 13-60.

----- (2004) "Symbolic Interaction and Classical Greek Scholarship: Conceptual Foundations, Historical Continuities, and Transcontextual Relevancies." The American Sociologist 35 (1): 5-33.

----- (2005) "Terrorism, Tyranny, and Religious Extremism as Collective Activity: Beyond the Deviant, Psychological, and Power Mystiques." The American Sociologist 36 (1): 47-74.

----- (2006) “In Defense of Knowing, In Defense of Doubting: Cicero Engages Totalizing Skepticism, Sensate Materialism, and Pragmatist Realism in Academica.” Qualitative Sociology Review 2 (3): 21-47.

----- (2007a) “Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics: Laying the Foundations for a Pragmatist Consideration of Human Knowing and Acting.” Qualitative Sociology Review 3 (2): 5-45.

----- (2007b) “Human Memory, Social Process, and the Pragmatist Metamorphosis: Ethnological Foundations, Ethnographic Contributions and Conceptual Challenges.” Journal of Contemporary Ethnography 36 (4): 378-437.

----- (2007c) “The Intellectual Canons of a Public Sociology: Pragmatist Foundations, Historical Extensions, and Humanly Engaged Realities.” Pp. 195-235 in Public Sociology: The Contemporary Debate, edited by Lawrence T. Nichols. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.

----- (2007d) “On Studying Ethnologs (Not just People, ‘Societies in Miniature’): On the Necessities of Ethnography, History, and Comparative Analysis.” Journal of Contemporary Ethnography 36 (6): 669-703.

----- (2008a) “Aristotle’s Rhetoric: A Pragmatist Analysis of Persuasive Interchange.” Qualitative Sociology Review 4 (2): 24-62

----- (2008b) “Producing, Consuming, and Providing Instruction on Poetic Texts in the Classical Roman Era: The Pragmatist Contributions of Horace (65-8BCE), Longinus (100CE), and Plutarch (46-125CE).” Studies in Symbolic Interaction 30: 81-103.

----- (2008c) “Writing History for Eternity: Lucian’s (c120-200) Contributions to Pragmatist Scholarship and Ethnographic Analysis.” Journal of Contemporary Ethnography 37 (1): 62-78.

----- (2009a) “Poetic Expressions and Human Enacted Realities: Plato and Aristotle Engage Pragmatist Motifs in Greek Fictional Representations.” Qualitative Sociology Review 5 (1): 3-27.

----- (2009b) “Reconceptualizing the Study of Community Life: Emile Durkheim’s Pragmatism and Sociology.” The American Sociologist 40:106-146.

----- (2010) “Creating, Sustaining, and Contesting Definitions of Reality: Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BCE) as a Pragmatist Theorist and Analytic Ethnographer.” Qualitative Sociology Review 6 (2): 3-27.

Prus, Robert and Scott Grills (2003) The Deviant Mystique: Involvements, Realities, and Regulation. Westport, CT: Praeger [Greenwood] Press.

Prus, Robert and Styllianoss Irini (1980) Hookers, Rounders, and Desk Clerks: The Social Organization of the Hotel Community. Salem, WI: Sheffield.

Prus, Robert and C.R.D. Sharper (1977) Road Hustler: The Career Contingencies of Professional Card and Dice Hustlers. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Puddephatt, Antony and Robert Prus (2007) “Causality, Agency, and Reality: Plato and Aristotle Meet G. H. Mead and Herbert Blumer.” Sociological Focus 40 (3): 265-286.

Sanders, Clinton (1989) Customizing the Body: The Art and Culture of Tattooing. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Schneider, Joseph W. and Peter Conrad (1983) Having Epilepsy. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Schwalbe, Michael (1995) “The Responsibilities of Sociological Poets.” Qualitative Sociology 18: 393-413.

Schutz, Alfred (1962) Collected Papers I: The Problem of Social Reality. Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

----- (1964) Collected Papers II: Studies in Social Theory. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Shaw, Clifford.

Sinclair, T. A. (1962) A History of Classical Greek Literature: From Homer to Aristotle. New York: Collier.

Spradley, James P. (1970) You Owe Yourself a Drunk: An Ethnography of Urban Nomads. Boston, MA: Little, Brown.

Strauss, Anselm (1993) Continual Permutations of Action. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.

Sutherland, Edwin (1937) The Professional Thief. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Thrasher, Frederick M. (1927) The Gang. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Thucydides (1972) History of the Peloponnesian War (four volumes). Translated by Charles Forster Smith. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

----- (1972) History of the Peloponnesian War. Translated by Rex Warner, with an Introduction by M.I Finley. New York: Penguin Putnam.

Waller, Willard (1967) The Old Love and the New. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Wax, Rosalie (1971) Doing Fieldwork. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Whittaker, Elvi (1994) "The Contribution of Herbert Blumer to Anthropology." Pp. 379-392 in Doing Everyday Life, edited by Mary Lorenz Dietz, Robert Prus, and William Shaffir. Toronto: Copp Clark Longman (Addison-Wesley).

Wiseman, Jacqueline (1970) Stations of the Lost: The Treatment of Skid Row Alcoholics. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Wolf, Daniel (1991) The Rebels: A Brotherhood of Outlaw Bikers. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Xenophon (1998) Anabasis. Translated by Carleton L. Brownson. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

----- (1925) The Calvary Commander. Pp. 235-293 in Xenophon in Seven Volumes, VII, Scripta Minora. Translated by E. C. Marchant. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

----- (1918) Hellenica in Xenophon Vol I-II. Translated by Carleton L. Brownson. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

----- (1923) Oeconomicus. Pp. 363-526 in Xenophon in Seven Volumes, IV, Memorabilia and Oeconomicus. Translated by E. C. Marchant. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

----- (1972) The Persian Expedition [Anabasis]. Translated by Rex Warner. New York: Penguin Putnam.

Citation

Prus Robert and Matthew Burk (2010) "Ethnographic Trailblazers: Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon." Qualitative Sociology Review, Vol. VI Issue 3. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php)

Qualitative Sociology Review
Volume VI, Issue 3 – December 2010

Robert Prus and Fatima Camara
University of Waterloo, Canada

Love, Friendship, and Disaffection in Plato and Aristotle: Toward a Pragmatist Analysis of Interpersonal Relationships

Abstract

Although much overlooked by social scientists, a considerable amount of the classical Greek literature (circa700-300BCE) revolves around human relationships and, in particular, the matters of friendship, love and disaffection.

Providing some of the earliest sustained literature on people's relations with others, the poets Homer (circa 700BCE) and Hesiod (circa 700BCE) not only seem to have stimulated interest in these matters, but also have provided some more implicit, contextual reference points for people embarked on the comparative analysis of human relations. Still, some other Greek authors, most notably including Plato and Aristotle, addressed these topics in explicitly descriptive and pointedly analytical terms.

Plato and Aristotle clearly were not of one mind in the ways they approached, or attempted to explain, human relations. Nevertheless, contemporary social scientists may benefit considerably from closer examinations of these sources. Thus, while acknowledging some structuralist theories of attraction (e.g., that similars or opposites attract), the material considered here focus more directly on the problematic, deliberative, enacted, and uneven features of human association.

In these respects, Plato and Aristotle may be seen not only to lay the foundations for a pragmatist study of friendship, love, and disaffection, but also to provide some exceptionally valuable materials with which to examine affective relations in more generic, transhistorical terms.

Keywords

Love, Friendship, Affection, Interpersonal Relations, Plato, Aristotle, Classical Greek, Pragmatism, Symbolic Interaction

[1] Robert Prus is a Sociologist at the University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G1. A symbolic interactionist and ethnographer, Robert Prus (prus@uwaterloo.ca) has been examining the conceptual and methodological connections of American pragmatist philosophy and its sociological offshoot, symbolic interactionism, with Classical Greek and Latin scholarship. Fatima Camara completed her Master of Arts Degree in Sociology at the University of Waterloo (2005) developing a thesis entitled *Celebrities and Significant Others: Developing Fascinations, Relationships and Identities* (fcamara@gmail.com)

©2005-2010 Qualitative Sociology Review

Working within the symbolic interactionist tradition (Mead 1934; Blumer 1969; Prus 1996 and 1997; Prus and Grills 2003), this paper examines the works of two scholars of the classical Greek era (circa 700BCE-300BCE) who provide further insight into the study of friendship, love, and disaffection. Although there is a much broader Greek literature dating back to Homer (circa 700BCE) and Hesiod (circa 700BCE) that addresses a great many aspects of interpersonal relations, the present analysis focuses on the works of Plato (c420-348BCE) and Aristotle (c384-322 BCE). More specifically, we will be building on Plato's *Symposium*, *Phaedrus*, and *Lysis*, along with Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Although written over two thousand years ago, Plato and Aristotle provide a remarkable library of knowledge relevant to interpersonal relationships. Not only do these authors generate extremely astute considerations of friendship, love, and disaffection, but they also introduce countless other themes that cut across human relations more generally. While representing notably different styles of scholarship, both authors provide careful consideration of a variety of perspectives, deliberations, and actions pertaining to people's affective relationships with others.

Some social scientists may be inclined to dismiss classical Greek scholarship as "the relics of antiquity," but Plato and Aristotle present a great deal of material pertinent to contemporary analyses of people's relationships and a related set of opportunities for social scientists to engage these topics in transcontextual and transhistorical terms.

Following (1) an overview of the interactionist perspective, (2) a brief processual consideration of relationships, (3) a short discussion of classical Greek and related definitions of friendship, love and disaffection, we engage (4) Plato's *Symposium*, *Phaedrus*, and *Lysis,* and (5) Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. The paper concludes with (6) a more contemporary pragmatist consideration of friendship, love, and disaffection using Chicago-style symbolic interactionism as our primary reference point.

The Theoretical Framework

This project builds fundamentally on the symbolic interactionist tradition (Mead 1934; Blumer 1969; Strauss 1993 and Prus 1996, 1997, 1999). Accordingly, the eleven premises or assumptions outlined here not only reflect the interactionist paradigm more generally, but also establish the conceptual parameters for the present consideration of affective relationships:

1. *Human group life is intersubjective*. Human group life is accomplished (and made meaningful) through community-based linguistic interchange.
2. *Human group life is knowingly problematic*. Rather than positing an objective or inherently meaningful reality, it is through activity, interchange, and symbol-based references that people begin to distinguish (i.e., delineate, designate, and define) realms of "the known" and "the unknown."
3. *Human group life is object-oriented*. Denoting any phenomenon or thing that can be referenced (observed, referred to, indicated, acted toward, or otherwise knowingly experienced), [objects] constitute the contextual and operational essence of the humanly known environment.
4. *Human group life is (multi) perspectival*. As groups of people engage the world on an ongoing basis, they develop viewpoints, conceptual frameworks, or notions of reality that may differ from those of other groups.

5. *Human group life is reflective*. It is by taking the perspective of the other into account with respect to one's own being that people become "objects unto themselves" (and act accordingly).
6. *Human group life is sensory / embodied and (knowingly) materialized*. Among the realms of humanly knowing "what is" and "what is not," people develop an awareness of [the material or physical things] that others in the community recognize. This includes attending to some [sensory / body / physiological] essences of human beings (self and other), acknowledging human capacities for stimulation and activity, and recognizing some realms of practical (enacted, embodied) human limitations and fragilities. Still, neither phenomena, sensations, nor motions are meaningful in themselves.
7. *Human group life is activity-based*. Human behavior (action and interaction) is envisioned as a meaningful, deliberative, *formulative* (engaging) process; of doing things with respect to [objects].
8. *Human group life is Negotiable*. Because human activity frequently involves direct interactions with others, people may anticipate and strive to influence others *as well as* acknowledge and resist the influences of others.
9. *Human group life is relational*. People do things within group contexts; people act mindfully of, and in conjunction with, their definitions of self and other (i.e., self-other identities).
10. *Human group life is processual*. Human lived experiences (and activities) are viewed in emergent, ongoing, or temporally developed terms. The emphasis, accordingly, is on how people (as agents) make sense of and enter into the instances and flows of human group life in meaningful, purposive terms.
11. *Human group life takes place in instances*. Community life is best known through an attentiveness to the particular occasions in which people do things. Conceptions of human experience are to be developed mindfully of, and tested against, the particular occasions or instances in which people attend to and otherwise act toward self, other, and other objects of their awareness.

Although rudimentary in certain respects, these premises have profound *conceptual and methodological implications* for those studying the human condition. They alert students of the human condition to the importance of attending to (1) the ways in which people make sense of the world in the course of symbolic (linguistic) interchange, (2) the problematic or ambiguous nature of human knowing (and experience), (3) the object-oriented worlds in which humans operate, (4) people's capacities for developing and adopting multiple viewpoints on [objects], (5) people's abilities to take themselves and others into account in engaging [objects], (6) people's sensory-related capacities and [linguistically meaningful] experiences, (7) the meaningful, formulative, and enabling features of human activity, (8) people's capacities for influencing, acknowledging, cooperating with and resisting one another, (9) the ways that people take their associates into account in developing their lines of action, (10) the ways that people experience (and accomplish) all manners of community life in the ongoing or emergent instances of the "here and now" in which they find themselves, and (11) the “whatness” of human group life by examining the instances in which community life take place.

Still, much more is involved in the study of human group life and while premises of these sorts provide a conceptual home base, the interactionist emphasis is on “studying group life in the making.” Focusing on human knowing and acting, the interactionists also have sought to develop concepts that enable them to comprehend the human condition in more direct and systematic terms. Examining instances of community life in process terms, through ethnographic inquiry, the

interactionists have attempted to specify, assess, articulate, and extend existing notions of human group life.

Given this quest for an analytic or conceptually articulated sociology (Blumer 1969; Lofland 1976, 1995 and Strauss 1993), the interactionists have made reference to generic social processes as elements addressing central aspects of human group life. Addressing the transcontextual and transhistorical features of human lived experience, generic social processes (GSPs) represent more pervasive and enduring qualities of ongoing community life.

As outlined by Prus (1996, 1997), the major generic social processes include: (1) acquiring perspectives, (2) achieving identity, (3) being involved [i.e., getting started, sustaining involvements, becoming disinvolved, becoming reinvolved], (4) doing activity, (5) developing relationships, (6) experiencing emotionality, (7) developing communicative fluency, and (8) forming and coordinating associations [establishing associations, objectifying associations, encountering outsiders].[2]

Providing researchers with a foundational set of the emergent features of human group life, GSPs allow for the comparison of concepts with specific instances of human interaction not only from their own research, but from any other works on the human condition that attend in more direct ways to humanly engaged activity.

Although those in the interactionist community have not yet studied friendship, love, and disaffection in particularly extensive terms, a variety of scholars working within the broader ethnographic tradition have contributed notably to an understanding of these matters in more generic terms. Working from an interactionist perspective and conceptually synthesizing the wide array of ethnographic literature that deals with interpersonal relationships, Prus (1996) provides the following list of the subprocesses involved in developing relations with others:[3]

**Getting Prepared for Generalized Encounters*
**Defining Self as Available for Association*
**Defining (specific) Others as Desirable Associates*
**Making Approaches / Receiving Openings from Others*
**Encountering (and indicating) Rejection / Acceptance*
**Assessing Self and Other for "goodness of fit"*
**Developing Interactional Styles (in each relationship)*
**Managing Openness and Secrecy*
**Developing Understandings, Preferences, Loyalty*
**Managing Distractions (and outside commitments)*
**Juggling (multiple) Relationships*
**Severing Relationships (disentanglement)*
**Renewing Relationships (Prus 1996:159)*

We will not be examining these processes on a point by point basis within the present analysis. Nevertheless, these processes provide a consequential aspect of the conceptual frame with which this paper has been developed and we will return to a consideration of these matters in the conclusion.

[2] For some other extensions of generic social processes as fundamental features of community life, readers are referred to considerations of deviance and regulation (Prus and Grills 2003), policy (Prus 2003b), terrorism (Prus 2005), public sociology (Prus 2007d), and technology (Prus and Mitchell 2009).

[3] For reviews of some of the ethnographic literature on relationships, see Prus (1996, 1997) and Prus and Grills (2003).

The Classical Greek Literature

We did not engage the classical Greek literature specifically to learn about friendship, love and disaffection, but instead became more gradually aware of the relevance of these elements in the Greek classics amidst a more general consideration of human group life.[4] Still, it also became apparent that this literature cannot be adequately appreciated without attending to friendship, love, and disaffection.

A great many texts from the classical Greek era have been lost. Nevertheless, there still is an extensive literature available on themes pertaining to love, friendship and disaffection. While the Greek poets have given much attention to these topics, Plato and Aristotle provide a remarkably solid conceptual base and departure point for pragmatist considerations of people's affective relationships.

For readers less familiar with Plato and Aristotle, it should be observed that Plato and (his student) Aristotle are two of the most, if not the two most, conceptually enabling scholars of record. Nevertheless, the ideas and positions that they introduce are far from singular in emphasis. Still, both are highly articulate and insist on defining their terms of reference.

Whereas Plato is often depicted as "an idealist" and Aristotle as "an objectivist," these designations are only partially accurate at best. At times, Plato (representing Socrates) writes as a theologian and is highly skeptical of human (sensate-world) knowing.[5] Still, Plato also writes as a utopian political scientist (socialist), a moral entrepreneur and control agent, a philosophical dialectician,[6] and a pragmatist philosopher. Aristotle does not subscribe to a spiritual or "other world" theology. Instead, Aristotle is intensely concerned about examining the nature of human knowing and acting with respect to the sensate world. Aristotle emerges as a moralist at times, but in more consequential terms Aristotle is a biologist, physical scientist, a political scientist, a dialectician, a logician, and a pragmatist philosopher.

Whereas Plato provides a great many astute secular considerations of the human (sensate) condition, much of his work (reflecting the position of Socrates) is concerned with preparing people for another world (heavenly) existence. By contrast, Aristotle intends to enable people to better know and more effectively engage aspects of the humanly known (sensate) world.

Plato's works are presented in the form of dialogues and generally involve Socrates as the major and single most influential spokesman (regarding matters of theology, morality, dialectics, and wisdom). Whereas Plato's dialogues deal with a great many aspects of community life, many of which are pursued in considerable detail. In addition to other matters, Plato gives extended attention to affective relationships. Plato's materials sometimes reflect moral viewpoints but his texts

---

[4] The primary contact route was a study of power as a humanly engaged process (Prus 1999), but this venture has since developed into a much more extended, pragmatist (interactionist-informed) analysis of human knowing and acting as this pertains to poetics, rhetoric, theology, history, education, politics, law, and philosophy. Some materials developed from this project that trace aspects of the study of human knowing and acting from the classical Greek era to the present time can be found in Prus (2003a, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007a,b,c, 2008a,b,c,d, 2009, 2010), Puddephatt and Prus (2007), and Prus and Mitchell (2009).

[5] Plato often invokes ideals as reference points and is concerned about promoting wordly virtue as a preparation for a divinely enabled after life. His images of divinity and an after-life resonate extensively with those subsumed by Jewish, Christian, and Islamic theologians.

[6] As Plato uses the term (*Republic*), a dialectician is an analyst who pursues comparative analysis (similarities and differences) on a sustained, open (secular), conceptual basis. This is the way we will be using the term as well.

encompass a rich slate of substantive and analytical issues pertinent to love, friendship, and disaffection.

Aristotle's writings differ from Plato both in philosophical emphases and writing style. Rejecting Plato's divinely enabled mind-body dualism, Aristotle contends that people are to be understood first as animals, in biologically enabled terms. Like *all* other living creatures humans possess a life-energy (*psyche*; often translated as "soul"). Unlike Plato, who argues for a spiritual soul, Aristotle states that there is no separation between the physical body and the life energy and, in the case of humans, insists on the developmental unity of body, mind, and activity.

For Aristotle, human knowing is a process. It reflects people's capacities for sensory experiences, but is contingent on activity, group life, and (more uniquely) language. In ways that resonate extensively with American pragmatist and symbolic interactionist thought, Aristotle views humans as biologically-enabled *actively-engaged, community-based* and *linguistic-informed* (Prus 2003, 2004, 2007a, 2008a, 2009).

Whereas Plato deliberates openly and extensively about the nature of affective relationships in certain of his dialogues, Aristotle's considerations of love and friendship are much more explicit and direct. As with so much of his other works, Aristotle approaches human relationships as knowingly enacted and developmental endeavors. Still, Aristotle's writings are not void of moral overtones. Aristotle's material on friendship and love are laced with notions that people should try to act in good (i.e., noble) manners and avoid involvements in, and associations with, less desirable activities and associates.[7]

Defining Friendship, Love, and Disaffection

In developing this statement, we have attempted to remain as close as possible to the authors' use of the terms "friendship, love, and disaffection." Still, since the authors use words of these sorts in somewhat different ways in presenting their materials, the definitions proposed for the use of this paper cannot precisely replicate those of the authors.

In more ideal senses, *friendships* denote relationships between two people that involve reciprocated positive affections and caring for the other and self. However, as the material following demonstrates, this often does not capture the actualities of

[7] The texts from Plato and Aristotle used in this statement have been translated from Greek writings by other scholars. These translations have been developed by people who not only would have had no knowledge of our interactionist applications but also have no particular affinities with the approach developed within. It also might be recognized that these published translations are apt to be considerably superior to even more careful readings of the sort that might be produced by reasonably competent individuals who have studied Greek for some years.

At the same time, there will be variations among translators and these differences will be most significant with respect to particular details. Fortunately, we not only have access to multiple translations of many classical Greek texts, but also have been concentrating on more substantial portions of text. Thus, in dealing with materials for this project, we have endeavored to locate text that is both extensive and explicit in its development with respect to the topics of *friendship, love*, and *disaffection*.

Like us, many readers may be surprised to see just how extensively many, seemingly contemporary, notions about friendship have been articulated in classical Greek scholarship. Still, contemporary researchers have to be prepared to overcome some differences in writing styles in texts that were written centuries ago. This, however, should be recognized as a limitation of the reader rather than the authors.

friendship. Not only may people develop a variety of affective stances towards others and pursue these in different degrees of intensity, but people's interests also need not be reciprocated "by their friends." In addition, while still being referred to as friendships, some relationships may notably lack the positive affection of ideal friendships and may be based solely on the utility of the association to one or both parties.

Compared to friendship, *love* implies a more intense, affectionate concern for the other. Still, two separate emphases of love may be delineated. These acknowledge people's capacities for sensate experience and affection concerns. One variant of love may be described as an attraction or affection of a romantic, sexual, erotic, passionate, or sensate nature. It may include but does not presume a deep caring for the other. The other notion of love denotes a deep caring and affection for the other but does not, in itself, imply a romantic, sexual, erotic or passionate element.

Again, ideal notions versus actual instances of these concepts must be considered. It also should not be assumed that these emphases are mutually exclusive. As well, neither of these notions of love need be reciprocated. Likewise, while genuine affection appears to represent the primary basis for the second variant of love, caring relationships also may be closely connected with the practical utility of the other. Because the term love is often used in reference to more sensate or more caring orientations in the statements following, we will endeavor to contextualize the discussion appropriately.

Whereas friendship and love generally imply positive affections toward the other, *disaffection* denotes expressions, affections, and involvements that generally oppose these notions; including animosity, ill will, enmity, unfriendliness, and dislike. Disaffection, too, may be experienced in a variety of ways, with varying degrees of intensity, and need not be reciprocated.

Disaffection is given considerably less attention than love and friendship in the works considered here, but it should not be supposed that disaffection precludes friendship and love, or vice-versa. Indeed, some disenchantment or displeasure with the other may be evident both within relationships of distinctively friendly and loving natures as well as represent the pointedly central emphasis of some relationships.

Attending to Plato and Aristotle

In what follows, Plato's considerations of affective relationships will be discussed at some length prior to Aristotle's analysis of relationships. As in so many other areas of his scholarship, Aristotle builds on insights that Plato introduced.[8] Thus, an appreciation of Plato's work facilitates understanding of the more pointedly analytic materials that Aristotle develops. At the same time, however, an examination of Aristotle's work on friendship is instrumental for better comprehending Plato's insights. Still, both authors benefited immensely from the more general intellectual community in which they were embedded.

[8] Whereas Aristotle builds on Plato's work in various ways, those who suggest (sometimes smugly) that Aristotle was not very original are poorly informed individuals and simply have not examined Aristotle's texts with much care. Thus, although Plato is the more entertaining author and is much easier to read, Aristotle's works are filled with conceptual insights and developments the likes of which have never been matched for their comprehensive, enabling, and innovative contributions to sustained scholarship.

Although we had earlier considered the matter of organizing the texts of Plato and Aristotle around the set of subprocesses pertaining to relationships as generic social processes (Prus 1996), we realized that Plato's and Aristotle's materials have a particular classical quality of their own. Since these accounts of affective relationships are analyses unto themselves and thereby differ from the mass of material that one normally accumulates in extended ethnographies, we were concerned that we maintain the integrity of these texts for readers.

Thus, while attentive to much of the contemporary ethnographic literature pertaining to relationships as GSPs we will review, analyze, and present materials on friendship, love, and disaffection in the orders in which they appear in the original text. This may result in some repetition, and appear a bit fragmented at times, but it will provide readers with a much better sense of the particular texts being considered and is necessary if the analytical authenticity of these authors is to be maintained.

While the works considered here also deal with many other relevant issues to the social sciences, only the themes regarding friendship, love and disaffection are examined in more detail. In line with the interactionist emphasis on the *what* and the *how* of everyday life, aspects of these texts that deal more directly with human knowing and acting are highlighted.

Plato's Portrayals of Affective Relationships

Although these dialogues likely were not developed in this particular order, we have organized the analysis around Plato's *Symposium*, *Phaedrus*, and *Lysis*, respectively. This enables us to move from some more general to somewhat more focused aspects of affective relationships. Still, readers are cautioned that we can convey only partial images of the rich detail that Plato develops in each of these statements.

Symposium[9]

Developed within the context of a *symposium* or formal drinking party, Plato's *Symposium* is made up of seven speeches made in honour of Eros, the God of Love.[10] Although Plato often discusses these themes in the context of mythological heroes or celebrities, this work holds relevant insight regarding social interchange for the contemporary reader. As a means of maintaining organizational flow, the speeches in *Symposium* are discussed in the order in which they are delivered.

Within this text Plato generally uses the term love to refer to sexual, romantic, erotic or passionate attractions and expressions, but he also locates this emphasis with somewhat broader conceptions of love. While friendship is not explicitly considered in this work, some notions of disaffection are discussed in relation to romantic involvements.

In particular, *Symposium* addresses (1) *the importance of studying love,* (2) *the relevance of love as an element in human behavior,* (3) *various forms of romantic love*, (4) *the relative nature of love*, (5) *multiple views and customs regarding*

[9] Although we benefitted from the translation of *Symposium* provided by Benjamin Jowett, we have relied primarily on the excellent translation of *Symposium* developed by Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff (1989).

[10] *Eros* is the Greek term for *love* or *desire;* often used in reference to the Greek Goddess of Love, *Aphrodite*. Also consider *eros* as in *hero or heroine.*

©2005-2010 Qualitative Sociology Review

passionate love, (6) *parallels between erotic love and other realms of human involvement*, (7) *a theological explanation concerning the origin of passionate love and desire*, (8) *praises and promotions directed towards romantic love (specifically the god of love)*, (9) *objects of love and desire*, (10) *ultimate goals of love (as happiness and immortality)*, (11) *definitions and implications of "true love,"* and (12*) instances of people's passionate fascinations and obsessions with others, and the reactions of third party others*.

Prior to the presentation of the speeches, Plato draws attention to the great significance and vital importance of romantic love, and asks why this topic is not more frequently directly addressed.

Within the first speech of *Symposium* (178b-180e; with Phaedrus speaking), the *God of Love* is described as powerful and compelling, as well as a prominent motivating force of human behavior. Instances are provided in support of this claim including: experiencing the desire to hide one's involvements in wrongdoing from loved ones, performing extraordinary acts for a loved other, and making more extensive sacrifices for the benefit of loved ones than for anyone else. Love is also viewed as an inspiration for doing good. Encouraging desirable behavior and deterring less admirable deeds, love thereby *aids in the maintenance of virtue and order*.

In the second speech (180d-185c; from Pausanias), the speaker discusses various forms of love. He makes the case that there are actually two gods of love. One represents *common* or *vile* love, entailing short-lived physical lust and desires. The second signifies *proper* love, which is described as having lasting, more intelligent, and virtuous qualities. Instances of each form are provided.

Pausanias then addresses the *relative nature of love*, claiming that love does not possess inherent values of good or bad, but rather people attach evaluations to the resulting thoughts and behaviors:

> This applies in the same way to every type of action: considered in itself, no action is either good or bad, honorable or shameful…how it comes out depends entirely on how it is performed. If it is done honorably and properly, it turns out to be honorable: if it is done improperly, it is disgraceful…Love is not in himself noble or worth of praise; that depends on whether the sentiments he produces in us are themselves noble. (Plato, Symposium, 181a, Nehamas and Woodruff trans.)

In turn, Pausanias recognizes the various perspectives and practices that may be taken on love. These notions vary from region to region and person to person. He speaks directly of how different regions maintain different views and customs regarding love:

> …Although the customs regarding love in most cities are simple and easy to understand, here in Athens (and in Sparta as well) they are remarkably complex. In places where the people are inarticulate, like Elis or Boetia, tradition straightforwardly approves taking a lover in every case. No one, the young or old, would ever consider it shameful. …By contrast, places like Iona and almost every other part of the Persian Empire, taking a lover is always considered disgraceful. (Plato, Symposium, 182b-c, Nehamas and Woodruff trans.)

Pausanias then goes on to provide instances of the perspectives and customs that his own group holds. These include a positive evaluation of those expressing one's love for a partner (especially if the loved one is of honorable background and

accomplishment); performing extraordinary acts for one's lover (while these same extraordinary acts performed for a nonlover would be regarded in a negative manner); the lover is given special treatment and much of the lover's behavior is overlooked; success in acquiring a lover is deemed noble and failure to do so is regarded as shameful; and loving on the basis of physical appearances for short periods of time rather than engaging in more lasting and involved relationships is described as a vulgar and vile practice. Pausanias continues with further descriptions of the proper methods for obtaining a lover.

The existence of customs are said to be a means of promoting acts of proper love (as discussed above) and deterring those of vile and vulgar forms. His speech ends with a consideration of acts of deception and how these practices may be employed within relationships of love.

The third speaker (186-188d; Eryximachus speaking here) also discusses love in the context of the two forms proposed above (proper vs. vile). However, Eryximachus claims that love occurs in all realms and is not limited to the human soul. *Parallels* are drawn between qualities attached to the love experienced between humans and those fascinations people develop in areas such as medicine, music, seasonal change, astronomy, and theology. Eryximachus draws out instances of struggle between the proper (good, just, honorable, healthy, harmonious and heavenly) and the vile (common, vulgar, harmful, crude, impulsive, and destructive).

The fourth speech (189d-194e; delivered by Aristophanes) presents a *creation story of love* intended to account for human experiences of love and romantic desires. These are said to result from an instance of punishment, bestowed by the gods, which consisted of the splitting of all humans -- male, female and androgynous -- in two separate bodies (the present human form). In turn, the experience of love is simply the natural longing to be whole or pursuit of unity with the original other half. This account is offered to explain romantic desires of both a homosexual and heterosexual nature and the intense longing for one another that is often felt by lovers.

The fifth presentation (195a-198a; by Agathon) takes the form of an epideictic or evaluative speech;[11] it is offered *in praise of the God of Love* and the gifts this god brings. In doing so, Agathon first describes Love's physical character including youth, delicate nature, fluid supple shape (allowing for the convenient passage in and out of the soul), and attractive appearance.[12] This is followed by a description of Love's moral character as virtuous and just, moderate, brave, wise, and creative. Agathon also praises the God of Love for the gifts she bears:

> Love fills us togetherness and drains all of our divisiveness away. Love calls gatherings like these together, in feasts, in dances, and in ceremonies. Love moves us to mildness, removes us from wildness…love cares well for good men, cares not for bad ones. In pain in fear, in desire, or speech love is our best guide and guard. (Plato, Symposium, 197e, Nehamas and Woodruff trans.)

This speech outlines love's abilities (variously) to unite individuals; generate calming effects; promote acts of kindness; foster grace; and encourage yearning and desire. As well, love offers guidance, protection, and friendship to those of good nature.

---

[11] Epideictic (evaluative or demonstrative) rhetoric deals in the art of praise or blame for specific individuals as well as commemorations or condemnations of particular groups or events.

[12] In *Symposium* (195a-198a), Love (as one of the gods) is sometimes discussed as a "god" but at other times is presumed to be a "goddess."

Before the next speech officially begins (198b-201e), Socrates, a featured member of the party briefly addresses the *objects of love and desire*. His claim is that desire is always directed towards a thing. In particular, the quest is for needed things. This includes those things that one does not possess but desires to possess, as well as those things that one already possesses but desires to continue to posses in the future. He also posits that the object of desire or love is only directed towards things that are beautiful and good, never towards the ugly.

In the sixth speech, Socrates (201-212b) recounts a conversation he alleges to have had on love with a woman called Diotima. In the process (through Diotima), Socrates takes issue with some of the things suggested in earlier speeches. Providing an account of the upbringing of the god of love, the popular beliefs and praises of the god are refuted. In its place, she claims love actually consists of a balance between beautiful and ugly, mortal and immortal, wise and ignorant, rich and poor. Within this discussion, notions of happiness are examined. It is suggested that happiness entails the possession of that which is good and beautiful.

When addressing the *goal or ultimate aim of love*, Diotima claims that the answer is *happiness*. This occurs when one possesses the beautiful things once desired (thus, there is no need or desire for anything further). Questions are then raised concerning whether this love and desire for happiness is experienced by all.

This discussion leads to *a clarification of the definition of love*. Here, conveying her viewpoint, Socrates suggests the concept of love actually covers several different forms of emotion and experience:

> …We divide out a special kind of love, and we refer to it by the word that means the whole—'love'; and for the other kinds of love we use other words… Every desire for good things or for happiness is the 'supreme and treacherous love' in everyone. But those who pursue this along any of its many other ways—through making money, or through the love of sports, or through philosophy—we don't say that these people are in love, and we don't call them lovers. It's only when people are devoted exclusively to one special kind of love that we use these words that really belong to the whole of it 'love' and 'in love' and 'lovers.' (Plato, Symposium, 205b-d, Nehamas and Woodruff trans.)

While people's actions (and fascinations) with respect to other matters may parallel those experienced in the pursuit of love (ultimately happiness), they are not labeled in "love" terms. Rather "love" is used to represent a particular form or *a special kind* of affection or intrigue. Also of sociological interest in this discussion is the author's recognition of the ambiguities of language and its implications for analysis of particular subject matters.

