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The Sociology of Emotions

This book reviews the theoretical and empirical work in the sociology of emotions, with appendices on relevant psychological theories as they intersect with sociological theories. The theories are grouped into several basic approaches: dramaturgical and cultural, interaction ritual, symbolic interactionist, exchange, structural, and evolutionary. The theories that have been developed within these diverse traditions are summarized, and illustrative empirical work using each theory is reviewed.

Jonathan H. Turner is a general theorist who seeks to integrate existing theories into more robust and formal theories. He is the author of 28 books and more than 140 articles and chapters as well as the editor of 4 books. He also has been editor of *Sociological Perspectives* and *Sociological Theory*.

Jan E. Stets is a sociological social psychologist who studies self, identity, emotions, and interaction. She is Co-Director of the Social Psychology Research Laboratory at the University of California, Riverside. She is the author of 2 books and more than 40 research articles.

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To our spouses, Alexandra Maryanski and Peter J. Burke.

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Foreword

It is easy to overlook the dramatic progress in the study of social emotions in three decades since the sociology of emotion became a recognized field. We know a great deal about how the physiology of emotion, the cultural forms that shape it, and the interactional situations that evoke it are intertwined, but there has not been one place to go to contemplate this accumulation of knowledge. In its early days, the field was integrated by a fierce debate between social constructionists and positivists. After that controversy lost its fire, however, theorists mainly started to develop their separate strands, often becoming so immersed in developments in areas like the study of gender effects, group processes, and sociobiology that they failed to see the whole picture. Indeed, some pessimists believed that the sociology of emotion had ceased to be a distinctive body of knowledge.

To any of us who lost the intellectual fire that was present in the late 1970s, this remarkable volume will be a useful rekindling. I approached the volume expecting a cogent review of the major theories in the field. I found that and much more. This book is not just an encyclopedic review of major theoretical frameworks, although it could serve that function admirably for a graduate course. Instead it is a creative, thoughtful development of the *science* of the sociology of emotion. It begins by developing a new taxonomy of theoretical views, linking some ideas that are conceptually related but became separated by phraseology, method, or historical period. It carefully reviews the empirical literature that is relevant to the main theoretical ideas, allowing the theories to come alive through their research applications. Most importantly, it points out interconnections between approaches. It shows where there are gaps in the mosaic of middle-range theories that we have been pursuing. It provides a framework that makes the book's claim – that we might be close to creating a general, comprehensive theory of emotion within sociology – a believable one (even for a skeptic like me, who generally has a taste for more bounded, middle-range theories).

The scholarly range and depth of this book should not be surprising, given its authors. Jon Turner, of course, writes books like most of us write articles. As the major integrative theorist of his generation, his insights into the intellectual structure of theories have been schooling us for decades. His book *The Structure of Sociological Theory* has been through seven editions, and *The Emergence of Sociological Theory* has been through five. Scholars have translated these landmark works into Russian, Polish, three Chinese languages, Korean, Arabic, and Portuguese. The current volume will be his fourth book on emotions since 2000. It joins his innovative treatment of the evolutionary literature in *On the Origins of Human Emotions*, an edited volume on *Sociological Approaches to Emotion*, and a new book that is just coming out entitled *Human Emotions: A Sociological Theory*. With his open-minded, integrative approach to the melding of biology, culture, and social interaction, Turner brings a fresh view to the sociology of emotions.

Jan Stets offers a perfect complement to Turner's broad style of theoretical vision. She works in one of the most coherent, productive theoretical research programs in sociology. By thinking about how theoretical principles (most often from identity control theory) can be applied, logically expanded, and tested, she has pushed theoretical development forward into creative new empirical domains. In particular, her work has revolutionized the study of the family and domestic violence by treating those areas with a theoretical sophistication that had been largely absent in recent decades; her two earlier books on domestic violence give a coherence to that contentious topic that is a scientific breath of fresh air. Her gift for systematic development of a theoretical research program is demonstrated most recently by her experimental studies extending identity control theory to the emotional responses to injustice. Her honesty in assessing the fit between theory and data serves her well in the development of this volume's extraordinarily complete, careful judgments about the empirical tradition underlying each of the theoretical strands.

I found myself using this book in many ways. It is a readable summary of the most significant theories in the field, so it is useful as a guide for literature review. By including some oft-overlooked connections to literature outside the conventional sociology of emotions, it deepens our intellectual heritage. We all think of Hochschild, Gordon, Cancian, Clark, and Thoits as cultural theorists, but how many of us draw out the intellectual kinship between their work and Rosenberg's theory of identification from the early 1990s? Most reviews of ritual interaction begin and end with Randy Collins; here, those ideas are connected to their historical roots in Durkheim and to kindred spirits like Summer-Effler. In addition, the book can be used as a great way to point students to a research thread. Because it includes the major empirical work on each idea, one can be sure that students get the important structure of a theoretical tradition, including its research application. Rather than including the impressive work on group processes and

emotions as a short footnote, this volume develops those perspectives in two substantial chapters, one on exchange and one on structural views of status and power. The book truly represents the state of the science in the sociology of emotion.

However, the most exciting aspect of the book for me is the fact that it is impossible to read through it without jotting down ideas about linkages that one wants to make in one's own work. I made notes about the special usefulness of Goffman's and Hochschild's ideas in developing definitions of situations. I compiled several places where existing theory spoke to my puzzlement about the role of empathy in producing emotion. I found places in four chapters where models were developed that might explain mixed emotions (another topic of current work). I thought about how reintegrative shaming and disintegrative shaming might be linked to the identity meanings of the sanctioner. In short, the book made me think in new ways. By pointing out the important holes and fertile potentials in our social understanding of emotion, Turner and Stets have paved the way for our next three decades of theoretical progress.

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May 2004