

Social Psychology

Newsletter of the Social Psychology Section of the American Sociological Association

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CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Future issues of the newsletter depend on contributions from ASA members. We welcome submissions for articles, suggestions for Graduate Student Profiles, New Books, and Voices of Experience columns, or other announcements. They should be sent to the newsletter editor, Kathy J. Kuipers, at kathy.kuipers@umontana.edu.
Next Issue: July 2, 2009
Submission Deadline: June 15, 2009



REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

Karen Hegtvedt
Emory University
Karen.Hegtvedt@emory.edu

"It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife." Jane Austen opens her classic work, *Pride and Prejudice*, with this line, which is now among one of the most recognized lines in the canon of English literature. While it may no longer be "true" or "universally acknowledged" that a wealthy, single male is "in want of" a wife, it does remain true and largely (if not universally) acknowledged among social psychologists that gender, social class, and other status characteristics as well (e.g., race, sexual orientation though these others were rarely acknowledged concerns in Austen's world) often drive the dynamics of interaction. With subtlety and a flare for irony, Austen captures what 20th century social psychologists would describe as status processes (and even implies conditions under which they may be disrupted!). Given that *Pride and Prejudice* was first titled *First Impressions*, she also goes a long way in describing instances of social cognition processes. And, while Austen is hardly the only author in the last two hundred years to illustrate concepts that we social psychologists hold dear, she was among the first of lasting stature to do so. Thus, I would like to posthumously confer on her the honor of being one of us (or, conversely, we should be honored to count her among us).

In my fall column, I noted that there were many social psychological processes at play in the presidential election. The same could be said for what is described in most novels. I can readily think of examples from Dickens, Dostoevsky, Dellilo and others, including genre writers whose stories entertain but are unlikely candidates for the canon of literature. So, why nominate Austen to be an honorary social psychologist? It is not a matter of *not* recognizing that other authors may also be attuned to the things we study (many are of course!). Rather, in part, it is simply because I am more attuned to what Austen wrote than what other authors have written. I have lost count of how many times I have read *Pride and Prejudice* but I know that I have read each of her other novels at least three times. Writers in general write what they know—and that is especially true

for a columnist of a section newsletter who has only a one-year stint.

There are, however, at least two other perhaps more compelling reasons for nominating Austen. First, although Austen's "data" are fictional, there is a sense in which she is an ethnographer. In the absence of real "action" (like battles, explosions, political maneuvering, mysterious deaths) in an Austen novel, each consists of descriptions of the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of members of several families living in the English countryside who make occasional forays into "town" (i.e., London). Her work captures the mundane activities and notes how deviation from the mundane may reverberate through an entire community. While she only hints at issues of social class, economic times, or warfare, and the only intrigue present might regard who will win someone's affections, she provides us with a clear sketch of the lives of early 19th century families belonging to the "gentry." And second, insofar as *Pride and Prejudice* in particular deals with the shifting perceptions and evaluations of the main characters (Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy), she also presages the social psychology that may underlie how readers read texts. In turn, those social psychological processes allow us to link our sub-discipline to another, that of culture.

On one level, *Pride and Prejudice* is just a love story, depicting the growing attachment between Elizabeth and Darcy—an attachment that neither seeks nor initially wants to admit. On another level—a social psychological level—the novel exemplifies the processes and consequences of social categorization. In describing initial impressions of each other at a country dance, Austen's characters clearly start with a top-down process focusing on social class. The rich landowner Darcy sizes up the young women at the dance, comparing him to the features of his category of "appealing women," which largely includes women of a higher social class, and finds that the country women fall short of his standards. He may also find evidence for his category of

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NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Kathy J. Kuipers

University of Montana

kathy.kuipers@umontana.edu



Spring has finally arrived in the Rocky Mountains and, unlike most of you, we are at long last feeling the warmth of the sun on our faces, realizing long days of daylight, and surprised to find that this long semester is fast coming to an end. I am suddenly aware that the spring newsletter should be published and that the summer one, filled with news of ASA meetings, will not be far behind.

In this issue we remember Peter Kollock, a well-respected social psychologist, with remarks from Jodi O'Brien. Our community lost Peter in a motorcycle accident in January, 2009, but his work bridging areas including trust, cooperation, and risk; computer mediated interaction; and "micro-teaching" will long be influential. As one of Peter's co-authors and friends, Jodi's memorial column reminds us of how his sociological imagination will be missed.

The "Graduate Student Profile" column returns to this issue after a period of no nominations, to feature a graduate student from Emory University, Leslie M. Brody. Leslie works with both Karen Hegtvedt and Cathryn Johnson and is a Mellon Graduate Teaching fellow at Spelman College. As a fellow, Leslie teaches one course per semester at Spelman while participating in a graduate seminar designed to professionalize graduate students in a variety of areas such as: teaching, the job market, academic politics, institutional culture, and balancing research with other demands. In the Graduate Student Profile column, Leslie discusses her dissertation research and its connection to her other research interests.

As in past spring newsletters, we highlight our regional sociological organizations and meetings

with this issue. This year, another graduate student, Steven Foy from Duke University, writes about the Southern Sociological Society Meetings and shares with us the point of view of someone attending his first, professional meeting.

This spring, the SSS meetings were held in New Orleans and Steven contrasts the formality and opulence of meetings in a convention hotel with what he observes outside on the streets. In a separate paper, I write about the Pacific Sociological Association Meetings held in San Diego and the participation of social psychologists there.