In light of this, Diotima again affirms that the objective or goal of love involves the desire *to possess the good forever*, and further asks the following questions:

> How do people pursue it if they are truly in love? What do they do with the eagerness and zeal we call love? What is the real purpose of love? (Plato, Symposium, 206b, Nehamas and Woodruff trans.)

In addressing these concerns, Socrates says that Diotima's viewpoint is that the love relationship is a means of sustaining *immortality* (in a biological sense), via the reproductive practices that take place within love's context. In addition, love enables the lover to experience true beauty in its pure, divine and virtuous form. This notion of true beauty as the aim of love parallels the proper love discussed by previous speakers.

The final speech (212c-222b) is made by a boisterous uninvited guest, Alcibiades and reveals an instance of a *fascination with another*. While praising the object of his affection (Socrates in this case), Alcibiades reveals how his involvement has left him with many experiences and emotional episodes, including physical and emotional attraction, seduction, rejection, jealousy, and attempts to restrain from sexual temptation.

In developing *Symposium*, Plato draws our attention to a number of themes highly pertinent to affective relationships. Thus, he indicates (a) how romantic love may be viewed in differing ways, (b) how these understandings develop and are pursued, (c) the various customs and practices engaged by both those within groups (insiders) and outsiders, (d) how particular customs may be sustained or adjusted in the midst of community life, (e) how linguistic interchange is recognized and dealt with, (f) how people pursue and sustain these involvements, and (g) how those perspectives and actions entailed in involvements of love parallel people's intrigues in other realms of group life.

Phaedrus[13]

While Plato's *Phaedrus* also deals with other noteworthy themes, particularly those of rhetoric and theology, this text addresses notions of love, disaffection and friendship at some length.

Written in Plato's usual script-like manner, *Phaedrus* unfolds as a conversation between two companions. Although focusing primarily on romantic love, *Phaedrus* also periodically compares these involvements with friendships. In contrast to *Symposium*, which emphasizes praises, gifts, and benefits of romantic relationships, *Phaedrus* gives more attention to the animosity and disaffections that arise within romantic involvements.

In particular, Plato addresses (1*) the challenges of maintaining romantic relationships*, (2) *the disadvantages of viewpoints adopted by the romantically involved,* (3) *the responses of others to people's romantic involvements*, (4) *the practices and difficulties of terminating relationships*, (5) *the continuities of relationships based on physical attractions*, (6) *the general ingratiation tendencies of lovers when dealing with other people*, (7) *the selfless generosity implied by friendships*, (8) *reciprocity within friendships and romantic involvements*, (9) *the questionable behaviors of those in love*, (10) *themes of insecurity and jealousy in romantic love*, (11) *the relative nature of attraction and beauty*, (12) *flattery*, (13) *the relevance of similarities for romantic relationships*, (14*) the viewpoints of those involved with jealous and insecure lovers*, (15) *the advantages of people adopting "in love" perspectives*, and (16) *the theological perspectives of love*.

Plato (231-232a) first addresses some of the *problematic* features of passionate relationships. Notably, when people's commitments to loved ones are intensified, there is often an associated neglect of others. As well, extensive investments made to the loved one are generally viewed as wasted once desires diminish and relationships dissipate.

Plato then considers the *perspectives maintained by lovers*, positing that those who are in love reduce all other involvements as secondary to the lover. This is

[13] We have relied primarily on the translation of *Phaedrus* developed by Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff (1995), but also appreciated the translation of Benjamin Jowett (1937).

framed in negative terms, and is seen as detrimental to those involved as lovers. Those thusly involved are frequently referenced as *blinded by love* or being *lovesick.*

Plato (232b) next addresses the *stigma* or disrepute attached to the more overt, often physical expressions of erotic love and the practice of people spending too much time with their lovers:

> The result is that whenever people see you talking with him they'll think you are spending time together just before or just after giving way to desire. But they won't even begin to find fault with people for spending time together if they are not lovers; they know one has to talk to someone, either out of friendship or to obtain some pleasure. (Plato, Phaedrus, 232b, Nehamas and Woodruff trans.)

By contrast, there is no stigma applied to those who spend extended periods of time together within friendship contexts, since people are social beings and are thought to require the company of others.

The speaker (232b-232e) then addresses difficulties of *ending romantic involvements*, pointing to the emotional suffering and effects on people's future perspectives, especially when relationships are highly valued by one or both parties. These situations also may be difficult for both parties involved. Often the experience or threat of the termination of a relationship leads to the development of insecurities and jealousy (as was discussed in *Symposium*, 213d). Attempts may be made by the insecure or jealous lover to isolate the loved from others and therefore limiting potential alternatives and threats. In addition, the question is raised if jealousy is an indication of being in love.

Phaedrus (233) subsequently turns to matters concerning *the continuity of involvements*. Since physical attractions often result in emotional desires for another, this often leads to the development of romantic relationships on superficial basis. Thus, there is a greater potential for these relationships to falter, once desires have passed. This is contrasted with the development of friendships, which purportedly do not lend themselves to this situation as easily.

Ingratiation and the loss of sensibility or perspective also receive attention in *Phaedrus* (233b). It is observed that those in love are often highly complementary to people more generally. This tendency is seen to reflect people's absorption in the love perspective, which encourages lovers to see things through "rose-colored glasses":

> A lover will praise what you say and what you do far beyond what is best, partly because he is afraid of being disliked, and partly because desire has impaired his judgment. Here is how love draws conclusions: when a lover suffers a reverse that would cause no pain to anyone else, love makes him think he's accursed! And when he has a stroke of luck that's not worth a moment's pleasure, love compels him to sing praises. The result is you should feel sorry for lovers, not admire them. (Plato, Phaedrus, 233b, Nehamas and Woodruff trans.)

This expressed disenchantment with those in love is in stark contrast to the materials in *Symposium*, wherein the lover is viewed as noble and honorable.

The speaker (233c) subsequently focuses more directly on friendships. In particular he discusses the *actions of a good friend*. These include (a) giving without thought of immediate returns or pleasures, (b) refraining from emotional overreactions when encountering conflict, and (c) providing guidance and forgiveness for unintentional errors. These actions are said to assist in the

maintenance of lasting and enduring friendships. This is followed by the observation that erotic love is not a necessarily component for strong and secure relationships, as indicated in relationships between a parent and child.

The matter of *reciprocity* in both romantic relationships and friendships is then briefly examined (234b, 236-238c). It is suggested that favors or aid should be provided to those who are best able to return these, not those who are in the greatest of need.

Plato reminds readers that romantic love is often viewed as a justification for error, a strategy unavailable to those who are not in love:

> (F)riends often criticize a lover for bad behavior; but no one close to a non-lover ever thinks that desire has led him to bad judgment about his interests. (Plato, Phaedrus, 234b, Nehamas and Woodruff trans.)

While the lover is viewed as adopting a perspective that entails his loss of wits and being blind to reason, the same actions performed by a nonlover are not defined or justified in this irrational *lovesick* manner. Plato then discusses the capacity of love (and objects of desire) to encourage one to yearn for and accommodate temptations of lustful and sexual sorts.

Plato (239-240) then re-engages the theme of *jealousy* and *insecurity* and the resulting actions that may take place. This involves the practice of people becoming involved with those who are thought weaker and inferior, as a means of maintaining control and boosting self-esteem. As well, insecure and jealous lovers may attempt to prevent their loved ones from interacting with those who may appear superior to themselves, as well as with those (such as family and close friends) who may have the ability to block their relationships.

The danger, however, is that these exclusionary tactics eventually may lead to dislike or resentment of the jealous lover by the loved one. Throughout this discussion, as well, Plato makes mention of the *relative nature* and *utility of appearance in attraction*, pointing out that some forms and appearances are viewed as more desirable over others.

Plato (240c) then goes on to attend to the dangers of those who engage in *flattery*. The threat of this role comes in its charm and associated vulnerability many experience as a result. In a similar manner, he discusses someone assuming the role of "a younger kept person" — whose pleasures he describes as short lived and whose costs for enduring the relationship can be great.

The notion of *similarity as a basis of romantic involvements* (240e) is then briefly touched on. This takes place in the context of age, with those of similar age being drawn together. A further observation is that those who are in relationships with others of dissimilar ages, often experience difficulty since the elder's desire for the younger will not fade as quickly as the younger person's interests; resulting in continued attraction on the part of the elder individual that is not experienced and reciprocated by the younger person. This may lead to accounts of jealousy and insecurity, as discussed above, on the part of the older person, directed toward the younger individual.

Plato (240e-241c) examines this scenario through the perspective of the younger person or other *victims of jealous lovers*. Here, the author describes instances from this perspective and the difficulties involved therein:

> To be watched and guarded suspiciously all the time with everyone! To hear praise of yourself that is out of place and excessive! And then to be falsely accused—which is unbearable when the man is sober and not only

> unbearable but positively shameful when he is drunk and lays into you with a pack of wild barefaced insults! (Plato, Phaedrus, 240e, Nehamas and Woodruff trans.)

Plato (244b-245c) then shifts emphasis somewhat and describes the *advantages of the love perspective* (earlier described as entailing infatuation as well as a loss of reason and self-control). He first explains that the original meaning of the term madness (*mania*) once had positive connotations. In addition, he posits that madness has brought many people relief in troubling times, as it provides a kind of mental escape for those involved. As well, it has inspired the poets and muses. Finally, he suggests that one should not accept the claim that a friend in control (someone who is not influenced by sexual desires) is better then one who is infatuated (madly in love), as love is understood to be sent by the *gods to ensure our greatest good fortune*.

Plato (250d-256e) subsequently attempts to explain the experience of love, in particular sexual attraction and temptation directed towards physical beauty through his *theological* perspectives on the soul (*psyche*). Accordingly, true beauty is so valued because it resembles that which the (reincarnated) soul earlier experienced within the heavenly realm. For those souls that (once reborn in a new physiological body) remember more extensively, one's response is of admiration of ideals and longing for the divinely experienced past. However, those souls whose memories are feebler or who have not become close to the divine in earlier lives will respond in more animalistic, sensate-driven manners —giving into sexual desire without shame or remorse. This explanation is continued as Plato theologically accounts for various other instances of love and friendship, claiming that these relationships are inspired by the divine.

Within this context, Plato briefly makes reference to the notion of "similars" and "opposites" constituting a basis for a relationship. Here, he posits that those who are similar in character will form bonds, while those who are different from one another will not. *Phaedrus* concludes with an extended consideration of rhetoric.

Like *Symposium*, Plato's *Phaedrus* provides readers an extended, dialectic examination of friendship, disaffection and, in particular, romantic love. Drawing attention to some more problematic features of romantic relations, this text instructively addresses matters such as influence and negotiation in the development of relationships, intersubjective evaluations of objects/targets, tactics for developing, maintaining and terminating relationships, and the differing positions that people may adopt with respect to love and other affective relationships.

Lysis[14]

Plato's third text, *Lysis*, is a running dialogue about friends and potential romantic lovers. While the focus is on friendship, themes of passionate love and disaffection receive considerable attention.

Within *Lysis*, Plato examines the matters of (1*) people's differing experiences and expressions of infatuation or sexual attraction*, (2) *the reactions of others to infatuated individuals*, (3) *people pursuing and/or attracting of potential romantic partners*, (4*) the relevance of similarities for attractions,* (5) *concepts of happiness in romantic relationships*, (6) *utility of relationships*, (7) *mutuality in friendships and*

[14] While mindful of Benjamin Jowett's translation of *Lysis*, we worked more closely with Stanley Lombardo's translation.

romantic involvements, (8*) sharing common qualities as a basis for friendship (continued)*, (9*) whether those who are already happy require friendship*, (10) *some limitations of similarities*, (11) *relationships pursued for the sake of another friend*, (12) *friendship as knowable only relative to one's reference points*, and (13) *whether one can love another without also being a friend*.

Lysis begins (204a-205d) with a discussion of *romantic infatuation or intense sexual attraction* for another. Acknowledging the relative nature of beauty, Plato observes that people may hold differing definitions of physical attractiveness. The author also considers the different ways people may express their desires, including praising the object or person of affection (directly to these individuals and/or others), offering gifts to the object of desire and becoming preoccupied or fixated with contemplation of the loved other.

Plato also observes that people's expressions of infatuation may range from instances of concealment and highly discreet revelations to open and uninhibited actions. These practices also are seen as contingent on the response and reactions of third parties to the infatuated individuals. Providing some instances of negative reactions, Plato suggests that reactions from others may involve viewing the infatuated individual as mad, raving, ridiculous or annoying, as suggested in the following account of an individual responding to the infatuation of another:

> [I]f he spends any time with you at all you'll be driven to distraction hearing you say it so often. We're all just about deaf from all the 'Lysis' [name of the admired] he's poured into our ears. And if he's been drinking, odds are we'll wake up in the middle of the night thinking we hear Lysis' name. As bad as all this is in normal conversation, it's nothing compared to when he drowns us with his poems and prose pieces. And worst of all he actually sings odes to his beloved in a weird voice, which we have to put up with listening to. (Plato, Lysis, 204c-d, Lombardo)

Plato (205e-206e) then considers the *matter of people (as agents) pursuing or attracting prospective lovers*. Here, he discusses some strategies and related cautions. Thus, lovers sometimes endeavor to overwhelm loved individuals with praise and gifts, this method engenders the risk of ridicule (from others) of the efforts made and losses of investments consumed by the gifts. This risk increases as the effort invested in the loved object increases.

As well, the praise, gifts, and other acknowledgements directed toward the targets of affection may serve to increase these people's confidence in their abilities to attract and successfully pursue relationships with other people -- thereby making the lover's task even more challenging. Thus, rather than overwhelming targets with praise, gifts, and the like, the speaker suggests the most promising method of pursuit is to *soothe* and *charm* the target by engaging in intellectual conversation.

Next, Plato (207) addresses the idea is that common qualities and similar desires provide a basis for friendship. The commonalities discussed include things such as age, class backgrounds, and physical attractiveness.

Plato (207d-210c) subsequently posits that relationships of romantic love and friendship reflect the desire for the loved one to be happy. Defining *happiness* as the freedom to do whatever one pleases without restraint. Plato examines the matters of trust, freedom and guidance in relationships of love and friendship. He posits that these bonds may entail the desire for those who are loved to be free to do what makes them happy, but freedom as employed here is limited to those things that the loved individual fully understands. Until then, loved ones are to be guided by their

more knowledgeable associates, as in the instance of the parent and child or city officials and citizens.

From there, Plato (210d) briefly discusses the *utility of relationships*, suggesting that bonds of romantic love and friendship may be developed on the basis of one's usefulness to the other.[15] Thus, useful qualities are said to increase closeness. Within this context, the speaker revisits the topic of pursuit of passionate relationships. Here he (210e) posits that a successful strategy for dealing with love objects is to "cut them down to size" and "put them in their place," rather than "puffing them up and spoiling them." The implication is that target confidence in self hinders the probability of agents achieving reciprocity of affection on the part of the loved one. This subdiscussion is concluded with the thought that desired relationships seldom are easily acquired.

Plato (212b-213d) next addresses *mutuality* within relationships, particularly those of friendships. Here, he questions the commonly invoked criterion of reciprocity, asking if people have to exchange somewhat comparable feelings of love or affection to be considered friends; if it is possible to have only one friend in a friendship; and, if so, who the friend actually would be in nonreciprocated relationships:

> Then which is the friend of the other?Is the lover the friend of the loved, whether he is loved in return or not, or even hated? Or is the loved the friend of the lover?... [O]ne is frequently a friend of a nonfriend, and even of an enemy. This is the case when you love someone who does not love you back, or even hates you. And frequently one is the enemy to a nonenemy, or even to a friend, as happens when you hate someone who does not hate you, or even loves you. (Plato, Lysis, 212c, 213c, Lombardo)

As in much of Plato's work, no definite conclusions are made; rather he poses questions and proposes issues for the reader to consider.

Plato (214a-219) subsequently returns to the issue of sharing common qualities as a basis for friendship. While acknowledging the plausibility of people developing affinities on the basis of similarities, Plato points out a major exception to this notion. Thus, he posits that those who share negative qualities (the bad) cannot actually maintain true loving or liking friendships, especially with another who is also bad.

Pursuing this theme further, Plato then asks whether *those who are already happy and good* (and therefore seem not to require anything or anyone) *have any requirement for friendship*. He further questions whether a good person can enter into a lasting relationship with another that is also good. Still, Plato is not finished with the matter of similarities.

He introduces another oppositionary point, suggesting that relationships among similars also foster competition. Rather than strengthen bonds, similarities provide comparison points and may lead to envy, contempt, and jealousy. In addition, those who do not share common qualities are said to maintain better, more lasting relationships as they require or complement each other's shortcomings or needs. Plato then goes on to suggest that examining relationships in these terms may not be wise since there are many instances where neither those who share and do not share common qualities with another are able to enter into and sustain lasting relationships.

---

[15] Plato also discusses the utility-based friendship in several of his other works, especially in regards to political associations (*Alcibiades*: 126b; *Republic* I: 351c-e, V: 462-464; *Laws* III: 694a-b, V: 738d-e, 743d).

Plato (219-221) again addresses the matter of utility in friendship, through the example of those *bonds that people pursue for the sake of another friend*. Here, he asks about the genuine nature of these relationships and the terms used to describe them:

> When we talk about all the things that are our friends for the sake of another friend, it is clear that we are merely using the word 'friend.' The real friend, is surely that in which all these so-called friendships terminate. (Plato, Lysis, 220b, Lombardo)

Should these relationships exist only for their utility in maintaining relationships with other friends, the termination of relationships with the initial (third party) friends may lead to the ending of these other relationships. Likewise, if the initial incentives or basis of relationships are removed or somehow changed, these relationships also will undergo transformations, possibly resulting in their extinction.

Within this context, Plato (220d) draws attention to the point that *all things are considered in relation to something else*; a reference point is always required for the consideration (and knowing) of things. This is illustrated by reference to the preceding instance, as Plato questions the use of the term friend:

> Then that friend of ours, the one which was the terminal point for all the other things that we called 'friends for the sake of another friend,' does not resemble them at all. For they are called friends for the sake of friend, but the real friend appears to have a nature completely opposite of this. It has become clear to us that it was the friend for the sake of an enemy. Take away the enemy and it seems it is no longer a friend. (Plato, Lysis, 220d, Lombardo)

It is only when compared to other relationships that the employment of the term friend seems less genuine. When considered in isolation, without a context or reference point, evaluations cannot be made.

Plato (221b) then briefly deals with the notion of romantic love in friendship. He questions the separation of love from friendship asking, *if it is possible to desire and love something passionately without feeling friendly toward it*. Without providing any definite answers, Plato then addresses the notion of desire in relationships with respect to complementary requirements and resources. As already discussed, the speaker posits that the desire experienced in these contexts entails the wanting of that in which one is deficient; thus, another who possesses that which one is lacking is therefore desirable.

Examining aspects of friendship, romantic love and disaffection in Plato's usual dialectic manner, *Lysis* provides readers with much instructive insight (perspectives and practices) into affective relationships. In particular, he addresses (a) the strategies employed in the pursuit of both romantic and friendly involvements (influence and persuasive communications), (b) the practical limitations people may encounter in dealing with targets and third parties, (c) the humanly enabling features of relationships, (d) some different bases of attraction and the contingencies affecting each of these, and (e) the ambiguities that scholars encounter in the analysis of friendship.

Given the compelling qualities of Plato's analysis of friendship, love, and disaffection, there is much more to learn from Plato's works. Interestingly, an examination of Aristotle's writings on friendship are instructive not only in their own right, but also as a means of shedding further light on Plato's works.

In contrast to Plato, who openly questions the viability of friendship as a humanly experienced phenomenon, Aristotle acknowledges friendship as a fundamental feature of human group life. Aristotle's emphasis, thus, is not whether friendship can exist in the human realm, but rather what human friendship entails, the forms that friendships assume, and how these relationships are developed, sustained, and terminated by people in the humanly known and enacted spheres of community life.

Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*[16]

While many of Aristotle's works are relevant to the study of human group life,[17] the present statement focuses on only a portion of these materials, more specifically Books VIII-IX of *Nicomachean Ethics*.[18]

Like Plato, Aristotle exhibits some moral judgments in his consideration of affective relationships (as seen in his discussions of good and bad friends and proper methods and practices maintaining successful and virtuous life-styles). Aristotle also introduces some structuralist variables (as with age, class, and attitudes) into his analysis of friendship. Still, because Aristotle engages the concepts of friendship, love, and disaffection in exceptionally direct, detailed, and processional terms, his materials are of great value to those in the social sciences more generally and to those working in the interactionist tradition more specifically.

Whereas Plato's *Symposium*, *Phaedrus*, and *Lysis* focus on passionate love, Aristotle engages friendship more generically. Still, Aristotle also deals with romantic love along with many other matters discussed by Plato. However, these are framed in different ways, typically in more explicit and analytically direct manners.

Notably, too, while Plato's concepts are developed within conversational flows, Aristotle's texts are turgid, densely compacted analyses packed with insights on people's relationships. To make the material more manageable for readers, the two books (sections) from *Nicomachean Ethics* (*NE*) will be considered separately, mindful of the developmental flow that each assumes.

Book VIII of *NE* explores the following aspects of friendship: (1) *the necessity of friendship,* (2) *various instances of friendship,* (3) *common qualities (and desires) and complementary needs as two distinct bases for friendship,* (4) *definitions and objectives of friendship,* (5) *kinds of friendship and behaviors involved in maintaining these relationships,* (6) *the suitability of particular people for friendship*, (7) *the nature of friendships between those of differing status positions*, (8) *the differing roles of "lover" and "loved,"* (9) *the parallels of friendships with people's other relationships (civic and government associations)*, (10) *friendship amongst blood relatives*, and (11) *some problematic aspects of friendship.*

---

[16] In developing this statement on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* we built on the translations of Terence Irwin, Harris Rackham, and W. D. Ross. However, we also benefited from the remarkable commentary of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* developed by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). It also might be observed that Aquinas also provides exceptionally competent commentaries on several of Aristotle's texts.

[17] Aristotle's *Poetics, Politics, Rhetoric,* and *Rhetoric to Alexander* also address people's relationships and interchanges with others. Other works of pragmatist relevance include Aristotle's *Categories*, *On Interpretation*; *On the Soul*; *Sense and Sensibilia;* and *On Memory*.

[18] For related, more sustained pragmatist considerations of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Rhetoric*, and *Poetics* (see Prus 2007a, 2008a, 2009), respectively.

Aristotle (*NE,* VIII: i) begins his analysis looking at the *necessity of friendship*. Like Plato (*Phaedrus:* 232b, *Symposium:* 178), Aristotle also makes the claim that people are social beings and, as such, require the company of others.

Aristotle then addresses some variants of friendship, including those who are members of the same groupings (family, sex, ethnic backgrounds) and makes special reference to friendships that arise in political associations. Aristotle also discusses the virtuous and honorable values attached to friendship. Those who were genuine "friends" or are able to maintain multiple friends are more esteemed.

Aristotle also draws attention to the notions *of common qualities and desires, as well as complementary requirements and resources as a basis for friendship.* He briefly discusses the matters of complimentary needs as a means of attraction versus common qualities and desires. Here, Aristotle develops arguments similar to those found in Plato's works.[19]

The *objectives* and *definitions of friendship* are then addressed (VIII: ii). The objective or goal of friendly relationships is to "love that which is good." Good is said to be that which is honorable, pleasurable, and useful (if used to attain that which is honorable and pleasurable). However, Aristotle further notes that these notions are relative to the perspective of the actor. Thus, *each man loves not what is good for him, but what seems good* (*NE, VIII, ii: 1155a*).

Aristotle next considers *definitions of friendship* suggesting that these relationships must be reciprocated, further observing that this is why one cannot maintain a friendship with inanimate objects. Stating that there must be mutual awareness of one another and reciprocation within friendship, those relationships with humans where the friendship is unreciprocated are better be described as (unilateral) instances of goodwill. Accordingly, Aristotle proposes the following definition:

> To be friends, then, they must be mutually recognized as bearing goodwill and wishing well to each other... (Aristotle, NE, VIII, ii: 1156a, Ross trans.)

Aristotle (*NE,* VIII: iii) then goes on to further describe three different foundations or *kinds of friendship*. Accordingly, friendship may be based on (1) utility,[20] (2) pleasure, and (3) virtue and honor. Relationships based on *utility* reflect concerns for the other based on the potential use or advantages these people represent. Friendship founded on instrumentalist motives does not reflect a genuine concern for the well being of the other. Aristotle observes that these types of relationships are especially common among the old, the very young, and travelers, as these people often are in positions of dependence.[21]

---

[19] While Plato supports the claim that common qualities foster friendships, he also posits that commonalties may encourage competition within these relationships. Although Aristotle does not address this later notion in *NE*, Aristotle makes a parallel claim (*Rhetoric* II: 1381b1) where he suggests those who are similar may in some cases pose threats to one another with respect to competition for resources, thereby deterring the development of friendships.

[20] Plato (*Lysis* 210d) also addresses instrumentalist friendships that are developed on the basis of evaluations of the other's usefulness.

[21]Aristotle also considers the utility of friendship within *Rhetoric* and *Rhetoric to Alexander*. In both texts, Aristotle discusses the practices of speakers creating friendly feelings between themselves (as well as any person or group on whose behalf they may speak) and the audience from whom speakers seek desired decisions and activities. Likewise, speakers may attempt to generate considerable disaffection between audiences and the opposing speakers (and those that they represent).

As Aristotle also observes in *Rhetoric to Alexander*, having friends increases one's overall reputation for credibility since maintaining friendship involves keeping promises as well as being good, honest, and just. In addition, Aristotle speaks of the advantages of people developing friendships with

Pleasure is the second potential basis of friendships. These relationships are similar to friendships of utility in that there is not a genuine concern for the other, but rather are engaged for the pleasure or enjoyment the other may bring. Young men are said to hold many friendships of this type, as their priorities often are situated concerns with immediate pleasure. Given their broader, instrumental base, these first two types of friendship (utility and pleasure) are not envisioned as lasting. They are thought to be maintained only as long as the other is deemed useful or pleasurable.

The third kind of friendship is based on *virtue and honor.* Representing a balanced reciprocation of genuine concern for the well being of the other, Aristotle defines this type of relationship as the ideal form of friendship. He describes this relationship as both useful and pleasurable. In addition, it is the most intense, enduring and rare of the three types of friendship relationships. Its rarity reflects the comparative lack of virtuous people available to become involved in these relationships, as well as the time and effort needed to both become familiar with one another and sustain these involvements.

Aristotle (*NE,* VIII: iv) further considers the various types of friendship, observing some similarities between virtuous friendships and those of utility and pleasure in that the virtuous friend is also both useful and enjoyable to the other. Relationships centrally based on utility and pleasure, are not as lasting as those of virtuous forms, but they may still endure if mutual benefits are being received. However, should these benefits not be reciprocated, the friendship is likely to dissipate:

> (F)riendships are most permanent when friends get the same thing from each other (e.g. pleasure), and not only that but also from the same source, as happens between ready-witted people, not as happens between lover and beloved. For these do not take pleasure in the same things, but the one in seeing the beloved and the other in receiving attention from his lover; and when the bloom of youth is passing the friendship sometimes passes too (for the one finds no pleasure in the sight of the other, the other gets no attention from the first)… (Aristotle, NE, VIII, iv: 1157a, Ross trans.)

In addition, Aristotle points out that while any person may take part in friendships of pleasure and utility, only those possessing virtuous, good, and honorable qualities can maintain friendships of virtue, as they hold a genuine and unselfish concern for the others' well-being. Acknowledging the enduring qualities of virtuous relationships, Aristotle notes that those based on pleasure and utility are much more susceptible to sabotage than are those of a more virtuous (trusting, caring) nature.

Aristotle (*NE,* VIII: v) continues his discussion in the context of these three forms of friendships, exploring the importance of spending time with friends in order to maintain those relationships. Aristotle says that physical distance does not necessarily prevent friendships; but rather hinders the activities involved in maintaining these relationships. In addition, he suggests that spending time with friends is characteristic of friendships, whereas people who simply assist one another are better deemed "well-wishers." Aristotle then reiterates the notion of reciprocity, claiming that friendship is a kind of equality, especially among those of virtuous nature.

---

those who are righteous, are more influential, live in closer proximity, and have similar interests, as well as those with whom one is obliged to work or co-operate with in some way.

Aristotle (*NE,* VIII: vi) subsequently addresses the matter of people's *suitability for friendship*. Here, he posits that people who posses more virtuous qualities make better friends; while those who are less patient with others, become easily annoyed, or are weak conversationalists are poor candidates for genuine friendship relations. Aristotle also observes that the virtuous or ideal relationships are difficult to maintain since it is challenging to sustain a tolerant and friendly persona at all times. Still, an overall pleasant demeanor is important if one is to be considered a successful or desired friend.

Next, Aristotle considers friendships between people *of differing statuses or positions* (*NE,* VIII: vii). Within these relationships, as in the instances of parent and child or ruler and subject, participants do not exchange the same benefits. Still, these friendships are maintained as reciprocations are balanced when recipients of goods and services provide proportionately more love (affection) to donors in order to restore equality of benefits.

However, since proportionate amounts of affection and other benefits are difficult to gauge, this balance is not always easy to maintain. As well, Aristotle notes the difficulty in determining exactly at what (calculus) point people can be friends; for even when many aspects of reciprocation are absent, people may still retain friendships. Recognizing that *friendship* is complex and subject to various exceptions, Aristotle stands by his original emphasis on the importance of reciprocity (*NE*, VIII: ii).

Aristotle (*NE,* VIII: viii) then compares the *friendship roles* of the lover (loving) and the loved (being loved). Here, he posits that people generally prefer the role of being loved in much the same way they enjoy being honored:

> Most people seem, owing to ambition, to wish to be loved rather than to love; which is why most men love flattery; for the flatterer is a friend in an inferior position, or pretends to be such and to love more than he is loved; and being loved seems to be akin to being honoured, and this is what most people aim at... Now since friendship depends more on loving and it is those who love their friends that are praised, loving seems to be the characteristic virtue of friends. (Aristotle, NE, VIII, viii: 1159a, Ross trans.)

Preferences aside, Aristotle observes that friendship often appears to revolve more fully around loving then being loved, as is the case with the mother and her infant. Within this context, Aristotle reviews earlier notions of equality, and similarities and complimentary positions within friendships.

Subsequently, Aristotle (*NE,* VIII: ix) considers the *parallels* between friendships and other relationships, particularly those of a civic nature. Here, he addresses the ties and bonds that develop between those who are affiliated by virtue of common circumstances, such as fellow soldiers and travelers in particular locales. These relationships are based on situated mutualities and are not expected to endure beyond these contexts. In contrast to friendships, civic associations are always directed towards particular interest or goals:

> But all associations are parts as they were of the association of the state. Travelers for instance associate together for some advantage, namely to procure some of their necessary supplies....Thus the other associations aim at some particular advantage; for example sailors combine to seek the profits of seafaring in the way of trade and the like… similarly members of a tribe or parish... religious guilds and dining-clubs, which are unions of sacrifice and social intercourse. But all these associations seem to be subordinate to the association of the state, which aims not at a temporary

> advantage but one covering the whole of life. (NE, VIII, ix: 1160a, Rackham trans.)

While friendships also are goal directed, these other relationships seem to be based more on achieving particular advantages for a their mutual benefit. Thus, friendships tend to outlast the accomplishment of specific goals.

Further extending notions of friendships to other contexts, Aristotle (*NE,* VIII: x-xi) next compares friendship with types of states or governments. Extending the friendship analogy to the relationship between these various forms of government and the people they govern, Aristotle compares friendships with monarchies or kingdoms, aristocracies or elite governments, and timocracies or constitutional governments.

Aristotle (*NE,* VIII: xii) then explores *friendships among blood relatives*. Comparing family relations to his earlier discussions of friendship and civic associations, Aristotle posits that the relations between blood relatives differ from instances of civic friendship. Hence, fellow citizens, fellow tribesmen, and fellow travelers share particular sets of common circumstance, whereas family roles are more diverse. Aristotle then discusses the differing qualities and nature of friendships between, parent and child, siblings, extended family members, and husband and wife.

Aristotle observes that the parent's affection for a child is greater then the child's affection for the parent. This results from (a) the parent being more familiar with the identity of the child than vise versa, (b) the parent viewing the child as belonging to them, as they physiologically pass on life-qualities to the child, and (c) the parent being able to love the child for longer than the child can knowing love the parent.

Siblings, cousins, and extended family members are said to resemble comrades and other civic associations as discussed earlier, in that these people generally are less dependent on one another, but still share some common circumstances. Aristotle also explicitly addresses the husband-wife relationship, suggesting that friendship exits more naturally within this context. This involvement entails both utility and pleasure, and may include virtuous qualities.

Aristotle (*NE*, VIII: xiii) then focuses on *the problematics of friendship*. He suggests that friendships of utility are most prone to difficulty since they are based solely on self-interested exchanges of goods and services. Whenever there are problems in exchange, this is directly reflected in the friendship. Aristotle briefly addresses potential problems such as the measurement and agreement of balanced exchanges as well as instances in which repayment is not made or is made in ways that displease recipients. He then suggests solutions to such difficulties, including people more cautiously choosing associates for friendships of utility. These difficulties are not as likely in virtuous friendships because of the genuine, unselfish concern that the parties involved have for one another.

Friendships of pleasure also depend on more direct notions of things obtained from the other. Once these enjoyments cease, so too does the friendship. Plato (*Phaedrus* 240e-241c) also considers matters of reciprocity within the context of romantic involvements, pointing out difficulties in sustaining mutual benefits.

Aristotle further considers matters of continuity with respect to friendships involving people of different or unequal situations. He suggests that disagreements over balances of exchange are likely to occur in these relationships, as each member of these relationships commonly view themselves as more deserving of benefits. Both also have different justifications for the basis of exchange:

> Differences also arise in friendships when there is a disparity between the parties…For men think it ought to be in a friendship as it is in a business partnership, where those who contribute more capital take more of the profits. On the other hand the needy or inferior person takes the opposite: he maintains that it is the part of a good friend to assist those in need; what is the use (he argues) of being friends with the good and great if one is to get nothing out of it (Aristotle, NE, VIII, xiv: 1163a, Rackham trans.)

Consistent with his earlier observations, Aristotle suggests that this difficulty may be avoided if those in lesser positions give more affection to those who provide more material goods, while those better able to offer the other material goods and services do so. He then notes that friendships, unlike business associations, are based more on what is possible for each to give, rather than what is equal in some more calculating manner.

