

Youth & Policy Special Edition:
The Next Five Years: Prospects for young people

Reviews

Kitty te Riele and Rachel Brooks (Editors)

Negotiating Ethical Challenges in Youth Research

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pp. 200

Wayne Richards

THIS BOOK OFFERS an insightful exploration of ethical challenges that can arise whilst conducting research with young people. Case studies are introduced by contributors to twelve chapters which bring a welcome international perspective in their reflective commentaries; where real ethical dilemmas experienced are balanced with critical reflection. The balance between theory and reflection works well for most of the chapters although, at times, the theoretical discussion distracts from the narrative structure of the case study. Critique of the universal application of standard ethical frameworks is a consistent thread which runs throughout the book. The limitations of these are examined in the light of the need for shifting frames of reference in order to encompass the complexity of different cultural perspectives and in order to be sensitive to distressing social and environmental factors faced by different communities and participants.

The book is structured around the three key themes of ‘power and agency’, ‘protection and harm prevention’, and ‘trust and respect’. The introductory chapter provides a sound exploration of formal ethical frameworks which sets the context for examining challenges in youth research. The conclusion offers an excellent synthesis of the challenges introduced by contributors to the three core themes. The three central sections of the book each consist of four chapters where the contributors share their reflections on ethical dilemmas that are seen to specifically relate to conducting research with young people in a variety of contexts.

The four chapters exploring ‘power and agency’, the first theme, bring attention to the asymmetric power relationship between the adult researcher and young people. They are also cognizant of race and hegemonic cultural perspectives alongside age as factors which impact on the relationship. Chapter 2 on conducting research with young people in the Global South examines how the expectation of informed consent in formal ethical frameworks is troubled in a variety of ways: by constructions of youth, including their status and responsibilities in communities stressed by AIDS

or poverty; by working and communicating across language barriers or literacy competencies; or by working with or through gatekeepers. The remaining chapters in this section explore the representation of young people and the challenge of participatory research with young people, and raise questions regarding how youth researchers are prepared and supported. Chapter 3 begins to enter that uncertain territory where practice and research overlap and when the research label needs to be applied, consequently triggering the need for ethical approval. This is a significant area that could have been developed further in the book. Chapter 4 considers how researchers select the way in which the lives and experiences of young people are interpreted and portrayed. It argues that the tendency to depict the lives of young people in relation to risk and deficit may be pragmatic in relation to bringing attention to need. However, this is also likely to pathologise young people and fail to give a holistic representation of the range of perspectives available. Chapter 5 considers how hegemonic influences on young people, rather than empowering their voices, may encourage them to adopt models and approaches which are observed and legitimised in the adult world.

Chapters in the ‘protection and harm prevention’ section explore how research can generate troublesome knowledge in working with sensitive issues. The ethical challenges explored include, duty of care, social justice, negotiating access, balancing confidentiality and protection where research leads to disclosures, and the uncovering of privileged knowledge. Throughout this section the potential for symbolic violence is examined – where young people are having to resist becoming trapped in a spiral of negative representations. The clear message in the chapters of this section is the need for researchers to adopt a situated ethic where decision making and discretion is applied to individual cases rather than prescribing a standardised framework of ethics.

The ‘trust and respect’ section offers a particularly pertinent set of ethical dilemmas around privacy and the ownership of data. This is poignantly introduced in chapter 10 which considers the death of a participant in a longitudinal research project and the subsequent status of the participants’ data and duty to his family. Regarding ownership of data, reflection on access to online data in chapter 13 raises interesting questions around what is private and what is public when it comes to consent and confidentiality. Chapter 12 on ‘negotiating the ethical borders of visual research’ with young people raises many dilemmas around confidentiality and anonymity which are conflated with cross cultural concerns regarding permission – giving and protection. The dilemmas introduced in this chapter are challenging and perhaps needed further unpacking.

The structuring of the three themes within different sections of the book does successfully identify core areas and provide a strong focus. The chapters however show significant overlap and are not easily contained in discrete sections. Issues of power, protection and respect are factors in all the chapters and do not necessarily justify separation. Chapter 11 on research with young people on female circumcision for example, which is in the trust and respect section, could just as easily have been placed in the section on protection and harm prevention. This is only a minor point but it does cause a little confusion in navigating the book.