A third graduate student contribution to this newsletter is the article by Philip Brenner. Philip is our new webmaster and was profiled in the fall newsletter, 2008. He also worked hard for the Centennial celebration, held September 26-27, 2009 at the University of Wisconsin, that marked the 100th anniversary of the publication of the first two textbooks titled "Social Psychology." He summarizes the presentations at that celebration and the advances in the "three faces of social psychology" in his paper.

The rewards in being section newsletter editor are many—getting a front row seat for finding out what's going on in the section and in our parent organization, ASA; meeting many wonderful social psychologists, those with voices of experience, and those who are just finding their voices; working with three great section chairs—Judy Howard, Lisa Troyer, and Karen Hegtvedt—and with a patient, mentoring webmaster, Tim Owens; and getting to creep around at the meetings taking photos. But it's time for me to hand over the InDesign software to someone new, who might link us into other parts of our community, and add fresh ideas to the newsletter, so I will be ending my tenure as newsletter editor after the summer 2009 issue. We are seeking any and all interested applicants.

The newsletter is published online, three times a year. I'm happy to answer questions about who, what, when, and how so please feel free to contact me or Chair, Karen Hegtvedt, if you are interested.

Thank you to all of the contributors to this issue, especially the three graduate students. The submission deadline for the next issue and my contact information are on the front page.

Social Psychology News, Events, and Meetings

Disability in Society Section

Anouncing a new Section-in-Formation: Disability in Society. This Section intends to explore issues that are relevant to social psychologists, including prejudice and discrimination, stereotypes, self and identity, socialization, status, impression management, and the impact of social inequality – within a broader framework that highlights the impact of a disabling society and the development of a social movement around disability rights. They are keen to further explore insights through studying experiences of disability from a range of perspectives and urge you to join with them. This new Section-in-Formation is a great place to network, engage with other scholars, discuss recent events, and pursue avenues for grants, teaching, research and service. The Disability section is also pleased to be offering FREE membership to 40 graduate students who are current members of ASA who would like to join the section. Potential members are encouraged to contact the chairs of the membership committee, Liat Ben Moshe, Sociology and Disability Studies, Syracuse University: ibenmosh@maxwell.syr.edu or Mark Sherry: markdsherry@yahoo.com

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SECTION OFFICERS			
Chair Karen Hegtvedt Emory University Karen.Hegtvedt@emory.edu Chair-Elect Dawn Robinson University of Georgia sodawn@uga.edu Secretary-Treasurer Amy Kroska (2010) University of Oklahoma amy.kroska@ou.edu	Council Deborah Carr (2011) Rutgers University cards@rci.rutgers.edu William Corsaro (2009) Indiana University corsaro@indiana.edu Martha Foschi (2010) Univ. of British Columbia mfoschi@shaw.ca Jeremy Freese (2009) Harvard University jfreese@ssc.wisc.edu	Sarah Harkness (student) Stanford University sharkne1@stanford.edu Matthew Hunt (2010) Northeastern University m.hunt@neu.edu Timothy Owens (2011) Purdue University towens@purdue.edu	SPQ Editor Gary Alan Fine Northwestern University g-fine@northwestern.edu Webmaster Philip Brenner University of Wisconsin pbrenner@ssc.wisc.edu Newsletter Editor Kathy J. Kuipers University of Montana kathy.kuipers@umontana.edu

Remembering Peter Kollock

Jodi O'Brien

Seattle University

jobrien@seattleu.edu

Peter Kollock, 49, died January 10, 2009 as a result of a motorcycle accident near his home in Calabasas, California. He was an associate professor in the Department of Sociology at UCLA. Peter was born on November 1, 1959 in Zaragoza, Spain and came to the United States when he was one year old. He grew up in Seattle, Washington where he attended Blanchet High School and the University of Washington (BA 1982, MA 1984 and PhD 1990).

Peter was hired as an assistant professor by the UCLA Department of Sociology in 1989 and spent his entire academic career there. Prior to taking the job at UCLA, Peter was known to have expressed the typical northwesterner's disdain for southern California ("the land of the lobotomized" as he sometimes referred to it in jest). However, once he arrived in Los Angeles he became an immediate convert and not even fires, earthquakes and mudslides could persuade him to leave the canyons (first Topanga and then Malibu) where he lived for the following 20 years.

As a graduate student, Peter established working relationships with several members of the faculty at the University of Washington including Richard Emerson, Karen Cook, Toshio Yamagishi, Phil Blumstein and Pepper Schwartz. These collaborations resulted in several different research projects that, while seemingly eclectic, had as a common thread Peter's keen interest in determining the bases of trust and cooperation in collective action. Peter's first published article, "Sex and Power in Interaction: Conversational Privileges and Duties" (Kollock, Blumstein and Schwartz, ASR, 1985) is an early example of his

penchant for synthesis within social psychology. Using principles of social exchange theory that he had learned while working with

Emerson and Cook, Peter suggested to Blumstein and Schwartz that relational power might help to explain the variance in conversational patterns usually attributed solely to gender. The hypothesis was supported when applied to the data that Blumstein and Schwartz had gathered for their *American Couples* study (see also Kollock, Blumstein and Schwartz 1994).

Peter's dissertation research was another example of theoretical synthesis tested through experimental design. Using concepts derived from both social exchange theory and symbolic

interaction, Peter proposed new models of cooperation under conditions of uncertainty. These models expanded on earlier social exchange theoretical principles by taking into account some of the ways in which actors signal intentions to one another and use pre-existing social scripts as a basis for ascertaining risk and trust. Working with Toshio Yamagishi, Peter was able to demonstrate conditions under which networks of trust (and the underlying social activities or rituals that contribute to trust) are necessary for social cooperation to emerge. This research resulted in three significant articles that are still considered disciplinary benchmarks (Kollock 1993a, Kollock 1993b, Kollock 1994).

