

he posits by fiat what he should have investigated theoretically (i.e., the presumed marxist-functionalist synthesis) and/or demonstrated as causally emerging (i.e., the presumed East-West convergence and the ascendance of the democratic socialist model). Or, about the latter, is he so unaware that the older commitments to a Keynesian basis of economic policy have been shaken and unabashedly abandoned in the 1970s and 1980s by most politicians and academic economists, a development that, at least, makes the social democratic/demo-socialist road more problematic and in need of stronger theoretical and economico-technical elucidation and support? Alas, no awareness of these research issues and the associated difficulties is shown in the book and no support is provided backing the author's claims; with these weaknesses evident and with only eleven—out of a total of eighty-seven—rather general bibliographical entries referring to works that appeared in the decade prior to its publication, how could he complain when his book is criticized as “unexciting” and lacking “excess theoretical content”?

On the matter of etiquette, Sollenius must someday learn that outbreaks such as his, imputing bad faith all too easily to any critic of one's work, are not within the province of the intellectuals' culture of critical discourse.

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Comment on Review of *The New Media*

Craig Calhoun's review of *The New Media: Communication, Research, and Technology* by Ronald E. Rice and associates (CS November 1985, pp. 731–732) is, in my judgment, largely on target. The book presents some mildly interesting empirical findings but is fragmented and atheoretical. However Calhoun's use of his review as the occasion for a series of gratuitous, patronizing, and grossly ill-informed remarks about “the young and ill-formed field of communications” is so far off target that it raises serious questions about both reviewers' responsibilities to readers and Calhoun's familiarity with the field.

Several points require correction. Calhoun opens his review by telling us that “Communication is probably the most important application of computer technology.” He

points out that computers are only a part of the current communications revolution that is bringing about widespread transformations in organizational, economic, and personal relations. However he notes that

sociologists have yet to produce a major study of any aspect of this transformation of technology and social integration. Perhaps there is simply little relationship between social importance and perceived sociological importance.

Sociologist Sherry Turkle's mass-circulated book, *The Second Self: Computers and the Human Spirit* (1984), like her earlier essays on computers and social relations, firmly established the computer culture as an important realm for sociological theorizing and empirical inquiry. Moreover, there is no paucity of sociologically informed studies of the impacts of the new technologies on socialization, work, play, politics, and international relations. At the theoretical and metatheoretical levels, Jürgen Habermas has, of course, been studying the relationship between technology and social integration for some time (as did his mentor, Theodor Adorno, and others associated with the Frankfurt School).

Second, Calhoun charges that scholars in communications “haven't done much better” than sociologists in exploring the social impacts of the new technologies “though they have done rather more at least to document some of the changes.” Calhoun should be advised that scholars in communications have not only documented the changes in books, journals, and international symposiums, they have also developed undergraduate courses and graduate programs devoted to exploration of the social impacts of the new technologies. Theoretical warrants for these studies are secured in the writings of such thinkers as Lewis Mumford, Raymond Williams, Manfred Stanley, Habermas, Jacques Ellul, Marshall McLuhan, Daniel Bell, Herbert Schiller, Ithiel de Sola Pool, Vincent Mosco, and others. A bibliography I compiled for an undergraduate course in the new technologies contains over a hundred book-length entries and is available on request (send an SASE to me at the Communications Studies Department, Muhlenberg and Cedar Crest Colleges, Allentown, PA 18104).

Calhoun's most persistent indictment of communications research centers on what he perceives as its lack of “some sort of theoretical perspective to help [communications re-

searchers] ask more meaningful questions and put together more coherent answers." The schism between "grand theory" and "abstracted empiricism" noted by C. Wright Mills a generation ago (and by P.A. Sorokin before him) continues to obstruct progress in all of the social sciences. However, communications research is no more vulnerable to methodolatry or theoretical obscurantism than is sociological theory. Rice and associates are abstracted empiricists. But communications theory is a rich and richly diffuse enterprise that draws upon classical sociological theory, social psychology, ethnography, linguistics, rhetoric, semiotics, structuralism, phenomenology, Marxism, and critical theory.

Calhoun seems to imagine that communications scholars emerged *ex nihilo*, new Columboes devoid of memory and learning. In spite of the straitjacket of vocationalism that many institutions of higher learning have imposed upon the development of communications programs, resulting in the too frequent recruitment of media practitioners rather than conventionally credentialed academics, many communications scholars do nevertheless still have roots in or affiliations with older disciplines. In fact, many communications scholars embrace the same intellectual ancestors as the readers of *CS*: Durkheim, Dilthey, Weber, Marx, James, Mead, Peirce, Schutz, and others.

Many American sociologists appear to share Calhoun's derogation of communications studies, although their Continental and British counterparts display less disciplinary hubris. The Calhoun syndrome is especially puzzling since American sociologists like Erving Goffman, Todd Gitlin, Gaye Tuchman, Michael Schudson, David Altheide, Sherry Turkle, and others have made significant contributions to communications studies. I wonder whether declining enrollments in sociology courses and expanding enrollments in communications courses are not an important key to the puzzle. In any event, Calhoun's remarks are inaccurate and unfair. They seriously misrepresent the state of communications studies and totally ignore sociologists' contributions to communications.