It is evident throughout the book that ethical challenges become sharper when the researcher is not an objective outsider but instead enters the subjectivities of young people's lives. In saying this, the book does not give sufficient recognition youth researchers being practitioner researchers and instead defaults to the researcher being the objective social scientist. For the practitioner researcher the contingencies of space in which unexpected ethical demands arise are not uncommon. Within this scenario, professional ethics have to be considered alongside research ethics to take account of professional boundaries and dual relationships. There is perhaps a missed opportunity in this book to explore this further and to pursue the question of when it is appropriate to use the label research in more depth. This however is a well written book that I would recommend for students and practitioners interested in research ethics.

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Roger Matthews

Realist Criminology

Palgrave/Macmillan 2014

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£75 (hbk)

pp. 179

John Pitts

IT IS SAID that in his declining years the legendary footballer George Best was lounging in his Park Lane hotel room, accompanied by a beauty queen, quaffing the finest champagne and toying with a spoonful of the best caviar, when a hotel bellboy popped his head around the door and asked: 'George! Where did it all go wrong?' And this is, in effect, the question that Roger Matthews is asking contemporary criminology. The exponential growth of the discipline since the 1970s, overshadowing the other social sciences and generating ever more university courses and solvent research centres, would seem to suggest that criminology is in rude health. But, just as George Best was really writing his own epitaph, criminology, for all its apparent opulence is, Matthews believes, on a road to nowhere.

Roger Matthews aims to transcend the factionalism, partiality and sheer naiveté which, he claims, currently threaten to confound the subject, by breathing fresh life into the quest for a politically engaged, theoretically informed discipline. In this, a concern with the damaging impact of crime upon its not infrequently, socially disadvantaged victims, would be inseparable from its attempt to devise constructive and humane responses to the perpetrators of crime, while addressing the criminogenic circumstances in which many of them lead their lives. This project was originally set in train in the 1980s by the late Jock Young, to whom *Realist Criminology* is dedicated. However, it fell from favour with the demise of New Labour with which, (for both good and ill), what

Matthews and Young (1992) described as 'Left Realism', became associated.

But *Realist Criminology* is not simply a reworking of yesterday's big idea. Its ambition is far more audacious. It aims to present both a thoroughgoing critique of where, why and how the various strands of contemporary criminology have gone wrong and a blueprint for how the discipline might be rescued from what the author sees as its intellectual and political irrelevance.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, Chapter 1, 'The Successes and Failures of Modern Criminology', has a lot more to say about the latter than the former. Matthews locates the germs of criminological realism in the politically engaged radical criminologies that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s whose strengths lay in their problematisation of previously taken-for-granted assumptions about crime and deviance and the revelation that social and judicial intervention often boomeranged, producing outcomes at stark variance with their stated intentions.

However, in their rejection of what C. Wright Mills (1959) called abstract empiricism, many of these radical liberals simply turned empiricism on its head. If mainstream criminology believed that 'drug abuse' or 'mental illness' were unproblematic descriptions of real problems, the radicals dismissed them as the 'social constructions' of 'moral entrepreneurs' who had a political or financial interest in 'labelling' people as socially deviant. They dismissed 'crime' as having no ontological reality and 'mental illness' as a pejorative label slapped onto free spirits who didn't conform to oppressive, taken-for-granted, ideas of sanity.

However, this intellectual position, lampooned by Stanley Cohen as *Homage to Catatonia*, ignored the reality that many ordinary people, particularly the poor and the powerless, were profoundly affected, and sometimes scarred for life, by robbery, burglary and violence, and that mental illness, the experience rather than the label, was a source of profound distress for millions. With the advent of post modernism, Matthews argues, these left idealists abandoned the pursuit of 'truth' altogether in favour of the absorbing but pointless post-modern pastime of interrogating randomly selected 'truth claims', no matter how bizarre.