Simultaneous to this research, Peter was engaged in two additional activities that also left a significant imprint, a textbook in social psychology and the development of a graduate student teacher-training program. In 1990 Peter and I were approached by an enterprising sociology editor, Steve Rutter, who had aspirations of creating an alternative publishing concept for sociology texts. The result was Pine Forge Press (under the auspices of Sage). Steve had heard that Peter and I taught a "unique" course in social psychology and was interested in having us turn the course into a text. The uniqueness of the course reflected the broad spectrum of social psychological influences we had encountered in our own very rich graduate training – we were truly fortunate to have been exposed to the full spectrum of the "three faces of social psychology" (with a few additional perspectives tossed in as well) by masters within the field. The outcome of this synthesis was *The Production of Reality* first published in 1993 (Kollock and O'Brien 1993) and now in its fourth edition.

In addition to soaking up every angle of the available perspectives in social psychology while in graduate school, Peter also established

a strong connection with Fred Campbell and Tad Blalock who had launched a pilot program (funded by the Ford Foundation) aimed at teaching graduate students to teach. Now part of the regular curriculum in most sociology graduate programs, at the time (1987) the endeavor was entirely novel and even held in disdain by some faculty colleagues (that would all change in the early 1990s with state legislatures mounting a call for increased "accountability" in faculty teaching). Peter was recruited to co-teach the newly formed seminar in graduate teaching with



Fred Campbell and together they created one of the country's first seminars in "micro-teaching" (the use of video-taping and group dynamics as a method for instructional development). Needless to say, this seminar included many elements derived from Peter's understanding of social psychology and group processes. He later established the teaching seminar at UCLA and was an active participant in the university's center for teaching. Peter is well-known among his colleagues and much loved among former students for his excellent teaching abilities. He was the recipient of the University of Washington's Graduate Student Teaching Award (1989) and two of UCLA's highest teaching awards, the Luckman Distinguished Teaching Award and the Eby Award for the Art of Teaching.

I speak for myself as well as for Peter in saying that both of us owe much not only to the excellent mentors we had in graduate school, but to the generous and enthusiastic guidance we received from members of the Social Psychology Section in general and the Group Processes participants in particular. Together we attended our first Group Processes meetings held at Emory University in 1987. I still recall how privileged and excited we felt to be there. We really thought we had "arrived." In the years since, Peter used these meetings as an occasion to sharpen his thinking on a range of topics and to try out groundbreaking ideas in a forum that he knew would offer incisive feedback, necessary criticism and unflinching support (e.g., Kollock 1998a, Kollock 1998b, Smith and Kollock 1996, Kollock 1996). It was in these meetings that he first articulated some of his notions for the application of principles of group processes to two new arenas: online communities and financial markets. The first direction resulted in the edited book, *Communities in Cyberspace* (Smith and Kollock 1998) co-edited with Marc Smith and

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Graduate Student Profile:

Leslie Brody from Emory University

Leslie Brody is a doctoral candidate at Emory University, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Teaching Fellow at Spelman College. Her primary research interests are social psychology, sex and gender, and justice. Her dissertation, entitled "On Behalf of Another: Exploring Social Value Orientation and Responses to Injustice," focuses on how people respond to others' experiences of social injustice – injustice that is observed, but not personally experienced.

More specifically, Leslie's dissertation looks at the relationship between a person's "social value orientation" and involvement in activities aimed at redressing social injustice on behalf of others. Social value orientation is an individual level factor that influences preference for certain distributive outcomes. When faced with social dilemmas, where individuals must choose to pursue their own, immediate interests or to sacrifice for the good of a larger group, some people respond in a "pro-social" manner, while others respond in a "pro-self" manner. Leslie's study explores whether prosocial and proself value orientations affect how observers respond to social injustices.

Participants in the study were American Jewish adults, a population chosen because of the noted salience of social justice issues in Jewish communities. Evidence of Jews using collective action to alleviate social injustice can be found in the histories and current work of Jewish organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, Mazon, Hadassah, and the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW). Leslie examines

factors that predict the social value orientation of Jewish adults, and asks how social value orientation and other individual level factors affect involvement in justice-oriented activities.

Leslie drew from literature in the areas of social psychology, social movements, political science, and Judaic studies in order to establish what factors are likely to shape social value orientation and responses to social injustice. A vignette/survey study was used to test her hypotheses. Initially, a questionnaire was used to assess individual social value orientation and social antecedents. Then participants were asked to read and respond to vignettes describing two different, socially unjust scenarios; and to indicate their current involvement in justice-oriented community organizations.

Results from Leslie's study suggest that social value orientation has a significant effect on "low commitment" responses to injustice, such as discussing the situation with others, attempting to stay informed about the situation, or voting in an election to try and alleviate the injustice. These are common reactions to social injustice, but require relatively

small sacrifices of time, energy, and/or financial resources. In contrast, "high commitment" responses to injustice – reactions that require more effort, such as participating in a protest, sending a letter to a newspaper or political representative, or donating money or volunteering for an social justice organization – are relatively unaffected by social value orientation. Instead, such behaviors are driven by factors such as valuing community involvement or believing that one's attempts to redress injustice will make a difference.

