

that go on *inside* individuals, the real dangers of manipulation by the therapeutic ethos become visible. What Furedi does not see is the possibility that the therapeutic might provide a language to interrogate and critique such individualized and oppressive thinking.

I enjoyed this book, and found it compulsive reading. I have an instinctive sympathy with the author's thesis that therapeutic culture, far from being enlightened and liberating, is more likely to impose a new conformity through the management of emotion. But I found the sociological analysis, ultimately, limiting. The therapeutic turn is obviously here to stay, so the most challenging question that faces us is whether, and how, we might harness it towards creative and liberating outcomes. But perhaps that is too therapeutic a question.

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### OUR WORLD, OUR LIVES

*The power of identity*, second edition. Manuel Castells, 2004. Oxford: Blackwell; ISBN 1405107138, 537 pp. £17.99.

*The power of identity* is the second in the trilogy *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, first published to much acclaim during 1996–98, and currently being re-issued as a new edition. The book opens with a Maya Angelou poem written for the inauguration of Bill Clinton in 1993, extolling the virtue of living and actively shaping our destiny, and ends with a 10-page treatise upon the nature of social change in what Castells terms 'network society'. The 400-plus pages in between confirm Castells's position as a foremost authority on contemporary society, and the role of individuals and agencies within it.

This is not, as the author himself acknowledges, 'a book about books' (p. 2), but one of grand ideas, and in that approach Castells echoes the work of other heavyweight contemporary social theorists such as Beck, Giddens and Touraine, whose influences are all acknowledged. Potential readers interested in a detailed engagement with key thinkers, or what Castells terms 'bibliography', are advised to 'consult the many good textbooks on each matter' tackled (p. 3) instead, and I would concur. What this text does provide is a cogent analysis of the relationship between individual actors and political processes – both global and local – as mediated through technology, national and supra-national institutions and personal and collective identities.

Castells has not updated references or data in this volume, his justification being that the book's purpose is 'analytical, not documentary' (p. xvi), but I think this is a shame nonetheless, since doing so would allow him to engage with developments in these spheres since the turn of the millennium. Likewise, two of the six chapters ('Patriarchalism' and 'The environmental movement') remain unchanged from the first edition, which could also have been rectified, even if rewrites were intentionally minimal. Castells suggests that he does not wish to be 'running after events for the rest of my life' (p. xvi), a sentiment with which we can perhaps empathize, but I feel a revision would be worthwhile to further strengthen what is an impressive discourse on contemporary world affairs.

Where this edition has been updated to consider, for instance, the growing influence since 1997 of environmental or religious fundamentalism upon personal, national and international politics, the result is powerful. For instance, Chapter 2 highlights the impact of globalization and informationalization via 'networks of wealth, technology and power' (p. 72) in transforming the world and its inhabitants. It offers an impressive breadth of empirical data covering five diverse movements opposing the US-dominated New World Order – Mexico's Zapatista guerrillas, the American Militia movement, Al-Qaeda, the Japanese Aum Shinrikyo cult and western anti-globalization protestors. In so doing, Castells mounts a forceful argument for considering these seemingly disparate social movements similarly. That is, as 'defensive movements built around the trenches of resistance from specific identities and/or specific interests' (p. 73). At the time of writing this review in March 2004, with the anti-western movements in both Afghanistan and Iraq showing little sign of being quelled, and the recent bombing of trains packed with commuters in Madrid, all seemingly under the aegis of Al-Qaeda, one might dispute Castells's assertion that the environmental lobby is the most influential social or political movement of our time.

Of general interest to the reader of *Auto/Biography* would be the opening chapter, 'Identity and meaning in the network society'. Here, Castells stresses the need to distinguish an individual's identity from their social role(s). Drawing upon Calhoun (1994), he characterizes identity as 'the process of construction of meaning on the basis of a cultural attribute' (p. 6). For Castells, the very plurality of contemporary identities causes stress and contradiction in both (re)presentation of the self and social action. Roles (for example, 'father', 'university lecturer' or 'football fan') are framed by norms in turn given by social structures. Meanwhile, identities 'are sources of meaning for the actors themselves, and by themselves' (p. 7), and

are generally stronger than roles due to processes of internalization, self-construction and individuation (Giddens, 1991). At its simplest, 'identities organize the meaning, while roles organize the function' (p. 7). But it is perhaps collective rather than individual identity/ies that is/are of greatest interest to Castells in the book, and their use as tools to interrogate issues including the anti-New World Order social movements discussed above.

This is a powerful and insightful book that adds to Castells's reputation as one of the foremost social theorists writing today, and it offers something of interest to specialist and general reader alike.

## REFERENCES

- Calhoun, C. 1994: *Social theory and the politics of identity*. Oxford: Blackwell.  
 Giddens, A. 1991: *Modernity and self-identity: self and society in the late modern age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

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## GETTING STARTED

*Studying at university: how to adapt successfully to college life*. G.W. Bernard, 2003. London: Routledge; ISBN 0 415 30312 5 paper, 132 pp. £9.99.

As I started reading *Studying at university*, I wondered whether it could live up to its billing as an 'essential guide for anyone wanting to know how they can make the very best of their university experience'. Further, would I, as a long serving lecturer, make more of my past and present university experience having consulted this 'down-to-earth' guide? Well, the answer was 'yes' on both counts. But to be sure I consulted two potential consumers of this study guide: one my 17-year-old nephew, whom I had recently been helping to complete his UCAS form, and my brother-in-law (his father), who teaches at a large mixed comprehensive in southern England, where he is in charge of advising sixth formers about their UCAS applications. Their verdict was resoundingly positive: the text was deemed very informative and the easy, accessible style was welcomed. Indeed, it will now be recommended reading for all sixth formers and their parents and copies will be added to the school library forthwith. Their one reservation was that at first glance it may look a little dry, but they pointed out that on closer scrutiny it was not.