This position is not only intellectually lazy, it is also politically irrelevant, and Matthews challenges liberal paranoia about creeping state-control and its pessimism about the possibility of effecting positive social reform. Far from intruding ever further into private lives, he argues, it is the withdrawal of the state from key areas of social life that is generating the social anxiety and fatalism that characterise 'late modernity'. But liberal pessimism has its upside, particularly for academics because, having accepted that 'nothing can be done', one can simply lie back or, more accurately, fly off to international conferences, at considerable expense to one's hard pressed students, to pontificate ironically on the folly of those who are actually trying to make things better.

The feminist criminologies of the 1970s have had a profound impact upon theory, policy and

practice in criminology and criminal justice. Highlighting criminology's obsession with young male perpetrators, feminists drew our attention to the very different origins of female criminality, while highlighting the immense scale of the usually hidden victimisation of women and children in a patriarchal society. Today, the legacy of their early work is to be found in changed legislation and policy as well as a seemingly endless stream of TV documentaries, and on the front pages of the national press.

Some feminist criminologists also demanded a new methodology to replace what Carol Smart has called 'malestream' criminology (1976). This new 'situated' or 'standpoint' methodology rejected the idea of a shared reality that could be investigated using conventional methods of 'value free' scientific research. In its place, there emerged a methodology which supplanted a notion of the 'real' with a plurality of 'realities', each shaped by different people's experiences of an inequitable, racist and patriarchal society. In this formulation there were no criteria against which the veracity of these perceptions of reality might be tested and, as Matthews argues, rather than finding a new and deeper reality, standpoint criminologies simply replaced one partial view of the world with another similarly partial view which said that the world wasn't like that at all.

In the 1980s, the radical criminologies of the 60s and 70s were confronted by two new phenomena; a right-wing intelligensia and a 'right realist' criminology. While Charles Murray (1984) argued that poverty was the product of an overweening welfare state that rewarded fecklessness, undermined individual responsibility, discouraged parental propriety and produced a culture of entitlement wherein sexual profligacy and criminality became the norm; James Q. Wilson and George Kelling's 'broken windows' thesis (1982) had it that the relentless policing of low-level incivilities in lower class neighbourhoods could prevent a drift into more serious crime and violence, thus enabling the poor but law abiding to reclaim public space, and avert ghettoisation. Like Iain Duncan Smith's Broken Britain, the ideas presented by Murray and Wilson and Kelling proceeded from the assumption that the aetiology of these problems lay in a moral crisis which took the form of a kind of cultural 'conduct disorder' amongst the poor. This formulation was, of course, music to the ears of the 'neoconservatives' who had assumed power in Britain and the USA in the 1980s, but anathema to liberals, who saw the gains of the 60s and 70s being trampled underfoot by the onward rush of the radical right. What right realism said to John Lea and Jock Young (1984) however was that a radical criminology that ignored the working class victim, the person most vulnerable to lower class criminality, was both intellectually bankrupt and politically impotent. Left realism, of which *Realist Criminology* is the latest and fullest manifestation, was born.

Roger Matthews wants to advance the project by constructing a new 'post-adolescent' criminology based upon 'critical realism'. But what is critical realism? Whereas positivistic social science is only able to draw causal inferences from observable events that commonly occur sequentially, critical realism's central aim is to reveal the mechanisms and structures which produce these

events and generate social action because, as Marx once observed, social reality may be very different from its empirically observable surface appearance (Bhaskar and Callinicos, 2003). Moreover, in contrast with the subjectivism of left idealist and standpoint criminologies, critical realism holds that the human beings inhabiting these social structures are capable of reflecting upon them, comprehending their real nature and, having reflected, changing their circumstances through social action; a process that may be facilitated by social scientific research. Thus, central to critical realism is its political project which, Matthews contends:

... is practically and politically engaged and takes the concerns of members of the general public seriously, seeing them neither as dupes or irrational. Most importantly, it aims to develop a critical approach that stands in opposition to forms of naive realism that see crime as unproblematic (p.29).