In addition to her own research, Leslie has worked on several projects with faculty mentors, Karen Hegtvedt and Cathryn Johnson, and fellow graduate students Krysia Wrobel Waldron and Natasha Morgan Ganem. Their most recent study, "When Will the Unaffected Seek Justice for Others?" appeared in the 2009 Special Issue on Justice in the *Australian Journal of Psychology*. Over the next several years, Leslie will continue to collaborate with this group of scholars as they delve into results from an NSF-sponsored study on how legitimacy affects responses to personal experiences of injustice. Additionally, she will continue to pursue her own research on how individuals respond to the unfair treatment of others in different social contexts.



NOMINATE GRAD STUDENTS

Do you know a graduate student who would be a good candidate to profile? Submit your nominations to the newsletter editor, Kathy J. Kuipers, at kathy.kuipers@umontana.edu.

Section Comings and Goings

Karen Hegtvedt

Emory University

Karen.Hegtvedt@emory.edu

Our section has been very fortunate. For seven years, Tim Owens (Purdue

University) commanded our section website. He followed our first webmaster, Peter Burke (UC Riverside). Peter, and then Tim, created both a repository for our section history as well a site, which communicated breaking news and

on council and committees. No longer did a new committee chair have to contact the last committee chair to find out how to operate the committee. The site included operating instructions. Tim created a news banner to help

cut through all the clutter that cumulates when information is put at users' fingertips. He also added several new sections to the website, including the new books section. And, Tim acted as the

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Social Psychologists' Centennial Celebration

Philip Brenner

University of Wisconsin

pbrenner@ssc.wisc.edu

2008 marked the 100th anniversary of the publication of the first two textbooks titled "Social Psychology." One was by William McDougall, a psychologist. The other was by E. A. Ross who was chair of the Department of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison at the time. On September 26th and 27th, this milestone was celebrated at the University of Wisconsin with a series of talks on the past, present, and future of our discipline. In this article, I want to briefly highlight these talks. However, knowing that I can't possibly do justice to their intricacies and nuance in such a brief review, I want to urge you to listen for yourself. The talks and their accompanying presentation slides are available on the Wisconsin Sociology website at <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/socpsych/centennial.php>.

After welcoming comments from Gary Sandefur, Dean of the College of Letters and Science, and Doug Maynard, Chair of the Department of Sociology, Professor John DeLamater presented a brief introduction to these first two social psychology textbooks, including how these texts were reviewed by other social psychologists.

The keynote address by Glen Elder, Jr. (Sociology, UNC-Chapel Hill) discussed research

and theory in social psychology and the life course. Glen spoke of the development of longitudinal study design and its impact on social psychology, in general, and on life course research, in particular. He highlighted the role of pioneer longitudinal studies, like the Oakland, Berkeley and Stanford-Terman cohort studies, and compared them to the newer wave of longitudinal studies, including the PSID, National Longitudinal Studies, HRS and AddHealth, and retrospective life histories. Glen argued that these studies have had an influence on theory building, using Kohn's study of work and personality and Bronfenbrenner's work on the ecology of human development as examples.

As this suggests, working with longitudinal data has transformed our theorizing about lives, bringing time, context and process into our theoretical models. Glen noted that these theories rely on narrative life histories, careers (linked careers, both orderly and disorderly), life cycles (stages of parenthood across generations), and age and time (in terms of age grading, timing of life transitions, and historical time). He suggested that life course theory has benefitted from the contextualization of how individuals develop and age by bringing understandings of age and temporality, life cycle and generations and lifespan conceptualizations of development.

Glen argued that in the early 1990s, five paradigmatic principles of life course theory arose that helped to organize the field around

essential distinctions. The first of these, linked lives, represents the oldest principle of the life course, that lives are embedded in relationships with people and are influenced by them. Second, the timing of events in social roles, whether early or late, affects their impact. Third, on lives in time and place, lived experiences are profoundly influenced by changing historical times and places. Fourth, human agency in constrained situations emphasized that people are actors with choices who construct their paths in life. And finally, he discussed the notion that human development and aging as a life-long process is the overarching principle that defines the territory. Glen ended his talk by highlighting some of the challenges of the field, including studying cumulative inequalities and stress, and the new directions in which these challenges will lead us, including linking life course work to research in the biological sciences, including collecting and analyzing biomarkers and bioassays.

Day one of the conference ended with a reception and a gala dinner, followed by an occasionally rowdy viewing of the first presidential debate.

Day two of the conference began with a talk by Shelley Correll (Sociology, Stanford). Shelley's talk focused on the use of experimental methods

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MORE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY NEWS, EVENTS, AND MEETINGS

Cooley Mead Award

Congratulations to Dr. Linda Molm of the University of Arizona, the 2009 Cooley Mead Award Recipient! She will receive her award and present her talk at a ceremony following the section business meeting in San Francisco. We look forward to it. Thank you to the members of the Cooley Mead Award Committee: Cecilia Ridgeway (chair), Don Reitzes, Jane Sell, Brian Powell, and Rebecca Erickson.

Slate of Candidates for the Election

Christine Horne (chorne@wsu.edu, Washington State University), Chair of the nominations committee for the social psychology section, reports the results of their work assembling a slate of candidates for the upcoming election. Thank you to the nominations committee: Linda Francis, Tyrone Forman, Kent Sandstrom, David Shank

(student), and Lynn Smith-Lovin. Each candidate has been contacted and each has agreed to run for the position. Don't forget to vote!