While addressing several themes that Plato introduces in *Symposium, Phaedrus,* and *Lysis,* Aristotle in Book VIII of *Nicomachean Ethics* more explicitly deals with (a) the importance of friendship relationships, (b) the ways friendships may be viewed and defined, and (c) the manners in which these relationships are developed and sustained. Aristotle also considers the differing positions and perspectives that people may assume within these involvements, the various contexts and instances in which friendships take place, and some of the difficulties that people encounter within friendships.

Book IX of *Nicomachean Ethics* continues in the same manner as Book VIII. Here, however, Aristotle more specifically considers: (1) *the difficulties of achieving reciprocity within friendship*, (2) *loyalty and obligations in friendship,* (3) *terminations of friendships,* (4) *notions of self and friendship,* (5) *goodwill in friendship,* (6) *concord in friendship,* (7) *benefactors and beneficiaries,* (8) *love of self and the virtuous self,* (9) *the necessity of friendship,* (10) *happiness and friendship,* (11) *maintaining multiple friendships,* (12*) friendship during misfortune and prosperity*, (13) *seeking, giving and receiving aid,* and (14) *shared activity amongst friends.*

In Book IX, Aristotle (*NE*, IX: i) continues to address the *problematics of reciprocity* within the various forms of friendship. More specifically, though, he attends to the difficulties that arise when the benefits received fall below recipients' expectations, resulting in the appearance that nothing was actually gained or received from the other. In providing a possible solution to this problem, Aristotle suggests that repayment should be determined by those who initially received a benefit.

Turning to notions of *loyalties and obligations* in friendship, Aristotle (*NE*, IX: ii) discusses various customs and expectations that people attach to particular friendship contexts:

> Clearly, then, we should not give the same thing to everyone... And, since different things could be given to parents, brothers, companions and benefactors, we should accord to each what is proper and suitable. This is what actually appears to be done. (Aristotle, NE, IX, ii: 1165a, Irwin, trans.)

Aristotle also notes that obligations are not always clear, especially when friendship involves people in different statuses or positions. Still, he suggests that people as individuals, should make efforts to act mindfully of the customs and/or obligations that are typically appropriate for people in their situations.

The discussion (*NE*, IX: iii) then centers on the *termination of friendships*. Aristotle examines circumstances that may lead to a dissolution of the relationship. Some of these changes may result from gains (in status, virtue and other manners) that one friend attains relative to the other, leaving an imbalance in their relative circumstances. Still, Aristotle suggests that these friendships may be sustained with effort. Some other difficulties may arise when people encounter deception or other misrepresentations from the other parties and subsequently expect more rather than less from the other.

Next, Aristotle (*NE*, IX: iv) considers how people's *senses of self* may come into play in friendships. After stating that how one treats a friend often reflects one's own attitude towards the self, Aristotle then questions whether it is possible for one to be friends with one's self. He suggests this is possible, as the person has the same desires and qualities as himself, and he is concerned for his own well being, just as a virtuous friend might act towards another. However, Aristotle contends that those who are not of a virtuous or good character cannot maintain friendships either with others or themselves. Since they do not view themselves as worth loving, they are unable to have virtuous friendly feelings (genuine concern for the well being of the other) even towards themselves (as objects of affection).

Subsequently, Aristotle (*NE,* IX: v) examines the notion of goodwill. While envisioning goodwill as a quality of friendship, Aristotle says that goodwill should not be mistaken for friendship because one can invoke goodwill without mutuality of awareness or reciprocation on the part of the other. These latter aspects are necessary for friendship to exist. Aristotle further distinguishes goodwill from romantic love, which includes *intensity and desire*. As a generalized caring for the other, goodwill may be said to be a quality within friendship as well as represent the beginning of a friendship. However, goodwill need not apply to those friendships based on utility or pleasure.

In a parallel manner, Aristotle (*NE,* IX: vi) then considers the quality of *concord* (i.e., harmony or agreement) in friendship. Aristotle uses the term in reference to *people's agreements on affairs that advance their interests and concern their lives* as opposed to agreement on other, more particular matters. Again Aristotle invokes the notions of good versus bad, claiming that concord of this sort is only present in virtuous people and, in turn, virtuous friendships.

Next, Aristotle (*NE*, IX: vii) focuses on the bond between *benefactors* and *beneficiaries*. He contends that benefactors generally have more love for beneficiaries then vice versa. He identifies a number of bases for this claim. Among these is the suggestion that giving is nobler than receiving:

> The benefactor's plan is fine for him, so that he finds enjoyment in the person he acts on; but the person acted on finds nothing fine in the agent, but only, at most, some advantage, which is less pleasant and lovable.
>
> What is pleasant is actualization in the present, expectation for the future, and memory of the past; but what is pleasantest is the [action we do] insofar as we are actualized, and this also is most lovable. (Aristotle, NE, IX,vii: 1168a, Irwin, trans.)

Aristotle also suggests that benefactors have more love for those who benefit from their generosity because the giving role involves more activity, and people seem to have more appreciation and enjoyment for that which they have worked. He also posits that the love returned to a benefactor from the beneficiary is often done so out of debt and obligation. This is not the case in the love directed towards the beneficiary.

From here, Aristotle (*NE*, IX: viii) resumes his discussion of *the self in friendship*, asking whether one may love the self more than others. Commonly, Aristotle observes, those seen to love themselves more than others often are viewed as selfish or bad (the evil person does everything for selfish gain). Conversely, Aristotle contends that people who have genuine concern for the well being of the other and who love the other the most make the best kind of friends. If the self fits these criteria, there should be no shame in being one's own best friend. In providing a singular approach to these two sides, Aristotle suggests that only those who are selfish, in that they take more than their share, are justly condemned with this negative view of self-love. However, if one treats the self, as one would treat another, in a virtuous manner, this negative label is unwarranted.

Aristotle (*NE*, IX: ix) continues his discussion of the virtuous love of self. He claims that if everyone loved themselves best in this week, it would result in successful community -- as the good done for one's self would benefit others as a result of its virtuous nature. However, those who love the self in evil ways would only hinder and hurt those around them. Aristotle illustrates this notion of the *virtuous self-loving* person through the following examples:

> It is true of the good man too that he does many acts for the sake of his friends and his country, and if necessary dies for them; he will throw away both wealth and honours and in general the goods that are objects of competition, gaining for himself nobility... In all actions, therefore, that men are praised for, the good man is seen to assign himself the greater share in what is noble. In this sense, then, as has been said, a man should be a lover of self; but in the sense in which most men are so, he ought not. (Aristotle, NE, IX, ix: 1169a–1169b, Ross trans.)

Stressing the love of the virtuous (other directed) self, Aristotle concludes that it is beneficial for community settings for virtuous people to be self-lovers.

While Aristotle briefly addresses the *necessity of friendship* in Book VIII, he discusses this notion in greater depth in Book IX. Recognizing that people require friends in time of need, as well as to offer aid to others, he asks if a happy person actually needs friends. It may *appear* that they do not need friendships, in that they do not need friendships of utility, for they require not goods or services; nor do they require friendships of pleasure, as their lives are already enjoyable. Plato (*Lysis* 214a-219) also raises this question, of whether the happy require friends, but Plato does not leave readers with any definite answer.

In an instructive variant from Plato, Aristotle contends that since happiness is an *emergent activity*, it does not revolve around the possession of objects of desire. Relatedly, Aristotle observes that the company of others provides a means of learning about and sustaining happiness as an activity. As well, this activity is difficult to maintain on a solitary basis:

> For as we have said at the beginning... happiness is a form of activity, and an activity clearly is something that comes into being, not a thing we possess all the time, like a piece of property... it therefore follows that this supremely happy man will require good friends, insofar as he desires to contemplate actions that are good and that are his own, and the actions of a good man that is his friend are such.... A solitary man has a hard life, for it is not easy to keep up continuous activity by oneself; it is easier to do so with the aid of and in relation to other people. The good man's activity therefore, which is pleasant in itself, will be more continuous if practiced

©2005-2010 Qualitative Sociology Review

> with friends… Moreover the society of the good may supply a sort of training in goodness. (Aristotle, NE, IX, ix: 1169b-1170a, Rackham, trans.)

Aristotle recognizes the human capacity for an array of viewpoints and thoughts on these matters. When people identify their own thoughts and actions as virtuous and good, life is improved. However, happiness is most fully realized when people of virtuous thoughts and actions share these with others of the same nature.

Next, Aristotle (*NE*, IX: x) draws attention to the notion that while one should not be without friendship, there are some practical limitations to the *number of friends* one might reasonably have. First, since friendships of utility require some giving of goods and services, it simply is not feasible to maintain a large number of relationships of this form. Pleasure in excess also seems to spoil the effect and so multiple forms of this friendship cannot be successfully maintained either. As well, one cannot maintain very many virtuous friendships, since these relationships require considerable time and effort to develop and sustain. Those who try to maintain many friendships simultaneously, sacrifice quality for quantity, and do not appear to be *real friends* to any.

Aristotle (*NE*, IX: xi) next considers the notion that *friends are sought out during times of advantage and need*. When fortune is bad, people require the assistance of friends. Yet when fortune is good, people turn to friends to offer them aid and to have them as company (as mentioned earlier, friendship is necessary even to the happy). Aristotle further posits that while friendship may be more of a necessity during troubled times, it is considered more honorable to engage friendships throughout favorable periods.

Aristotle then discusses *how friends may aid* each other during difficult times. He posits that friends not only may assist others through material aid, but also may offer emotional support. Friends may assist others during harsh periods by providing words of support and sympathetic understanding. Still, Aristotle warns that those in need should be sensitive to the emotions of the other; that their friends not be unduly upset or burdened by the difficulties they have encountered. Hence, the honorable view, as suggested by Aristotle, advises that friends should be wary when turning to others for support, doing so only in times of great need and then only in ways that would be of minimal inconvenience to their benefactors.

In addition to the above caution, Aristotle further suggests it is best to promptly volunteer aid to a friend in need. However, those who are disadvantaged should not presume or volunteer to share in the prosperity of a friend. Still, when offers of generosity are made, friends in need should modestly accept (and fully acknowledge) the generosity of the other, as friendship is ultimately necessary in both times of bad fortune and good.

In the final chapter of Book IX, Aristotle (*NE*, IX: xii) continues with the matter of spending time with friends. He posits that friends benefit simply from seeing the other happy. In addition, Aristotle suggests that it is within *meaningful shared activity* that friendship is expressed and life is enhanced:

> For friendship is a partnership, and as a man is to himself, so is he to his friend; now in his own case the consciousness of his being is desirable, and so therefore is the consciousness of his friend's being, and the activity of this consciousness is produced when they live together, so that it is natural that they aim at this. And whatever existence means for each class of men, whatever it is for those whose sake they value life, in that they wish to occupy themselves with their friends; and so some drink together, others dice together, others join in athletic exercises and hunting, or in the study of

> philosophy, each class spending their days together in whatever they love most in life; for since they wish to live with their friends, they do and share in those things which give them the sense of living together. (Aristotle, NE, IX, xii: 1171b-1172a, Ross trans.)

Still, Aristotle points out that shared activity amongst the bad and evil only spoils this behavior, while shared activity amongst honorable people leads to more virtuous actions.

Despite some more distinctive moral guidelines, Book IX of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* provides readers with great insight into the strategies and practices of sustaining relationships, various difficulties encountered and remedial adjustments, instances and tactics for terminating relationships, how the self may be involved in friendly involvements, the differing viewpoints that people may adopt within friendships, and the value that friendships hold for survival, community relations, and happiness.

While Aristotle repeatedly emphasizes the importance of virtuous (honorable), reciprocated friendships, he also clearly defines friendships in meaningful, deliberative, enacted, and negotiated terms. Although Aristotle's works complement Plato's analysis in many respects, Aristotle is more pointedly analytic in his consideration of friendship particularly with respect to people's activities and their capacities for self-reflectivity.

In Perspective

Although neither Plato nor Aristotle can be expected to maintain a consistent symbolic interactionist approach to the study of friendship, love, and disaffection, their works have a compelling relevance to contemporary scholars interested in the study of interpersonal relations.

Not only will academics in social psychology (psychology and sociology) who have worked in the areas of friendship and attraction recognize the roots of a great many themes in their fields of study in Plato's and Aristotle's works,[22] but a closer examination of these materials also reveals just how limited many developments in contemporary social science, particularly those of a more positivist nature (as in variables predicting attraction, friendship, and romantic relations), are when compared to the more processually engaged analyses of affective relationships that Plato and Aristotle developed over two millennia past.

Thus, while Plato and Aristotle introduce some structuralist notions of attraction (as in the notions that similars attract on the basis of shared circumstances and viewpoints or that opposites attract through complementary needs), they clearly and explicitly acknowledge limitations of these notions for interpersonal relations that many in the social sciences have yet to recognize. Consequently, not only do Plato and Aristotle draw attention to the multifaceted nature of affective relationships, but

[22] For some reviews of the broader literature on the social psychology of interpersonal attraction and interpersonal relationships, see Secord and Backman (1964), Erber and Erber (2000), and Hendrick and Hendrick (2000). For some materials on sexual and/or related intimate relationships that have a more distinctive interactionist and/or ethnographic emphasis, see Waller (1930), Reiss (1961), Bartell (1971), Warren (1974), Ponse (1978), Prus and Irini (1980), Vaughan (1986), Rosenblatt et al. (1995), Ekins (1997), Prus (1997), Rosenblatt and Stewart (2004), Rosenblatt (2006), and Holmes (2010).

they also envision these in problematic, emergent, minded, actively, and interactionally constituted manners.

In addition to delineating a number of conceptual dimensions that seem to have eluded many structuralist social scientists, Plato and Aristotle provide a great many focused departure points for the subsequent study of affective relationships. Indeed, they may be seen to provide an extended set of research agendas that are as relevant today as they were 2000 years ago.

Still, Plato and Aristotle have more to offer. In more substantive terms, both authors provide contemporary scholars with materials that have noteworthy ethnographic qualities. Because Plato's materials were developed within dialogues, wherein speakers present and engage in some detail a number of themes of relevance to affective relationships with the broader communities in which they are situated, the ethnographic essence is perhaps more readily evident in *Symposium*, *Phaedrus*, and *Lysis*.

Plato's dialogues are not developed in ways that typify current ethnographic styles, but seasoned ethnographers are apt to appreciate the care with which Plato (as an ethnographic insider) articulates a variety of positions that could be held by people of the sort depicted in the dialogues. As well, and in contrast to most "native" produced texts of record, Plato's speakers address specific topics in highly focused, articulate, and analytic ways.

Plato's analytic emphases contrasts notably with the works of the classical Greek poets (Homer, c700BCE; Aeschylus, 525-456BCE; Euripides, 480-406BCE; Sophocles, 495-405BCE; and Aristophanes, 450-385BCE), who also are exceptionally sophisticated authors. This is not to deny the ethnographic insights into the human condition that one may encounter in these poetic renditions. However, Plato's works have a much more sustained analytic descriptive quality to them than do the texts of these otherwise eloquent, highly accomplished poets.

In addition to providing descriptions of people's experiences with romantic, friendly, and ill-willed involvements, Plato often reveals the perspectives and actions of the participants as their relationships unfold. Plato also is attentive to the point that love, friendship, and disaffection as activities that have no inherent meaning or value, but rather take on meanings and values according to the perspectives and definitions that the people involved place on their associations with others.

Relatedly, Plato (in fundamental but often ignored terms) explicitly draws attention to the point that things are knowable only relative to other things. Meanings and evaluations of friendship and love, thus, only can be appreciated on the basis of the comparisons that one might develop with respect to other things (and other actions).

Without these reference points, as in comparisons with instances of negativity or animosity, notions of love and friendship are left meaningless. Plato also acknowledges the problematic use of language, recognizing that ideal definitions of love and friendship often differ from the ways that people's involvements develop in practice.

While focusing primarily on relationships of a romantic nature, Plato illustrates the multiple viewpoints that people may assume with respect to affective relationships and the meanings (and purposes) that these experiences hold for the people involved as well as their implications for community life more generally.

Plato also acknowledges the problematic features of these relationships and the ways in which people attempt to deal with these uncertainties and related difficulties. Likewise, Plato attends to the ways in which relationships are developed and pursued as well as things that may lead to their demise. He also considers the

responses and reactions of outsiders to romantic involvements and how these other persons may engage those who are more centrally involved in the situations.

Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* is more overtly analytical in its formulation than are Plato's dialogues. Still, because Aristotle's analysis focuses on human knowing and acting in such detail, he also offers much rich ethnographic insight into friendship relations of the classical Greek era.[23] Like Plato, Aristotle introduces some structuralist and moralist themes at times. As well, like Plato, Aristotle is careful to separate ideals from actualities.

Whereas Plato focuses primarily on romantic love, Aristotle examines friendship relationships on a more generic plane. Consistent with Plato's approach to sensate relationships, Aristotle envisions friendship as an emergent activity that is problematic in all stages of its development. Like Plato, Aristotle views relationships as matters that are knowingly shaped by the actors involved, through their capacities for reflectivity, activity, and meaningful interchange.

Aristotle also makes it clear that friendships may develop in varying ways with people approaching relationships with notably different objectives. While defining reciprocity as an essential element of genuine friendship, Aristotle also recognizes the problematic nature of friendship and considers the diverse manners that people may define, contribute to, and assess relationships with regards to their objectives, related notions of reciprocity, and their senses of self.

Like Plato, Aristotle is acutely aware of the interconnectedness of the people involved in particular instances of friendship with other aspects of community life. Both authors appreciate, in more ethnographic terms, the importance of examining affective relationships as community-based products and processes.

Further, in addition to materials that reflect notions of friendship among those in the philosophic and aristocratic sectors of the Greek community at the time, both Plato and Aristotle develop analytic positions that are distinctively generic in emphasis. These matters become more apparent when we return to the earlier discussion of generic social processes and, in particular, the subprocesses pertaining to people developing relationships with others.

Thus, while neither Plato nor Aristotle deal with the matters of people getting prepared for generalized encounters, defining self as available for association, or renewing relationships in any direct sense, their texts (consistent with Prus 1996) shed considerable light on the ways that people go about (a) defining (specific) others as desirable associates; (b) making approaches / receiving openings from others; (c) encountering (and indicating) rejection / acceptance; (d) assessing self and other for "goodness of fit;" (e) developing interactional styles (in each relationship); (f) managing openness and secrecy; (g) developing understandings, preferences, loyalty; (h) managing distractions (and outside commitments); (i) juggling multiple relationships; and (j) severing relationships.

To be sure, the two Greek scholars do not give all of these matters equal attention and they do not pursue each of these topics as fully as one might hope. Still, whereas Plato discusses matters of these sorts more pointedly in reference to romantic relationships and Aristotle primarily deals with friendship relationships, they provide a great deal of insight into the ways in which people relate to one another in more affective terms and offer an extended array of material that other scholars might use to

[23] Because Aristotle presents his material is such densely compacted forms, it is extremely difficult to summarize his work and yet maintain an adequate representation of its conceptual and substantive richness. Quite directly, there is so much more to his analysis of friendship than we are able to convey here.

develop comparative analyses of the processes by which people engage affective relationships. In this respect, their work both parallels and contributes to the scholarly objectives associated with contemporary analytic ethnography (see Blumer 1969; Lofland 1976, 1995; Strauss 1993; Prus 1996; 1997; 1999; Prus and Grills 2003).

While it would be absurd to expect any author, no matter how competent, to "do everything for us," it should be recognized that Plato and Aristotle have so much to offer to students of the human condition. Not only do their works serve as intellectual springboards from which to pursue the study of affective relationships in a number of comparatively neglected but highly productive ways, but their texts also serve as valuable transcontextual and transhistorical resources with to which assess (via comparative analysis) existing conceptualizations of the relationship process and further our understandings of human group life.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Natasa Bereneant, Lorraine Prus, and Beert Verstraete for their thoughtful readings of earlier drafts of this paper. We also are grateful for the editorial assistance of Lukas Marciniak, Krzysztof Konecki, Anna Kacperczyk, and the *Qualitative Sociology Review* staff in preparing this manuscript for publication.

References

Aquinas, St. Thomas (1964) *St. Thomas Aquinas' Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics.* Translated by C.I. Litzinger. Chicago: Henry Regnery.

Aristotle (1925) *Nicomachean Ethics.* Translated by W.D. Ross. New York: Oxford University Press.

----- (1984) *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, edited by Jonathan Barnes. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

----- (1985) *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by Terence Irwin. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett.

----- (1934) *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by Harris Rackham. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Bartell, Gilbert (1971) *Group Sex*. New York: Signet.

Blumer, Herbert (1969) *Symbolic Interactionism*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Correll, Shelley (1995) "The Ethnography of an Electronic Bar: The Lesbian Cafe." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 24: 270-298.

Ekins, Richard (1997) *Male Femaling: A Grounded Theory Approach to Cross-Dressing and Sex-Changing*. New York: Routledge.

Erber, Maureen Wang and Ralph Erber (2000) *Intimate Relationships: Issues, Theories, and Research*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Hendrick, Clyde and Susan S. Hendrick (2000) *Close Relationships: A Sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hesiod (1988) *Theogony* and *Works and Days*. Translated by M.L. West. New York: Oxford University Press.

Holmes, Mary (2010) "The Loves of Others: Autoethnography and Reflexivity in Researching Distance Relationships." *Qualitative Sociology Review* Vol.6 (2): 89-104.

Homer (1990) *The Iliad*. Translated by Robert Eagles with Introduction by Bernard Knox. New York: Penguin.

------ (1991) *The Odyssey*. Translated by E. V. Rieu. New York: Penguin.

Lofland, John (1976) *Doing Social Life*. New York: Wiley.

----- (1995) "Analytic Ethnography: Features, Failings, and Futures." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 24: 30-67.

Mead, George H (1934) *Mind, Self and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Palmer, Vivian (1928) *Field Studies in Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Plato (1997) *Plato: Complete Works*, edited by John M. Cooper. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett .

----- (1997) *Lysis.* Translated by Stanley Lombardo. Pp. 687-707 in John M. Cooper. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett.

----- (1995) *Phaedrus.* Translated by Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett.

----- (1989) *Symposium.* Translated by Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett.

Ponse, Barbara (1978) *Identities in the Lesbian World: The Social Construction of Self*. Westport, CN: Greenwood.

Prus, Robert (1976) "Religious Recruitment and the Management of Dissonance: A Sociological Perspective." *Sociological Inquiry* 46: 127-134.

----- (1989a) *Making Sales: Influence as Interpersonal Accomplishment*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

------ (1989b) *Pursuing Customers: An Ethnography of Marketing Activities*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

----- (1996) *Symbolic Interaction and Ethnographic Research: Intersubjectivity and the Study of Human Lived Experience*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

----- (1997) *Subcultural Mosaics and Intersubjective Realities: An Ethnographic Research Agenda for Pragmatizing the Social Sciences*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

----- (1999) *Beyond the Power Mystique: Power as Intersubjective Accomplishment*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

----- (2003a) "Ancient Precursors." Pp. 19-38 in *Handbook of Symbolic Interactionism,* edited by Larry T. Reynolds and Nancy J. Herman-Kinney. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.

----- (2003b) "Policy as a Collective Venture: A Symbolic Interactionist Approach to the Study of Organizational Directives." *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 23 (6): 13-60.

----- (2004) "Symbolic Interaction and Classical Greek Scholarship: Conceptual Foundations, Historical Continuities, and Transcontextual Relevancies." *The American Sociologist* 35 (1): 5-33.

----- (2005) "Terrorism, Tyranny, and Religious Extremism as Collective Activity: Beyond the Deviant, Psychological, and Power Mystiques." *The American Sociologist* 36 (1): 47-74.

----- (2006) "In Defense of Knowing, In Defense of Doubting: Cicero Engages Totalizing Skepticism, Sensate Materialism, and Pragmatist Realism in *Academica*." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 2 (3): 21-47.

----- (2007a) "Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*: Laying the Foundations for a Pragmatist Consideration of Human Knowing and Acting." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 3 (2): 5-45.

----- (2007b) "Human Memory, Social Process, and the Pragmatist Metamorphosis: Ethnological Foundations, Ethnographic Contributions and Conceptual Challenges." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 36 (4): 378-437.

----- (2007c) "On Studying Ethnologs (Not just People, 'Societies in Miniature'): On the Necessities of Ethnography, History, and Comparative Analysis." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 36 (6): 669-703.

----- (2007d) "The Intellectual Canons of a Public Sociology: Pragmatist Foundations, Historical Extensions, and Humanly Engaged Realities." Pp. 195-235 in *Public Sociology: The Contemporary Debat,* edited by Lawrence T. Nichols. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.

----- (2008a) "Aristotle's *Rhetoric*: A Pragmatist Analysis of Persuasive Interchange." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 4 (2): 24-62.

----- (2008b) "On the Pragmatics and Problematics of Defining Beauty and Character: The Greek Poet Lucian (120-200) Engages Exacting Portraitures and Difficult Subjects." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 4 (1): 3-20.

----- (2008c) "Producing, Consuming, and Providing Instruction on Poetic Texts in the Classical Roman Era: The Pragmatist Contributions of Horace (65-8BCE), Longinus (100CE), and Plutarch (46-125CE)." *Studies in Symbolic Interaction* 30: 81-103.

----- (2008d) "Writing History for Eternity: Lucian's (c120-200) Contributions to Pragmatist Scholarship and Ethnographic Analysis." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 37 (1): 62-78.

----- (2009) "Poetic Expressions and Human Enacted Realities: Plato and Aristotle Engage Pragmatist Motifs in Greek Fictional Representations." *Qualitative Sociology Review 5* (1): 3-27.

----- (2010) "Creating, Sustaining, and Contesting Definitions of Reality: Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BCE) as a Pragmatist Theorist and Analytic Ethnographer." *Qualitative Sociology Review 6* (2): 3-27.

Prus, Robert and Scott Grills (2003) *The Deviant Mystique: Involvements, Realities, and Regulation*. *Westport, CN: Praeger.*

Prus, Robert and Styllianoss Irini (1980) *Hookers, Rounders, and Desk Clerks: The Social Organization of the Hotel Community*. Salem, WI: Sheffield.

Puddephatt, Antony and Robert Prus (2007) “Causality, Agency, and Reality: Plato and Aristotle Meet G. H. Mead and Herbert Blumer.” *Sociological Focus* 40 (3): 265-286.

Reiss, Albert J. Jr. (1961) “The Social Integration of Queers and Peers.” *Social Problems* 9: 102-120.

Rosenblatt, Paul C. (2006) *Two in a Bed: The Social System of Couple Bed Sharing*. Albany, NY: State University of Albany Press.

Rosenblatt, Paul C., Terri Karis, and Richard Powell (1995) *Multiracial Couples: Black-and-White Voices*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rosenblatt, Paul C. and C. C. Stewart (2004) "Challenges in Cross-Cultural Marriage: When She is Chinese and He Euro-American." *Sociological Focus* 37: 43-58.

Secord, Carl W. and Paul F. Backman (1964) *Social Psychology*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Strauss, Anselm (1993) *Continual Permutations of Action*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.

Vaughan, Diane (1986) *Uncoupling: Turning Points in Intimate Relationships*. New York: Oxford.

Waller, Willard (1930) *The Old Love and the New*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Warren, Carol A. B. (1974) *Identity and Community in the Gay World*. New York: Wiley.

Citation

Prus Robert and Fatima Camara (2010) “Love, Friendship, and Disaffection in Plato and Aristotle: Toward a Pragmatist Analysis of Interpersonal Relationships**.**” *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Vol. VI Issue 3. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php)

Qualitative Sociology Review
Volume VI, Issue 3 – December 2010

Robert Sévigny
University of Montreal, Canada

Chen Sheying
Indiana University, USA

Elaina Y. Chen
Indiana University School of Medicine, USA

Explanatory Models of Illness and Psychiatric Rehabilitation: A Clinical Sociology Approach

Abstract

The notion of explanatory models of illness (EMI) epitomizes the theme of social representation in social psychiatry. This article illustrates a clinical sociology approach to the subject by revisiting the seminal work of Kleinman and reflecting on the use of EMI in studying severe mental illnesses, particularly in China. A general literature review is provided to show the complexity of the subject, and the work of clinical sociologist Sévigny over the past two decades is summarized. A case analysis is conducted to illuminate the many social factors that came to play in affecting the experiences and perceptions of schizophrenic patients and their significant others in the nation's capital Beijing in the 1990s. Diverse "explanations" in the experience of schizophrenia are explored, including the medical, the psychogenic, and the psychosocial models, among such others as inheritance and religious beliefs. Implications for research and clinical practice are discussed, including extending EMI study beyond illness interpretation to emphasize social rehabilitation.

Keywords

Explanatory Models of Illness (EMI); Social Psychiatry; Clinical Sociology; Rehabilitation of Schizophrenia; Case Study in China

Social psychiatry has been an understudied field in China, particularly since many ehavioral and social science disciplines were brought to a halt in the mid-20th century (Chen 2004). In contrast with scarce literature in this research field, the nation's rapid social change has produced mounting social and health problems,

---

1 Robert Sévigny is Professor Emeritus of Sociology at University of Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Sheying Chen is Professor of Sociology and Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at Indiana University, New Albany, IN, USA. Elaina Y. Chen is a clinical research assistant in the M.D. Program at Indiana University School of Medicine, Indianapolis, IN, USA. The project was supported by a grant from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada awarded to Prof. Sévigny (Principal Investigator).

particularly in its densely populated urban areas (Guo 1987; Sévigny Chen and Chen, 2009), with a large number of people suffering from schizophrenia (Lai and Lee 2006; Cooper and Sartorius 1996; Saha, Sukanta, Chant, David, Welham, Joy and McGrath, John 2005). In order to understand the responses of the Chinese society, Western research on the explanatory models of illness (EM or EMI) among psychiatric patients and other people suggests a useful approach to the social processes in which such a mental illness is recognized, interpreted, and treated in China. Following Kleinman's seminal work on the subject (Kleinman, 1980, 1988), researchers have made important contributions by applying EMI analysis in China (e.g., Phillips, 1998; Pearson, 1993), as well as in other developing countries such as India (e.g., Bhui and Bhugra, 2004; Charles, Manoranjitham and Jacob, 2007). Still others have used the EMI notion in a multi-ethnicity context (Hinton, Franz, Yeo and Levkoff, 2005). There are not enough case studies, however, to help expand EMI research, especially in the area of social rehabilitation of severe mental illnesses such as schizophrenia.

This article aims at shedding light on the subject by using a clinical sociology approach with a historical understanding of mental health issues in urban China amid significant social changes in the 1990s (Sévigny, 2004). In order to position our analysis under the perspectives of EMI, we first provide a review of such approaches to severe mental illness (schizophrenia in particular) in the literature. Based on an examination of their cultural relevance to the Chinese context, we present evidence from a case study in Beijing on how those recognized as well as some potentially new models were found in the real life of the Chinese people.

Research Background and Methodological Considerations

This paper is the result of collaboration between the first two authors. Chen specializes in macro-sociology and research methodology, ranging from policy analysis to cross-cultural practice in social work and mental health, with a special interest in the general or quantitative representation of psychosocial problems in China (Chen 1997, 2002). Sévigny has been working in the field of mental illness and rehabilitation in urban China from a clinical sociology perspective, which is a more micro point of view. For a comprehensive and penetrating analysis of data accumulated in the post-Maoist 1990s, their complementary approaches combined do form a unique edge. In a previous article (Sévigny, Chen and Chen 2009), they studied the place and the impact of the *Danwei* (work unit) in the experience of severe mental illness (schizophrenia). The present study further explores the notion of EMI evolved out of medical anthropology in the representation of mental illness in China from the integrated micro-macro approach.

Such a multi-level approach is supported by the following perspectives: (a) Systems perspective: Personal history, family and living arrangements, wider informal social networks, work/employment and other formal organization participation, social institutions, stratification, population and environment, and social-cultural change; and (b) Disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives: Social psychiatry, social medicine, clinical sociology, social work, and public policy. The approach entails adequate epistemological thinking, including the micro vs. the macro, empirical vs. interpretative, qualitative vs. quantitative, objectivity vs. subjectivity, the validity of behavioral and experiential data, personal experience and its representation, and the nature or value of those actors' knowledge. While not without exception, the traditional "scientific" analysis stresses quantitative data,

logical empiricism, and objective knowledge independent of both researchers and subjects. In contrast, our analysis will emphasize interpretative, qualitative, and experiential data as well as subjective understanding on the part of the researchers (which does not preclude an analytical posture from the latter). The following will not follow the typical empiricist-positivist hypothesis-testing procedure but offer a psychosocial perspective in which detailed case study data are provided to explore what it meant to experience a severe mental illness in China.

Two previous research projects by Sévigny were relevant to this project. The first one was an analysis of mental health practice from a sociological, interpretative approach. In that project, Sévigny (1983, 1984) coined the notion of "implicit sociology" to illustrate how mental health professionals did not limit themselves to formal/explicit/expert knowledge to understand and communicate with patients. Especially, on many social dimensions of mental illness experience, psychiatrists would use their personal, experiential knowledge to conduct medical assessments, to make suggestions to a patient, etc. For instance, a psychiatrist who had worked most of his life in a poor urban area would understand the meaning (for a woman) of being depressed or extremely violent in his unique way. In studying schizophrenia in China, the idea of implicit sociology has been expanded to pursue the diverse meanings, interpretations, and languages each party (e.g., patient or relatives, work unit leaders or colleagues besides psychiatrists or psychologists) used to express the experience of mental illness. It is for that project that Sévigny formulated a clinical sociology analytical grid (Rhéaume and Sévigny 1988).[2]

More immediately related to the present study is a project conducted by Sévigny in the mid-1990s on social rehabilitation of patients suffering from severe mental illness in urban China. During that period of post-Maoism, he was asked to set up a research project with two objectives in mind: first, to propose a sociological approach to the process of rehabilitation of schizophrenic patients, and, second, gather some qualitative data on the experience of the patients themselves and the experience of other significantly related people (Sévigny 1993, 2004, 2008: 2-10; Sévigny, Weng, Yang, Loignon and Wang 2009). It was understood at the outset that the approach would be largely based on the notions of experiential knowledge, representation, and meaning. It was also agreed that the project would be a "collaborative" endeavor in the field of clinical sociology[3] and would use a case study approach. Case analysis stressed a few central experiences, in which the patient tried to understand and give meaning to such things as feeling alienation from his/her usual social environment (work situation, family life, etc.), effort to retain a positive self image, and ways of accomplishing relatively satisfying social rehabilitation. One of those central questions each patient (and those in his/her immediate social environment, or ISE) had come to deal with was: How can I explain to myself, and to others, what happened and what is still happening to me? For each patient in the sample, the theme of "explanation" was central to both the experience

2 Clinical sociology is considered a sub-field of sociology that has its roots in many schools or trends in social sciences, mainly research-action, social psychology, interpersonal relationship, group dynamics, personality-culture-social structure, and social intervention. Clinical sociology always, in one way or another, deals with practice or action, either by studying the process of intervention or by studying factors related to action or practice, The term "clinical" is used here mainly by analogy ("to be or to go near the patient") and stress the intention to relate theory and practice, or concepts and empirical data. The other analogy implies the methodology of case studies. While some clinical sociologists work in the field of health, clinical sociology has been applied to all areas of action/practice (Sévigny 1996; Fritz 2008).