This aim will be fulfilled, he argues, if we recognise the ‘primacy of theory’. The problem here is not that the other criminological perspectives discussed are atheoretical, it is that these theories are ‘not up to the job’. The problem with the theoretical underpinnings of Left Realism, Standpoint Feminism, Right Realism and mainstream Administrative Criminology, the latter of which leans upon either Rational Choice theory (‘in the right circumstances we’d all do it’) or Routine Activities theory (‘it’s what people like them do’), is that they all fall at the first hurdle. That hurdle is the question, ‘Why don’t they all do it?’ And this is because they fail to distinguish between the, big, pre-disposing factors, like poverty, racism, inequality, patriarchy, moral decline, rationality or routine activities, which may place pressure on members of vulnerable populations to engage in particular forms of criminality, and the precipitating factors which propel or lure actual people into crime. To find out what these are we must ask another question, namely: ‘What is it, specifically, that causes these people, in this place, at this time, to do this, and not something else, in the particular way that they do?’ If we are to think about crime seriously or to do something to stop it, a theory that helps us to answer this question is vital.

And this leads Matthews inexorably towards Cultural Criminology. Although cultural criminology has had little to say about contemporary problems of crime and justice, Matthews applauds its challenge to mainstream criminology, arguing, as it does, for a critical re-examination of criminal motivation and criminal values. Rejecting positivism, rational choice theory and administrative criminology, cultural criminology has synthesised Chicago-style ecological theory, labelling theory, subcultural theory and feminist theory into a powerful explanatory tool. Drawing on the work of Jack Katz (1988), it maintains that criminal involvement is neither a purely rational act, involving a calculation of risk and reward nor an irrational act carried out by pathological subjects.

Cultural criminologists call for the development of different and more imaginative methodologies with which to target hard-to-reach and outcast groups and, along the way, they castigate university research ethics committees for standing in the way of their development.

But what is missing from cultural criminology, Matthews argues, is an appreciation of the victims of crime on the one hand and the role of public opinion and social norms on the other. Cultural criminologists he says ‘tend to use terms like “deviance”, “crime” and “transgression” interchangeably, thereby blurring the distinction between the serious and the trivial; the legal and illegal’. Like the labelling theorists of yesteryear, their discussion of ‘crime’ tends to focus upon crimes without victims while criminal acts are presented, as often as not, as a kind of David and Goliath struggle between the hapless ‘offender’ and the forces of ‘social control’. There are few vicious muggers and greedy burglars in the alluring world of cultural criminology. Yet, while street gangs may represent an exotic subcultural response to the vagaries of urban life for the radical criminologist, a lot of people, particularly if they are poor, young and Black, live in fear of, and are sometimes badly injured or killed by them.

Clearly, cultural criminology does a lot of what Roger Matthews thinks a thorough-going realist criminology ought to do, but its romanticism and its failure to examine what the despised ‘control agencies’ actually do, and on whose behalf they do it, represents a serious weakness. Like much liberal criminology, Matthews argues, cultural criminology’s anti-statism and its aversion to any attempt to ‘correct’ the ‘deviant’ mean that, at present, it can make only a limited, theoretical, contribution to crime reduction or attempts to limit the victimisation of the poor and the vulnerable.

And this is the challenge confronting a thoroughgoing Realist Criminology. While Matthews’ book is a genuine ‘tour de force’ it is also a work in progress. In its dissection of contemporary criminology it shows us both how far we have come and how far there is to go. Nonetheless, the great strength of *Realist Criminology* is that, unlike any other publication available today, it points to a way forward.

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Mark Naison

Badass Teachers Unite!

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£12.99 (pbk)

pp. 200

Kao Nou L. Moua and Alexander Fink

BADASS TEACHERS Unite! is Mark Naison's call to action for teachers, parents, and young people against corporate involvement in education reform. The likes of Teach for America, the Harlem Children's Zone, and Bill and Melinda Gates are under attack for their promotion of the charter school movement, which, in combination with No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top, Naison sees as scapegoating American teachers for education's failure to serve all children and using corporate influence to promote a narrow and ultimately failing reform agenda. The book is a compiled series of blog posts from Naison's activism in the Bronx, divided into three sections titled (1) Education Policy Critique and Advocacy, (2) Youth Issues and Student Activism, and (3) Lessons of Bronx Schools.