Chair Elect:

Timothy J. Owens

Jane D. McLeod

Council:

Jody Clay-Warner

Shelley Correll

Rebecca J. Erickson

Kathryn J. Lively

Student Council Member:

Celeste Campos

Lynn Gencianeo Chin

2009 Group Processes Conference

The 2009 Group Processes Conference will be held in conjunction with the ASA meetings in San Francisco on Friday, August 7th (the day before the conference). The location is in the process of being secured but plans are to hold the meeting in one of the conference hotels. Gretchen Peterson, one of

the organizers (with Lisa Rashotte and Robb Willer), anticipates that the meeting registration fee will stay at the same rate as last year (\$75 for faculty, \$35 for students), with an additional fee for late registration of \$10 for anyone submitting payments after July 15th.

This year's meeting will include several sessions open for submissions as well as an additional invited session to commemorate the contributions of Peter Kollock. The following is the list of planned sessions:

1) Panel honoring the contributions of Peter Kollock - an invited panel being organized by Michael Macy

2) Session on Applications of Group Process Theories - a session being organized by Gretchen Peterson (suggestions for papers or submissions should be directed to gpeters@calstatela.edu)

3) Session on Group

Processes in Organizations - a session being organized by Lisa Rashotte (suggestions for papers or submissions should be directed to lrashott@uncc.edu)

4) Session on Graduate Student Research - an opportunity for graduate students to showcase their research being organized by Gretchen Peterson (suggestions for papers or submissions should be directed to gpeters@calstatela.edu)

5) Open Submission session - a session being organized by Robb Willer (suggestions for papers or submissions should be directed to willer@berkeley.edu)

Submissions for any of the sessions (except the invited panel) should be sent to the organizer listed by May 1st, 2009. They are particularly interested in showcasing original empirical research at this year's conference. A website with details will be posted shortly and the link will be announced once it is ready. Those with questions should contact any of the organizers.

PETER KOLLOCK CONTINUED

still considered a pioneering contribution in studies on computer mediated communication and group dynamics. This interest led eventually to the Peter's involvement, along with Michael Macy, Marc Smith and others, in launching the ASA's section on Communication and Information Technologies.

The second direction, which derived in part from the explorations of online networks, took Peter into the real-time domain of Wall Street markets and finance. The impetus for this junket, which included his participation in a new start-up company called OnExchange, was Peter's interest in Ebay and similar online networks that were emerging as novel ways to connect and coordinate buyers and sellers. Peter was intrigued with the implications of these enterprises and what they could teach us about

trust, cooperation, risk and signaling in anonymous, temporary networks. In other words, online financial markets were yet another domain in which he could pursue inquiries regarding basic questions derived from his understanding

of social dilemmas and the challenges of coordination and cooperation in collective action (e.g., Kollock 1999, 1997). While his hopes of possibly getting rich in the process of pursuing this "applied research" didn't quite pan out, he did acquire a wealth of information. At the time of his death, he was in the process of formulating two book projects in which he intended to share these insights.

Most recently, Peter was engaged in a direction of inquiry that was bringing him full circle to some of his earliest interests in the social psychology of cognition and self-awareness. Following his engagement with OnExchange, which included relocating for 2 years to Boston and first-hand experience of some of the cruelest or least cooperative aspects of market dynamics (this was the period of the bubble-burst), Peter was prompted to pursue a long-time interest in Buddhist meditation. He became affiliated with the Deer Park monastery located near San Diego and organized in the tradition of the Vietnamese Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hahn. Following a three-month retreat at the monastery, Peter proposed a new course for the undergraduate curriculum at UCLA called "The Sociology of Mindfulness." This course, which became wildly popular, blended elements of cognitive social psychology, contemporary neurology,

and meditation to provide an intellectual and experiential understanding of the ways in which linguistic concepts organize our sense of self and our perceptions of our life circumstances. In collaboration with Barney McGrane and the monks at Deer Park, Peter arranged for students in the course to participate in a weekend meditation retreat. At the recent memorial service held at UCLA, one of the monks from the monastery offered a tribute in which he remarked that Peter had paved the way for them to rethink their own orientation toward outreach and education by reminding them of the connections between their own practices and significant contemporary intellectual and social issues.

This bridging was one of the hallmarks of Peter's career. In his early work, he called it cross-fertilization, but more recently he had become enamored with a concept he picked up

"Each of us who has had the privilege of hearing Peter deliver a speech or a lecture is familiar with the energy, wit and passion with which he made even the dullest of topics seem urgent and exciting."

in his research on financial markets: arbitrage. Arbitrage, as he used it, refers to the practice of taking an idea or resource from a domain in which its use has become well-established and perhaps even taken for granted

and introducing it into an entirely new domain as a way of infusing vitality into systems that have become stale or slow-moving.

Each of us who has had the privilege of hearing Peter deliver a speech or a lecture is familiar with the energy, wit and passion with which he made even the dullest of topics seem urgent and exciting*. He was the master of the pithy phrase, including one of my personal favorites, "we need to be mindful of the ways in which recipes for living become calcified as ideologies." Or his quip, "biologists take precautions to protect themselves from the viruses they study, sociologists should be wise enough to do the same" by which he meant that we should not simply content ourselves with uncovering social patterns, but that we should use our understanding to generate more self and collective awareness with the aim of greater harmony. Peter really did believe that if we could just figure out how to 1) understand our own intentions and inclinations, and 2) learn to communicate with trust and mutual comprehension, there would be much greater "informed cooperation" and the conditions for "pareto optimality" would be met. His professional intellectual life is a testament to his passion for this pursuit and reflects considerable courage in his willingness to chart new ground.

His contributions are substantial and he will be greatly missed.