3 While all the field work was done in a research-action/collaborative perspective, most of the analytical work has been conducted by the first author and other contributors.

of illness and the experience of rehabilitation. And the question was central for all those who were concerned about the patient's experience.

More than 15 years have passed since the field work was done, but this background led us to a systematic inquiry into the EMI in a quest for more up-to-date and culturally relevant tools for research.[4]

Objectives and Approaches of the Present Study

The purpose of this article is to reassess the **core** of the of the original EMI approach by exploring its similarities and differences with Sévigny's approach. Sévigny's clinical sociology approach focuses on how the larger social system (LSS) is referred to by patients and their significant others[5] when they try to make sense of the schizophrenic experience. The emphasis on the LSS, supported by Chen's macro-sociology perspective with an "economic state in transition" model to highlight the Chinese public policy context (Chen 2002), pays special attention to the rehabilitation process from an experiential perspective. The authors also wish to inquire into the "medical explanatory model" from a non-medical or non-professional point of view. A working hypothesis here is that there are fundamental differences between the medical and the lay knowledge/language, as well as very important complementarities between them.

The research involves a broad range of concepts related to social representation or explanation. In view of those conceptual schemes, the article will use case material to illustrate the uses of and reasons for different EMI by the Chinese people in both the diagnosis-treatment of schizophrenia and the rehabilitation process (after single or repeated crisis) in a particular historical context, e.g., post-Maoist urban China. Based on such analysis, the study will provide some significant lessons to improve the understanding of explanatory models (EM) of severe mental illnesses.

The article contains three parts. First, it examines the "classical" notion of EM with regard to mental illness. A major use of the notion has been to highlight the idea that there are other types of explanations than the medical ones and other significant points of views than those of the psychiatrists (i.e., "lay", "folk" or "popular" explanatory models and idioms of distress). The non-medical explanations from the literature will be summarized before reviewing the EMI notion that Kleinman proposed in the late 1970's. The second part presents an analysis of a case study, which will illuminate how clinical sociology approaches the question of explaining or interpreting the experience of schizophrenia with a special emphasis on social

4 In a pilot study Sévigny (1997), though not referring directly to Good' concepts (Sévigny 1977), used semantic indicators and identified three major EMI's in a complex theoretical system: a medical model, a personality of psychogenic model, and a psychosocial model. Sévigny also found that some informants – mainly family members – had referred to traditional Chinese medicine, though in a much more subdued or implicit way. For instance, a father would say "by the way" how he had taken his son to his old village to consult a traditional doctor, without elaborating on the subject, presumably because of the fact that his son had finally been hospitalized in a non-traditional institution.

5 This notion in sociology refers to any social actor adopted as a role model by another social actor (Jary and Jary 1991). Such a definition implies deep personal and emotional relationship with another social actor. In the context of this research project, we use a broad notion of "significant others" to include all social actors related to a person experiencing schizophrenia. The assumption is that even if some of them would not necessarily be considered as "role models", they had personally and emotionally "significant" relationships with the patient. For example, *Danwei* leaders or hospital staff were, at least potentially, "significant others" for the person experiencing a severe mental illness.

rehabilitation in a particular socio-cultural context. Finally, we will discuss how both the methodological approach and some interpretations of the data point to potentially significant improvement for further studies, particularly in the area of social rehabilitation.

Social Representation of Severe Mental Illness

Social representation of mental illness is a "classical" theme in social psychiatry (Jodelet 1991; Moscovici 1988). Here the notion is taken in its broadest sense to encompass many classic ideas in the social sciences: the definition of the situation, the perception of self and others, the meaning of experiencing, etc. Studying the social rehabilitation of psychiatric patients first requires understanding the representation of mental illness among different social actors involved in the process. Whether from the point of view of patients or those around them, attitudes and behaviors are based on such representation of mental illness.

EMI is a conceptual tool to help operationally define the idea of social representation of mental illness. A “model” is often used to classify the representation of professional (e.g., medical) knowledge, theory, practice, etc. But here we use the term in the same way as most medical anthropologists tend to use it, that is, representation of “non-professional” views and experiences. The explanatory models are commonly applied to both consequences (impact or outcome) and causes. In this article we use “causality” in a broad sense in order to understand the diversity of meaning of all the actors’ experiences.[6] When one talks about what causes an illness, the “cause” may be understood in the context of scientific knowledge. In the biomedical world, for example, certain factors explain an illness and determine an appropriate treatment. The key word here is “to explain”. The understanding that a lay person (e.g., a patient) has of her experience does not preclude reference to this scientific discourse: without belonging to the scientific world, the patient may well explain her/his illness in terms of genetics or psychosis. Today’s “common knowledge” is very often yesterday’s “scientific knowledge”. On the other hand, a patient may also talk about a “cause” in reference to the symbolic or subjective world of “meaning”. The search for answers to “why something happened”, and “how”, would be a part of the desire to understand and interpret illness. The patient may try to interpret what is happening to her without going into the realm of science. She/he may see it through the lenses of different sources of knowledge including science, the paranormal, spirituality, the universe of feeling, and personal motivation.

EMI: Diverse Approaches

By proposing the idea of EMI, Kleinman made a seminal contribution that influenced numerous other social scientists - by making it possible for patients and

6 Common definitions of a “cause”: (1) Things, persons, situations, events, historical moments, etc., which make something exist or happen; (2) Motivation, reason (*Le Grand Dictionnaire Encyclopédique de la Langue Française*, 1996). In the broad sense, “cause” is similar to “meaning. The English Oxford Dictionary defines “cause” as: “a person or thing that gives rise to an action, phenomenon or condition. (…) grounds for doing things, thinking or feeling something”, while “explanation” is defined as: “statement or account that makes something clear. (…) a reason or justification given for an action or a belief.” Such definitions do not refer to the methodology of establishing an “objective” relationship between a cause and a consequence, though one may refer to this “scientific” language in his or her own “non-scientific”, lay knowledge.

other related people to have a say about the experience of severe mental illness.[7] Let us look at a sample of projects that have explored the views of people involved, directly or indirectly, with mental health and illness in various contexts and with diverse research strategies. The following are different ways of classifying research projects that have considered the views of the actors as an important base for the understanding of mental health/illness.

Classification of EMI based on different notions used. There are many "equivalents" for the notion of illness, and also for the notion of "explanation". For illness representation, the following terms may also be used: sickness, disease, disorder, distress, disability, severe mental illness, severe mental health problems, etc. Similarly, there are a number of notions related to social representation that may be used in generic or specific ways: perception (illness perceptions), interpretation (interpretative or comprehensive approach), attribution (social attribution, symptom attribution, etc., which usually refer to non-professional explanations of an illness, problem, etc.), reason (as opposed to "scientific" causation), meaning (e.g., "meaning-centered analysis of popular illness", see Good and Good 1982), social construction, and common sense. The main interest in this listing of "equivalents" is to stress the richness and also the complexity of the notion of EMI. Each of these related notions may point to a specific psychiatric practice and/or a different research purpose.

Classification based on populations or samples studied. Another way to organize or classify research on EMI is the type of population or sample studied. One of the basic insights associated with EMI is the importance of taking into account the views of all persons related to a specific case rather than using only the medical (or biomedical) frame of reference.

- Studies about singular cases: According to Kleinman (1980, 1988a, 1988b), an EMI makes sense only with regard to specific/particular cases. This is how he suggested studying the EMI for each person related to a particular case: the patient's EMI,[8] the mother's EMI, etc. If we stick to Kleinman's definition of an EMI, only this type of sample would satisfy his criteria.[9] Different yet still close to Kleinman's notion are those studies based on samples consisting of people directly related to a person suffering from mental illness (usually family members of a patient).
- Studies based on samples of persons directly related to mental illness: Phillips and colleagues (2000) used this type of sample, for instance. This is useful when each respondent refers at least implicitly to a patient personally known to him or her while the conclusions or interpretations cannot be applied directly to specific individuals.
- Surveys of general populations: Generally, the objective is to find out the "lay" or the "popular" knowledge of ordinary people toward mental illness, or toward a specific disorder like schizophrenia. Dear and Taylor (1982) used this type of research, for example. A sub-type includes comparisons between populations, such as Americans vs. Chinese. Such surveys, deviating from Kleinman's original notion, are nevertheless useful for the study of EMI if taken as a whole. The main justification for this is that they are a part of

7 In this paper our reference to Kleinman's work concerns mainly or exclusively what could be called the core notion of EMI, and does not inten to to present a comprehensive review of his contribution of this notion.

8 The typical translation of a "patient" in the Chinese language is a "sick person".

9 This singular case approach was adopted by Sévigny in the Beijing project, hence the case analysis approach.

a cultural context.

Classification according to different aspects and time frames. The use of EMI may focus on different aspects/dimensions of mental health and illness, such as vulnerability-stress, "triggering" factors or conditions, expressed emotions (as a factor related to rehabilitation and to relapses), social stigma and stereotypes, help-seeking behavior, etc. Other categories may be based on different moments (e.g., a "before/after a specific event" or a state of vulnerability), or different phases (i.e., from diagnosis to treatment to rehabilitation),[10] in illness history.

Classification according to different research methods. Even though research may share the same purpose, the projects often differ from their methodological perspectives.

- Clinical approaches: The original work of Kleinman on EMI within the context of medical anthropology was concerned with immediate relationship between a patient and medical staff. Although this would not prevent generalizations later, the methodology used was basically clinical intervention. Kleinman used the usual tools of anthropologists, including the interview situation and participant observation (Kleinman 1980, 1988a, 1988b). Some others have based their research on clinical practice, such as the work of Phillips (1998).
- Statistical methodology: Many studies are based on statistics, which may not be considered as pertaining to the EMI field. They nevertheless provide clinicians with a useful contextual understanding of individual cases.
- Structured vs. unstructured data: The statistical approach implies structured data, and much of the research reviewed belongs to this type. On the other hand, others have used techniques more akin to classical social anthropology such as in-depth interviews or focus groups.
- Semantic data: As seen in the exchange between Kleinman and Good (Good and Good, 1980), semantic analysis is a complex field of study. Sévigny and colleagues (1999) also conducted a preliminary study based on similar but simplified type of EMI.

The above outline for identifying "representation" or "explanation" of mental illness underscores the complexity of both notions. Since the focus of this article is on the explanatory models of schizophrenia, we will refer to some but not all of the approaches mentioned above. In the following, we will examine Kleinman's definition of EMI, clarify its boundaries, and explore the use of EMI in the study of social representations that different actors have of rehabilitation (not just illness itself).

Kleinman's Notion of EMI

KIeinman proposed the notion of EMI at the turn of the 1980s. The following are notable regarding his seminal work and have been applied in numerous subsequent works:

- Kleinman and other medical anthropologists have applied the notion of EMI to three classical sectors of health intervention in terms of the knowledge and language referred to by a) medical professionals/formal interveners,

10 The case study we present in the next section, for instance, was based on interviews collected about six months after hospitalization. In this context the collected data, even when the interviewee spoke of the crisis period, was always "colored" by the immediate experience of rehabilitation.

b) informal or traditional helpers, and c) the general population of a specific society (Kleinman 1980). While the study of the first two types of knowledge (medical and folk) had been a part of medical anthropology for some time, Kleinman's quite radical point was to allow for the exploration and understanding of the views of many other people involved with the experience of patients. Those viewpoints became a substantial part of the psychiatric theory and practice. At least in the modern urban context, Kleinman's contribution suggests that, besides the biomedical knowledge, there are other less formal views useful for approaching mental illness and rehabilitation.

- Those "explanations" were understood as being given by persons involved in the experience of mental illness: the patient him-/herself, family members, relatives, etc. Even if clinicians or health professionals in contact with a patient did not formally mention this aspect, they did constitute a significant addition to biomedical knowledge (Kleinman, 1981).[11] EMI was not confined to the "individual" aspects of the experience but included social conditions/contexts of the patient's experience. A set of "categories" were proposed to describe and analyze this patient-social environment connections. Examples often referred to by Kleinman were concerned with the patient's immediate social situation but also were relevant to his/her social environment
- The notion of "explanation" was defined in a very broad and comprehensive sense. Intending to explore other definitions than the scientific or biomedical definition of the "causes" of an illness, he proposed a broad notion of "explanation" that included "experience" and "experiencing"[12] on one hand and "meaning", "understanding", and "interpretation" on the other.
- The methodology proposed was an anthropological approach, mainly participant observation and unstructured or semi-structured interviews. The explanations were, by definition, those given about a specific case. Each case involved a specific set of EMI. Case analysis in that context was the main analytical tool to allow for the exploration of the experience of mental illness from the viewpoints other than that of the medical expert.
- The purpose of the EMI study was to contribute to different types of mental health services and different "moments" of clinical interventions (from diagnosis to decision making about hospitalization, to treatment, and finally to rehabilitation).

Without following strictly the original EMI idea, some researchers have stressed different aspects of mental illness experiences. Others, without being centered on the mental health experience, have proposed approaches that also stress or give priority to the actor's knowledge and have been sometimes applied to the mental illness experience. A few instances of them are the grounded theory with its notion of "substantive" knowledge (Strauss 1987; Glaser 1992), the lay knowledge as opposed to professional knowledge (Fabrega 2002, 2006), the EMIC-ETIC approach, which was first developed in linguistics but much applied to anthropology (For instance, Fabrega (1991), the local knowledge (Geertz 2000), the indigenous knowledge, and

11 Having explored how psychiatric/medical professionals in practice referred to some non-professional knowledge about the social conditions – their own and their patients', Sévigny extended the notion of "implicit sociology" (Rhéaume and Sévigny 1988; Sévigny 1996) more specifically to psychiatric cases, including medical personnel, family members, neighborhood and local authorities and work units (*Danwei*) (Sévigny 2008, 2008a, 2009).

12 This is related to the notion of "experiential knowledge".

the implicit or tacit knowledge or etiology (Whitehouse, Maurer and Ballenger 1999). There are also other general concepts such as “attitude” or “belief” that are used in analyzing people’s values in relation to mental illness. This brief list illustrates how innovative Kleinman’s notion of EMI was, as part of a larger trend in the development of social sciences (particularly anthropology and sociology). Nevertheless, no clear answer has been found to the question arising from the Kleinman-Good exchange (Good and Good 1980): Does the EMI lead only to interpretation of a patient’s individual illness, or should or could it be seen as an interpretation of a “larger” social or cultural meaning? This question is still debated and reminds us of another, classical debate about individual/society/culture relationship, which is relatively new in sociology and tends to postulate a more deterministic point of view.[13]

All these are important in considering the original conception of EMI. Featuring research on mental health in ensuing years, it indicates the value, both for clinical practice and for research, of exploring and analyzing the views of all those involved to fully understand the experience of severe mental illness. [14]

Case Analysis

Undoubtedly, Kleinman’s contribution initiated a much more comprehensive approach to mental illness. Our assumption is that it may also be central to the study of social rehabilitation.[15] In order to show how Kleinman’s contribution has benefited clinical sociology in this regard, we will present some case material in this section. But we will first explore whether and how different social actors personally related to a patient’s experience of schizophrenia referred to any of the EMI reviewed above in their representation of severe mental illness, particularly to Kleinman's EMI.

Our empirical data were extracted from a qualitative research project conducted in China mentioned earlier (Sévigny, Chen and Chen 2009, Sévigny 2008, 2009, 2010). Between l988 and l997, the first author was involved as a sociological researcher in a large psychiatric hospital in Beijing. Twenty patients, as well as people from their immediate social environment (ISE) – family/relatives, neighbors, colleagues and leaders at workplace, and medical/hospital staff – were interviewed between 1990 and 1993. Most patients belonged to a major state-owned *Danwei* (work unit) and all were hospitalized in the medical facility. The research used a semi-structured technique of interview and focused on social representation by covering cultural, social, and organizational dimensions related to mental health interventions and rehabilitation. The analytical grid included basic concepts concerning the person-society relationship, which referred to the many “layers” of social conditions, ranging from personal experiencing to the interpersonal relations and to the larger social, economic, political and cultural systems. The case under study was chosen from this sample, which has been analyzed at length according to

13 Martucelli (2002) offers a new approach to the individual/society relationship, which, when applied to the mental illness/health field, opens it up to a less deterministic point of view.

14 For an excellent presentation of the EMI notion in the context of public health, see Massé (1995)

15 Psychiatric rehabilitation may be seen as a part of treatment, or as the process that may follow the treatment or hospitalization. Either way, for a patient, rehabilitation implies coming back to his or her previous place of life, re-gaining a previous status or achieving a new one. It is a complex biopsychosocial experience. In that sense, any rehabilitation is social rehabilitation involving the family, the neighborhood, and social organizations (including workplace and medical establishments) (Sévigny et al., 1997). In the context of this research, social rehabilitation involves all aspects of social life outside the hospital after hospitalization

the general grid mentioned above (Sévigny 2010). The differences between the perspectives of medical personnel, *Danwei* colleagues and leaders, members of neighborhood organizations and the family, and patients themselves as well as Western and Chinese representations of mental illness are also illuminated. Here we focus mainly on the EMI as perceived and expressed by the patient and her ISE.[16] We will explore in what terms the patient and the people from her ISE explained their encounter with a severe mental illness. After a short presentation of the patient and her ISE, we will explore how the EMIs implied, directly or indirectly, by the meaning, reasons, explanation, and causes of the patient's experience of schizophrenia.[17]

Case Description

Lulu, female, was 24 years old when she was first interviewed. She completed graduate studies and, since then, had always worked in the private sector after refusing the job assignment given by her college. At the onset of her crisis, she had been living with her boyfriend Ceng for three years.[18] They met in secondary school. At home she had her mother and a younger sister who was also suffering from a severe mental illness and hospitalized when Lulu went through her own crisis. She had an older sister who seemed to be in control of her own life and was helping her family through their difficulties, which were aggravated by the fact that their father had taken his own life a few years ago. When the episode concerning Lulu happened, the mother was outside of home tending her younger sister. Some time before Lulu was hospitalized, her older sister had helped her finding a job: she was accepted as a trainee in a new department store. In the new market economy, the store was owned and managed by foreign investment.[19] Lulu was released from the hospital about a year before the interviews were conducted and had since been living with her family. Just a few weeks earlier, again with the help of her sister, she had found a new job.

Causality and Meaning : "What Is Happening to Me?"

This question, which she discussed at length with the doctor who treated her, was still present in her mind almost a year after the crisis that led her to the psychiatric hospital. And the question applied to many of the critical incidents that happened to her. Our case presentation will be limited to her meeting with a taxi driver at the beginning of her illness and her hallucinations about his father.

---

16 Among the very few who have studied perceptions and representations of personal experiences of severe mental problems in China, Pearson (1995) and Phillips et al. (2000) dealt with the topic from different perspectives.

17 In the original, complete analysis, the case was analyzed under four headings indicating different but related approaches to the understanding of the patient's experience: a) the central or critical experiences in the patient's encounter with schizophrenia, b) consequences in his/her social rehabilitation, c) explanatory models (causes, consequences, meanings, etc.) and d) the patient's experience with the larger social system.

18 Note how she had accepted, and identified with, the new trend of the Chinese reform by the early 1990s: The absence of tight social control over her private life (her love affair) and her choosing a different job from the one assigned to her after her graduation.

19 In contrast to some other cases, Lulu found herself as a part of the trend characterizing the "new China" and felt very happy and motivated in that context.

She had been sent home by her department store manager who felt she was not feeling well at all and could not do her job. And she took a taxi, which her manager had called for her. A long story unfolded from there. She felt guilty for having had sex with this taxi driver because she felt she betrayed her boyfriend Ceng. At the same time, she was quite "shaken" because she remembered having more pleasure having sex with Fang (the taxi driver) than she usually did with Ceng.[20]

(1) Causes and consequences

Almost a year after this incident, she asked questions about love and sexuality with deep feelings. She remembered that Fang abused her, yet did not reject "those good feelings" when she was with him. At the same time, she could not see herself marrying Ceng ("I made love with another man...I belong to another man [than Ceng]...). Another reason making it impossible to marry Ceng: "I am mentally sick and if we had a baby it would be a fool".

Lulu was interested in understanding the causes of her illness and its consequences. Concerning mental illness, this distinction led her to differentiate between having experienced her illness (such as her hallucinations) and the consequences for her social reinsertion and rehabilitation.

(2) The question of meaning: "What is happening to me?"

During her interview, Lulu recalled another event that left her with incomprehension and fear: "*I saw my dad on TV. He was navigating a space ship…*" At that moment, she remembered telling herself: "*What is happening to me?*" Her father had passed away a few years ago and there she saw him on the screen. This question expressed her feeling of despair concerning both what happened to her during that past year and in that particular event. In many ways, she tried to understand the reasons that caused her crisis and what had happened afterwards, but in the case of her hallucinations associated with her father, it was more meaning than consequence that still bothered her.

(3) Biomedical explanations

While biomedical explanations did not play an important part in her understanding of her illness, Lulu would still refer to them from time to time:

- She made allusion to genetics twice: First, she told the interviewer that she thought schizophrenia could only be passed on from father to son, yet she realized that her younger sister inherited the illness from their father. Second, she mentioned that because of the genetic factors she did not make the decision to bear Ceng's child.
- What she really tried to understand was why she had "hallucinations". She asked herself the question, stressing at the same time that she did not understand why (*What is happening to me?*). Interesting enough, she did not mention any of the medical staff comments on that issue.[21]
- She directly addressed the medical aspect of her illness only when she

20 Even she knew she had some hallucinations while she was with Fang (for a few days), all this was not only hallucinations: Fang indeed was a "real" person who took her back to her home and met Ceng, Lulu's boyfriend. So the explanations she was trying to find were at those two levels.
21 In the entire interview, Lulu did not say much about her hospitalization.

made a connection between medication and sexuality ("*Since I've been medicated, I don't want to have sex anymore* (…) *Our sexual life is not as satisfactory as in the past*…"). Yet, after making that connection, she did not go further to conclude that things would be better if she were not medicated: for her, medication was only one of the many explanations. Her real preoccupation was her relationship with Ceng, not just the sexual aspect of it.

- She would sometimes use the concept of "illness", "psychosis", or "schizophrenia" to explain her situation, but generally s she tended to avoid naming her illness and would rather say "*this illness*" or "*this kind of illness*" as we saw in the following examples: The first medical explanation that she gave to make sense of what happened with a taxi driver[22] was that she was suffering from a heart disease (*I did not know that I had <u>this kind</u> of illness… I thought I was suffering from a heart disease*). Again, she lost her job because of her illness (*I lost everything because I was ill…*). And finally, she believed that she brought prejudice to Ceng "*because of this illness*".

Her illness became a way to understand her experience, yet she did not seek medical explanations as such. In other words, she saw her illness as the cause: knowing that she was ill enough to make sense of her experience. Finally, with the exception of her brief allusion to genetics, she did not try to explain her "illness" in terms of any biomedical or "scientific" knowledge.

(4) The paranormal explanation

Lulu used a paranormal explanation to understand how her father appeared in her hallucinations. As we saw from this statement:

A newspaper that I read addressed the question: Can the spirit get out of its human shell? I read that Americans were conducting experiments on living humans, experiences that allowed the spirit to get out of its shell… I think that because of this illness [hers]*, I have earring and visual hallucinations. It's just the spirit that is going out of its shell…*

She did not explain her hallucination as a magical paranormal experience. Rather, she had a rational approach to the paranormal.

(5) Qigong and the release of energy

Lulu also talked about *Qigong*, which is seen by scientists as either a paranormal science or spirituality (particularly in terms of Chinese popular religion). As we saw in the excerpts from her interview, she talked about *Qigong* when she repeated how she left her job in a state of crisis ("*Some people were sending me energies…*"). The way she still talked about it, twelve months after the events, showed how this was a part of her belief system. Whether or not she had hallucinations, *Qigong* existed and she could use it to understand her experience.

(6) Her personality and her search for understanding

Her self-image played an important role in her understanding. When asked by the interviewer to describe herself, she gave a rather positive image. She saw herself as being "*superior to the average individual*", as "*intelligent*", and mentioned that she

22 Lulu had intimate relationship with the taxi driver for a short period of time.

always did well in class ("*among the first ten students*"), she was "*extraverted*" and "*knows how to make friends easily*", she had a "*good sense of humour*". Yet, when she spoke of herself in those terms, it was not to "explain" her illness, but to express, by comparison, the consequences or "sequels" of this illness: her feeling of apathy, the absence of rules, the boredom and the isolation, her difficult relationship with Ceng, her suicidal tendencies, etc.

(7) Her feeling of guilt

Her feeling of guilt was also a part of her personality. This feeling punctuated her search for understanding. She did not dwell on it, but made allusions when referring to the key people of her experience. Sometimes, this feeling appeared during her hallucinations, as was the case when she was with the taxi driver. At other times, she expressed it clearly, as was the case with Ceng. First she felt guilty because she had "caused him prejudice", then she felt guilty because of the "genetic root of her illness". She also felt guilty for her relationship with the taxi driver. Finally, she felt guilty – or at least indebted – towards her mother. At the beginning of the interview, she was asked: "How does your mother treat you?" She answered briefly: "I have no complaint." Later on, she expressed herself in a more emotional way:

"I think it's not fair for my mother… It's not easy for her to take care of a daughter of my age… If it was not for her, I would already be dead… Her life is so miserable, she was so unlucky… I do my best to stay alive just for her…"

Her relationship with her mother and her feeling of guilt toward her were central to her understanding of her experience even though Lulu did not make any explicit connection in terms of "causality".

(8) Lulu's experience towards the Reform politics

The reader must remind himself/herself that we were in the early 1990s: the Reform had taken place for more than ten years, but was still in the midst of tremendous political and social change. Contrary to some other cases, Lulu was open and in favor of the social and economic reform toward a market economy. It is not clear if Lulu's political views had any impact on her illness, but it seemed clear that it had some implications for her rehabilitation process.

Although this is only a short summary of Lulu's case, it is important, as in most psychosocial analyses, to keep in mind three dimensions or levels of experiences: the individual level; the immediate entourage; and the greater social, political, economic, and cultural clusters. Lulu made references to them all; she would sometimes refer to one dimension and to another one later on. They remained present as important background of Lulu's actions.

Clinical Sociology and EMI: Discussions

Our review and analysis in this article and other publications suggests a number of ways to achieve a better understanding of the notion of "explanation" or the idea of EMI. All case studies from the original Beijing research project suggest that the clinical sociology approach, specially its operational methodology, may add meaning and complexity to the EMI notion. In the contest of this research, operational definition of EMI implied the following characteristics:

- To address more systematically the organizational, institutional, political and social dimensions of the experience of schizophrenia rather than focusing solely on the cultural perspective. Take a plural or multidisciplinary approach instead of a mono-disciplinary one, incorporating sociology, anthropology, political science, etc.
- To include important social actors that were almost never included in the analysis of EMI (the Danwei, its leaders and members, is a good example).
- To propose a broad definition of the notion of “explanation” or “explanatory”: to include consequences as well as causes and consider personal motivations or intentions, desires or “wishes”, as being potentially part of an explanatory model. Such a complex definition of causality was given in one of the previous papers (Sévigny, Chen and Chen 2009). Lulu's questions about her sexuality and love were of that type.
- To include, in the data to be analyzed or understood, the points of view of all the main actors from a patient’s immediate social environment (ISE). Nothing in the original idea of EMI did preclude such an inclusion, but many other important social actors such as Danwei leaders and members, local authorities, hospital staff persons and others, were almost never included in the analysis of EMI.
- To give a more central place to the experience of social rehabilitation. Of course, as all psychiatrists have done in one way or another, Kleinman included rehabilitation as the ultimate end of treatment. However, compared to recent developments in the last two decades, rehabilitation in the 1980s did not have the central place that it now enjoys in the psychiatric field in China as elsewhere. From a methodological perspective, this has been achieved by gathering the relevant data between six months and a year after the hospitalization period. In other words, data have been gathered in the period during which social rehabilitation ("life after hospitalization and after the psychiatric crisis") was a central or critical phase. A good illustration of the place of social rehabilitation in relationship with other aspects of a patient's experience is this one: Lulu has a lot to remember, and to be concerned about, her hallucinations before and during her hospitalization, but it is clear that the remembering of that period was important about her future life, that is, her rehabilitation.
- Address the control issue we alluded to in the first section: Do social and cultural conditions determine only (or mainly) symptoms and illnesses, treatment and rehabilitation or, is it possible that patients and their significant others may use their personal and social resources to exercise some control over their personal and social experiences, or at least the representations of them? This question is still much debated in medical anthropology (Lock and Scheper-Hughes 1990). Lulu expressed the concern for the same "cause-consequence' issue. In her own way, on a very practical but also as an existential level, she was struggling with the question that Martucelli (2002) considers as characterizing one of the experience of "modern" individual: "how, in spite of my severe problems, do I stand up as a person and as a member of my society?"

The above points may be summarized in two general guidelines: a) Keep in mind the three dimensions of all experiences: the individual level, the immediate entourage, and the greater social, political, economic, and cultural clusters; and b) always include the rehabilitation process as one of the critical personal and social issues of

any experience of severe mental illness. In their representation of their experience of schizophrenia, Lulu and other cases studied all made explicit and implicit references to those three levels and to their psychosocial rehabilitation.[23]

Kleinman's original idea of EMI helped to advance the study of social representation in social psychiatry. It provides behavioral and social scientists with a useful paradigm to understand the meaning of mental illness from the perspectives of a patient and her significant others, as well as the impact of the patient's interactions with her immediate and larger social environment. On the other hand, clinical sociologists' work helps to validate the EMI approaches via detailed case studies that focus on various social factors affecting the experiences and perceptions of schizophrenic patients and their significant others. It also helps to identify the existing boundaries of the EMI approaches and expand their use in meaningful and operational ways. Sévigny's effort in the past two decades as reviewed in this article is a typical example of how clinical sociology research has approached the subject in similar yet different ways with an emphasis on relevance to the Chinese context. In that sense, the environment of a de-politicized "economic state" (Chen, 2004) is key to a historical understanding of the larger picture of mental health issues in China amid significant social changes since the late 1970s.

References

Bhui, Kamaldeep, and Bhugra, Dinesh (2004) Communication with patients from other cultures: The place of explanatory models. *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment* 10:474-478.

Charles, H., Manoranjitham, S.D., and Jacob, K.S. (2007) Stigma and explanatory models among people with schizophrenia and their relatives in Vellore, south India. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry* 53(4): 325 - 332.

Chen, Sheying (1997) *Measurement and Analysis in Psychosocial Research: The Failing and Saving of Theory*. Brookfield, VT: Ashgate.

------ (2002). Social problems of the economic state: Historical roots and future directions. *China Report* 38(2):193-214.

------ (2004). *Public Policy and Development Strategy: Theoretical, Comparative, and Historical Perspectives Illustrated with the Case of the Chinese State*. Kendall/Hunt Publishing, Dubuque, IA.

Cooper, J. E., and Sartorius, N. editors (1996) *Mental Disorders in China: Results of the National Epidemiological Survey in 12 Areas*. London: Gaskell.

Dear, M.J., and Taylor, S.M. (1982) *Not on Our Street: Community Attitudes to Mental Health Care*. London: Pion.

Fabrega, Horacio (1991) 'Psychiatric Stigma in Non-ÀWestern Societies". *Comprehensive Psychiatry,* Vol.32, No 6: 534-551.

------ (2002) Medical validity in Eastern and Western traditions. *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, 45(3):395-415.

23 Space limitation prevents us from presenting all cases and discussing at length the notion of clinical sociology. Interested readers may refer to related publications (Sévigny 1996, 2008, 2008, 2009, 2010).

------ (2006) “Why psychiatric conditions are special: An evolutionary and cross-cultural perspective.” *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, 49(4):586-601.

Franklin Franklin, Karl J. (1996) “On Etic vs Emic: A Review and Interview.” *Summer Institute of Linguistics.*

Fritz, J.M. editor (2008) *International Clinical Sociology.* New-York. Springer.

Geertz, Clifford (2000) *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (2nd edition). New York: Basic Books.

Glaser, B. (1992) *Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Good, Byron J. (1977) “The heart of the matter: The semantic of illness in Iran.” *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry,* 1:25-58.

Good, Byron J., and Good, Mary-Jo Delvecchio (1980) “The meaning of symptoms: A cultural hermeneutgic model for clinical practice.” Pp. 165-196 in: *The Relevance of Social Science for Medicine,* edited by L. Eisenberg and A. Kleinman. Dordrecht: D. Reidel.

------ (1982) “Toward a meaning-centered analysis of popular illness categories: *Fright illness* and *heart distress* in Iran.” In: *Cultural Conceptions of Mental Health and Therapy*, edited by Anthony J. Marsella and Geoffrey M. White. New York: Springer.

Guo, Nianfeng (1987) “Social investigation and analysis of mental health problems.” *International Journal of Mental Health (Special issue: Mental health problems and care in the People’s Republic of China).* 16(3):43-50.

Hinton, Ladson, Franz, Carol, Yeo, Gwen and LewKoff, Sue (2005). “Conception of Dementia in a Multiethnic Sample of Family Caregivers.” *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society,* Vol.53 Issue B: 1405-1410.

Jary, David andJary, Julia (1991) *Sociology: The Harper Collins Dictionary.* New York,. Harper Collins Publisher.

Jodelet, D. (1991) *Madness and Social Representations*. London: Harvester/Wheatsheaf.

Kleinman, Arthur (1980) *Patients and Healers in the Context of Culture: An Exploration of the Borderland between Anthropology, Medicine, and Psychiatry*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

------ (1981) “On illness meanings and clinical interpretation: Not ‘rational man’ but a rational approach to man the sufferer/man the healer.” *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 5:373-377.

------ (1988a) *The Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing and the Human Condition*. New York: Basic Books.

------ (1988b) *Rethinking Psychiatry: From Cultural Category to Personal Experience.* New York, Free Press.

Lai, Gina, and Lee, Rance P.L. (2006) “Market reforms and psychological distress in urban Beijing.” *International Sociology* 21(4):551-579.

Le Grand Dictionnaire encyclopédique de la Langue Française (1996) Paris. l'Édition de l'Olympe.

Lock, M., and Scheper-Hughes, N. (1990) “A critical-interpretative approach in medical anthropology: Rituals and routines of discipline and dissent.” Pp 47-72 in *Medical Anthropology: Contemporary Theory and Method* edited by Johnson, T.M. and Sargent, C.F. New York: Praeger.