The first section demonstrates the possibility and risk of the blog format. We found ourselves arguing with various 'posts', noticing that the short-form format felt like an invitation to engage in debate and served, therefore, as a broader invitation Naison offers to readers to engage in conversation about education reform (a first step toward the activism he hopes to encourage). However, these fragments of analyses left us filling in a lot of assumptions. For example, who does Naison include as a 'teacher'? In his writing, we are left to believe teachers are professionals in a school, serving *in loco parentis* (in the stead of a parent), and responsible for working with our children. They are the ones who will save public education and we need to lean on their wealth of experiences and knowledge. And yet, he worries that corporate education reformers wrongfully blame teachers for the failure of the public schools. In his pushing back, Naison accepts the terms of the corporate reformers, leaving schools, administrators, and teachers framed in the same corporate rhetoric he seeks to fight. Rather than shift the conversation, Naison seems to be interested primarily in propping up 'the other side'. He offers an 'us vs. them' mentality, though the 'us' only includes the normal players. What if the category of 'teachers', was more inclusive, we wondered? Could it include the voices of parents, community members, and students? Another group organising in a similar area for school reform was the Black Power movement. Among other things, they sought community control of schools so that the community – parents and young people included – could make choices about what was taught and who taught it.

On the whole, this leaves Naison's analysis of education policy wanting. He seems to adopt a standard leftist view of education reform – anti-testing, pro-public education, less corporate involvement, stronger teacher unions. These proposals are not new: as educational historians

Lawrence Cremin (1990) and Diane Ravitch (2010) have noted, reforms in education over time in the United States have tended to oscillate between various poles: local and national, student choice and standardized assessment, and debates about quality. For example, Naison several times mentions and valorizes vocational education in Germany, without a critical analysis of issues – like race and racism – in the German education system, or a sense of how it would map onto a distinctly different context like the United States. These oversights demonstrate the lack of nuance that carries through the book in Naison’s assessment of education.

At the centre of Naison’s argument is engaging youth. In the second part of the book, Naison provides historical, current, and personal examples of young people’s activism, resistance, and participation. He shares poignant experiences of mentoring young men. He writes about the importance of building relationships, physical touch, and the role of caring adults in the lives of young people who face incredible challenges. However, as compelling as Naison’s argument is that young people must be engaged in education and education reform, missing throughout the book is a clear sense of whether or not Naison sees young people as conscious activists for change or, as the music sections indicate, simply showing their diversity and difference through their presence. Rather than allow young people to share their experiences from their own perspectives, Naison shares experiences of and with young people through his own perspective as an adult. Naison reminisces about his own past – what schools used to be, what teachers used to be, and what neighbourhoods used to be. Unfortunately, this nostalgic tone – ‘when I was a young person’ – further isolates today’s young people from the conversation.

Naison’s last section details examples of activism from the Bronx. These examples range from arts and history projects to rallies and individuals who have challenged school reformers targeting public schools and public school teachers. For example, Naison shares the story of the Pruitts from the Bronx, a family of educators and school administrators. Naison recalls at Upward Bound reunions, men of colour exchanging their experiences of Jim Pruitt and remembering Jim Pruitt’s mentorship. As youth workers reading this book, we see the Pruitts’ work with young people encompassing some of the essentials of youth work: a focus on relationships, inclusiveness to all, and a focus on valuing young people’s interests and voices. We see the Pruitts as educators, whether their work happens inside the classroom or outside the classroom. We also see the ‘badass teachers’ educating young people throughout Naison’s book as all the adults struggling to create positive and healthy opportunities for young people, whether or not they have licenses to teach. Perhaps most importantly, we see young people as active agents of change and at the centre of education reform. As youth workers, steeped in the traditions and practices Naison sometimes names in this text, we are able to make sense of his lessons from the Bronx and use those lessons to support our own work with young people. But what of licensed teachers? What are ‘badass [licensed] teachers’ going to do with this book? If this book is a call to arms for teachers, the first section on education policy and advocacy offers something (though still lacks the substantial knowledge we need for deep reform), but the second and third sections are significantly less direct.

If the purpose of this book is to inspire teachers toward real alternatives to the corporate education system that will value and work for all young people, unfortunately, it does not accomplish that.