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* For an example of Peter lecturing on social dilemmas see: <http://www.archive.org/details/HowardRheingoldIFTFStanfordHumanitiesLabPeterKollock>

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS CONTINUED

in social psychology. She noted that experiments, while primarily the methodological “face” of psychological social psychology, can and have had an important role in sociological social psychology. In response to their oft-overstated criticisms — that they are sociologically irrelevant, too artificial, and lack external validity — Shelley argued that the importance of experimental methods is in their use in theory testing. She used three examples to illustrate the use of experiments in sociological social psychology, each illustrating the underlying processes of gender discrimination beyond the reach of other methods. Shelley closed by addressing the possibilities for experimental methods in sociological social psychology, highlighting interdisciplinary trends and technological advances, especially as research is organized more around important substantive issues.

The second talk of the day was given by Mitchell Duneier (Sociology, Princeton). Mitch’s talk highlighted the use of ethnographic methods in social psychology. Ethnographers, he said, spend a lot of time in the field attempting to understand peoples’ definitions of the situation, an important part of social psychology, especially the symbolic interactionist tradition. However, he warned that social psychological concerns — the unfolding or evolving self; the individual’s embeddedness in groups and how the groups affect the ongoing development of the individuals’ self concepts; documenting interactions and thinking about careers and processes; negotiation of social order — are becoming endangered in ethnographic work with the influence of cultural sociology and the rise of the qualitative interview in lieu of observation. Especially worrisome, according to Mitch, is the use of a single quotation from an interview to illustrate a point which doesn’t fully elucidate the context. This “cherry picking” further harms our understanding of variation. He ended his talk with a discussion about the possibility of revisiting probabilistic sampling in ethnographic research using the Internet.

Yuri Miyamoto (Psychology, UW-Madison) gave the third talk of the day. Yuri’s talk focused on the intersection of cognitive and social psychology,

addressing the identification and explanation of cultural differences in terms of the socio-cultural grounding of psychological processes. Her examples identifying these differences between Eastern and Western cultures focused on attribution, cognition, attention, and dialectical thinking. Explaining these differences, Yuri compared distal (societal-level culture) and proximal (individual-level culture) causes. In the former, research has taken advantage of interesting and informative exceptions to the Western individualist/Eastern collectivist dichotomy. For example, she noted similarities between the voluntary settlers of Hokkaido, Japan’s northern island, and the dominant white culture of the United States on measures of individualism, contrasting both to the collectivism of mainland Japanese culture. In the latter, Yuri suggested cultural differences in goals, using a communication experiment. She closed her talk by linking this research to the health consequences of cultural differences.

Attendees then heard from Terri Orbuch (Sociology, Oakland University and ISR, Michigan) who spoke on the contributions that social psychological theory has made to the study of interpersonal relationships. Drawing on data from the Early Years of Marriage Study, she focused on three areas of theoretical contributions. First, Terri spoke about the symbolic interactive transformation of the self, where she noted that couples’ illusion making can have positive consequences for happiness. Second, she discussed the dynamics of group interdependence and cohesion, where she suggested that partners’ accommodation, collaboration and affirmation predict stability and well-being. And finally, she highlighted the social construction of meaning, which she discussed in terms of the context of race and gender and their interactive effects. For example, Terri noted that findings from the EYM Study suggest that Black-American husbands are more likely to participate in household tasks and childcare than White-American husbands. Moreover, husband’s participation in household tasks and childcare is important for the marital quality of Black-American wives.

The final talk of the conference was given by

James House (Sociology, Survey Research, and Public Policy, Michigan). Jim’s somewhat sobering talk focused on social psychology’s decline since its “Golden Age,” ending about 1970. He suggested that economics had filled the void left by a declining social psychology, discussing this in terms of broader developments in both the social sciences and the political economy of the late 20th Century. On the former topic, he discussed what he called the “failure of success” and the dramatic growth away from interdisciplinarity toward fragmented intradisciplinarity. He also noted the increasing divide between basic and applied science and the concomitant growth of professional fields. On the latter topic, he highlighted declining funding for training and research in the post-Golden Age, as a result of economic problems and pressures in the 1970s and early 1980, and social psychology’s vulnerability to these factors, in addition to the broader sociopolitical and sociocultural influences from the left, the legacy of the 1960s, and the right, in terms of a new conservative Neoliberal Zeitgeist.

Mercifully, Jim did not stop his talk there, but then turned to the promise and prospects of the 21st Century. He highlighted the possibilities engendered by shifting sociopolitical forces, a reemphasis on the role and need for human agency, and the need to balance rational choice with structural constraint and non-rational motivation and values. Finally, Jim offered his prescription for the discipline. He highlighted the need for social psychology in both sociology and psychology, but also the need to reconnect them, and integrate social psychology with the biomedical and natural sciences, as well as with other social sciences. In so doing, we must reduce hyper-specialization and fragmentation in our discipline(s), and better articulate our research with important “applied” problems of individuals and society.

Thanks to everyone who was able to attend and participate in the conference. Your presence provided many opportunities for intellectual stimulation and plenty of friendly conversation. Special thanks to all the presenters, the Department of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin, and to theory@madison.

Spring in San Diego for PSA

Kathy J. Kuipers

University of Montana

kathy.kuipers@umontana.edu

San Diego, California, was the site of the 80th Annual Meeting of the Pacific Sociological Association Meeting this year from April 8-11. The theme, “the Shifting Foundations of Social Inequality”

allowed for a variety of sessions and social psychologists demonstrated that inequality is NOT exclusively within the more macro domain of stratification and social class theory. In a *Presidential Session on New Directions in Inequality Research*, Cecilia Ridgeway spoke about “The Gender Frame & Institutional Structure.” For sessions, Richard Serpe organized two around social

psychology: *Racial Differences in Social Psychology Processes* and *Considering Race & Ethnicity in Social Psychological Research & Theory*. As always,

both graduate and undergraduate students had many opportunities for participation in regular sessions and roundtables and in their own roundtables and poster sessions. It’s great to see social psychologists attending regional meetings where we have more visibility in smaller

sessions, more informal meetings, and more opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students as participants. The PSA Meeting (and other regional association meetings) is an especially effective way to socialize our students into the profession and to demonstrate that, in addition to teaching and collecting data, social psychologists disseminate the results of their research to their colleagues and get valuable feedback in the process.