Martucelli, Danilo (2002) *Grammaires de l’individu*. Paris: Gallimard.

Massé, Raymond (1995) *Culture et santé publique* (Culture and Public Health), Montreal: gaëtan morin éditeur.

Moscovici, S. (1988) “Notes towards a description of social representations.” *Journal of European Social Psychology* 18: 211-250.

Oxford Dictionary of English. Second Edition (2003) Oxford-New York. Oxford University Press.

Pearson, Veronica (1993) Families in China: an undervalued resource for mental health? *Journal of Family Therapy* 15(2), 163–185.

------ (1995) *Mental Care in China: State Policies, Professional Services and Family Responsibilities*. London. Gaskell.

Phillips, Michael R. (1998). “The transformation of China's mental health services.” *The China Journal* 39:1-36.

Phillips, Michael R., Li, Yongyun, Stroup, T. Scott, and Xin, Lihua (2000) “Causes of schizophrenia reported by patients’ family members in China.” *British Journal of Psychiatry* 177: 20-25.

Rhéaume and Sévigny (1988) *Sociologie implicite des intervenants en santé mentale* (The Implicit Sociology of Mental Health Practioners), 2 vols. Montreal. Editions Saint-Martin.

Saha, Sukanta, Chant, David, Welham, Joy and McGrath, John (2005) “A systematic review of the prevalence of schizophrenia.” *Plos Medicine* 2(5): 413-433.

Sévigny, Robert (1983) Théries psychologiques et sociologie implicite (Psychological theories and implicit sociology), *Santé mentale au Québec* s*(8)* 7-21.

------ (1984) “L’intervention en santé mentale et la notion de sociologie implicite. (Mental Health Intervention and the notion of implicit sociology).” *Culture, Health, Santé* 11(3), 12-19*.*

------ (1993) Psychiatric practice in China: Some preliminary elements for further analysis. *Culture and Health* 9: 253-270.

------ (1996) “The clinical approach in the social sciences.” *International Sociology* 12, 135-150.

------ (2004) “Social welfare policy: Social rehabilitation of psychiatric patients in urban China.” *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, Vol. 50, No. 3: 241-261.

------ (2007) “Histoire et perspectives de l'approche clinique humaine et sociale (The Human and Social Clinical Approach: History and Perspectives).” Pp. 15-39 in *Récits de vie et sociologie clinique*. Quebec. *Les Presses de l'Université Laval.*

------ (2008) “The Patient's Personal Experience of Schizophrenia In China.” Pp. 135-152 in *International Clinical Sociology*, edited by J.M. Fritz. New-York. Springer.

------ (2009) “Jingshen Jibing kangfuxue: youguan linchuan shehuixue de tansuo (The Clinical Approach to Psychiatry and Social Rehabilitation).” Pp. i5-41 in *Jingshen fenlizheng de kangfu caozuo shouce* (Handbook of Rehabilitation for Schizophrenic Patients) edited by Y.Z. Weng, R. Liberman and Y.Z. Xian. Beijing. People's Health Publishing House of Beijing

------ (2010) Sociologie clinique et schizophrenie en Chine Post-Maoiste: le cas de Lu Lu (Clinical Sociologie and Schizophrenia in Post-Maoist China). *Sociologie et Sociétés* XLI, No.1.

Sévigny, R., Chen, S., and Chen, E. Y. (2009) “Personal experience of schizophrenia and the role of *Danwei*: A case study in 1990s’ Beijing.” *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry: An International Journal of Cross-Cultural Health Research*, 33:86–111.

Sévigny, R., Yang W., Zhang P. Marleau J., Li G., Xu D., Wang, Y. and Wang, H. (1997). „Representation Of Social Rehabilitation of Psychiatric Patients in China.” Pp. 101-103 in *Crisis Toward Growth and Solidarity.International Conference of Health Behavioral Science*, edited by T.Munakata, F.Onuoha and A. S. Snow. *Japan,* Tokio, Sophia University.

Sévigny, R.; Yang Wenying; Zhang Peiyan; Yang Zhou Yun; Su Lin; Xu Dong; Li Guowang; Wang Yanling; and Wang Haijun (1997) “Representations of social rehabilitation of psychiatric patients in China.” Pp. 190-194 in: *Crisis Behavior toward Growth and Solidarity*, edited by Munakata T., Onuoha, F. and Suw, A. S. Tokyo: Sophia University,.

Sévigny, R.; Yang Wenying; Zhang Peiyan; Yang Zhou Yun; Marleau, J.; Su Lin; Xu Dong; Li Guowang; Wang Yanling; and Wang Haijun (1999) “Attitudes toward the mentally ill in a sample of professionals working in a psychiatric hospital in Beijing (China)”. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry* 45:41-55.

Strauss, A. (1987) *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Whitehouse, Peter J.; Maurer, Konrad; and Ballenger, Jesse F. (eds.) (1999). *Concepts of Alzheimer Disease: Biological, Clinical, and Cultural Perspectives*. Johns Hopkins Johns Hopkins University Press.

Citation

Sévigny Robert, Sheying Chen, and Elaina Y. Chen (2010) “Explanatory Models of Illness and Psychiatric Rehabilitation: A Clinical Sociology Approach” *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Vol. VI Issue 3. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php)

Qualitative Sociology Review
Volume VI, Issue 3 – December 2010

Asta Rau
Rhodes University and University of Free State, South Africa

Jan K. Coetzee
University of Free State, South Africa

Amy Vice
Rhodes University, South Africa

Narrating student life in a time of risk

Abstract

Students speaking to students reveal how they perceive and experience risk — and specifically, risk associated with HIV — during their years attending a small university in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. Data were collected in twenty focus group discussions that spanned two years and two cycles of an action research project designed to infuse HIV/AIDS-content/issues into a closely supervised third-year Sociology research methodology course. The project was undertaken in response to a call by HEAIDS (Higher Education HIV/AIDS Programme, funded by the EU) for universities to address HIV/AIDS in curricula. The intention is to prepare young graduates to respond meaningfully to HIV and AIDS when they enter the world of work in a country with alarmingly high levels of HIV prevalence and incidence.

Insights from theorists Ulrich Beck (1992) and Mary Douglas (1986) on the cultural dynamics of modernity were used as lenses to view the narratives of students in relation to three key HIV risk factors: alcohol consumption, multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships, and condom use. Gender, which emerged as a cross-cutting issue, was also explored. The rich qualitative data were brought into a dialogue with selected statistics from the HEAIDS 2010 sero-prevalence survey conducted in 21 higher education institutions in the country.

Data show that risk perception and risk behaviour are formulated at individual, social network, and societal/structural levels — as well as at the interface between these. Understandably there was variation in how individual students perceive, experience and negotiate risk, but overall, participating students assessed risk in terms of its immediate importance or threat to them, prioritising the now and choosing not to think about the

[1] Asta Rau: Rhodes-HEAIDS project at CHERTL (Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning), Rhodes University, Grahamstown; University of Free State (A.Rau@ru.ac.za);
Professor Jan K. Coetzee: Senior Professor of Sociology at the University of the Free State. He was previously Professor and Head of the Department of Sociology at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa (J.K.Coetzee@ru.ac.za); Amy Vice: Department of Sociology, Rhodes University, Grahamstown.

©2005-2010 Qualitative Sociology Review

future. Social bonding, including peer pressure, exerts considerable influence on the ways in which students construct and re-construct their perceptions of risk, and HIV/AIDS. From a structural perspective the smallness of the university and the town lulls students into trusting easily and believing that greater visibility leads to greater safety. Sex is "no big deal" and casual sexual relationships are accepted by many as the norm. Although students report high condom use in casual sexual encounters, which mitigates risk, condom use drops sharply in the context of alcohol consumption — and the often excessive consumption — which is "the order of the day".

Overall, patterns in risk perception and behaviour suggest that many student participants feel justified — by virtue of being students and free at last to explore and experience the edges of their adult life — to push the boundaries of risk.

Keywords

HIV risk; University students; Sexuality; Alcohol; Multiple concurrent partnerships; Condom use; Gender; Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

Modern society is often regarded as one which organizes itself in response to risk, which pervades myriad aspects of everyday life. HIV/AIDS is one of the primary risks faced by people in South Africa. The country has one of the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence[2] rates in the world, with 5.2 million adults and children estimated to be living with HIV in 2008, representing 10.6 percent of the total population (Shisana *et al*. 2010). Since 2007 South Africa has seen a decrease in HIV prevalence among young people (Shisana *et al*. ibidem). This is reflected in a recent survey of 21 higher educational institutions in the country, which found a mean prevalence of 3.4 percent among students (HEAIDS 2010). Among university students in the Eastern Cape Province, however, the prevalence rate was 6.4 percent — the highest in the tertiary education sector (HEAIDS ibidem). Although this is considerably lower than the national average, higher education in South Africa, and more specifically in the Eastern Cape, has no reason to be complacent — a 6.4 percent prevalence rate is still very elevated, particularly when taken together with the fact that South Africa currently has the highest rate of incidence (*new* infections[3]) in Eastern and Southern Africa (UNAIDS 2010).

This article attempts to widen our understanding of how a group of students at Rhodes University in the Eastern Cape experience, and importantly negotiate, risk in the context of their potentially high exposure to HIV. Data were collected over a two-year period (2008 – 2009) by means of twenty focus group discussions among students at this university. The research comprised two cycles of an action-research pilot project that infused HIV/AIDS-content/issues into a research methodology course in the Department of Sociology.

Conceptualizing Risk Society

Risk is intrinsic to everyday life. The ways in which people understand risk are "inevitably developed via membership of cultures and subcultures as well as through

[2] 'Prevalence' refers to the number of people in a population who are HIV-positive.
[3] 'Incidence' refers to the number of *new* infections in a population.

personal experience" (Tulloch and Lupton 2003: 1). Because of their pioneering works in the field of risk theory Ulrich Beck (1992) and Mary Douglas (1986) are seen as authorities in the field. They offer quite different accounts of the cultural dynamics of modernity. Even though both claim that our beliefs are shaped by social contexts and cultural processes, Beck and Douglas differ with regards to how they assess the 'reality' of conflicting interpretations of the risks we face (Wilkinson 2001: 5).

Beck (1992b) claims that our modern situation is novel: the result of our 'hazardous' technological-scientific advancement. He claims that it is impossible to insure ourselves against "the high-consequence risks which are imposed upon our lives as the side-effects of industrial societies' pact with progress" (as summarised by Wilkinson 2001: 3). Thus, the 'risk society' was borne under the counter-force of hazard and the threat of self-annihilation (Beck 1992b: 3). Late modernity, according to Beck (1992a), has meant the weakening of tradition and the surge of individualisation. This means that individuals are 'forced' to invent new certainties so as to make their way through life without the guidance of the norms and expectations of tradition (Tulloch and Lupton 2003: 4). This is often referred to as 'reflexive modernisation', a situation in which individuals are left to construct their own identities in the absence of long-established communal identities (Jones and Raisborough 2007: 4). Jones and Raisborough (2007: 5) criticise Beck, claiming that he concentrates too much on the macro or structural level risks. They state: "The degree of agency, choice and resistance that individuals have in the face of normalising discourses is contingent on socio-cultural context" (Jones and Raisborough 2007: 16), and so we need to take into account the multiple aspects of reality within which each individual lives.

Douglas (1986), on the other hand, claims that what we conceive as the 'reality' of risk "is determined by our prior commitments towards different types of social solidarity" (Wilkinson 2001: 1). In other words, Douglas believes that what individuals define as 'risk' is shared within cultures or communities. In this way she advances a structural-functionalist interpretation of risk perception. She emphasises that risk judgements are shaped by "shared understandings and anxieties about phenomena" (Tulloch and Lupton 2003: 7). In an effort to protect themselves, groups gather "a common set of aims and objectives" (Wilkinson 2001: 4), and they perceive 'others' as the cause of the threat, projecting the blame outwards. Such collective representations of risk, claims Douglas, perform an important function in the maintenance of social solidarity (Douglas 1990: 4). There are clearly differences between Beck and Douglas in as far as the way in which modern society operates. Wilkinson (2001: 15) refers to a third way of describing how risk impacts on people's lives by stating that there are contrasting and sometimes also contradictory ways in which people may "construct and experience their knowledge of the future as one which imposes different types of hazardous uncertainty upon their lives". Wilkinson therefore cautions against the attempt to restrict the meaning of risk to one particular form of social construction (2001).

In his paper titled 'Risk theory in epidemic times' Tim Rhodes (1997) contributes to the debate by distinguishing between two specific theories regarding risk behaviour, *viz.* 'situated rationality' and 'social action theory'. The former tends to be limited to individual rationality and choice, which" [fails] to capture the distribution and influence of *power* in negotiated actions and the *habituated* nature of risk behaviour" (Rhodes 1997: 208). 'Social action theory', in contrast, considers how risk is socially organised with the aim being "to understand the interplay of social factors which give rise to individuals' situated risk perceptions and actions" (Rhodes ibidem). Rhodes (1997) thus outlines the two main explanatory paradigms – the 'individual' and the

‘social’. Where the ‘individual’ paradigm views risk as the outcome of individual choice and action, the ‘social’ paradigm views risk as the outcome of the interaction between numerous individual and social actions (Rhodes 1997: 210). Rhodes also claims that historically the theorising of HIV and AIDS has been epidemiological[4], favouring a one-dimensional, as opposed to an holistic approach – which is unsatisfactory. Noting that the spread of HIV is not random but is linked to and follows the many different paths of human interaction and behaviour, Rhodes (1997: 209) proposes that if social scientists hope to formulate a comprehensive theory of risk behaviour they need to combine ‘individual’ and ‘social’ theories, as a divide between these only serves to hinder a proper understanding of the way in which the interplay between individuals and society produce risk behaviour (Rhodes 1997: 211).

People who perceive habituated risk behaviours as carrying less risk than benefit, “particularly if harm is yet to occur” (Rhodes 1997: 220), assess risk in terms of immediate importance and immediate threat. Helene Joffe (1999: 1-2) adds that people often externalise threats so as to attain a sense of invulnerability to risk. So when initially faced by risk, people tend to shift the blame for and vulnerability to risk by responding: ‘not me’, ‘not my group’, ‘others are at fault’ (Joffe ibidem). She claims that in the context of HIV, fear of infection intensifies people’s need to distinguish between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Joffe 1999: 23). In this regard people tend to be “unrealistically optimistic in relation to their own susceptibility to dangers” (Joffe ibidem: 7). This is the theory of ‘optimistic bias’ in which “people evaluate their own risk in comparison to how much at risk they imagine others to be” (Joffe ibidem). The personal shock evoked by mass risks — such as HIV/AIDS — “sends people along a defensive pathway of representation” (Joffe ibidem), protecting them from unwelcome emotion. Joffe (1999: 10) also claims that when people encounter new risks, they draw on ideas that originate within ‘their’ group to understand and explain them — emphasising the role of group affinity in shaping ideas. In short, processes that lie beyond the individual help to forge how she/he responds to risks (Joffe 1999: 8). Peer pressure and the social construction of sexuality and sexual norms via narratives, experiences and beliefs generated in social groups may well predispose young people to poor sexual health (MacPhail and Campbell 2001: 1615).

HIV/AIDS in Higher Education Institutions in South Africa

HIV/AIDS is one of the greatest risks that South Africans, and in the context of this paper, university students face. This section summarises HIV statistics specific to the higher education sector, forming a backdrop to discussing how students perceive and experience HIV-risk. Statistics from the national HEAIDS (2010) report are used because reports for individual institutions — including Rhodes University at this stage — remain private. The sampling methods used for the HEAIDS sero-prevalence study yielded results generalisable to the sector nationally, but it must be noted that considerable variation was found between universities and between provinces.

As mentioned earlier, the mean HIV prevalence among students was 3.4 percent. Echoing a long-standing trend in prevalence among all South Africans — and statistically significant — in the higher education sector females (with

[4] Epidemiology – in relation to HIV – is the study of how a virus behaves in a population. Primary tools of epidemiology are statistical measures and modelled projections.

a prevalence of 4.7 percent) were more than three times as likely to be HIV-positive as were males (at 1.5 percent).

Prevalence was lowest in the 18-19 age group (0.7 percent), rose in the 20-25 age group (2.3 percent), and was highest among those over 25 years (8.3 percent). So a high risk of becoming infected with HIV exists for younger students who have unprotected sex with older students. This trend is clearly seen in the populations with generalised epidemics[5], where HIV jumps *down* the age ladder from older to younger cohorts.

In terms of the number of sexual partners, echoing national trends, more male students reported having had sexual partners (19%) in the month prior to the survey, compared to female students (6%). Concurrency, as discussed later, is a potent factor in HIV transmission, but this potency is deflected in the context of condom use. Although the majority of students who had sex in the past year (60 percent) reported using condoms at last sex, there were indications of high levels of binge drinking – a context that is not conducive to consistent, correct use of condoms.

Overall knowledge of HIV was high, but students lacked deeper understandings of how HIV could be prevented, for instance through the use of PEP (post-exposure prophylactic) – a course of antiretroviral treatment administered after rape, violent crime, accident and so forth. This is ominous given that only 61 percent of students reported feeling safe from physical harm in their institutions, and only 38% agreed that female students were safe from sexual harassment at their institutions.

Although the numbers differ, overall patterns of infection in the higher education sector are consistent with what has been reported in national sero-prevalence, behaviour and communication surveys (HEAIDS 2101).

Factors Related to Sexual Risk Behaviour and HIV Infection

There are several factors that impact on HIV prevalence and incidence. This article focuses on three key themes in the data: alcohol consumption; multiple and concurrent partnerships (MCPs), and condom use. Gendered power relations, which emerged as a cross-cutting issue, are also discussed.

Alcohol consumption

Rhodes University has a reputation of being a 'drinking university'. Young and De Klerk (2007: 1-2) explore this in their report on alcohol consumption at Rhodes University. Because of the small size of the University social networks are strong, and because a large portion of students relish the social aspects of their university experience, many get roped into the drinking culture. This can happen irrespective of student's prior attitudes and beliefs concerning the excessive alcohol consumption which is encouraged, and largely normalised, within many of the student social networks. Young and De Klerk (2007: 6) report that only 11% of respondents indicated that they do not drink at all, with the remainder drinking at least occasionally, and many drinking excessively. Many students reported drinking patterns that were either hazardous, harmful or alcohol dependent (Young and De

[5] Generalised epidemics are where HIV has spread into all demographic groups in a population and HIV is primarily transmitted through heterosexual sex. Concentrated epidemics, on the other hand are where HIV is primarily found in sub-sectors of the population such as men who have sex with men, intravenous drug users, and sex workers.

Klerk 2007: 7) — as many as 18.4% drank at levels harmful to their health, with an estimated half of this proportion potentially being alcohol dependent.

Because of the role of alcohol consumption in university culture it is important to examine its influence on sexual behaviour. Pithey and Morojele (2002: 2) point out that "alcohol use and HIV-related sexual risk behaviours are growing problems that affect most sectors of the community in South Africa". There is a high level of acceptance of heavy drinking, and it is a popular pastime for many South Africans, with the easy availability of alcohol in South Africa encouraging its use (Pithey and Morojele ibidem: 8). Adolescents and youth are particularly affected by heavy drinking and HIV-related sexual risk behaviour, with women being the most affected group (ibidem: 2). Higher rates of drinking were found in urban areas, with white males (71%) and females (51%) topping the list (Pithey and Morojele ibidem: 9). Parties, clubs and shebeens were named as the most popular venues for alcohol consumption.

A study by Fischer *et al.* on adolescent risk behaviour (based on a population from Cape Town schools) indicated a significant relationship between binge drinking and sexual intercourse (Pithey and Morojele ibidem: 25). Simpson's 1996 study on predominantly white Rhodes University students likewise showed significant associations between alcohol use, number of sexual partners and knowledge of HIV transmission (Pithey and Morojele ibidem: 25-26). A World Health Organization (2005: 8) report confirmed that there was low condom use among those under the influence of alcohol and apparently, being under the influence of alcohol is often culturally accepted as an excuse for irresponsible behaviour, including risky sex (WHO ibidem: 46). It is known that sexual risk behaviour accounts for much of the HIV transmission in South Africa, "and alcohol has been shown to increase such behaviour" (WHO ibidem: vii). The WHO report (ibidem) also states that the coexistence of these two behaviours (sexual risk behaviour and alcohol consumption) has the potential to increase harms associated with each of these separately. Alcohol use and sexual behaviour actively support one another "with alcohol use and beliefs acting as both precursors and outcomes of sexual behaviour" (WHO ibidem: 46).

Multiple and concurrent partnerships (MCP)

Multiple and concurrent partnerships are sexual relationships that overlap in time: either where two or more partnerships continue over the same time period, or where one partnership begins before the other terminates (CADRE 2007: 5; UNAIDS 2009: 2). Multiple concurrent partnerships occur where there are long-term/steady sexual partners, short or long-term 'side' partners, casual sex encounters, or all three (ibidem). Concurrency has been dubbed the 'superhighway' of HIV transmission and is particularly dangerous in a context of low consistent and correct condom use (CADRE 2010).

MCPs substantially increase the risk of HIV transmission, because they create a sexual network where "a new infection has the potential to move rapidly between people as a product of high viral load in the early phase of infection, where transmission is up to ten times more likely to occur than during the latent phase of HIV infection" (HSRC 2009: 41). HIV spreads faster through the population (a) because of the increased likelihood of transmission per sex act in this early stage of infection (called acute infection) when newly infected people have no way of knowing that they are carrying the virus, and (b) because the higher number of sexual

partners creates repeated short time frames for potential onward transmission (CADRE 2010; UNAIDS 2009: 2).

Concurrent sexual partners are common among young South Africans aged 20-30 (CADRE 2007). In their report, CADRE (ibidem: 42) noted that many South Africans did not have a strong sense that having many partners or that having concurrent partners is a major risk factor for HIV transmission. While people have a high level of awareness of HIV and its negative impacts, there is not much consideration given to HIV prevention in sexual relationships, particularly in longer-term relationships, and where trust is given early on in new relationships (CADRE ibidem: 45). There is also the notion of having a 'main' partner based on 'love and caring' and 'other' partners, distinguished by 'opportunistic sex' and sometimes by economic benefit. "If a 'main' partner was unable to meet one's economic needs, this justified getting those needs met by others" (CADRE ibidem: 42). This duality between 'main' and 'other' partners is widely regarded as acceptable.

The HSRC report (2009: 41-43) notes that in 2008 five times more males (30.8%) reported having had more than one sexual partner in the past twelve months, as opposed to their female counterparts (6.0%). In the higher education sector men also reported having more sexual partners in the month before the study (19%) than did women (6%) (HEAIDS 2010). Gendered power relations and notions of masculinity are two important factors underlying this trend.

Nationally, there was an overall increase in multiple sexual partners between 2002 and 2008 (from 5.5% to 10.6%) – clearly there is a need for more preventative education in this regard. Epidemiological modelling based on evidence from other parts of Africa demonstrates how even a small reduction in MCPs at the individual level would significantly slow the spread of HIV at the population level (UNAIDS 2009: 1). Furthermore, according to UNAIDS (ibidem: 3), we need reduction strategies that are both locally driven and locally relevant whilst being national in reach, large-scale and also rapidly scaled up — the time for debate, vacillation and pilot projects is over. MCP reduction has to become the overarching focus and priority of education, communication and implementation, and it needs to be supported by condom programming (CADRE 2007: 7; CADRE 2010; UNAIDS 2009: 4). Furthermore, such initiatives should include messages "to address behavioural formation among the young, behaviour change among those with formed behaviours [that are high-risk] and behavioural maintenance [of risk-aversive practices] among all groups. [Initiatives must also link] messages about MCP to messages about the interface between alcohol, MCP, casual sex, and unsafe sex" (CADRE 2007: 7).

In order to achieve any sort of positive behaviour change, we need to understand what motivates people to engage in MCP. According to Soul City (UNAIDS 2009: 5), and CADRE (2010) contextual drivers of MCP include: low appreciation of risk; sexual dissatisfaction in relationships; lack of communication between partners — exacerbated by taboos that restrict partners from talking about sex; the influence of culture and social norms; the desire for money and new consumer values that coincide with rapid urbanisation; harmful use of alcohol; peer and family pressure; and resilient stereotypical beliefs about male domination and the inability of men to control sexual desire. Regarding more positive influences – it seems that the choices people must make in order to reduce the risks of HIV infection are not "strongly supported by peers or broader social norms" (CADRE 2007: 6). Given the role that MCPs play in the rapid spread of HIV it is imperative to tackle issues at several levels – individual, social network, community and societal/structural (CADRE 2010).

Condom programming

Consistent and correct condom use remains a critical element of HIV prevention and treatment (HSRC 2009: 44; UNAIDS 2004: 1). Research on heterosexual sero-discordant relationships (where one partner is infected with HIV and the other is not) clearly show that correct and consistent condom use significantly reduces the risk of HIV transmission. Avert (2009) notes that the 256 million male condoms distributed in 2007 by the South African government, is down from the 376 million distributed in the previous year. Notwithstanding reported shortages in condom supply, both the HSRC (2009: 45) and Avert (2009) report that there has been a significant increase in the number of people using condoms between 2002 and 2008: "For adults 15+ years, the overall proportion of people who reported using condoms at last sex more than doubled from 27.3% in 2002 to 62.4% in 2008" (HSRC 2009: 45). Furthermore, it is younger people who show the highest rates of condom use "which bodes well for the future of prevention" (Avert 2009). High condom use is also reported by South African university students (HEAIDS 2010) – particularly in the context of casual sex – which confirms that communication, education and other interventions have had a positive impact on this aspect of behavioural formation.

It has long been the lament of HIV/AIDS practitioners, researchers, governments, NGOs, funders — in short just about everybody from international to local levels — that knowledge about the risks of HIV does not necessarily translate into good prevention practices. As MacPhail and Campbell (2001: 1617) point out, "knowledge of sexual health risks is not necessarily a good predictor of condom use." They propose that six factors reduce or hinder condom use: lack of perceived risk (by externalising the threat); peer norms (felt most strongly among the male population); condom availability (more problematic for females than males); adult attitudes to condoms and sex (adults don't condone the use of condoms by young people — they insist on abstinence instead); gendered power relations (high levels of coercion and violence as well as financial dependency constrain females from refusing sex or negotiating safer sex); and, the economic context of adolescent sexuality (the 'commercialisation' of youth sex through, for instance, transactional relationships; the fact that for some, condoms are a luxury) (ibidem).

Gender issues

Stirling (*et al.* 2008: 1) proclaim that the AIDS epidemic in South Africa is sustained by "the relentless cycle of vulnerability affecting girls and young women". Almost two-thirds of all HIV-positive young people in the world live in sub-Sahara Africa, and around 75% of all infections among the 15-24 year age group are among young women (Stirling *et al.* 2008: 2). Between 2005-2007 prevalence rates in the 15-24 age group in South Africa show that young males had a prevalence rate of 4% whereas young women had a prevalence of 17% (Stirling *et al* ibidem). Echoing this trend, prevalence among female South African university students was found to be 4.7 percent — three times higher than males, at 1.5 percent (HEAIDS, 2010).

Andersson and Cockcroft (2008: 11) note how there are indications of higher HIV risk taking among people who have a history of gender-based violence and higher rates of violence are seen among those who are already HIV positive. It is often difficult to tell which comes first, but evidence favours gender-based violence "as a potentially actionable cause – direct or indirect – of HIV infection" (Andersson

and Cockcroft ibidem). This is particularly worrying in a South African higher education context where only 38% of students perceived female students being safe from sexual harassment at their institutions (HEAIDS 2010).

Methodological Notes

The data collected for this article are based in qualitative social research where understanding the life worlds of participants and the way in which they interpret their everyday experiences are central foci. In reaching towards an understanding of participants' life worlds we attempt to unveil some of the meanings and motives that underlie their behaviour. Qualitative/interpretive research approaches challenge the researcher in that they yield fluid and multiple perspectives of the world. This is because people actively construct, co-construct and reconstruct their own social reality — even during data collection processes. According to Coetzee and Rau (2009: 2), "people are endowed with consciousness and they see, interpret, experience and act in the world in terms of a vast range of subjectively and intersubjectively constituted meanings", and thus there is no single objective truth. Social and individual reality contains elements of beliefs and convictions that often escape observation by either senses or mind. A hermeneutic challenge is that perceptions of risk and reported behaviours are constantly being redefined, creating challenges for the collection of data.

This research set out to *understand* how a group of university students experience risk in their everyday lives. A total number of 20 focus groups were conducted with Rhodes University students over a period of 2 years (10 focus groups were held in 2008 and a further 10 groups in 2009).[6] Groups discussed the perceptions and subsequent behaviours of students with regards to life in a time of risk, with particular emphasis on their awareness of the risk of contracting or transmitting HIV.

Special attention was given to alcohol use/abuse; gendered power relations; economic constraints; peer pressure and cultural norms. How do students perceive their vulnerability to the disease? How do cultural norms and peer pressure affect their behaviour, regardless of their knowledge of the disease? Does succumbing to a 'culture of drinking' affect their susceptibility to the danger of becoming infected?

All focus group discussions were digitally recorded. Recordings were then transcribed and checked. Data collection, processing and analysis were guided by close supervision, including students' application of ethical processes and protocols.

Data Analysis and Discussion

General risk perceptions

Everyday behaviours are often perceived to carry more benefit than risk, "especially if harm is yet to occur" (Rhodes 1997: 220). This appears to be the case for student participants, who tend to assess risk in terms of immediate importance or threat, prioritising the 'now' and choosing not to think about the 'future'. Students

[6] A list of focus groups appears at the very end of this article. In the Data Analysis and Discussion section quotes are attributed to a specific focus group (FG). FG20, for instance, refers to focus group 20 conducted in May 2009.

don't want to have to think about things such as risks: "You want to live your life … you don't want to have to be responsible" (FG6). "Because I'm having a good time I reckon it's worth it" (FG19). If a threat such as HIV has never been experienced personally (i.e. if one has never known anyone personally infected), students tend not to think about the possibility that they could be at risk. With as many as one in six South African students (18%) personally knowing someone who is HIV-positive (HEAIDS 2010) one would expect high risk aversion, but from what students say, they only perceive themselves to be at as much risk as those with whom they associate on an *everyday* basis. So when friends take risks, these behaviours become 'normalised', the threat of HIV becomes externalised and a sense of invulnerability prevails. As Joffe (1999: 7) notes, 'othering' — distinguishing between 'us' and 'them' — creates an unrealistic optimism in relation to their own susceptibility to HIV. As one participant stated: "It's got a lot to do with that 'It won't happen to me' mindset. It'll be like, 'I know all this stuff', but in the back of their mind they're saying: 'It's not going to happen to me, so why should I actually care?" (FG5).

While student participants acknowledge that there is more than ample knowledge available on the topic of HIV/AIDS, some admit that they choose to ignore available information because they decide that it is not relevant to them or to their social group. Furthermore, some claim to be 'sick and tired' of hearing the same messages over and over again, so they 'switch off' when the issue is raised. From what they say it seems that many white, middle class students perceive HIV to be a disease of poor, uneducated black people. Some black students also share this view. 'Clean', educated people (such as themselves, they argue) are not at risk when it comes to contracting HIV. A participant in one of the groups claimed: "People see [HIV] as a dirty disease … it's what poor people get; it's not like someone from a middle class background can possibly get HIV" (FG15).

Furthermore, Rhodes University students feel safe in the 'bubble' of Grahamstown: "It's a small town and, you know, you don't expect HIV to hit you" (FG11). As another participant put it: "We believe that nothing can touch us and that nothing happens outside of our little bubble, and we go about our everyday lives without taking into cognisance what we do and the repercussions of our actions" (FG14). The general idea is that ignorance is bliss, and there are risks some are prepared to take: "It's like the benefit almost outweighs the risk" (FG19). Because HIV threatens and happens to 'other' people, students appear willing to "laugh it off". Furthermore, because they do not want the risk to exist, or to accept it as real, they have a tendency to "wish it away" (FG16). All these factors combine to desensitise students to risk: "We are almost becoming used to it … we are becoming so apathetic" (FG2). Apathy extends to a refusal to think about HIV risk, and the less students think, the less real it becomes to them.

Their new found freedom on arriving at university is another factor influencing how Rhodes student participants experience risk. Away from their family and parental control, students can explore and experience much more than was previously possible. Many students hold the view that they are only students for a short time in their lives and that they should enjoy every moment, be adventurous and do things they normally would not do: "I've never done this before and it's my chance to do it now … while I'm here I just want to play" (FG15). The vulnerability of newcomers to university is confirmed in findings of the HEAIDS study, which reports that during first year "students lack the experience to make good, risk-aware decisions, especially regarding sexual liaisons and alcohol" (2010: xv). Making friends in this new environment can be difficult and some students do admit to falling prey to peer pressure in an attempt to fit in: "I think that given enough pressure we all give in to

risky situations" (FG15). The new environment often results in their foundations being shaken. As one participant articulates it: "Their securities are nowhere, so they'll look at what the majority's doing and be like, 'Okay, where can I fit in?'" (FG13).

A structural factor in risk-taking behaviour that participants mention is that "Grahamstown is a small city and it gets boring, so you do things you don't normally do" (FG15). For a lack of excitement, students actively seek risky activities. Pushing the boundaries is considered fun, as "half of the thrill is because you know that you are taking risks" (FG16). "Taking risks is an adrenaline rush" according to a male student (FG7). And because of perceptions that Grahamstown offers a safer environment than other bigger cities, student participants tended to feel that their 'risky' activities are not really as bad one would think. Rhodes and Grahamstown have an "environment of being laid back and being very casual" (FG1) and thus "students do tend to be a little more casual and a little more trusting" (FG1).

As Tulloch and Lupton (2003: 1) claim, the ways in which people understand risk are "inevitably developed via membership of cultures and subcultures as well as through personal experience". This appears to be very much the case with Rhodes University students, who negotiate risk within the subculture of student life, and who claim to be unaffected by the reality of risks they face because they have no real personal experience of such risks and so, feel detached from them. Most participants point out that despite peer pressure and a need to conform to cultural and sub-cultural norms at the university, an individual chooses how to behave and " you need to take responsibility for yourself and your own actions" (FG1). The dilemma of behaviour change communication is aptly illustrated by one participant who points out that "actually taking action is the most difficult part of it all; awareness is very different from action" (FG2). This collaborates with Douglas's (1992) notion that risk judgements are shaped through shared understandings of what constitutes risk – students know better, but they act in the moment and their decisions are shaped by what their peer group and social environment consider as 'normal' behaviour. By inventing new certainties students — particularly new students — negotiate their way in an unfamiliar and uncertain environment.