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Bonnie Thomas

How To Get Kids Offline, Outdoors and Connecting With Nature

Jessica Kingsley 2014

ISBN: 978 1 84905 968 8

pp. 269

Maxine Green

THE FIRST impression in glancing through this book is that it is a treasure trove of useful and interesting exercises and ideas for working with children and young people in the outdoors. Even the most experienced youth and children's worker will find something new to take away and use.

The author, Bonnie Thomas, comes from a therapeutic background and this runs through the whole of the book, so many of the exercises are framed to encourage healing and to provide support. For example, the first chapter is called 'Incorporating Nature in Your Therapeutic Practice', and later there is a profound chapter called 'Nature-Based Therapy and Grief Work with Youth' by Karla Helbert. Both of these chapters have a level of sensitivity and care combined with some practical 'tools' that children and young people can use. Thomas describes how to make and use 'wish dolls and worry dolls' and Helbert has a lovely exercise for articulating grief using 'a natural body of water'. These contributions feel as if they have been formed from many encounters with children and young people so this moves the book from a 'how to' guide to one which has authenticity.

The chapter entitled 'Relaxation and Mindfulness' is a great introduction on how to support children and young people to become present in the moment. For anyone who wants to try using guided meditations there are two in the book which can be used and are gentle, restorative and safe. Thomas also explores self esteem and positive connections which she connects to nurture and giving. There are chapters on gardening and how to use natural contexts such as snow, fields and grassy areas, puddles and mud, and sand and beach. Her approach is creative, fun, caring, and practical.

The author is American so there is the inevitable need to translate from one culture to another. The exercise of using a ‘natural body of water’ may be more difficult in normal British temperatures and there are only some parts of the country at some times of the year when it would be possible to build a snow fort. Another criticism is that the book lacks an underlying structure, both in terms of the way the book is laid out in a somewhat serendipitous way and in terms of the underpinning values. The spirituality in the book feels a bit untested so there were some areas where caution would need to be used in undertaking the exercise. For example, encouraging children and young people to identify with totemic animals might be fine taken at a surface level but there could be a complexity to this which is not properly explored in the book.

This should not detract from the book’s use as a creative and at times beautiful resource which should really help the reader to start using nature as part of their work or develop more skills, knowledge and confidence in this area.

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Momodou Sallah

Global Youth Work: Provoking Consciousness and Taking Action

Russell House 2014

ISBN: 9781905541847

£14.95 (pbk)

pp. 120

Yvette Smalle

GLOBAL YOUTH Work provides a succinct and interesting introduction to the contested understandings of this area of youth work and work with young people. It critically unpacks and explores Global Youth Work (GYW) as terminology, concept, process and praxis. It does this by clearly locating GYW in the changeable world of youth work and youth policy. Here the author addresses a range of interrelated social, economic, and political changes that impact on young people across the world and it contributes to struggle, understanding, defining, and applying of GYW.

In each chapter, Sallah provides the reader with a synopsis of central contemporary themes and issues, informed by chief commentators and relevant research. Writing in user-friendly language, Sallah meticulously introduces and debunks key concepts and ideas, including globalisation, capitalist hegemony, dogmatism and relativism. Students will find this useful in building a more comprehensive understanding of what constitutes GYW and a global practitioner; it will also assist students in developing a conceptual framework for their critical thinking and practice. Students will find especially useful as a model; the way and clarity in which Sallah sets his framework

and declares his stance that GYW should be rooted in, ‘...social justice; social justice in a world of grotesque inequality and pervasive distribution of world’s resources; social justice for a world in which 80% of its resources are consumed by only 20%...’(p.iv). This argument is proclaimed from the onset and is unpacked and threaded through discussions in subsequent chapters, and fully uncovered in Chapter 5.

As a text book, with questions, reflection points and case studies, drawn from across the world, it provides students (postgraduate and undergraduate) with added opportunities to develop their reflexivity and to begin to build on locating themselves as individuals and practitioners in the global arena. I also found useful the autobiographical and biographical examples used to narrate and reflect on salient points; these helped to make accessible and make sense of the highly political and complex issues covered by Sallah.