SSS Meeting - From the Suites to the Streets

Steven L. Foy

Duke University

steven.foy@duke.edu

There's something ironic about holding a meeting with the theme of "Inequalities Across the Life Course" at a venue as lavish as New Orleans' Hotel Monteleone. Furthermore, though many of the sociologists gathered there may have faced unequal outcomes as a result of the societal construction of race, gender, sexuality, and other bases, it is probably safe to say that few of us currently spend time contemplating whether we'll have food or shelter in the days to come.¹ Still, what we scholars and researchers shared in that decadent space was an

informed understanding of sociology's potential to challenge existing hierarchies and problematize formerly common-sensical notions of our everyday world.

Inequality is multifaceted, but many of its representations came into focus through the thoughtful scrutiny of each presenter. Bases of inequality brought under the sociological microscope included everything from race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality, to age, alcoholism, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, imprisonment, and access to health care. Deserving of special attention was Patricia Hill Collins' call for us to reconsider our notion of community service, a concept lived out daily by people in low-income communities but more frequently associated with the privileged donation of a day to the downtrodden in a small-scale, colonialist production.

There was much to learn and contemplate;

we produced and consumed a great deal of knowledge. Nevertheless, it was difficult to shake a few nagging questions in the back of my head. I wondered, "How much of what we say within this decadent space will ever reach the ears, eyes, and minds of the non-sociological world?" and, perhaps more importantly, "How frequently do our presentations of problems lead to concrete solutions?" Then, I met Mike.

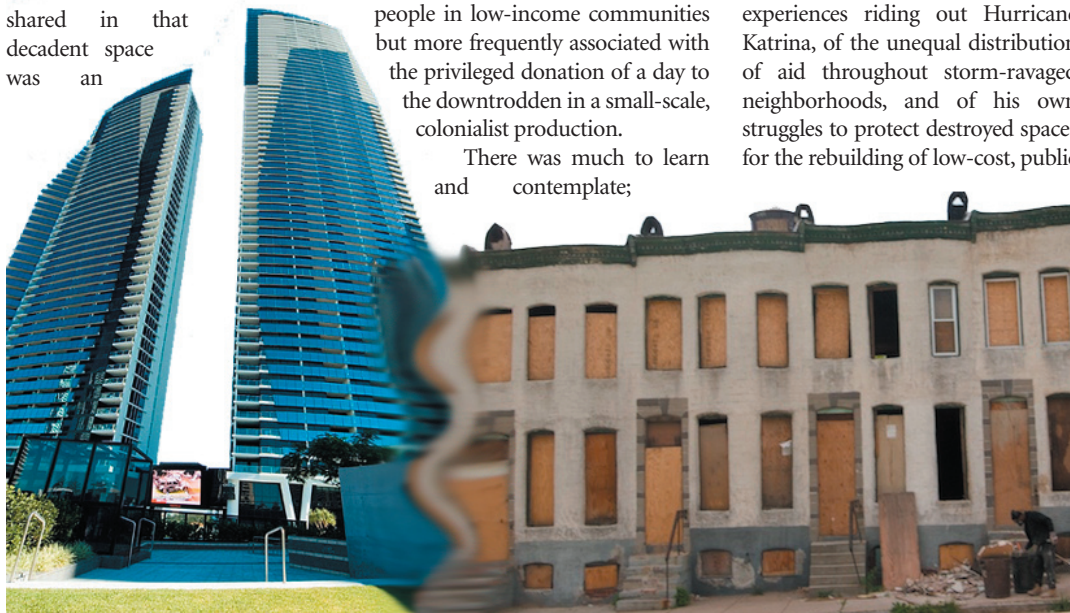
Roaming along Bourbon Street at night, a few colleagues and I came across Mike, a white, middle-aged, heavy-set tarot card reader whose chin was adorned with a long white beard flecked with specks of grey. In between readings, he recounted his experiences riding out Hurricane Katrina, of the unequal distribution of aid throughout storm-ravaged neighborhoods, and of his own struggles to protect destroyed spaces for the rebuilding of low-cost, public

housing instead of the expensive lofts and commercial spaces proposed by developers. Then, Mike gave us a glimpse into the inspiration behind his struggles, asking us if we had ever read Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's *Racism Without Racists*. For a moment, I glimpsed a bridge between the suites and the streets whereas before, I had only seen latched windows and closed doors.

Meetings like this one remind us of the extent to which knowledge is a two-way street. Just as our colleagues have much to say about our nation and our world's persistent inequality, so too do our co-citizens on the streets of places like New Orleans. Although I don't expect to walk down a street anytime soon and see masses of people bumping into each other because they don't want to avert their eyes from *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, people like Mike remind us that the knowledge we produce and consume within sociological circles is not taken for granted. We hope that, as sociologists, we will not take the efforts of individuals like him for granted either. After all, if we really are in the business of addressing inequality, how useful is knowledge divorced from action?

(Footnotes)

¹ In the interest of full disclosure, perhaps I personally represent an even greater irony as a white man in such a context.