Alcohol consumption

Rhodes University is considered to have a strong 'drinking culture' among its students. Drinking is seldom strongly condemned, but rather, it is normalised and often encouraged amongst peers. Because the University is small, with strong social networks there is a high degree of trust that students are safe among 'their own'. Drinking is also considered to be a vital part of one's university experience, with alcohol being consumed for recreation, socialising, 'de-stressing' and celebrating.

It is well known that drinking lowers inhibitions, and some student participants say it increases their sex drive. So alcohol consumption and risky sexual behaviour are clearly linked in this context. Some participants even claim that they "won't go out sober because they won't be able to score" (FG9). Participants say that in itself sex is not that risky, but with drinking and lowered inhibitions they don't think about the consequences of unprotected casual sex: "Like, if I'm pissed, I'm in the mood for fun, whatever – I don't think about risks" (FG19). Participants mention alcohol giving "liquid courage" (FG3) — the ability to be more outgoing and talk to anyone. "Drinking does change you in a way that you do things that you would not normally do" (FG20). "Some guys even claim that when they go out with their mates they take bets as to who will find a partner first, and not using a condom is an occasion to cheer" (FG 10).

Many students don't feel pressurised into drinking – they want to drink: "Well, for me, when I came to Rhodes, my home is very strict, so I said: 'I'm going to do all these things I'm not allowed to'. No one forced me to do it. It's what I decided" (FG3). Others felt that they had succumbed to peer pressure: "I was trying to find friends; most people were doing things that I would not normally do … the drinking culture, going out … so I felt pressure to do it also" (FG3). There generally appears to be more pressure on male students than on female students. As one participant said of his male friends: "Everyone is around you, egging you on" (FG10). Participants also claim that it is difficult to exercise personal discipline when you are surrounded by people who are constantly going out and drinking: "You may as well get hammered" (FG9).

Proponents of the argument that drinking is not *that* excessive say that the main reason why drinking appears to be the 'order of the day' is because the students are in a much closer proximity to each other and the drinking is more noticeable. Adding to the notion of structure as constructing social realities, another says: "I think it's also because of the location — it probably gives us a better opportunity to do what we do" (FG10). Because of the small scale of the town, everything is closer and more accessible, so it is easy to go out drinking and return to campus or other residences. As discussed earlier in **General risk perceptions**, the downside of being a small town is that there is not much alternative evening entertainment, and for some students drinking solves the problem: "It's much more interesting being drunk … We don't have anything better to do" (FG19).

Students admit that they are more susceptible to many different varieties of risk when drunk (risks such as muggings, rapes or raping, car accidents, and getting into fights). One participant said: "I reckon as soon as alcohol comes into the equation you become a larger target for crime in general" (FG11). But alcohol makes the risk easier to accept. As a participant stated: "With alcohol, there is that belief that risk is worth it" (FG20).

Multiple and concurrent partnerships

Participants note that because Grahamstown is such a small environment, it is easier to go home with a random person: "There is so much more that you feel that you can do here and that you wouldn't do back home — people are much more liberated at Rhodes" (FG5). There appears to be more trust because of the smaller environment and tight social networks. Students often perceive each other as known to everybody else and therefore think that casual partners would not try anything 'dodgy' because one of their friends (or, one of their friends' friends) will know and tell (FG 15). This can lead to a false sense of security. Also, because of the tight social networks, students believe that if this person was 'dirty' (i.e. had HIV/AIDS or a sexually transmitted infection, or some other problem), then they would have heard about it (FG 5). The fact that they have not heard of a problem leads them to believe that the person is 'clean'. Furthermore, they think that because they are at university and are educated they are not at high risk of contracting a sexually transmitted infection, particularly HIV. They also choose less risky looking people: if someone looks 'clean' and healthy then he or she must be fine. "I only sleep with clean people, so I am clean" (FG5), said one participant.

There is also the notion that boredom creates the need to "hook up" with different people: "You go find yourself a score" (FG6). As one participant stated: "It's a sport almost to see how many people you can hook up with before you graduate"

(FG15). There appears to be more peer pressure among male students to have many casual partners, or one night stands: “Say I saw a lot of my friends getting together with people. Yes, there would be a tendency for me to up my game so to speak, probably just because you want to be one of the boys, that kind of thing” (FG5). Students see random sex as a kind of game; as something that is “a socially influenced thing … like if your friends are hooking up and having naps [spending time in one another’s residence rooms] it’s more likely that you will be encouraged to do the same thing” (FG5). This appears to be an acceptable, normalised activity and thus perceived as not particularly risky. The idea of celibacy is laughed at and referred to as “rubbish” (FG17).

Because students perceive other students to have an acceptance of drinking and randomly hooking up with people whilst drunk, it gradually becomes acceptable behaviour. As one participant said: “I think that in the society that we live in its okay to have multiple sexual partners. It’s okay to drink and behave in an uncontrolled and debaucherous manner” (FG16). Students condone casual sex and as long as they stick to ‘clean’ people like themselves, do not feel that they are placing themselves in any real risk of HIV. “I don’t think they are thinking about the whole AIDS thing and what could happen … it happens to everyone else” (FG7). It is also acknowledged, however, that the small environment at Rhodes University escalates risk of contracting HIV or an STI, because “everyone is doing someone… you could end up sleeping with the same person your friend is sleeping with” (FG5) and someone along the line could be HIV-positive.

Sex is seen as a casual thing, “like a trend on campus” (FG6), and many students talk of “friends with benefits” — where friends sleep together, but there is no real relationship involved. Also, because of the higher female to male ratio at Rhodes, it is acceptable for males to have more than one sexual partner (a view held by the female participants too). As a female student commented: “When you’re at varsity, and you’ve got a boyfriend … chances are you’re sharing him” (FG19). Knowing one’s partner’s HIV status is not common, placing people at even more risk of contracting HIV. Many students reported feeling uncomfortable or embarrassed to ask their partner to get tested with them, because it is seen as breaking the trust believed to exist in a relationship (FG 16).

The HEAIDS (2000) survey also found that university students are accepting of casual sexual partnerships, but it is not as accepting of multiple concurrent partnerships. Overall there were few Rhodes University students who expressed awareness of the risks involved in having multiple and concurrent partnerships. As noted earlier, at the national level students know the basic facts about HIV/AIDS but lack more nuanced understandings (HEAIDS 2010). Part of the reason is that in higher education institutions, and more generally in South Africa’s response to the epidemic, the detrimental influence of high viral load during acute infection has not been anywhere near as well conveyed as, for instance, condom use. Clearly, MCP is a prevention issue that requires more aggressive interventions at programmatic and communication levels (CADRE 2010).

Condom use

Student participants view condoms primarily as a contraceptive barrier, and secondarily as a way of preventing sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Falling pregnant is sometimes seen as being more of a risk and embarrassment than is the danger of contracting HIV, so preventing pregnancy becomes the higher priority: “All

these serious problems kind of fade away in your mind and the priorities become intimacy and pregnancy — you worry about those things simply because the person you are having sex with does not fit your perception of someone who has STIs or HIV/AIDS" (FG6). "Pregnancy", in the words of one female participant, "is visible; it's something that everyone can see and judge. Whereas HIV is up to you to tell" (FG5). And it would be up to the HIV-positive person to tell too, given confidentiality issues. Another factor inhibiting condom use is that if a female is on the pill, *this* will help with preventing unwanted pregnancies.

There is the perception that condoms are not necessary for sex with 'clean' and healthy looking people. They are also not necessary with regular partners or in longer-term relationships. As one participant put it: "Trust comes in and the condom just goes out the window" (FG19). If both partners know their HIV status and know that they're HIV negative, then there is no reason to bother using condoms: they feel safe, they trust, and forgo prevention. In the context of a generalised epidemic, this is dangerous thinking. More heartening is that the HEAIDS (2010) study found a trend among students to use condoms during casual sex, which is likely one of the reasons why prevalence in this population is lower than the national average. As one participant commented: "If you're having a one-night stand then you definitely must [use a condom] because you don't have the right yet to not use one" (FG7). Older students are seen to prefer first year students because they're 'clean': "They haven't been exposed to the environment that we have been exposed to" (FG5). This raises the issue of young students who are not au fait with negotiating risk — and condom use — falling prey to older, more experienced, students. Space constraints preclude this article from exploring age-disparate sex, but it should be noted that this has become a priority area for HIV prevention interventions (CADRE 2010).

Unprotected sex is commonly spoken of by student participants as being more enjoyable. Speaking for many, one said: "I prefer the feeling of flesh" (FG6). Students also seem to think it embarrassing to ask a stranger to use a condom, and it is said that many males will coerce partners into not using one. Not wanting to "ruin the moment", and that using condoms was "too much of a mission" (especially when drunk) were named as factors contributing to the non-use of condoms. There is often peer pressure among males to not use condoms. One participant went as far as to say: "I think it's only pressure that influences people to have unprotected sex" (FG15). This relates to a statement from a different group where males in residences were said to "cheer you on for not using a condom" (FG4). As MacPhail and Campbell (2001: 1615) note, the social construction of sexuality might predispose young people to poor sexual health.

Students acknowledge that there are condoms freely available on campus and they appear to be aware of the location of condom dispensers. But they claim that these are located in arbitrary locations that are too public and that they would rather go without condoms than to be seen taking them. This may seem strange in a context where sex is seen as a casual thing but can have to do with the fact that many students do not think that the free government condoms are safe, or sexy, and prefer using brand names (such as Durex). Female students appear to be the most influential in this regard, as illustrated by one participant who says that "if a guy I am about to have sex with whipped out a government condom then I would rather refuse sex" (FG 7). It is seen as acceptable for males to carry condoms, but females believe that there is a stigma attached to them carrying condoms. They fear being labelled a "slut", "loose", "promiscuous", and not trustworthy or "clean". This brings us to a cross-cutting issue: gender.

Gender issues

Inequitable gender norms have long been acknowledged as one of the drivers of HIV infection. Participants in this research named culture as being one of the culprits of gender inequities. As one participant said: “That is how I was raised — men have always been viewed as more superior to women” (FG2). Some male participants believed that they have the right to demand sex, even though many of them do not act in this way. And several participants claim that this is “a socialised thing” and that men are “wired differently” to women (FG2). As one participant puts it, “…you can’t exactly blame the man – its society at large” (FG11). Regarding blame, many male participants believe that it is up to female students to be more responsible, and not go out and get drunk — getting drunk increases the risk that they will be taken advantage of or raped. “Women need to face that in reality, they can’t go out and get vrot [rotten] drunk and expect nothing to happen to them” (FG11), claims one male participant. This is perceived to be a “tragic fact of life” (FG11) which women need to accept, rather than expecting men to change their attitudes or reflecting why men can do so with impunity.

A few female participants noted how many women just sit back and accept this ‘fact’, rather than actively trying to fight back. South Africa was spoken of as being a patriarchal society, making it difficult for women to stand up for themselves and demand that their health and safety needs be met. Women have little chance of demanding that men wear condoms, and at Rhodes University it appears that many a female student is prepared to place herself at risk rather than disappoint her man: “Women just don’t want to empower themselves by using femidoms … if a man says ‘No condom’, they just go with it because they are so eager to please” (FG15). As discussed earlier, some females fail to carry condoms fearing stigmatisation and rejection. Some even mentioned fear of violence if they bring up the issue. These factors are particularly pertinent to the finding that only 38% of university students nationally perceived female students as being safe from sexual harassment at their institutions (HEAIDS 2010).

Male students admit to making sex a game, taking bets on who will bring home a girl. And some are not averse to coercing a girl to get what they want, especially since they believe that their sexual desires are natural and need to be met. As one says: “It’s about making your stand [as] the alpha male” (FG6). Happily there are many male and female students who do not condone, and who are not shaped by, negative gender stereotyping.

Conclusion

The research aimed to broaden understandings of how Rhodes University students perceive their susceptibility to risks, particularly risks associated with HIV, and how they behave in relation to such risks. Some participants — both male and female — were non-drinkers, did not support negative gender stereotyping, did not engage in sexual intercourse of any kind, and were very aware of the consequences of promiscuous behaviour and unsafe sexual practices. On the other hand, the notion that ‘you’re only young once’ and that high risk behaviour is part of student life and culture came up often in the discussions. Many student participants, despite being well aware that they were placing themselves at risk, were clearly prepared to ignore the dangers and indulge in heavy drinking and high-risk sex.

Data show that risk perception and risk behaviour are formulated at the individual, social network, and societal/structural levels. Rhodes students appear to negotiate risk perceptions and susceptibility within their broader social environment: they only feel as much at risk as they believe their peers to be. Since students believe that they are relatively safe within the 'bubble' they call Grahamstown, they do not perceive the risk of acquiring HIV to be that severe, or particularly real.

Rhodes University does much to publicise and help students understand the risks involved in behaviours such as substance use and sex that puts them at high risk of HIV. Some students claim to be tired of hearing the same stories over and over again. Some even go as far as saying that the more the University attempts to change their behaviour, the more they attempt to actively seek out what is regarded as risky. It appears that risk is appealing and the feeling of getting away with something outweighs the danger of potentially negative consequences. As one participant put it: "The juice is worth the squeeze" (FG 20).

References

Andersson, N. and A. Cockroft (2008) "Gender-based violence, young women and girls, and HIV in Southern Africa: An issues Brief", in UNAIDS, *Addressing the vulnerability of young women and girls to stop the HIV epidemic in southern Africa.* Online: www.unaids.org

Avert (2009) "*AVERTing HIV and AIDS*". Online: www.avert.org

Beck, Ulrich (1992a) *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. London: Sage.

------ (1992b) "From Industrial Society to the Risk Society: Questions of Survival, Social Structure and Ecological Enlightenment". *Theory, Culture and Society* 9: 97–123.

CADRE (Centre for AIDS Development, Research and Evaluation) (2010) *HIV Prevention Communication Training Programme*. Johannesburg: CADRE. [In press].

------ (2007) *Concurrent Sexual Partnerships Among Young Adults in South Africa - Challenges for HIV Prevention Communication*. Online: www.cadre.org.za

Coetzee, Jan K and Rau, Asta (2009) *Narrating Trauma and Suffering: Towards Understanding Intersubjectively Constituted Memory*. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 10(2), Art. 14.

Douglas, Mary (1986) *Risk Acceptability According to the Social Sciences.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

------ (1990) "Risk as a Forensic Resource". *Daedalus* 119(4): 1–16.

------ (1992) *Risk and Blame: Essays in Cultural Theory.* London: Routledge.

HEAIDS (Higher Education HIV/AIDS Programme) (2010) *HIV Prevalence and Related Factors – Higher Education Sector Study, South Africa, 2008-2009*. Pretoria: Higher Education South Africa.

Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) (2009) *South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence, Behaviour and Communication Survey, 2008: A Turning Tide Among Teenagers?* Online: www.hsrcpress.ac.za

Joffe, Helene (1999) *Risk and 'the Other'*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jones, Julie S. and Raisborough, Jayne (2007) *Risks, Identities and the Everyday*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishers Limited.

Leclerc-Madlala, Suzanne (2008) *Intergenerational/age-disparate Sex: An Issues Brief", in UNAIDS, "Addressing the Vulnerability of Young Women and Girls to Stop the HIV Epidemic in Southern Africa*. Online: www.unaids.org

MacPhail, C and Campbell, C. (2001) "I Think Condoms are Good but, aai, I Hate Those Things': Condom Use Among Adolescents and Young People in a Southern African Township". *Social Science and Medicine*, 52: 1613–1627.

Pithey, A and Morojele, N (2002) *Literature Review on Alcohol Use and Sexual Risk Behaviour in South Africa*. Prepared for WHO Project Alcohol and HIV infection: Development of a methodology to study determinants of sexual risk behaviour among alcohol users in diverse cultural settings. Pretoria: Alcohol and Drug Abuse Research Unit, Medical Research Council. Online: www.sahealthinfo.org.za

Rhodes, Tim (1997) "Risk Theory in Epidemic Times: Sex, Drugs and the Social Organisation of 'Risk Behaviour". *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 19(2): 208-227.

Shisana, Olive, Rehle, T, Simbayi, L C, Zuma, K, Jooste, S, Pillay-van Wyk, V, Mbelle, N, Van Zyl, J, Parker, W, Zungu, N P, Pezi, S, *et al.* (2009) *South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence, Behaviour and Communications Survey 2008: Turning the Tide among Teenagers?* Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) (2009) "Mid-year Population Estimates". *Statistical release* P0302: 1–17. Online: www.statssa.gov.za

Stirling, Mark, Rees, H, Kasedde, S and Hankins, C (2008) "Background", in UNAIDS, *Addressing the Vulnerability of Young Women and Girls to Stop the HIV Epidemic in Southern Africa*. Online: www.unaids.org

Tulloch, John and Lupton, Deborah (2003) "*Risk and Everyday Life"*. London: Sage Publications.

UNAIDS (2004) *Position Statement on Condoms and HIV Prevention*. Online: www.unaids.org

------ (2009) *Strategic Considerations for Communications on Multiple and Concurrent Partnerships within Broader HIV Prevention in Southern Africa*. Online: www.unaids.org

------ (2010) *New infections: Eastern and Southern Africa*. Online: www.unaidsrstesa.org

Wilkinson, Iain (2001) "Social Theories of Risk Perception: At Once Indispensable and Insufficient". *Current Sociology* 49 (1): 1-22.

WHO (World Health Organisation) (2005) *Alcohol Use and Sexual Risk Behaviour: A Cross-Cultural Study in Eight Countries*. Geneva: Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse. Online: www.who.int

Young, Charles and De Klerk, Vivienne (2007) *Patterns of Alcohol Usage on a South African University Campus*. Rhodes University, Dean of Students: Grahamstown.

Key to Focus Group Discussions (Exact dates given, where known).

FG1 – Focus group discussion on the Risk of Crime and Violence # 1, 12 May 2008
FG2 – Focus group discussion on the Risk of Crime and Violence # 2, April/May 2008
FG3 – Focus group discussion on Emotional Risk, April/May 2008
FG4 – Focus group discussion on Financial and Environmental Risk, 22 April 2008
FG5 – Focus group discussion on Health Risk # 1, 21 April 2008
FG6 – Focus group discussion on Health Risk # 2, April/May 2008
FG7 – Focus group discussion on Health Risk # 3, April/May 2008
FG8 – Focus group discussion on the Risk of Racism and Xenophobia, April/May 2008
FG9 – Focus group discussion on the Risk of Substance Abuse # 1, April/May 2008
FG10 – Focus group discussion on the Risk of Substance Abuse # 2, April/May 2008
FG11 – Focus group discussion on the Risk of Crime and Violence A, May 2009
FG12 – Focus group discussion on the Risk of Crime and Violence B, May 2009
FG13 – Focus group discussion on Emotional Risk, 5 May 2009
FG14 – Focus group discussion on Financial and Environmental Risk, May 2009
FG15 – Focus group discussion on Health Risk A, 6 May 2009
FG16 – Focus group discussion on Health Risk B, May 2009
FG17 – Focus group discussion on the Risk of Racism and Xenophobia A, May 2009
FG18 – Focus group discussion on the Risk of Racism and Xenophobia B, May 2009
FG19 – Focus group discussion on the Risk of Substance Abuse A, 18 May 2009
FG20 – Focus group discussion on the Risk of Substance Abuse B, May 2009

Citation

Rau Asta, Jan K. Coetzee, Amy Vice (2010) "Narrating student life in a time of risk." *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Vol. VI Issue 3. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php)

Qualitative Sociology Review
Volume VI, Issue 3 – December 2010

Adie Nelson and Veronica Nelson
University of Waterloo, Canada

"Hey Mitch-elle, you need a shave!": The school days of hirsute adolescents

Abstract

This qualitative, longitudinal study directs attention to how adolescence – a time period that is already fraught with pressures and struggles for most - may be complicated by the presence of hirsutism, a putatively "sex-discordant" marker. Attention is directed to the school-based experiences of a non-representative sample of 67 Canadian youth and 41 adult women who shared their recollections of how hirsutism had impacted their lives as adolescents. Although hirsute youth may seem well-situated to act as the trailblazers for the type of subversive crossings that Butler (1990) championed in *Gender Trouble*, our study find little to suggest that they would welcome this role. Rather, the obverse seems true. However, given the dependent status of adolescents in Western society, it might be entirely presumptuous to expect hirsute youth to behave as if dualistic thinking about sex, gender and sexuality did not exist when so many of their experiences will continuously remind them that it does**.**

Keywords:
Adolescence, Stigma, Hirsutism, Gender, Relational Aggression

Research documents that beginning in early grades and throughout high school, physical attractiveness is not only a major determinant of popularity for girls but that those who do not conform to a stereotypic image of feminine beauty may be targeted by others for ridicule and rejection. Thus, for example, Puhl and Latner's (2007) review of the scholarly literature on weight stigma in childhood and adolescence notes that while both overweight and obese boys and girls are likely to experience social rejection, discrimination and negative stereotyping by their peers, females may be especially vulnerable to certain forms of victimization such as weight-based teasing and name-calling and exclusionary treatment. Moreover, if Wardle and Cooke's (2005) review of recent empirical studies that have examined the relationship between childhood obesity and body dissatisfaction, self-esteem and

1 Adie Nelson is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Waterloo. She received her Ph.D. from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Her areas of specialization are gender, sexuality and deviance (eds@uwaterloo.ca); Veronica B. Nelson is completing an Honours Biomedical Science degree at the University of Waterloo and plans to pursue a career in medicine (vbnelson@scimail.uwaterloo.ca).

©2005-2010 Qualitative Sociology Review

depression pointedly acknowledges the resilience of many obese youth, it simultaneously records the pernicious consequences that may ensue when a young person possesses a negatively-defined attribute or 'stigma' (Goffman 1963) and a devalued social identity. For these reasons, it would seem unfortunate that, in stark contrast to the voluminous literature that has addressed obesity among children and adolescents, there is a dearth of research on the experience of "hirsutism" in adolescence.

Hirsutism, a medical term which is applied exclusively to females, has been defined as an 'excess' of coarse, terminal hair at androgen-dependent areas or in a "masculine" or "male-like pattern'" (Dawber 2002: 34). Its definition, however, must be acknowledged as problematic for at least three reasons. First, although the growth of terminal or 'sexual hair' may be 'entirely dependent on the presence of androgen' (Martin et al. 2008: 1007), individuals are arrayed along a hormonal-sex continuum. Second, the dualistic notion that males are invariably hairier than females is challenged by research that indicates that patterns of hair growth are not only affected by sex, but by such factors as age (Spencer et al. 2007), 'race'/ethnicity (DeUgarte et al. 2006) and body mass index (Cupisti et al. 2008). Third, while the Ferriman-Gallway (F-H) rating scale, which quantifies hair growth in women from 0 (the absence of terminal hair) to 4 (extensive coverage) in nine locations (i.e., upper lip, chin, chest, upper back, lower back, upper abdomen, lower abdomen, upper arms, thighs) is widely used in both initial assessments of hirsutism (mild: score 8-15, or severe: >15) and as the basis for treatment recommendations, the definition and weighting of hirsutism are inevitably subjectively problematic. Thus, while Ferriman himself recommended that hirsutism be defined by a value of 5 or more on his scoring system (DeUgarte et al. 2006: 1345), other have notably favoured higher scores (e.g., Lipton et al. 2006; Mofid et al. 2008). Nevertheless, if defining what is and is not indicative of 'hirsutism' is rife with difficulties, it would seem a fraudulent type of democratization to presume that the lives of young girls who experience profuse hair growth on, for example, their faces, necks and chests are interchangeable with those who do not.

Dependent on the inclusivity of the definition used, hirsutism has been estimated to affect between 5 percent to 15 percent of women of reproductive age (Azziz 2003; Martin et al. 2008). Although hirsutism may be 'idiopathic' (i.e., of unknown cause) and occur in females with normal ovulatory function and/or androgen levels, research based on clinical populations reports that hirsutism most often signifies an endocrine abnormality, specifically androgen excess (hyperandrogenemia), with polycystic ovary syndrome identified as its most common cause (Martin et al. 2008). However, given that '[t]he diagnostic evaluation of the potentially hirsute patient first involves confirming the presence of hirsutism and then excluding associated or etiological abnormalities and disorders (e.g., ovulatory dysfunction, adrenal hyperplasia, diabetes, thyroid hormone abnormalities' (Azziz 2003: 995) it is not, perhaps, surprising that research on hirsute youth has almost invariably been conducted by physicians, based on clinical samples and focused on issues of diagnosis, etiology and medical management (e.g., Barth and Clark 2003; Buyukgebiz 2007a, 2007b; Chang and Coffler 2007; Dzhorbenadze, Kristesashvili and Chopikashvili 2005; Harwood,Vuguin and DiMartino-Mardi 2007; Huppert, Chiodi and Hillard 2004; Lucky et al. 2001; Mastorakos, Lambrinoudaki and Creatsas 2006; Quint 2002; Sciarra, Balducci and Toscano 1997).

The 'Hairless Norm And Hirsutism As Stigma

Previous research has identified the semblance of hairlessness on the bodies of adult women as strongly normative within contemporary Western culture (e.g., Basow 1991; Basow and Braman 1998; Ferrante 1988; Hope 1982; Kitzinger and Wilmott 2002; Labre 2002; Tiggeman and Kenyon 1998; Torien and Wilkinson 2003, 2004; Toerien, Wilkinson and Choi 2005). Research also suggests that women who contravene the norm of hairlessness may be subject to negative assessments (e.g., Basow and Willis 2001; Tiggemann and Lewis 2004). While Boroughs, Cafri and Thompson (2005) suggest that the practice of body hair removal by men is now common enough in North America to warrant its description as a 'new cultural phenomenon,' data compiled by the National Clearinghouse of Plastic Surgery Statistics suggests that the practice of body hair removal remains strongly gendered. Thus, in 2007, women accounted for 81 per cent of the recipients of laser hair removal procedures performed by members of the American Society of Plastic Surgery; teenagers accounted for 7 per cent (ASPS 2008).

Inasmuch as hirsutism dramatically contravenes the hairless norm, it may be anticipated that females who are hirsute will face challenges. Although the visibility of their stigma may vary, Pachankis (2007: 328) has emphasized that those who possess a 'concealable' or 'hidden stigma' will routinely confront a host of unique stressors including 'having to make decisions to disclose one's hidden status, anxiously anticipating the possibility of being found out, being isolated from similarly stigmatized others, and being detached from one's true self.' However, while his cognitive-affective-behavioral process model highlights how features of situations can lead to negative psychological consequences, the tendency in research on hirsutism has been to ignore what Pachankis (2007: 341) terms the 'hidden dimensions of stigma' and, where higher rates of psychopathology are reported, to attribute such rates to hirsutism itself.

Hirsutism in adult women has been associated with greater dissatisfaction with body image, confusion of gender identity, disordered eating, a lessened sense of femininity, 'abnormal' sexuality, heightened levels of anxiety, depression and social fears and a compromised quality of life (e.g., Kegan, Lio and Boyle 2003; Morgan et al. 2008). Koulouri and Conway (2008: 800) find the adverse impact of hirsutism on psychological well-being and on quality of life to be comparable to that of asthma, epilepsy or diabetes; Lipton et al. (2006: 166) report that 'Hirsute women in our study had higher scores for anxiety and depression that newly diagnosed gynecological cancer or breast cancer patients.' Yet, the generalizeability of these findings may be questioned, given that participants in studies on hirsutism have almost always been recruited from specialist settings (e.g., hospitals, clinics) and it is possible that these women may have been preferentially referred to these locations because of their especial distress over the presence of "excess" hair. One may also ponder the possible differences that might exist between women who have demonstrated a readiness to participate in clinical trials that have investigated the benefits/risks of the various and sundry drugs and procedures that may be used in the treatment of hirsutism (e.g., antiandrogens; insulin-lowering drugs; glucocorticoids; GnRH agonists; electrolysis; laser photothermolysis) and those who have declined participation. In consequence, while Azziz (2003: 995) asserts that '[t]he presence of hirsutism is extremely distressing to patients, with a significant negative impact on their psychosocial development,' it is worth noting his use of the term 'patients.' Moreover, while bold pronouncements on the negative impact of hirsutism on psychosocial development are common within this body of literature, there is actually

a marked absence of research on the experiences of hirsute youth and only rarely have researchers considered 'the meanings which women themselves ascribe to their hair growth and its management, and their relationship to a gendered social context' (Keegan, Lio and Boyle 2003: 329).

Method

Our study attempts to augment the extant literature by looking at how hirsutism is experienced by youth and, more specifically, emphasizing the salience of their peer interactions in schools as they formulate their self-identity and adapt, cope and adjust to their stigmatized appearance. It is based upon a non-representative sample of 67 Canadian youth who were located through an admixture of snowball and rare element sampling and interviewed informally on multiple occasions over a ecade; in many cases, enduring friendships were forged with our participants. At the time of first contact, all of these youths were between the ages of 13 and 17. The acquisition of an initial sample of participants was serendipitous and it was unexpected that, on occasion, participants would spontaneously volunteer to introduce us to family members who also experienced hirsutism. In retrospect, their doing so may be reflective of the fact that there is a 'strong familial component to hirsutism' (Azziz 2003: 999). However, this development led fortuitously to the identification of a second group of 41 adult women (ages 21 to 46) who shared their recollections of how hirsutism had affected their lives as adolescents.

All of our participants identified themselves as hirsute. Following Mofid et al.'s (2007: 433) observation that an 'individual woman's definition of hirsutism may differ depending upon her ethnic background and upon her interpretation of normal,' we privileged our respondents' definition of themselves as hirsute even when, on occasion, these self-definitions had not flowed from a medical evaluation or a physician's formal assessment of the individual on the F-G scoring system. However, the absence of these confirmatory features was far more common among the adults in our sample (20%) than the youths (7%). Among those who had been diagnosed by a physician as hirsute, our sample of adults were also much more likely to report that the diagnosis they had received during adolescence was limited to that of 'hirsutism' and that this label had been based on a cursory visual inspection of the problematic area(s) (generally the face) without any follow-up tests performed (for instance, blood work, ultrasound scans) and/or treatment proffered. Compared to adults, the youth in our sample were far more likely to report that, at some point during their adolescence, their hirsutism had resulted in referral to one or more medical specialists. Youth were also much more likely than adults to report that their hirsutism had been identified as a symptom of a condition - even though, as we will emphasize later, there was often remarkable fluidity in what, specifically, that condition was adjudged to be. However, rather than view this lack of exactitude as a limitation of our study, we believe that it constitutes a strength for, in itself, it serves to illuminate the uncertainty that marks the adolescent odyssey of hirsute youth. Among our respondents, the 'meaning' of being 'hairy' or 'hirsute' was not static; rather, understandings of its import shifted over time, reflecting and refracting the disparate frameworks and vocabularies of others who tended to it and endowed it with significance.

Although it is incontestable that our sample may be 'atypical,' the strategy we employed seems a sensible and viable method for gaining access to a population with a condition that, the literature records, is often sheathed in secrecy and

perceived to be a non-shareable problem. We have combined the experiences of our adolescent and adult samples inasmuch as their experiences of hirsutism during adolescence were markedly similar. In doing so, we were cognizant of the fact that, when queried about earlier perceptions and attitudes, people may retrospectively appropriate the past and change it. Moreover, we recognized that individuals themselves could be unaware of how their attitudes have changed over time. Nevertheless, the comments of our adult respondents suggested that hirsutism is perceived by those who have experienced it as a 'sticky' stigma (Bergman and Chalkley 2007).

Becoming 'Hairy'

The vast majority of our respondents stressed that it was not until their middle school years that their pattern of hair growth had been seen by others and/or themselves as a significant marker. Although they were often uncertain about when, precisely, hair had first appeared on any specific area of their bodies, they responded with far less hesitation when asked when they had first thought of themselves as 'hairy.' Almost invariably, this perception was dated to a specific occasion when their possession of hair on some area had prompted negative commentary or response, most often by a peer at school. It was *that* incident, they would emphasize, that had also triggered a sense of themselves as 'weird,' 'abnormal' or deviant. Thus, they would report that they had never thought of their possession of body hair in any particular area as especially noteworthy until, for example, a classmate had shouted at them during recess, 'Yo Elvis! Nice sideburns!' and that this remark had, in turn, prompted a raucous chorus of agreement from others. One respondent reported that the first time that she was conscious of the hair on her face was when, early in grade 7, she had arrived at her locker, discovered a piece of paper taped upon it that proclaimed that the locker belonged to 'Cousin It' and observed a group of her peers looking towards her and laughing. A second respondent recalled that, in grade 9, she had found an adhesive 'Hello I'm...' name tag affixed to the back of her school sweater with 'Sasquatch' written upon it. At approximately the same age, but two decades earlier, one of our adult respondents reported that she had found 'Chewbacca' scrawled in felt pen across her middle school locker; up until that time, she remarked, she had thought of her facial hair as 'no big deal. I don't even think I was really aware of it. I knew that I had *really* hairy *legs* but it didn't bother me any.' A fourth respondent recalled that she became conscious of herself as 'hairy' when, in grade 8, a group of girls who had previously ignored her met her at the entrance of the school and told her that they had heard that she had a birthday coming up and wished to give her a gift. When she opened the elaborately packaged present, she had discovered a container of Nair, a hair removal product. The benefactors of this gift, she said grimly, seemed greatly amused by her discomfiture and, for weeks after, she reported, numerous other youths, many of whom were strangers to her, had approached her in the school corridors to ask if she had liked her present or, alternatively, to chide her for "obviously" not using the gift that she had received. 'They'd say, like, "What's wrong with you anyhow? You're supposed to thank someone when they give you a gift. Didn't your parents teach you manners?'"A fifth respondent reported that when her grade 8 class had been told to complete a yearbook survey that asked the students to single out from among their peers 'Who is most likely to----?' (e.g., become prime minister; win an Oscar), she had been mortified to discover that one or more of her peers had added 'join the circus' to the

list and specified her most likely future vocation as a 'bearded lady.' A sixth respondent reported that following the airing of an episode of C.S.I. entitled 'Werewolves,' which depicted two characters with congenital hypertrichosis, several of her middle school male classmates had begun to call her a "werewolf" and to routinely greet her with howling noises. A seventh respondent reported that, for several weeks during a grade eight semester, she had intermittently found a disposable razor placed on the desk where she routinely sat for her first period class.

These early experiences were imbued with significance and, even decades after the event, were recalled with apparent clarity. In illustration, one may consider the level of detail that is contained in the report of an adult respondent who recounted an incident that had reportedly occurred more than two decades prior:

> It was in my grade 10 chemistry class with Mr. Eyre. The class was divided into three sections with two people at each of the lab desks that went from the front of the class to the back. At the front of the class, there was a riser with the teacher's lab station on it and a blackboard behind it....I was a little late that day....[a]nd just as I was coming in the door, this guy Shannon Black who sat at the far side of the room at a lab table that was third from the back in the row nearest the window, he yells out, "Hey Mitch-elle, you need a shave!" Well, the whole class just thought this was hysterically funny... I can still see Shannon and his lab partner and both of the guys at the lab table behind him practically falling off their stools while I'm just standing there glued to the floor, deer in the headlights sort of thing... I can still feel how hot my face got and how I had this funny feeling in my head like I was being held under water. [What did you do?] What could I do? I just stared down at the floor and walked to my seat as quickly as I could with everyone just laughing at me..... I just wanted to die.