As a sociologist doing communications research, I am keenly aware of the weaknesses of the new discipline: most notably excessive vocationalism, entrepreneurial overeagerness, methodological asceticism, historical myopia, and relative neglect of rigorous institutional and structural analysis. Sociological critique

and sociological imagination can help correct these weaknesses. Sociological hubris cannot.

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Reply to Jansen

Fortunately, because Sue Curry Jansen's polemic lacks persuasive force, I am already convinced that communications is a field worthy of study and that it receives the attention of fine scholars. Nonetheless, it is a "young and ill-formed field"; Jansen offers no real evidence to the contrary. As an academic specialty, communications studies is being formed by the contributions of scholars from widely divergent backgrounds; almost of necessity it is poorly integrated. This is mostly unfortunate, occasionally exciting, but hardly surprising. No doubt it will change.

I am not sure why my brief remarks on the field of communications studies hurt Jansen's feelings so much. In any case, they hardly evidence "disciplinary hubris." I did not assert the superiority of sociology, but suggested that sociologists have done even less good work on new communications technologies than their colleagues in communications departments.

As to Jansen's more specific points, she seems to be attacking some chimera of her own imagination, not what I said.

1. I did not argue that communications in general goes unstudied, but rather that there are few good studies of the impact of new communications technologies on social life. Jansen mentions none. Sherry Turkle's interesting book has little to say about the use of computers as a communications technology (see also my comments in "Our Computers, Our Selves," *Society*, May 1986). I am well aware that scholars in communications have produced many books, articles, and international symposia; most of those that focus on the new communications technologies are (a) not very good, (b) primarily descriptive, and (c) completely ad hoc in their appropriation of theory. This is not, as I said in my review, the case for all branches of communications studies; language use, political discourse, advertising, newspapers, and many other sub-

jects have received scholarly attention of high quality.

2. I do not see what the fact that "scholars in communications . . . have also developed undergraduate courses and graduate programs" has to do with the question of whether they have done good research on new technologies.

3. Of course various famous people such as those in Jansen's list have contributed theoretical insights that may be applied to the study of communication (though I do not care for the notion of "theoretical warrants" being issued for courses). Some of them also have done significant empirical work in the field, but not on the new communications technologies now being introduced. Habermas, for example, has written very important work on communicative action, technological consciousness, and the general course of rationalization, but he has written little on satellites, computers, or other new communications technologies. More to the point, those who have written about the latter have made little good use of Habermas's work. I asked Habermas a couple years ago whether any of his students or associates had such work under way, and he said not.

4. I am well aware that many communications researchers have roots in existing disciplines and certainly do not believe the field emerged *ex nihilo*. That is one reason why it is hard for the field to come together now. But what does it have to do with the issue at hand that "many communications scholars embrace the same intellectual ancestors as the readers of *CS*?"

5. No doubt tendencies to abstracted empiricism and theoretical esotericism are also inherited in part from other fields. Universities compound the problem by either withholding support from creative new programs or offering it injudiciously to faddish ones. One reason for the feverish outpouring of (often weak) communications research is the attempt to legitimate the field in the eyes of academic administrators and funding agencies. This sheer volume of output impresses Jansen; perhaps it will also impress the relevant deans and funding agencies.

6. I can find no hint in my review of patronizing language comparable to Jansen's opening and penultimate paragraphs.

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Comment on review of *Group Formation in Social Science*

Sociology professors tell me that book reviewers are often unable to look at what someone else tries to do, so preoccupied are they with their own problematics. After reading Roscoe Hinkle's review of Stephen Murray's *Group Formation in Social Science* (*CS*, January 1986, p. 119) I believe this. The book is about discontinuities, about social factors distinguishing groups that bill themselves as "revolutionary" from groups that stress building on previous traditions. Only in a final parenthesis does Hinkle provide any indication that his own interest in intergenerational continuities is not shared by the author of the book reviewed, whom he has faulted for not sharing the reviewer's interests in epistemological comparisons of widely diffused social science perspectives.

Even if substituting a reviewer's problematic for the problematic of the work reviewed is common, such a practice serves only the ego of reviewers and, by keeping readers from finding out what books are about, disserves sociology. In this case, readers should know that in addition to the functionalist part of the theory Hinkle likes and reports, the novelty of the book reviewed is to explain the small-group dynamics of scientific "revolutions." Also, they should know that the research included interviews, a questionnaire and archival research, network analysis of acknowledgments, citation analysis, and genuine participant observation, as well as Hinkle's "method" of reading published literature.

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Response to Chen

Chen's effort to claim foul (for Murray) in the comment on my review of *Group Formation in Social Science* is devoid of substantial merit:

1. Contrary to Chen's insistence, the Murray volume is not simply about discontinuities. Murray's own problem statement in chapter 1 indicates a concern with both continuities and discontinuities. Only in chapter 12 does attention turn prevalingly to discontinuities and especially those lying outside of anthropological linguistics and broadly in the domain of the social sciences.