COMINGS AND GOINGS CONTINUED

graduate student at the University section's institutional memory. He ensured storage of important section information, and could remember the decisions about what to store and where. There was rarely much lag time when Tim was asked to update the site. You could say that Tim was a not only the webmaster but also the master of responsiveness. The section owes a hearty "THANKS" to Tim for his many years of service.

Tim has transferred the title of social psychology webmaster to Philip Brenner, currently a

graduate student at the University of Wisconsin. Under the direction of John DeLamater, he is finishing his dissertation, which investigates the over-reporting of socially desirable behavior in traditional sample surveys using religious service attendance as a sample case. He will be taking a position as a Research Fellow in the Program in Survey Methodology in the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan in the fall. Before beginning graduate school, Philip maintained the website for a research project – and he liked

doing web work! We are happy that we can "book-end" his graduate experience by having him take over the role of webmaster for the section as he completes his Ph.D. The section appreciates his willingness to take on this responsibility. The new URL is: <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/socpsych/ASA>.

Section elections will be upon us soon. Elsewhere in the newsletter the slate of candidates is presented. The slate, however, does not reflect an important vacancy in the section: the newsletter editor. As she notes in her column, Kathy Kuipers plans to step down this

year. Like the webmaster role, the section depends upon the goodwill, skill, and dedication of a volunteer. In her years of service to the section, Kathy has done an excellent job. She is very adept at nudging—with great politeness—chairs to submit their columns in a timely fashion and finding colleagues to write feature pieces. Thank you, Kathy! And, I look forward to hearing from interested potential editors. Anyone interested in taking on this position, should contact me at khegtve@emory.edu (and I'm sure that Kathy will answer the questions of potential volunteers!).

CHAIR'S REMARKS CONTINUED

"country girls" as plain, uneducated if not slow-witted, and tractable. Members of the country families, including Elizabeth initially, know of his fortune (£10,000 a year in the late 18th century!) and largely find his behavior consistent with their category for "upper class." Insofar as his status may rub off on them, they want to get to know him, and thus grant him leeway with regard to his less than polite behavior toward them. When Darcy says to his friend Bingley that Elizabeth "is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me [to dance]," he is clearly lumping Elizabeth into his category of "country girls," which, though consistent with what the representation heuristic would predict, results in him significantly underestimating her. Darcy's slight, however, is overheard by Elizabeth, and increases his relevance to her, which in turn drives Elizabeth to refine her initial impression of him based on his behavior (effectively a bottom-up or data-driven approach to impression formation). Being in want of inviting manners, she concludes that that he is proud and haughty.

In effect, their initial impressions prejudice the interpretation of new information about each other and lay the basis for the operation of self-fulfilling prophecies. One could say that the primacy effect was in full operation. Indeed, when Elizabeth learns that Darcy kept Bingley away from her sister Jane, she attributes it to his proud, haughty disposition. Darcy defends his actions by noting that he saw no evidence of Jane's affection toward his friend and thus he nobly protected his friend from heartache. Such contrasting views of the same behavior capture the actor-observer bias.

When Elizabeth hears the housekeeper at Darcy's estate, Pemberly, sing his praises, citing what a caring and compassionate master he is, she finds it difficult to incorporate this information into her image of him. Only when she herself encounters him at Pemberly and he demonstrates not merely polite but also generous behavior toward her and her relatives (who are in commerce, which she presumed he would disdain), does her image of him begin to change. And, of course, when she learns that he saved her family reputation from irreparable harm (owing to her youngest sister's scandalous elopement with a soldier), she puts her initial impression to rest and concentrates on his positive characteristics. Although not detailed here, a similar transformation in impressions occurs for Darcy with regard to Elizabeth. In social psychological terms, these transformations illustrate both the difficulty of changing mental representations or schema as well as the conditions that may facilitate that change (e.g., repeated disconfirmations of an existing image). Moreover, though as only hinted at in this description, the main characters are efficient and flexible perceivers, whose assessments are colored by both their own motivations and situational factors.

By being an astute observer of her own social world, Austen creates a fictional world to which we can apply principles that have been systematically studied by social psychologists. My reading of the text and the examples offered above of how the text resonates with social cognition processes is only one interpretation of the novel. Just as I brought my social psychological thinking to bear upon the story, other readers may bring their

own frames of reference to bear, which reflect their own social categories, motivations, and so forth. And thus the process of reading is much like the process of categorization underlying the impressions that Darcy and Elizabeth form. The notion that the reader "interacts" with the text gained currency in the last 20 years. That interaction stems from the interplay between the mental representations evoked by the text and those held by the reader, coupled with the reader's motivations in consuming a particular work of fiction (e.g., for entertainment, edification, or a requirement) and maybe even the conditions of reading per se (e.g., with or without distractions, at one's leisure, or under time constraints). Another interpretation of the reader/text interaction could be based in symbolic interactionism and ideas about how people create meanings. Yet, while a few social psychologists have made forays into understanding this reader/text interaction, more typically it is those who study cultural products that make such attempts. How readers interpret texts is one arena in which cultural sociologists and social psychologists may find it fruitful to collaborate. (An invited 2009 social psychology ASA session is likely to illustrate other ways!)

One of the reasons that *Pride and Prejudice* is a lasting cultural product is that it aptly describes the dynamics of interaction, focusing on the perceptions and meanings that drive the dynamics. Jane Austen was not a social psychological or cultural theorist, but the lessons embedded in her prose transcend socio-historical time and capture principles of modern social psychology. In so doing, she deserves to be one of us.



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