Although both male and female peers were said to have engaged in such bullying, other girls were most likely to have been repeatedly aggressive. Thus, our respondents identified girls as the most common source of mean-spirited gossip and the spreading of false rumors that were perceived as both maliciously-motivated and injurious (e.g., telling others that the hirsute youth was going through a "sex change" operation; pronouncing a girl's hair growth sure evidence that she was a "lesbian"; claiming that the hirsute girl had stared at their breasts or attempted to "grope" them; informing others that an unnamed "friend" had witnessed the hirsute girl changing for gym class and "saw" that she possessed male genitals). Girls were also identified as the most likely to have engaged in acts of ostracism and exclusion. For example, a 14 year-old respondent reported that during that week's gym class, a square-dancing lesson had required students to hold the hand of their assigned partner. When her partner had seemed markedly reluctant to do so, the girl had taken the initiative and grabbed the other girl's hand. The next day, she informed us, she had been swarmed by seven girls who called her a "hairy freak" and told her that if she ever touched their friend again, she would "really regret it." It was similarly common for our respondents to claim that they were "always left out" when their female peers extended invitations to parties, that their friendly overtures would be rebuffed and/or that their attempts to find a seat among others in a classroom or at a lunchroom table would routinely result in their being told by other girls that the empty chairs were being "saved" for others - even though they later saw that the chairs remained empty.

Although girls were said to be as likely as males to engage in name-calling, boys were identified as more likely to bestow nicknames, often drawn from popular culture, upon hirsute youth. Although "Wookiee," "Wolfman" and "King Kong" were mentioned by both adults and youth, those that were unique to youth included names derived from popular videogames, animated television programs and comics such as *Pokemon* (e.g., "Mamoswine," "Furret," "Hariyama"), *Digimon* (e.g., "Jijimon," "Mojyamon"), *Dragonball Z* (e.g., "Saiyan"), *Halo* ("Brute") and *Quake* ("Shambler"). None of these nicknames was perceived as being complimentary. A 14 year-old respondent noted that while she had initially been flattered when a male classmate began to call her "Sweetums" and thought this signified that he "liked" her, she had "felt like an idiot" when, after the boy's friends followed his lead, she had been made aware that the intended referent was that of an ogre-like "Muppet." Boys were also reportedly far more likely than girls to engage in a novel form of verbal aggression that consisted of linguistically de-gendering the female target's given name and refashioning it as a "male" name. Although doing so may have been most easily accomplished when the given name already incorporated a male name that could be enhanced with a diminutive ending (e.g., "Danielle" and "Roberta" transformed into "Dan" and "Rob" or "Allison" and "Kendra" abbreviated to "Al" and "Ken"), this type of symbolic gender recasting also occurred when first names were far less obviously malleable. Thus, for example, "Renee" could be renamed "Ramone" and "Talia" referred to as "Tyler."

From Hairy To 'Hirsute'

The vast majority of our respondents reported that they had first consulted with physicians about their hair growth only after experiencing school-based relational aggression. Although these visits with often prompted by the hope of a sure diagnosis and a speedy resolution to their problem, this was rarely forthcoming. Thus, for example, one respondent reported at age 14 that she had been diagnosed with "terminal hair growth" by a physician at a walk-in clinic and advised that, if she was troubled by the hair on her face she should shave or wax or, if her parents could afford it, undergo electrolysis. However, as the degree of her hirsutism increased and our respondent underwent a series of consultations with other medical specialists over the years that followed, she reported that her condition had "finally" been identified as - (variously) - "idiopathic hirsutism," "polycystic ovary syndrome" and "nonclassic congenital adrenal hyperplasia"; until age 20, however, the recommended treatment for her hirsutism remained constant. A second young woman, at age 15, stated that she had been told by her family physician that "obesity" had precipitated her possession of both excessive "male hormones" and a dense profusion of coarse hair upon her face, chest, shoulders, back and buttocks; she was advised to lose weight. At age 17, she was diagnosed by one endocrinologist with "hypertrichiosis" and at age 19, by a second endocrinologist, with "polycystic ovary syndrome." A third respondent reported that, at age 5, she had developed hair on her pubic region and under her arms and that this had led to a diagnosis of "precocious pubarche"; after developing facial hair at age 16 she was diagnosed with "Graves' disease" (a thyroid disorder) and, at age 18, with polycystic ovary syndrome. A fourth respondent, who had received a diagnosis of hypertrichosis from a pediatrician at age 14 and a subsequent diagnosis of "hirsutism" from an endocrinologist at age 17 observed that, when she had asked her family physician about these ostensibly different labels, she had been told that these terms were used

interchangeably and signified "the exact same thing." If this conversation was accurately reported by our respondent, her family physician's claim would seem at least somewhat puzzling, given that medical researchers in this area frequently emphasize that "[h]irsutism *must* be distinguished from hypertrichosis" with the latter defined as "generalized excessive hair growth" that is "distributed in a generalized, nonsexual pattern" and is "not caused by excess androgen (although hyperandrogenemia may aggravate it)" (Martin et al. 2008: 1109, emphasis added). It may be the case that the girl's physician was unaware of the distinction and its purported significance. However, it also seems possible that, in responding to a query from a youth rather than an adult, the girl's physician may have thought it acceptable/preferable to answer her in a way that dampened the likelihood that she would ask further questions and allowed him to move quickly on to other patients. A fifth respondent whose profound hirsutism had prompted visits to assorted physicians since the age of 13 and testing for a plethora of suspected conditions, stated at age 18 that when her endocrinologist had recently scheduled her for yet-another diagnostic test, she had asked him what condition he thought she had. In response, her physician had reportedly "snapped" at her impatiently: "21-hydroxylase deficiency. Is that useful to you? Is that what you want to know?" After searching Wikipedia, she thought it likely that her doctor suspected that she had 21-hydroxylase-deficient nonclassic adrenal hyperplasia and worried that this meant she was a "hermaphrodite." Whether or not this is so, it is evident that her physician's response to her was phrased in medicomystical jargon that obscured as much, if not more, than it revealed.

None of the examples featured above should be considered anomalous; rather, ambiguity and flux in relation to diagnosis seemed the norm among our respondents. Moreover, it was common that optimistic expressions of the results of future appointments with physicians would be followed, after the fact, by the voicing of feelings of exasperation, hopelessness and defeat. As one 17 year-old girl remarked, voicing a common sentiment, "What's the point of going back every six months when all he [her endocrinologist] ever does is weigh me, take my blood pressure, ask me if the hair bothers me - well, duh! - ask me when I got my first period - as if that's changed since I last saw him - and send me for more blood work? He doesn't really *talk* to me - I'm in and out of his office in, like five, ten minutes!" These feelings of frustration and impotence, unfortunately, were often redoubled when our respondents interacted with adults who occupied professional roles within schools.

Navigating The Corridors

Although reports of in-school bullying by peers were common among our respondents, when asked if they had reported these events to a school authority figure, less than one in ten of our respondents said that they had done so. The most common reasons for non-reporting were: embarrassment and a marked reticence to repeat the contents of their peers' remarks; a desire to minimize the degree of attention that was directed at their hair growth; a fear that the contents of their disclosure would not be kept confidential and, instead, serve as fodder for school gossip; and the perception that intervention was unlikely to be effective. When disclosure to a school authority figure occurred, it was often a mediated act that followed from the youth confiding in an adult, almost always a mother, who contacted the school on the child's behalf or encouraged the child to report the offensive

behaviour. When reports were made, school guidance counselors were the most frequently selected confidante. However, despite the high incidence of zero tolerance policies within schools that promise certain punishment for those who bully or act in a discriminatory manner, the reports of our respondents suggest that these policies may serve largely rhetorical purposes. A 16 year-old recalled,

> Well, when Sofia yelled out in class that I had a moustache, I was really upset about it and when my mom picked me up after school, I was crying in the car and she phoned the school when we got home. The next day Mr. McBride, who was the guidance counselor, called me into his office. But all he told me was that I needed to learn how to get along with people and that he could help me do that but that it was really a task that I must find out on my own. And he told me that I shouldn't be so sensitive and that he was sure that Sofia was only joking. He asked me what she did when she had said I had a moustache and I said that she smiled. But because I had said that she had smiled, Mr. McBride said that she "obviously" must have been joking and told me that if I had said that she "smirked," rather than "smiled," then *that* would have meant that she was making fun of me. But because I said that she had "smiled," he insisted that this meant she was just joking and that I shouldn't have taken it seriously. A couple of days later, he pulled me out of class again and said that he had talked to Sofia and that she said that she was only joking and this "proved" his point and again he told me that I had to learn how to get along with people. He said that I should try and be more open and try explaining my feelings to other people and that if anyone said anything that was hurtful towards me that I should say "That really hurt my feelings" or "That isn't very nice. My feelings are hurt." I told him that I felt that if I did this, it would just encourage them more because what, after all, was the point of telling someone that they had a moustache other than to hurt their feelings? He said that he wasn't sure but it couldn't have been that she intended to hurt my feeling because I had said that she "smiled" and not "smirked." He then told me that... I had to develop a sense of humor. And, after Sofia and her friends really started tormenting me and my mom started calling the school demanding that they do something to help me, he told me that I shouldn't get my mother to call the school because I should learn how to deal with it on my own and after all, I was the one who had the problem and I was the one who needed to develop a thicker skin. But anytime that I had a problem, that's what he'd say: That I was over-sensitive; that I needed to learn how to get along with others; that I was the one who had problems and not the people who were making fun of me - and that they were really not making fun of me at all and that I was just being overdramatic and overly sensitive and didn't have a sense of humor. And that's why, for the most part of grade seven and all of grade 8, that I believed in what the kids in the schoolyard said - that I was weird or freakish. And, since I was being hurt by it, I felt that I was going crazy in some way.

Other respondents also emphasized that their efforts to obtain intervention had often left them feeling that they were 'totally alone.' A 15 year-old girl stated that after being harshly reprimanded by a gym teacher for being repeatedly late to class, she had attempted to confide in the teacher that she did not feel comfortable changing in front of others "because of a medical condition" and, as a result, waited for the others to leave the locker room before changing her clothes. In response, her gym teacher had told her dismissively that she should "just get over it," that she was being "neurotic" and that she was sure that "none of the girls would say anything, They're all really

nice girls." Reflecting on her teacher's response, the girl bitterly observed that some of these "really nice girls" had already commented on her "beard," "sideburns" and "gorilla arms" and expressed her belief that her school life would have been "even worse. It would have been absolute hell" had the girls been aware that she had coarse dark hair covering her chest, back and buttocks. A 14 year-old reported that when her teacher announced an in-class competition that would pit the boys against the girls, a girl in her class had loudly called out, "So who gets Emma?" - a query that had prompted laughter from her classmates and silence from the teacher. A 17 year-old recalled that during the "sex education part" of her grade 8 physical education class, the topic of homosexuality had been raised and elicited a string of "Eeews!" from her classmates. She noted that after the teacher had informed the class that "gays were different from 'normal' people, like they had different genes and that's why lesbians looked more like guys, this guy Brandon in my class turned around and yelled at me, 'Yo Al-ison, you got different genes buddy?'" and that all of the students had roared. When asked if the teacher had reprimanded the boy, she replied, "No. Miss Bensia was the kind of teacher who wanted to be pals with her students and she always sucked up to the popular kids. Brandon was really popular. I was really unpopular. [How did this incident make you feel?] I don't know. Confused. I wondered if maybe I was gay and just didn't know it." A 16 year-old who had been prescribed contraceptives in treatment for her hirsutism reported that, in an attempt to silence the jeers of classmates who frequently referred to her as a "lesbo," she had deliberately attempted to make her possession of these pills visible (e.g., taking the disc of pills out of her purse and prominently setting it on her desk while searching for a pencil), with the hope that her peers would (mis)construe this as evidence that at least one boy found her sexually attractive and that she was engaged in heterosexual activity.

Only on rare occasions did our respondents report experiencing significant support from a peer. These incidents, however, were uniformly recounted in a tone of triumph. For example, a 16 year-old girl stated that during a school lunch period, one of her female classmates had sat down beside her and, in a purported demonstration of "true friendship," had told her that others routinely called her "things like 'she-male,'" "lesbian," "freak of nature"; her confidante reportedly emphasized that while she had told these anonymous others "that it isn't very nice to call people names... no one else stuck up for you. They just totally hate you." Our respondent said that the girl's report had made her feel "hopeless" and "sick" and that she had been "totally shocked" when a boy who was standing nearby had unexpectedly leaned forward and told her classmate, "You know what? You're full of shit." She remarked that while her confidante had become visibly flustered, termed the boy 'totally rude" and said that he "had no right to butt into a private conversation," "I could have kissed him! I just thought, finally! *Finally*! Someone stood up for *me*! I didn't even know him really. He wasn't in any of my classes. Just a guy. Just a *really really really* nice guy." Reports of intervention from a relative stranger, however, were rare. More frequently, peer-based support was reported to come from a sibling or a "best friend" who had entreated aggressors to "leave her alone" or "stop picking on her" or, most commonly, privately voiced comments of consolation and commiseration (e.g., "just ignore them, they're a bunch of losers"). However, many of our respondents reported that they had few friends or identified themselves as being "loners" who attempted, as much as possible, to stay in the shadows.

To that end, it was common that respondents with, for example, facial hair would note that they would deliberately pull their hair forward over their shoulders so as to cover their face and neck, keep their head down, avoid making eye contact with

others and, when speaking to another was necessary, cup their chin with their thumb and lay their index finger directly across their upper lip. However, such attempts to "pass" as indistinguishable from others could also result in censure. A 14 year-old girl who adopted this type of defensive posture said that when she had attempted to disclose an incident of harassment to her guidance counselor, her guidance counselor told her that she "knew" by her "body language" and because she would not make eye contact with her, that she was not being truthful in her report. Many respondents also acknowledged that, in an attempt to ingratiate themselves with their peers, they had wittingly allowed themselves to be exploited. For example, respondents reported having attempted to win exemption from name-calling by doing the homework of a popular schoolmate, willingly taking on "all of the work" for a group project or engaging in frequent acts of gift-giving; in later adolescence, these efforts included "lending" money to classmates with full awareness that the "loan" was unlikely to be repaid and volunteering/agreeing to act as a chauffeur and to ferry classmates, who otherwise ignored them, to and from school. These efforts, it should be noted, only occasionally accomplished their intended goal.

It is not, perhaps, surprising that adolescents frequently noted that they found it easier to form friendships on-line rather than off; however, there could be much pathos in their reports of attempted on-line friendships and romances. For example, a 16 year-old respondent happily reported that she had a boyfriend who she had met on MySpace. He was 19, she proudly remarked, lived in Tennessee and was a "university student." However, she also mentioned sometime later that when he had asked her for a picture of herself, the picture that she had sent had been of a model selected after searching through an array of "Google"-images. An 18 year-old observed that in an attempt to find others "who were like me" by "Googling" the phrase "hairy female support group," she had learned that the term gorilla derives from "gorillai," a Greek word meaning a "tribe of hairy women" and discovered a large number of porn sites that gave prominence to women with "hairy armpits and crotches." Nevertheless, after noting that one of these porn sites was purportedly run by a woman who was a "leader in the hair acceptance movement" and hosted a support group for hirsute women, she had sent the woman an email, requesting information on how she might join this group. However, her email went unanswered.

It was routine that our respondents would report that, in an attempt to minimize negative commentary from their peers about their hair growth, they had experimented with an assortment of drug store hair removal products; the most commonly used were razors and depilatory creams. These early hair removal efforts were often performed in furtive fashion: a 13 year-old said that she had snuck her father's razor into her bedroom and there, with her back placed against the door and holding a hand mirror, had attempted to shave her face, neck and chest. Given the clandestine nature of such attempts, it is not surprising that products were occasionally used incorrectly or in an excessive and extravagant way. For example, a 15 year-old acknowledged that while the instructions on a hair removal cream had directed that the product remain on the skin for no longer than 10 minutes, she thought that could obtain better results if, after applying the creme to her face, she waited for half an hour; in the aftermath of doing so, she had experienced a skin inflammation that was both painful and evoked further commentary by her peers.

With one exception, our respondents' initial attempts at hair removal were restricted to impermanent measures; the exception was a respondent who stated that when, at age 13, she had confided in her aunt that she was being constantly teased about her facial hair at school, her aunt had told her that she "knew exactly what it was like," had undergone "years of electrolysis" herself as a young adult and stated,

“Don’t worry, we can do something about it.” Nevertheless, it may be noted that while this girl began receiving electrolysis at the age of 13, it did not provide a “quick fix” to the girl’s problem of hirsutism. As of age 18, she still attended weekly hour-long sessions of electrolysis and her aunt estimated that she had spent “tens of thousands of dollars” on her niece’s electrolysis. Similarly, while one girl had received at least a half dozen laser hair removal treatments (at a cost of approximately $2,000) between the ages of 17 and 18 in an attempt to remove the dark and profuse amounts of hair that covered her arms, the most notable effect had been to lighten the hair and to somewhat reduce its density; in consequence, the girl was skeptical of the utility of pursuing laser treatments on other, less visible areas of her body, such as on her chest and back. Moreover, in both of these cases, the youth commented upon the costs of these procedures and this awareness seemed to weigh heavily upon them. Both repeatedly mentioned feeling guilty that “so much money” had been spent and/or “wasted” upon them.

For some, their experience of school-based teasing and ridicule seemed at least somewhat cushioned by the fact that there was a familial support system that contained one or more adult females whom the youth knew to be “hirsute,” regardless of whether or not these women publicly presented themselves as such. The presence of these individuals seemed to mitigate the youth’s perception of herself as either aberrant or anomalous. Moreover, these individuals could also provided the youth with practical assistance. A 16 year-old, for example, reported that her 21 year-old cousin had helped her to apply a depilatory cream to her shoulders and back. However, the majority of our respondents seldom reported support offered or given. A 16 year-old stated that after using her mother’s credit card to pay for a 15 minute introductory session of electrolysis at a beauty salon at a reported cost of $18, her mother had become livid and threatened to have her arrested. A 14 year-old who possessed hair on her chest and back recalled begging her mother to allow her to stay home on the occasion of an end-of-term field trip to a public swimming pool. In response, she reported, her mother had screamed at her, compared her unfavourably to a classmate who lived nearby and rhetorically asked what she done in a past life to deserve a daughter who was “different from every other girl.” A third reminisced, “I told my mom over and over what was going on at school but she just played deaf. I just couldn’t get through to her. She’d just say, ‘Well, in many European countries, women don’t shave at all and a little peach fuzz is considered beautiful.’ I’d tell her, ‘Mom, I don’t live in Europe and I don’t have a ‘little peach fuzz.’ I have hair all over my face and it’s making my life a misery.’ But each time I’d try to talk to her about it, she just wouldn’t listen.” It should be noted, however, that this young woman’s mother may not have been, as her daughter supposed, “deaf” or indifferent to her daughter’s concerns. It would seem entirely possible that, instead, the woman may have been attempting to provide her daughter with an alternative definition of facial hair which stressed its normality and compatibility with feminine beauty and, that by employing a euphemism (i.e., a “little peach fuzz”), she was attempting to downplay its significance. It is also possible that the stigma of hirsutism is contagious in the same way that the sacred becomes taboo through contact. If so, parents may attempt to reject the stigmatization of their daughters by refusing to acknowledge it.

Discussion

Although the topic of hirsutism among youth has been virtually ignored by social scientists, this situation warrants redress. It is possible that the reasons why social scientists have been dissuaded from pursuing research in this area are the *a priori* identification of hirsutism as a "medical condition" and the nature of academic training itself, which structures both under-and postgraduate programs within disciplinary lines and militates against the likelihood of multi-disciplinary knowledge and collaboration. As a topic which would seem to invite consideration of the nature of the relationship between sex and gender, it may also be expected that researchers will adopt a vantage point (e.g., biological determinist or social constructionist) that is favoured by their academic specialization and tends to reflect their academic roots.
Yet, it should be evident that the experiences of hirsute youth are not impelled solely by their biology and that hirsutism is not solely a "medical condition." Whether or not their hirsutism is identified as "idiopathic" or as evidence of hyperandrogenism, the experiences of our respondents furnish poignant testimony to the human costs of dichotomous thinking in relation to sex, gender and sexuality. That is, if binary oppositions are integral to Western thought, they have obvious ramifications for the lives of hirsute youth: A way of thinking that insists that all phenomena must belong to one or the other of two categories, female/male, feminine/masculine, heterosexual/homosexual, tolerates no ambiguous middle ground. Rather, it encourages the belief that the elements within each category are different to the point of antithesis. From the reports of our respondents, dichotomous thinking about sex, gender and sexuality continues to hold sway in the new millennium and is reinforced and reproduced in a critically important form of "borderwork" (Thorne 1993) that occurs in peer-to-peer interactions between hirsute youth and their classmates and which serves to construct and reinforce gendered embodied deviance and its consequences.

In arguing that gender is "performative" - a social "fabrication" and "effect of power" that arises from a "decidedly public and social discourse" that, in coercive fashion, insists upon the constant repetition of certain stylized acts - Butler (1990) maintains that gender is not biologically impelled but, instead, socially constructed and that categories of identity can be purposefully displaced by "sexual crossing" – a mixing up of multiple identity pathways. Thus, in enjoining gender performances which create "gender trouble," it was suggested that these types of performances could function to "show up the incoherence....[and] the artifice...that is the gendered self" (Beasley 2005: 102). Yet, if on the surface hirsute youth may seem well-situated to act as the trailblazers for these types of subversive crossings, our data find little to suggest that they would welcome this role. Rather, the obverse seems true. However, given the dependent status of adolescents in Western society, it might be entirely presumptuous to expect hirsute youth to behave as if dualistic thinking about sex, gender and sexuality did not exist when so many of their experiences will continuously remind them that it does.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank Paul Rock for his constant kindness and invaluable comments on multiple drafts of this manuscript.

References

American Society of Plastic Surgery (2008) Plastic Surgery Procedures Maintain Steady Growth in 2007. March 25. (http://www.plasticsurgery.org)

Azziz, Ricardo (2003) "The Evaluation and Management of Hirsutism." *Obstetrics and Gynecology* 101:995-1007.

Barth, Julian H. and Sheila Clark (2003) "Acne and Hirsutism in Teenagers." *Best Practice & Research Clinical Obstetrics & Gynaecology* 17: 131-148.

Basow, Susan A. (1991) "The Hairless Ideal: Women and their Body Hair." *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 15:83-96.

Basow, Susan A. and Amie C. Braman (1998) "Women and Body Hair: Social Perceptions and Attitudes." *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 22: 637-645.

Basow, Susan A. and Joanna Willis (2001) "Perceptions of Body Hair on White Women: Effects of Labeling." *Psychological Reports* 89: 571-576.

Beasley, Chris (2005) *Gender & Sexuality*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Bergman, Mindy E. and Katherine M. Chalkley (2007) "'Ex' Marks a Spot: The Stickiness of Dirty Work and Other Removed Stigmas." *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* 12:251-265.

Boroughs, Michael, Guy Cafri and J. Kevin Thompson (2005) "Male Body Depilation: Prevalence and Associated Features of Body Hair Removal." *Sex Roles* 52: 637-644.

Boroughs, Michael and J. Kevin Thompson (2002) "Body Depilation in Males: A New Body Image Concern?" *International Journal of Men's Health* 1: 247-257.

Buyukgebiz, Atilla (2007a) "Hirsutism in Adolescent Girls." *Journal of Pediatric Endocrinology & Metabolism* 20: 473-474.

------ (2007b) "The Face of Late-onset Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia." *Journal of Pediatric Endocrinology & Metabolism* 20: 667.

Butler, Judith (1990) *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge.

Chang, Jeffrey R. and Mickey S. Coffler (2007) "Polycystic Ovary Syndrome: Early Detection in the Adolescent." *Clinical Obstetrics and Gynecology* 50: 178-187.

Cupisti, Susanne, Natia Kajaia, Ralf Dittrich, H. Duezenli, Matthias W. Beckmann and Andreas Mueller (2008) "Body Mass Index and Ovarian Function are Associated with Endocrine and Metabolic Abnormalities in Women with Hyperandrogenic Syndrome." *European Journal of Endocrinology* 158: 711-719.

Dawber, Rodney P.R. (2002) "Hirsuties." *The Journal of Gender-Specific Medicine* 5: 34-42.

DeUgarte, Catherine M., K.S. Woods, Afred A. Bartolucci and Ricardo Azziz (2006) "Degree of Facial and Body Terminal Hair Growth in Unselected Black and White Women: Toward a Population Definition of Hirsutism." *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism* 91: 1345-1350.

Dzhorbenadze, M.T., D.I. Kristesashvili, D.I. and N.A. Chopikashvili (2005) "The Frequency and Character of Clinical Manifestations of Androgenization Among Adolescent Girls." *Georgian Medical News* 129: 23-25.

Ferrante, Joan (1988) “Biomedical Versus Cultural Constructions of Abnormality: The Case of Idiopathic Hirsutism in the United States.” *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 12: 219-238.

Goffman, Erving (1963) *Stigma*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Harwood, Katerina, Patricia Vuguin and Joan DiMartino-Mardi (2007) “Current Approaches to the Diagnosis and Treatment of Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome in Youth.” *Hormone Research* 68: 209-17.

Hope, Christine (1982) “Caucasian Female Body Hair and American Culture.” *The Journal of American Culture* 5: 93-99.

Huppert, Jill, Martina Chiodi and Paula A.J. Hillard (2004) “Clinical and Metabolic Findings in Adolescent Females with Hyperandrogenism.” *Journal of Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology* 16: 103-108.

Keegan, Anna, Lih-mei Lio and Mary Boyle (2003) “‘Hirsutism’: A Psychological Analysis.” *Journal of Health Psychology* 8: 327-345.

Kitzinger, Celia and Jo Willmott (2002) “‘The Thief of Womanhood’: Women’s Experience of Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome.” *Social Science & Medicine* 54: 349-361.

Koulouri, Olympia and Gerard S. Conway (2008) “A Systematic Review of Commonly Used Medical Treatments for Hirsutism in Women.” *Clinical Endocrinology* 68: 800-805.

Labre, Megdala P. (2002) “The Brazilian Wax: New Hairlessness Norm for Women?” *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 26: 113-132.

Lipton, Michelle G., Lorraine Sherr, Jonathan Elford, Malcolm H.A. Rustin and William J. Clayton (2006) “Women Living with Facial Hair: The Psychological and Behavioral Burden.” *Journal of Psychosomatic Research* 61: 161-168.

Lucky, Anne W., Frank M Biro, Stephen R. Daniels, Marcelle I. Cedars, Philip R. Khoury and John A. Morrison (2001) “The Prevalence of Upper Lip Hair in Black and White Girls During Puberty: A New Standard.” *Journal of Pediatrics* 138: 134-136.

Martin, Kathryn A., R. Jeffrey Chang, David A. Ehrmann, Lourdes Ibanez, Rogerio A. Lobo, Robert L. Rosenfield, Jerry Shapiro, Victor M. Montori and Brian A. Swiglo (2008) “Evaluation and Treatment of Hirsutism in Premenopausal Women: An Endocrine Society Clinical Practice Guideline.” *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism* 93: 1105-1120.

Mastorakos, George, Irene Lambrinoudaki and George Creatsas (2006) “Polycystic Ovary Syndrome in Adolescents: Current and Future Treatment.” *Paediatric Drugs* 8: 311-318.

Mofid, Alireza, Seyyed A.S. Alinaghi, Saeed Zandieh and Tahereh Yazdani (2008) “Hirsutism.” *International Journal of Clinical Practice* 62: 433-443.

Morgan, John, Samantha Scholtz, Hubert Lacey and Gerard Conway (2008) “The Prevalence of Eating Disorders in Women with Facial Hirsutism: An Epidemiological Cohort Study.” *International Journal of Eating Disorders* 41: 427-431.

Pachankis, John E. (2007) “The Psychological Implications of Concealing a Stigma: A Cognitive-Affective Behavioral Model.” *Psychological Bulletin* 133: 328-345.

Puhl, Rebecca M. and Janet D. Latner (2007) “Stigma, Obesity, and the Health of the Nation’s Children.” *Psychological Bulletin* 133: 557-580.

Quint, Elisabeth H. (2002) “Hirsutism and Adnexal Masses in a Teenager.” *Journal of Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology* 15: 319-321.

Sciarra, Francesco, Rina Balducci and Vincenzo Toscano (1997) “Hyperandrogenism in Adolescent Females.” *Steroids* 62: 728.

Spencer, Jessica B., Mitchell Klein, Ashim Kumar and Ricardo Azziz (2007) “The Age-Associated Decline of Androgens in Reproductive Age and Menopausal Black and White Women.” *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism* 92: 4730-4703.

Thorne, Barrie (1993) *Gender Play*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Tiggeman, Marika and Sarah J. Kenyon (1998) “The Hairless Norm: The Removal of Body Hair in Women.” *Sex Roles* 39: 873-885.

Tiggemann, Marika and Christine Lewis (2004) “Attitudes Towards Women’s Body Hair: Relationship with Disgust Sensitivity.” *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 28: 381-387.

Toerien, Merran and Sue Wilkinson (2004) “Exploring the Depilation Norm: A Qualitative Questionnaire Study of Women’s Body Hair Removal.” *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 1: 69-92.

Toerien, Merran and Sue Wilkinson (2003) “Gender and Body Hair: Constructing the Feminine Woman.” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 26: 333-344.

Toerien, Merran, Sue Wilkinson and Precilla Y.L. Choi (2005) “Body Hair Removal: The ‘Mundane’ Production of Normative Femininity.” *Sex Roles* 52: 399-406.

Wardle, Jane and Lucy Cooke (2005) “The Impact of Obesity on Psychological Well-Being.” *Best Practice & Research Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism* 19: 421-440.

Citation

Nelson Adie and Veronica Nelson (2010) “*Hey Mitch-elle, you need a shave!:* The school days of hirsute adolescents” *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Vol. VI Issue 3. Retrieved Month, Year
(http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php)

Qualitative Sociology Review
Volume VI, Issue 3 – December 2010

Piotr Bielski
University of Łódź, Poland

Book review:
Method meets art. Arts-Based Research Practice by Patricia Leavy. New York – London: The Guilford Press, 2009

Probably most of you got to know at least few social sciences students or researchers who are also in their other social role artists – writers, poets, dancers or visual artists. However, usually they think of their artistic activities as something that should be kept separate or they just take advantage of this identity as it facilitates an easier entrance into artistic social worlds which they explore with a scientific „free form art" methodology. Social science methodology, even in case of most qualitative research, is still to significant degree inspired by positivist science which developed strict criteria in order to draw a definite border-line between the structured and based on methodology objective or intersubjective science and free and fully subjective artistic creation. If young researcher hears a comment of a senior researcher that his or her work resembles „more a work of art than sociology" it means that chances for a success with current work in an academic world are rather small. Patricia Leavy, Professor of Sociology at Stonehill College (Easton, Massachussetts) and a story writer in her methodological book invites us to make the two worlds meet and provides us with lots of examples of successful incorporation of art into the research.

What Patricia Leavy advocates is the integrity, overcoming divisions between social roles of artists, researchers and teachers as in the concept of A/r/tographical work which merges „knowing, doing and making" proposed by Pinar (p.3). The author prefers to speak rather of the art practices than methods, as this term expresses a support for a „break with methods convention" and because it „rejects the notion of tools that are neutrally implemented" (p. 3). The practices which are outlined in the book include literary, visual, performative arts, as well as music and show multiple possibilities of employing them in a research. On the paradigm level, the author situates the art-based researches in the frames of the qualitative paradigm, advocating its merging with the critical, social justice and feminist perspective which concede voice to the marginalized. She also credits Foucalt, Derrida as important contributors to the advancement of art-based methods, because of the postmodern „arguing that form and content are inextricably bound and enmeshed within shifting relations of power" (p. 8). The art-based methods or practices have to some degree different goals than the traditional ones as they mostly aim at reaching the general public and concentrate on the social and psychological side of the research process. In this approach there is a focus on processes and not on facts and aim at building empathy and compassion, fostering identity building, challenging stereotypes,

©2005-2010 Qualitative Sociology Review

promoting dialogue, evoking meanings instead of denoting them. They also tend to serve better for switching from the monovocal perspective to plurivocal, depicting complexity with multiple meanings. The author aims at renegotiation of „one-size-fits-all" model of evaluation of qualitative data, opening also a space for heart, emotions and beauty instead of just „truth" and „knowledge", promoting using art in Sinner's words „to unsettle ossified thinking and provoke imagination" (p.16-17).

The book is written as in a form of a manual which offers us opportunities to explore questions around use in social research: narrative inquiry, poetry, music and performance-based methods of inquiry, dance and visual arts. In the chapter about narrative inquiry, Leavy challenges the concept that the researcher could be a neutral transmitter of stories or experiences of other people. Researcher is an active agent that can even „regenre" or rewrite (using the *ghostwriter* metaphor) the narratives told by other people, in case of trauma survivors the researcher may for example develop a coherent, chronological narrative our of disordered pieces told by the victims. The researcher observes how the people telling the stories reframe them and replot them, applying continuous reflexivity. Leavy invites readers to get interested in autoetnographic narratives, the researcher should not be excluded from telling about their own experiences and could be seen as a „viable data source" (p. 37), possibly taking advantage of forming a reflective teams with colleagues. The author provides with moving examples of researchers who endeavor on autoetnography, describing difficult emotional experiences such as death of relatives, pain and their own serious illness, grieving or exploring such delicate questions as spiritual experiences. Autoetnography seems also to be relevant for describing major „life markers" such as partnering, parenting, decoupling or pregnancy (p. 41).

The author also advocates of using fiction writing by researchers finding in a fiction story a proper mean of transmitting the message to general public. Leavy criticizes dualism existing in the academia, placing a division between the truth and fiction between those false oppositions that the qualitative research should leave behind. „There are truths to be found in fiction- she argues- and nonfiction also draws on aspects of fiction in its rendering of social reality" (p. 48). Nonetheless, she does not provide qualitative research with a firm ground on which such research „beyond truth and fiction" could be based. The provided in the book example of short story by Karen Scott-Hoy about her own reaction and her children reaction to September 11 2001 assault is an example of a ethnographic story which can enrich the research with the emotional aspects.