In Chapter 5, ‘What is Global Youth Work?’ Sallah starts by setting out, as he did in the previous chapters, the contestation around notions of GYW and related concepts. He reiterates that GYW is by no means universally understood or practised in a unitary way. This chapter is particularly useful in engaging readers with the difference between the terminology, used to describe what is essentially the subject matter; teaching / passing on relevant issues, and GYW as a process and a particular philosophical approach to education. Education that includes a commitment to fighting against injustice and for a more just society: personally, locally and globally.

This chapter offers readers insight into a range of definitions and understanding of what constitutes GYW. Sallah suggests the definition that provides the most clarity and distinction between the nature of GYW and development education is from the DEA (Development Education Association), which states:

GYW is a form of development education. However, what makes GYW distinct is it starts from young people’s own perspective and experiences and develops a negotiated agenda for learning. Although it shares many of the values and principles that underpin good youth work, development education often has its own agenda from the outset, linked to specific campaigns or concerns and has historically taken place in more formal educational settings (DEA, 2004, cited on p.68).

Sallah adds that his understanding and practice of GYW is informed by Paulo Freire. A Freirean approach to GYW advocates that education is essentially about liberation of the oppressed. This implies that the central purpose of any education, especially education on global issues, has to be about promoting a critical understanding of self, other and society. From a critical understanding, Sallah reiterates Freire’s position that this is more than just passing knowledge on global issues; it is about promoting a critical consciousness that leads to informed action against social injustice, on a global perspective (p.73).

As Sallah himself identifies, this is fundamentally good youth work, which is essentially informal education and youth work principles that are based on Freire's liberatory ideas. Although I largely agreed with Sallah, I am left wondering: why the need to have a distinction made between 'youth work' and 'global youth work'? Is this not just a matter of semantics? If global youth work is essentially about starting where the young people are at, helping them to understand and construct their reality and support them to locate themselves in the wider world (p.71), is this not simply youth work? I am of the opinion that this chapter, and in fact the book, would have benefited from a further unpacking of youth work versus global youth work versus radical youth work.

In conclusion, as indicated above, *Global Youth Work* is logically and critically argued; it leads readers into engaging with current social justice and global issues that inform the ongoing contested debates and understanding of what constitutes GYW. Although this book covers an expansive range of material, it is brief and to the point, making it a good introduction to key concepts and interrelated issues. It sets a clear framework for locating practice, and provides examples and case studies taken from across the globe and related approaches. This is an accessible text book that provides an essential introduction to GYW; it will be equally useful reading for postgraduates and undergraduates students, helping them to build on their understanding of GYW and to situate themselves as critical, global reflexive practitioners.

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Jaber F. Gubrium and Margaretha Järvinen (editors)

Turning Troubles into Problems – Clientization in Human Services

Routledge 2014

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£85 (hbk)

pp.235

Jan Huyton

I APPROACHED this book with the expectation that it might be premised on the process described by Habermas (1987) as therapeuticocracy. Indeed the influence of Habermas is present in the book, and it resonates with Chriss (1999) who examines the role of government and professional organisations in the encroachment of a therapeutic mentality into areas of life where this is not warranted. What we have in this book is not a Frank Furedi style thesis on the therapeutic turn

(2003). Rather it offers a series of critiques written by an international group of social researchers who highlight the complexity of the roles played by policy and practice in a series of chapters firmly rooted in social and community practice.

In Chapter 1, 'Troubles, problems and clientization', editors Gubrium and Järvinen outline the underpinning ethos and inspiration behind the book's creation. The introduction offers an excellent overview of the manner in which the 'human services' can disempower people by pathologising some of life's trickiness and challenges; elevating troublesome life events into problems requiring therapeutic or state intervention. Gubrium and Järvinen refer to this process as 'clientization', resonating with the determination of youth and community workers to resist labeling the people we work with as 'clients'. Youth and community workers may take from this chapter some inspirational themes and concepts which serve to sensitise us to the proliferation of specialist workers waiting in the wings to fix problems which might otherwise have been addressed through the dialogue of youth work relationships and community engagement.

