

in an academic contest it only goes so far. Such an ostensibly methodical usage of ‘personal lives’ only works to the extent that it convinces people who were already likely to share these views; others may simply reject them as idiosyncratic, and all are likely to eventually become immune to their persuasive powers. The effectiveness of the authors’ implementation of life narrative methodology would be greatly enhanced by a more conscious and theoretically reflexive treatment of the form, which readers of this journal will know has been the object of considerable scholarly labour and debate, especially over the last quarter century.

Overall, I enjoyed this book and would recommend it. I have no doubt that in response to students’ input, subsequent editions of the text will overcome some of these theoretical oversights, making it an even better read.

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#### **INTERCONNECTIONS OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL INTERACTION**

*States of knowledge: the co-production of science and social order.* S. Jasanoff, editor, 2004. London: Routledge; ISBN 041533361X, 317 pp., £70.00 cloth.

*States of knowledge* seeks to explore the relationship between scientific knowledge, culture and political power through a series of essays that utilize knowledge as a resource. The book’s main organizing principle is that of co-production – that the natural and social orders work together to produce one another; and that the way we understand the world and choose to live in it are interconnected. The book examines the potential of the integration of science, power and culture and how this can extend the language of the social sciences, whilst highlighting the importance of science and technology studies to ‘modern’ life.

Science and technology constantly impact upon human interaction and Jasanoff uses the Y2K millennium bug and the collapse of the World Trade Center towers in New York on 11 September 2001 to illustrate this. She then goes on to further demonstrate that though science and technology impact upon human relations, humankind has yet to master nature and the AIDs epidemic, global climate change, ageing and infertility are amongst her examples of the social order’s powerlessness against nature. What are the responses to this? How do we analyse these responses? The book claims that the social sciences do not – at present – have the tools to explain these interactions and: ‘Conversations between S&TS and

neighbouring fields about the links between knowledge, culture and power are therefore urgently needed and could be enormously fruitful' (p. 2).

The book is divided into 14 chapters; the first two, and the last (in the form of an afterword) are by the editor Jasanoff, the other eleven chapters are by various authors on a diversity of subjects, which are roughly grouped into the following categories: chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 investigate co-production and the environment, exploring how environmental changes and global connections use and produce new knowledge; chapters 7, 8, 9 and 10 investigate co-production and the development and interplay of human interaction with the life sciences, paying particular attention to research communities; chapters 11, 12 and 13 are more diverse in their focus but centre upon conflicts within and between states and institutions and the particular role of science and technology through periods of social and political change.

The book is an interesting and important contribution to the analysis of how science and technology can interact with the social sciences and succeeds in demonstrating ways in which the different disciplines can combine and utilize their knowledge. However, the book implies that social science has been less than rigorous in its examination of the links between scientific knowledge, power and culture, and has sought to keep itself separate from other disciplines. Though many social scientists hold the view that progress, science, technological development and the acquisition of knowledge do not necessarily equate to a rational and enlightened social order, this should not be confused with a lack of understanding of or analysis of the implications of scientific endeavour and technological progress. Indeed social science in its postmodern form acknowledges the many disasters that progress, science and technology have made possible in the 'modern' world and concedes that no one answer exists to any problem, thus the discipline is open to working with others and the book overstates any reticence for opening and keeping open the lines of communication.

*States of knowledge* does bring this interconnectedness of science, technology and social interaction up to date with a collection of essays that are – on the whole – approachable, interesting and accessible. The book would possibly be of use to undergraduate students, though it is more likely that postgraduate students, analysts and researchers would find this book useful.

The book's strength lies in its diverse range of essays. For example, Miller illustrates the uncertainties that exist between levels of authority within and between national and international organizations. Miller analyses global climate change to demonstrate a need for co-operation between states through case-study research of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Thompson examines the shift in status of the African elephant from 'endangered' to 'manageable' through co-ordinated global effort and a sharing of knowledge to make a similar point. Continuous dialogue over a sustained period of time between global organizations, non-government organizations (NGOs) and the different African states, which took into account culture, rights (human and animal) and sustainability, forged a 'liveable' consensus surrounding the trade in African elephants.

Dear's analysis of 'authority, knowledge and expertise in the seventeenth century' demonstrates how skill, expertise and authority are not static but constantly in flux throughout history and are influenced by culture. Dear examines the relationship that exists between experience, expertise, knowledge and skill and how these links come to lend legitimacy to the authority of the time. Such diversity makes the book an interesting and challenging read. For anyone interested in the areas of science, technology, the production of knowledge, social organization and how they can impact on lives, *States of knowledge* will prove to be an interesting and thought-provoking resource.

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