In the chapter on application of poetry in the social research, the author justifies the role of poetry as a powerful mean of transmitting values and experiences of those who are disenfranchised and accessing subjugated knowledge (p. 74). Such research study was made by Faulkner who gave voice to the Jewish people who have alternative sexual identity (p. 69) or by Cynthia Cannon Poindex who used poetry to tell about how a gay couple copes with an HIV diagnosis (p. 85). Leavy also mentions the examples of writers-researchers who, basing on the individuals narratives, write a „collective biography". She describes use of poetic transcription in the expanded version of grounded theory, where the selected words and phrases spoken by the respondents become the basis of the poem which the researcher writes using the narrator's speech patterns (a technique developed by Glesne and Faulkner, p.75). An example which Leavy provides are the parts of narratives of girls about their code category of „Breasts" which occurred in 5 out of 18 interviews about the „body image". The resulting poem tries to transmit their emotions and experiences challenging the sexism. Among the advantages of the poetic criteria in

the research the author names „embodied experience, discovery/ surprise, narrative truth and transformation".

In the case of music, Leavy explores it as a mean of groups and individuals' representation, its narrative character (generating direct semantic or semiotic meaning), its capacity of empowerment and generating cultural capital and challenging hegemonic ideologies. It is very interesting that the author finds it useful to employ in the research the temporal and ephemeral art of performance. The performance artists can enrich the research as they have enhanced sensory awareness and observation skills and enrich the ability to infer objectives and subtext in participants' verbal and nonverbal actions (p. 136-137). Leavy cites Denzin who promotes Criticial Pedagogical Theatre as a method of empowerment of the oppressed and overcoming its submission to oppression (p. 140). Drama is presented as the method of „data collection, analysis and (re)presentation" (p. 141) and brings examples of researchers who write ethnodramas basing them on the respondents' narratives similarly as in the before mentioned case of poems, as well as form fieldnotes and observations. Ethical issues arisen by the drama method are discussed along with an interesting example of popular theater as Participatory Research Method. Also dance-based research is discussed as a new promising discipline which can serve for the therapeutic means as well as serving for representation and new insights (discovery, p.185). There is also a chapter about visual arts but their successful application in the research have been already widely discussed in our Journal.

The book is an interesting guide of the quite recently discovered common ground between the social research and arts. Summing up, what the author defends is a holistic approach to research and „bridging the art-science divide" citing the title of the final chapter. The Art-Based methods can definitely enrich the qualitative paradigm with sensory aspects, serving the representation, authenticity and emancipation, expanding the trans-disciplinary character of the research (p. 256). The poetry as well as other art can say what the mere words just cannot say and the use of the arts fosters better representation and inclusion of voices that do not fit into traditional research repertoire. Well, after reading this book I got the impression that the hegemony of „I think, therefore I am" is over, now it is time to give voice to the variety of „I dance therefore I am", „I play therefore I am" or of „I feel therefore I am" .

Citation

Bielski, Piotr (2010) "Book review: Method meets art. Arts-Based Research Practice by Patricia Leavy" Qualitative Sociology Review, Vol. VI Issue 3. Retrieved Month, Year, (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php)

Qualitative Sociology Review
Volume VI, Issue 3 – December 2010

Justyna Nowotniak
University of Szczecin, Poland

Book Review: Understanding Education: a Sociological Perspective by Sharon Gewirtz and Alan Cribb. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009

Understanding Education: a Sociological Perspective by Sharon Gewirtz and Alan Cribb published by Polity Press in 2009 deserves attention of academic teachers and sociology students for several reasons. One of them is the importance of questions raised by the authors and the other is the scope of a discussion attempting to find answers to those questions. While examining professional biographies of the authors, we may assume that such experienced researchers who emphasise the significance of values in social studies will meet that difficult challenge.

Sharon Gewirtz is a Professor of Education at King's College London. She has conducted research on a range of topics, including ESRC-funded studies of market forces and parental choice in education. Her latest "Changing Teacher Professionalism: international trends, challenges and ways forward", RoutledgeFalmer (with Pat Mahony, Ian Hextall and Alan Cribb) was published in 2009. She is a co-convenor of the Policy Studies and Politics of Education Network of the European Educational Research Association and she is a member of the European Commission's network of experts on the social aspects of education and training (NESSE).

Alan Cribb is a Professor of Education at King's College London. He has a particular interest in developing interdisciplinary scholarship that links philosophical, social science and professional concerns, and has pursued this interest through writing about health care ethics, health promotion, psychosocial oncology, health economics and medical education.

Some of key questions raised in the book include the following: What purposes should education serve? Why does education matter? and What should be done about education? These are basic issues pertaining to values which are not always considered important for the sociology of education. The publication reveals several major differences between opinions of the most reputable scholars in this field of social sciences. Solving major issues concerning the potential impact of sociology in creating the education policy aims at building a bridge between scientists, politicians and educators who directly and indirectly create the image of educational systems in the world.

The issue of the status of contemporary sociology related to its functions, which becomes increasingly intensive with every page of the book, is a part of the

©2005-2010 Qualitative Sociology Review

discussion. The authors affirm the attitude of a dedicated sociologist, while highlighting the importance of a normative function in this field of social sciences. Set of arguments supporting the main theses is clear and consequent. For this reason the book has educational advantages. Arguments have a transparent structure, cohesive regarding its content and form, and are written in a clear language. Examples of research projects included in the book facilitate understanding and help remembering basic notions discussed by the authors. The first examination of chapters gives an impression that the book is friendly to sophisticated researchers and readers interested in theoretical intricacies of social studies. The book methodically introduces readers to major categories for analysing basic issues of the educational sociology. These categories are easier to understand being presented in various contexts. This, however, does not mean that all of them have been treated equally thoroughly. An example is 'reflexivity', referred to in the majority of conclusions by Gewirtz and Cribb. While providing arguments for their position, the authors limited the discussion to several selected theoretical issues. It is regrettable that they have disregarded texts by Anthony Giddens (2003, 2009) pertaining to 'reflexivity', probably because of so many experts criticised texts by that author. The sociologist defined the nature of an entity that may proceed along the 'third path' thanks to its 'reflexivity'. The cooperation between Giddens and Tony Blair focusing on defining political rules for the third path did not produce expected results. However, from the point of view of the book, the above could reveal further contexts of the relationship between science and politics, as well as applicable revaluation. It is even more intriguing since *The Third Way. The Renewal of Social Democracy* (1998), so much concentrated on sociological and political issues, is frequently not considered to be a book on sociology.

As regards theory and educational sociology, the authors do not find a space for those examples in the Part I *Approaching Education Sociologically*. The authors themselves did not claim to develop a complete typology, but rather marked the need to group alternative approaches and ways of their interpretation into specific sets. Thus, they highlighted the impact of sociology on understanding educational values and ways they are built, allocated and perceived.

An idea of building a discussion on the central political and ethical dimension of the sociology of education deserves words of appreciation. This has been done with reference to five rightly juxtaposed examples of contemporary research in Chapter 1 *Understanding Education: the Role of Sociology*. This enables the reader to enter smoothly into a review of the most influential theories of sociology and classical texts in Chapter 2 *Understanding Structure and Agency*. The chapter includes references to Talcott Parsons' 'The school class as a social system' (1961), Howard S. Becker's 'The teacher in the authority system of the public school' (1953), Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis' 'Schooling in Capitalist America: educational reform and the contradictions of economic life' (1976), Paul E. Willis' 'Learning to Labour: how working class kids get working class jobs' (1977), and Robert Dale's 'Education and the capitalist state: contributions and contradictions' (1982). At the end of the chapter, readers find a short presentation of opinions expressed by Pierre Bourdieu and Basil Bernstein, representatives of the 'new sociology of education', included in their flagship publications of the 1980s.

Chapter 3 *Varieties of Critique* returns to issues discussed in previous chapters but in a different fashion. The chapter provides a comprehensive presentation of critical approaches: feminism (Byrne 1978; Spender, Sarah 1988), critical race theory (Ladson-Bilings, Tate 1995) and poststructuralism (Walkerdine 1981).

Almost by definition, critical trends, with their strong normative image, provide a variety of arguments for a normative dimension of sociology, which is meticulously used by the authors. They emphasised that the normative dimension is frequently considered to be a background or a side effect of the descriptive and explanatory function in sociology and sociologists themselves are sceptical about judgemental opinions. In their opinion, excessive sociological generalisation and changing the profile of research objects (sociology as field for contesting many contemporary social phenomena) promotes qualitative changes in sociology. It becomes a science which increasingly often examines challenges which are directly described as 'socially important' topics.

It is regrettable that the conclusion at the end of the chapter does not refer to later works by authors quoted. It is worth highlighting the consequence with which Bourdieu (1992) accuses social sciences of being immersed in a form of instrumental legitimisation, even more so that he also analyses relations between 'reflexivity' and 'reflectivity' in sociology. He emphasises the issue recurring in 'Understanding Education': reflectivity enables transfer of knowledge from one area of inquiry into another, since it covers multiple consideration of an issue as an expression of 'feedback'. Reflectivity usually enables revealing the 'substantive nature' of the world.

In Part 2 *Key Themes*, after collating competing approaches to the sociology of education (structural functionalism, symbolic interactionism, Marxism, feminism, critical race theory and poststructuralism), the authors mark their applicability in relation to such themes as social reproduction, politics of knowledge, multicultural education, identity and teachers' work. Each of the issues may be considered an introduction to another sphere of values. A framework for all themes is the issue of social inequality which dynamically presents the quality of sociologists' struggle against the normative dimension of research projects and theoretical studies.

A short and selective review of theoretical opinions developed over several decades, extending far beyond radical leftist theories, is presented in Chapter 4 *Social Reproduction*. The Chapter shows evolution of opinions expressed by sociologists on social reproduction. The choice of examples and publications for the sake of the deeper discussion in this part of the book imposes a specific pattern of analysis, which links social reproduction with issues of cultural reproduction, while including a stress on gender studies. The described research findings are produced by Amanda Keddie and Martin Mills (2007), Louise Archer (2008), Shereen Benjamin (2003) and Agnes van Zanten (2004).

The issue of equalising educational opportunities as one of major social problems, frequently discussed in the context of the sociology of education, is clearly linked with the need of continuous examination of social reproduction mechanisms. While encouraging to penetrate the problem, Cribb and Gewirtz suggest to be particularly cautious, since relations between sociological theory and political intervention are far from being unequivocal. The implementation of the equal opportunities principle in education is an indispensible element for building a society without strict social divisions and determination of man's future depending on gender, place of birth, social background, parents' wealth and education, and ethnic and religious origin. It is hard to disagree with the authors that such a broad subject of research involves epistemological challenges. Moreover, from the point of view of thesis articulated at the beginning, the chapter unveils the scale of neglect in the context of a normative function implemented by sociologists. A telling example of a need to assess the social reality fitted in the role of a researcher is the determining of a subject of research. Even a simple decision on selecting phenomena to be examined needs to be preceded by determining which of them are important.

Chapter 5 *Knowledge and the Curriculum* provides arguments confirming the contribution made by the sociology of education into researching the relation between objectives of education and social values. The main thesis included in this part of the book is the following: knowledge may produce various disparities. In three sections comprising that chapter, the authors consider Knowledge and the Curriculum from the point of view of the critical theory, poststructuralism, and social realism. Examples indicate two competing positions regarding knowledge, which remain in conflict due to a different hierarchy of underlying values. The first one refers to an identity of a student, and the second one shows the cognitive power of science, which leads to emphasising the cognitive interest. Potential threats are linked with each of the options. While preparing the reader to a discussion on the justification of both analytical perspectives and prioritising them, the authors highlight the need to understand differences underlying the two approaches.

In my opinion, the chapter, which is of key significance for the challenge of understanding education defined in the title, is rather superficial. Until that moment, a large number of examples of research and theoretical perspectives was justified considering the type of issues discussed, however in this particular case the discussion seems incomplete. Knowledge and the Curriculum clearly shifts the stress on the analysis of the Curriculum.

Below are some examples justifying the accusation. The analysis is limited to one issue only. Hidden curricula, which are the core of the critical theory, are merely mentioned without referring to classic works by Robert Merton, Roland Meighan and Philip Jackson. Theories of the hidden curricula change the design of research which, while analysing various contexts, looks for an answer to one of key education issues, namely: What does the school teach? or What does it not teach?

A very telling statement was once expressed by Herbert Kohl (1970: 116): *schools, which cannot cope with the issue of the hidden curricula teach students to remain quiet about what they think and feel. Moreover, they teach students to pretend what they think and feel.* Jackson (1990: 4) described such characteristics in a similar manner: *the school is a place in which students sit, listen, wait and raise hands, talk, cooperate and queue.* According to sociologists, reasons for that include disintegration of knowledge provided in contemporary schools, mismanagement of teaching time by teachers or shortage of motivation to learn among students. The conclusion to that chapter postulates that authors of curricula should reflect on both hierarchies of values which define the relationship between knowledge and the curriculum.

Introduction to Chapter 6 *Identity* reminds us about a clear difference between the sociology of education and sociology developed for education. In fact, the authors remind us about the aim of the book, namely defining the relationship between sociological research and creating a social policy, based on a conviction that much can be achieved through cooperation between sociologists and those who create the education policy. At the same time, the authors list reasons for which sociological writings do not contain too many recommendations addressed to practitioners, educators, and scholars who are interested in improving the institutional process of teaching and educating. It is because sociologists who develop ideas for reforms believe in fact that their active involvement in changing the order remains beyond their competencies. On the other side of the spectrum, we may find a conviction that those who research educational processes frequently remain under an apparent impression that recommendations for the education policy can be easily expressed and they frequently base their believes on faulty concepts of political origin. Therefore, it is a waste of time to research them. Since understanding of the

education policy is difficult, sociologists devote little time for it. Cribb and Gewirtz with their concerns focus on the third type of arguments.

In the introduction to the chapter, the authors express their opinion on the category of Identity, while referring to Manuel Castells' opinions (2004). Defining the identity of a man requires answering two questions: who do I think I am? and Who do I want to be? Peter Weinreich (1983 :159) wrote *that identity is a notion which promises a lot and causes much disappointment.* The authors have a different opinion since they believe that the notion, through its indefinite nature and capacity, is capable of opening many doors in science.

The largest section of the chapter focuses on intercultural education, chiefly in the context of developing the identity of students (Waters 1994; Harris 2006). An example of Asian girls living in Great Britain is very telling. Girls do their best to avoid the prevailing discourse of Asian femininity subordinated to a man. This reveals oppressive cultural practices they are subjected to, whereas at school they can feel a sense of freedom (Shain 2003).

A dynamic nature of human communities and identity of particular people is particularly vivid in the case of mandatory schooling. It is where we can observe an interface between individual identities and different ethnic identities. Such frequent contacts require continuous adjusting and building a space of common reality. A school is an area of numerous conflicts and a space of competition between various groups. It is an area of confrontation of values, aspirations, and interests. Creating an appropriate pattern for the contact with Otherness and due respect to it seems particularly important. The authors emphasise that educators, who may improve or diminish the meaning of Otherness through an education policy that influences the identity of students, are entangled in dilemmas of redistribution of recognition.

The difference between a sociologist and an educator is based on the fact that a sociologist makes the social world meaningful, and a practicing educator makes choices regarding things that should be done. Such dilemmas are unavoidable.

Chapter 7 *Teachers' Work* presents and compares tasks implemented by teachers in various countries and the autonomy they have while implementing them. The authors emphasise that in the past thirty years of the education policy in the world, the policy concentrated on improving the quality of education frequently accompanied by strengthening solutions which increased professional preparedness of teachers (Robertson 2000; Ball 2003). This has resulted in establishing increasingly higher requirements for teachers to match growing responsibilities. Such changes were followed by major development of the sociology of education.

The first part of the chapter focuses on source texts discussing consequences of neoliberal reforms for the autonomy of a teacher. It also includes a thesis that neoliberal methods of teaching create social inequality, as illustrated by an example of schools in Chicago (Lipman 2009).

A further part of the chapter focuses on mechanisms, scopes and issues of allocating, maintaining and reducing the autonomy of a teacher. Several examples are used to discuss methods for defining the content of curricula and teaching objectives as well as the role played by teachers in adjusting objectives. Further, the discussion focuses on freedom teachers have based on examples of defining mandatory and facultative subjects, as well as selecting textbooks and teaching methods.

The authors naturally resorted to examples of countries which followed the opposite direction. Reducing the autonomy and increasing teachers' responsibilities can be observed in countries where education has been decentralised, such as

Belgium, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The best example is France where education policy aims at building social solidarity and by definition opposes neoliberal projects.

Summarising, major changes, which clearly increased the scope of teachers' responsibilities, result from several factors, including school autonomy, ways of increasing quality of education and new social responsibilities vested in schools. In some countries, these factors complement each other. For instance, the autonomy of schools and increased freedom in teaching related to it frequently resulted in improved education levels. This does not mean, however, that the issue of 'teaching for tests' and consequently the de-professionalization of teachers knowledge became the past. Some questions still remain valid: what should the autonomy of this professional group include? Who should exercise control and how the control is to be exercised?

Increased autonomy is usually matched with higher responsibility; a responsibility which does not involve merely following procedures by teachers in a given institution but also the assessment of results of their own work. This leads us to another question: What is the value of the autonomy for each teacher separately?

Part 3 *Conclusion* occupies one full Chapter 8 *Extending Reflexivity in Sociology of Education*. An excellent Polish philosopher Leszek Kołakowski frequently accused intellectualists of ignorance which expressed a passive attitude towards serious matters, which is ultimately the tragedy of science. In response to that, a question was raised: Is it worth focusing on matters which are so strictly linked with politics, power and positions, in other words factors of temporary nature?

When we apply this measure to the book, we may state that Cribb and Gewirtz fit into a vivid contemporary tendency to perceive sociologists as active creators of a social change. In this particular sense, it is a valuable book, although it is not of innovative nature when it comes to its main message. Great theoretical schemata in sociology of the 1950s left a sense of threat. When they proved to be neither neutral nor socially innocent as intended, the sociology resigned from a claim of neutrality. It was perhaps one of the most important signs of inevitable criticism of any form of sociological reflection.

Nevertheless, the relationship between science and politics, as history shows, may question the autonomy of the former. In this spirit, in final pages of the book, the authors assessed the position of Martyn Hammersley. The polemic text of *Reflexivity for what? A response to Gewirtz and Cribb on the role of values in the sociology of education* refers in general to the role played by the contemporary sociology while emphasising the individual understanding of reflexivity. The author stressed that formulating an objective and undertaking to build new knowledge are ethical in nature. Each further step of a scholar should be free from valuation (Hammersley 2008: 549-558).

Chapter 8 comes back to the main line of arguments by broader presentation of ethical reflexivity in the sociology of education. In the opinion of the authors, the reflexivity deepens the perception of sociology aimed at building and supporting the education policy, and thus reveals the potential to be used in theory and practice.

After reading Part 3, in my opinion, the publication should include an additional chapter on reflexivity and its relation to a similar analytical category of 'reflectivity'. The sociological and also philosophical literature distinguishes between those categories. Despite that fact, various publications on social sciences treat the terms as synonymous. Reflexivity is usually supported by those who promote constructivist concepts in which the observer of reflections play an important role. In this sphere of reflexivity, subjects observe themselves and their thinking process as expressed by

Michael Fleischer (2005). The act of reflection also has a minor dimension and becomes an act of analysis in result of the transformation.

Therefore, reflexivity is more complex, multi-dimensional, and reflective. In other words, reflexivity, referred to in the final part of the book by Cribb and Gewirtz, applies to contents which appear in a reflection and which are frequently placed in different contexts by collating them in various theoretical frameworks. This would mean that reflexivity is brought down to the epistemic level, and reflectivity is ontological.

Reflexivity enables people realising their own dependence on meanings fitted into the culture. Thus, they are less dependent on systems, organisations and institutions in which they function. Overcoming them frequently requires a struggle against all limitations. At the same time, the awareness of being involved depends on the depth of reflexivity, and this can be measured by self-understanding resulting from self-reflectivity.

My impression is that the longing for 'reflexivity' or 'reflectivity' shows the status of contemporary changes in the field of social sciences, changes which lead to the social transformation. Almost in an instance, they give raise to questions about the desired direction and measurable effect. The book contains many such important questions.

The understanding of 'reflexivity' is clearly less important in the publication than confirming its role in creating further visions for education systems. It is going to be significant as long as we are finally saturated with texts affirming its indispensible nature. From that point of view, it is justified to assume that the way reflexivity strengthens social life and fills social research is important. In a sense, its level shows who we are and what we achieve in our work. However, educational sociologists rarely become politicians who create education systems and thus reflexive creation may remain a sphere of research only.

The vision of 'engaged sociology' will certainly find many supporters among representatives of education sciences who will face the following dilemmas: Can sociology of education speak on behalf of educators? and What does that really mean? While exposing its normative function, does sociology express interests of specific stakeholders of educational processes? If yes, than whose interests, students or teachers?

The culture in its nature has become increasingly common. Challenges are many, and educators frequently express their will to cooperate with representatives of other disciplines as regards re-organising the education practice. The vision of the normative function of the sociology of education presented in the book fits into such needs. A success will only be achieved when the scientific practice makes reflexivity a driving force for changes in education systems in the world. Otherwise we are left with the following sarcastic conclusion: Why bother about winter, when there is no snow!

References

Bourdieu, Pierre and Loic J.D. Wacquant (1992) *An invitation to reflexive sociology.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Hammersley, Martyn (2008) „Reflexivity for what? A response to Gewirtz and Cribb on the role of values in the sociology of education". British Journal of Sociology of Education 29 (5): 549-558.

Jackson, Philip (1990) *Live in Classrooms.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Kohl, Herbert R. (1970) The Open Classroom. A Practical Guide to A New Way of Teaching. London: Random House.

Weinreich, Peter (1983) „Psychodynamics of Personal and Social Identity." In Identity: Personal and Socio – Cultural, edited by A. Jacobson – Widding. Uppsala: Academiae Upsaliensis Humanities Press.

Citation

Nowotniak, Justyna (2010) "Book review: Understanding Education: a Sociological Perspective by Sharon Gewirtz and Alan Cribb" Qualitative Sociology Review, Vol. VI Issue 3. Retrieved Month, Year, (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php)

Contributors

Robert Prus is a Sociologist at the University of Waterloo, Canada. A symbolic interactionist and ethnographer, Robert Prus has been examining the conceptual and methodological connections of American pragmatist philosophy and its sociological offshoot, symbolic interactionism, with Classical Greek and Latin scholarship.
Contact: prus@uwaterloo.ca

Matthew Burk Matthew Burk completed his BA Honours degree in Sociology at the University of Waterloo and is presently developing a MA Thesis on "Being Managed: Experiential Processes, Problematics, and Resistances."
Contact: mburk9912@gmail.com

Fatima Camara completed her Master of Arts Degree in Sociology at the University of Waterloo (2005) developing a thesis entitled Celebrities and Significant Others: Developing Fascinations, Relationships and Identities. After graduation, Fatima taught Sociology at Humber College Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning. Since 2008, Fatima has been living in Berlin, Germany where she is exploring the use of digital media as an educational tool by developing a curriculum for teaching young students digital music production and is producing her own music.
Contact: fcamara@gmail.com

Robert Sévigny, Ph.D., is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Sociology, University of Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Trained in both Sociology and psychology, his main interests include: the individual-society relationship; the implicit sociology of mental heath professionals, self-actualization and alienation; group dynamics, interpersonal relationships and restricted/small groups; interventions in health, social and community services, and the importance of ethnicity; psycho-sociology and clinical sociology; qualitative methodology and case studies; and research in urban China: the experience of schizophrenia. He currently focuses on elaborating further on his research experiences in the post-Maoist China.
Contact: robert.sevigny@umontreal.ca

Sheying Chen (Ph.D. UCLA) is Professor of Social Policy and Assoc. Provost for Academic Affairs at Pace University, New York. He held positions as Assoc. Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Professor of Sociology at Indiana University (Southeast), Dean and Professor of Professional Schools at the University of Guam, and Chair Professor of Social Work and Sociology at the City University of New York (Staten Island). He served as Coordinator for Graduate Studies in Sociology at Zhongshan University (Guangzhou), designed China's first national training program for social work/administration educators, and authored the first national lecture series on community service. His publication records include the first comparative book on community care in China, works on aging and mental health, articles and books on general public policy (GPP) (especially social policy of a changing "economic state"), projects on higher education management/academic administration, and volumes on research methods and measurement/analysis issues.
Contact: sheyingchen@yahoo.com

Elaina Y. Chen is a graduate researcher in the M.D. Program at Indiana University School of Medicine, Indianapolis.

Asta Rau accumulated a wealth of experience in the small and corporate business sectors before taking up tertiary studies and graduating with a PhD from Rhodes University in 2005. After her doctorate she obtained a postgraduate qualification in Monitoring and Evaluation from Stellenbosch University. Since 2005 she has been working as a researcher in the fields of HIV/AIDS, Media Leadership, Higher Education, and Evaluation. She has taken a leading role in several projects, including the Centre for AIDS Development, Research and Evaluation's (CADRE) current development of an HIV Prevention Communication Training

©2005-2010 Qualitative Sociology Review

Programme for Eastern and Southern Africa. For South Africa's HEAIDS (Higher Education HIV/AIDS) programme she conceptualized, designed, and implemented research on the curricular response to HIV/AIDS at Rhodes University. The Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership saw her spearheading several research initiatives, including the organisation and co-facilitation of a regional Media Leadership Lekgotla, which culminated in her authoring a book. Throughout her research career she has remained involved in teaching and capacity building – particularly in the field of qualitative research methodology. Asta is passionate about research. Her goal is to continue to learn about and conduct rigorous, insightful, useful work. She also has a strong interest in evaluation and results based management and the application of these strategic approaches to pressing social issues.
Contact: A.Rau@ru.ac.za

Jan K Coetzee is a Senior Professor of Sociology at the University of the Free State. He was previously Professor and Head of the Department of Sociology at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa. His main work has been in the Sociology of Developing Societies (editor and co-editor of 4 groundbreaking works, e.g. Reconstruction, Development and People published by International Thomson Publishing in 1996 and Development: Theory, Policy, and Practice published by Oxford University Press in 2001) and in the narrative study of lives. In the case of the latter his books on the life stories of former political prisoners in South Africa and the then Czechoslovakia (Plain Tales From Robben Island, published in 2000 and Fallen Walls, published in 2002) were awarded the Vice-Chancellor's Book Award at Rhodes University in 2002.
Contact: J.K.Coetzee@ru.ac.za

Amy Vice was a postgraduate student at Rhodes University in 2009. She is currently working towards a Master's degree in Sociology.

Adie Nelson is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Waterloo. She received her Ph.D. from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Her areas of specialization are gender, sexuality and deviance. Her work has appeared in journals such as The British Journal of Sociology, the Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, Qualitative Sociology and Psychology of Women Quarterly; she is the author, co-author or editor of approximately two dozen books.
Contact: eds@uwaterloo.ca

Veronica B. Nelson is completing an Honours Biomedical Science degree at the University of Waterloo and plans to pursue a career in medicine. Her first publication occurred at age 11, when she won the Canadian National Poetry Contest for young poets.
Contact: vbnelson@scimail.uwaterloo.ca

©2005-2010 Qualitative Sociology Review

Author-Supplied Abstracts & Keywords

Robert Prus, University of Waterloo, Canada
Matthew Burk, University of Waterloo, Canada

Ethnographic Trailblazers: Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon

Abstract
While ethnographic research is often envisioned as a 19th or 20th century development in the social sciences (Wax, 1971; Prus, 1996), a closer examination of the classical Greek literature (circa 700-300BCE) reveals at least three authors from this era whose works have explicit and extended ethnographic qualities. Following a consideration of "what constitutes ethnographic research," specific attention is given to the texts developed by Herodotus (c484-425BCE), Thucydides (c460-400BCE), and Xenophon (c430-340BCE). Classical Greek scholarship pertaining to the study of the human community deteriorated notably following the death of Alexander the Great (c384-323BCE) and has never been fully approximated over the intervening centuries. Thus, it is not until the 20th century that sociologists and anthropologists have more adequately rivaled the ethnographic materials developed by these early Greek scholars. Still, there is much to be learned from these earlier sources and few contemporary social scientists appear cognizant of (a) the groundbreaking nature of the works of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon and (b) the obstacles that these earlier ethnographers faced in developing their materials. Also, lacking awareness of (c) the specific materials that these scholars developed, there is little appreciation of the particular life-worlds depicted therein or (d) the considerable value of their texts as ethnographic resources for developing more extended substantive and conceptual comparative analysis.

Keywords: Ethnography; Classical Greek; Herodotus; Thucydides; Xenophon; Symbolic Interaction; Anthropology; History; Pragmatism; Generic Social Process

---

Robert Prus, University of Waterloo, Canada
Fatima Camara, University of Waterloo, Canada

Love, Friendship, and Disaffection in Plato and Aristotle: Toward a Pragmatist Analysis of Interpersonal Relationships

Abstract:
Although much overlooked by social scientists, a considerable amount of the classical Greek literature (circa700-300BCE) revolves around human relationships and, in particular, the matters of friendship, love and disaffection. Providing some of the earliest sustained literature on people's relations with others, the poets Homer (circa 700BCE) and Hesiod (circa 700BCE) not only seem to have stimulated interest in these matters, but also have provided some more implicit, contextual reference points for people embarked on the comparative analysis of human relations. Still, some other Greek authors, most notably including Plato and Aristotle, addressed these topics in explicitly descriptive and pointedly analytical terms.
Plato and Aristotle clearly were not of one mind in the ways they approached, or attempted to explain, human relations. Nevertheless, contemporary social scientists may benefit considerably from closer examinations of these sources. Thus, while acknowledging some structuralist theories of attraction (e.g., that similars or opposites attract), the material considered here focus more directly on the problematic, deliberative, enacted, and uneven features of human association. In these respects, Plato and Aristotle may be seen not only to lay the foundations for a pragmatist study of friendship, love, and disaffection, but also to

©2005-2010 Qualitative Sociology Review

provide some exceptionally valuable materials with which to examine affective relations in more generic, transhistorical terms.

Keywords: Love; Friendship; Affection; Interpersonal Relations; Plato; Aristotle; Classical Greek; Pragmatism; Symbolic Interaction

---

Robert Sévigny, University of Montreal, Canada
Sheying Chen, Indiana University, USA
Elaina Y. Chen, Indiana University School of Medicine, USA

Explanatory Models of Illness and Psychiatric Rehabilitation: A Clinical Sociology Approach

Abstract
The notion of explanatory models of illness (EMI) epitomizes the theme of social representation in social psychiatry. This article illustrates a clinical sociology approach to the subject by revisiting the seminal work of Kleinman and reflecting on the use of EMI in studying severe mental illnesses, particularly in China. A general literature review is provided to show the complexity of the subject, and the work of clinical sociologist Sévigny over the past two decades is summarized. A case analysis is conducted to illuminate the many social factors that came to play in affecting the experiences and perceptions of schizophrenic patients and their significant others in the nation's capital Beijing in the 1990s. Diverse "explanations" in the experience of schizophrenia are explored, including the medical, the psychogenic, and the psychosocial models, among such others as inheritance and religious beliefs. Implications for research and clinical practice are discussed, including extending EMI study beyond illness interpretation to emphasize social rehabilitation.

Keywords: Explanatory Models of Illness (EMI); Social Psychiatry; Clinical Sociology; Rehabilitation of Schizophrenia; Case Study in China

---

Asta Rau, Rhodes University and University of Free State, South Africa
Jan K. Coetzee, University of Free State, South Africa
Amy Vice, Rhodes University, South Africa

Narrating student life in a time of risk

Abstract
Students speaking to students reveal how they perceive and experience risk — and specifically, risk associated with HIV — during their years attending a small university in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. Data were collected in twenty focus group discussions that spanned two years and two cycles of an action research project designed to infuse HIV/AIDS-content/issues into a closely supervised third-year Sociology research methodology course. The project was undertaken in response to a call by HEAIDS (Higher Education HIV/AIDS Programme, funded by the EU) for universities to address HIV/AIDS in curricula. The intention is to prepare young graduates to respond meaningfully to HIV and AIDS when they enter the world of work in a country with alarmingly high levels of HIV prevalence and incidence. Insights from theorists Ulrich Beck (1992) and Mary Douglas (1986) on the cultural dynamics of modernity were used as lenses to view the narratives of students in relation to three key HIV risk factors: alcohol consumption, multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships, and condom use. Gender, which emerged as a cross-cutting issue, was also explored. The rich qualitative data were brought into a dialogue with

©2005-2010 Qualitative Sociology Review

selected statistics from the HEAIDS 2010 sero-prevalence survey conducted in 21 higher education institutions in the country.
Overall, patterns in risk perception and behaviour suggest that many student participants feel justified — by virtue of being students and free at last to explore and experience the edges of their adult life — to push the boundaries of risk.

Keywords: HIV risk; University students; Sexuality; Alcohol; Multiple concurrent partnerships; Condom use; Gender; Eastern Cape Province of South Africa

---

Adie Nelson, University of Waterloo, Canada
Veronica Nelson, University of Waterloo, Canada

"Hey Mitch-elle, you need a shave!": The school days of hirsute adolescents

Abstract
This qualitative, longitudinal study directs attention to how adolescence - a time period that is already fraught with pressures and struggles for most - may be complicated by the presence of hirsutism, a putatively "sex-discordant" marker. Attention is directed to the school-based experiences of a non-representative sample of 67 Canadian youth and 41 adult women who shared their recollections of how hirsutism had impacted their lives as adolescents. Although hirsute youth may seem well-situated to act as the trailblazers for the type of subversive crossings that Butler (1990) championed in *Gender Trouble*, our study find little to suggest that they would welcome this role. Rather, the obverse seems true. However, given the dependent status of adolescents in Western society, it might be entirely presumptuous to expect hirsute youth to behave as if dualistic thinking about sex, gender and sexuality did not exist when so many of their experiences will continuously remind them that it does**.**

Keywords: Adolescence; Stigma; Hirsutism; Gender; Relational aggression

---

©2005-2010 Qualitative Sociology Review

QSR

Available Online
www.qualitativesociologyreview.org

For all sociologists for whom interpretative paradigm and qualitative research methodology are basic perspectives of studying social reality.
In order to enable a free flow of information and to integrate the community of qualitative sociologists.

EVERYWHERE ~ EVERY TIME

Volume VI ~ Issue 3
December 30, 2010

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Krzysztof T. Konecki
ASSOCIATE EDITORS: Anna Kacperczyk, Slawomir Magala
EXECUTIVE EDITORS: Lukas T. Marciniak, Patryk Zareba
COVER DESIGNER: Anna Kacperczyk