Likewise youth and community work educators in the higher education context may recognise parallels with the tendency to problematise some of the challenges faced by students who are making personal, professional and academic transitions (Earwaker, 1992), and a concern that the existence of specialists should not mean the denial of opportunities for students to discuss with tutors troublesome matters associated with being a student (Macfarlane, 2007). The book's exploration of 'clientization' offers underpinning theory which may support discussions about the role of professional judgment in relation to the boundaries both of youth and community work and higher education, and the extent to which this is being eroded by an increased emphasis on 'turning personal troubles into manageable problems' (p.85).

The anthology is inspired by two seminal texts – Emerson and Messinger's article 'The micro-politics of trouble' (1977) and Lipsky's (1980) book *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*. Gubrium and Järvinen refer to a 'discretionary border' and 'inexorable interplay' between troubles and problems in everyday life. Emerson and Messinger's work (1977) is used to frame the notion that a private trouble may, if picked up by the 'clientization' radar, be transformed and reified into a form of psychological, medical or criminal deviance, thus beginning a chain of predictable professional responses by the human services. Gubrium and Järvinen purport that troubles, when left in the social sphere, are commonly muddled and undefined. Once they become subject to the gaze of professionals they become clearly defined, specific dysfunctions for which an expert professional is required; vaguely defined troubles become clearly articulated, manageable problems.

Lipsky's work is in identifying the locus of social policy in relation to service provision. Gubrium and Järvinen draw attention to Lipsky's (1980) theory of 'street-level bureaucracy'; encouraging practitioners to examine the extent to which 'clientization' takes place through the interventions and

interactions of practice. As practitioners we need to acknowledge how programmed interventions are not suitable for addressing the murky front-line activities of the conditions of society. Whilst this terminology may be considered evocative of Schön's 'swampy lowland' (1987), Lipsky's thesis is more radical in its assertion that there may be areas of contention and struggle between citizens and individual front-line workers; matters worthy of consideration via the dialogue and dialectic (Belton et al, 2011) of the practice of supervision. Indeed this book offers some useful theoretical perspectives which may make a contribution to the teaching and practice of supervision in youth and community work, raising our awareness of the roles we may play as practitioners in exacerbating the 'clientization' process.

Each chapter considers 'clientization' in relation to a particular service area, many of which address attempts to tidy up and standardize a messy 'client group' and to transform them into serviceable clients. The book is organized into sections, the section 'Collective challenges' being particularly interesting as it introduces a number of projects for young people which we might, in the UK, refer to as supported housing. In Chapter 5 we learn about a residential project in the USA for young adults with dual diagnoses of mental illness and drug addiction. This chapter reports on an ethnographic study of a residential, therapeutic community and is as much a commentary on documentary or narrative methods of interpretative research in action, as it is about the research findings; a lovely exemplar for teaching this methodological paradigm. Fundamentally the project under investigation is presented as one where mental health is viewed as a continuous on-going process rather than a fixed, diagnosed state. The narrative method is also used as a means of open and pluralistic diagnosis within the project – the young adults who live there being empowered and encouraged to offer peer diagnosis and support within the framework of the therapeutic community. The inevitable challenge comes in convincing funders who are concerned with achievement of outcomes for individual service-users, a familiar scenario for UK colleagues. We learn that the project has developed a fusion of approaches which satisfies funders in relation to demonstrable, established forms of clinical treatment, whilst maintaining an ethos of fostering empowerment and collectivism.

Chapter 6, 'Wild Girls and the deproblematization of troubled lives', looks at a support project for girls in a large Danish city. Vitus critiques the Danish context of social welfare provision describing it as a process which 'combines neo-liberal sentiments with empowering clients who have become consumers of welfare services' (p.87). Vitus describes how this particular support project for girls has attempted to circumvent the clientization process by silencing problems and making the girls visible – leaving the girls to define themselves in order to 'change the self-image of the problem-ridden "system-child"' (p.89). The chapter serves as a case study of power-sharing and negotiation between the staff and the young women who use the project, incorporating what is termed 'girl-ruled space'. Vitus describes this as a means of avoiding practices by which the organisation becomes 'a party to creating the social problems the organisation seeks to handle and repair' (p.99).

The merit of this book lies in its applied context; revealing how theories such as therapeutocracy become more complex and nuanced when played out in grassroots practice.

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