Victims of Sociology

The Woman Question in Classical Sociological Theory. TERRY R. KANDAL. University Presses of Florida, Gainesville, 1988. xx, 341 pp. Paper, $19.50.

The principal aim of this lively and readable book is to provide an examination of the place of women in the sociological systems of the "classical" theorists. The selection of thinkers the author considers here is generous; it includes the obvious choices—Comte, Spencer, Durkheim, Weber, Parsons—but also many lesser figures sometimes given short shrift in standard treatments of the classics: Mill, Pareto, Michels, de Tocqueville, Mannheim, Simmel, Tönnies, and C. Wright Mills. Terry Kandal performs his task with energy and insight. He effectively analyzes the role women play in the major works of the sociological tradition such as Comte's *System of Positive Polity* (1851), Durkheim's *Suicide* (1897), Spencer's *The Study of Sociology* (1873), and Tönnies's *Community and Society* (1887). But he also tracks down more focused treatments of the "woman question" in little-known essays or books written by these thinkers that have been overlooked previously, for instance, Michels's interesting study, *Sexual Ethics* (1911), and some of the fascinating semijournalistic pieces of Simmel.

Kandal prefaces his analyses with brief histories of the feminist movements in each European nation and the United States. These historical sketches vary widely in quality and depth of analysis, the best being the story of the multivalent German feminist movement, which reflected the whole spectrum of feminist opinion from liberal reformism to revolutionary militance. Kandal appears to want these historical introductions to serve as counterpoints to the predictably conservative, not to say sexist, portraits of woman's "nature" expressed by the classical theorists, in order to demonstrate that women may be less easily pigeonholed in reality than sociological schemata might have it. Kandal sympathizes in these narratives with radical or socialist varieties of feminism and in general is critical of the bourgeois feminist movements that did not formulate root-and-branch critiques of the patriarchal family or capitalist society.

It is this radical variant of feminist theory that informs the greater part of his analysis, summed up in the question he poses at the outset of his concluding chapter: "From a feminist perspective, how good are the classical theorists?" One might reasonably expect that an analysis based on such a question would yield results that would fully satisfy neither historians of sociology seeking explanations for the sexist orientations of classical theory nor sociologists hoping to understand how women figured in the overall system of any single theorist, and in general that expectation will likely be fulfilled.

Despite his own methodological injunction in favor of a more historically informed (and less functionalist) sociology of women, Kandal's own account of the development of sociological theory is not distinguished by a high degree of historical sophistication. He does not make very effective use of either biographical detail or general intellectual context to advance compelling explanations for antifeminist sociological theory, and he is sufficiently uninformed on the history of biology and physiological psychology that he often misrepresents the actual relationship of biological and social causation in the systems of many of the thinkers he discusses. This problem is nowhere more evident than in his many discussions of "functionalism," where the crucial question of whether woman's (and man's) nature is biologically determined or a product of a ramifying division of labor is never clearly addressed.

Sociologists, on the other hand, may conclude that by concentrating so closely on the "woman question" Kandal risks distorting how women and women's social roles articulate with a classic theorist's whole sociological *oeuvre*. This problem might prove to be more troubling in the short analyses Kandal devotes to Comte, Pareto, Michels, and Parsons than in the lengthier sections on Simmel, Spencer, and especially Weber, where his treatment of the overall architecture of their thought is more assured.

Despite these particular caveats, Kandal's survey of the "woman question" responds to a distinct need in the sociological tradition to come to terms with the lamentable inability of the founding fathers of the discipline to meet their own standards for an objective and value-free science of society. Kandal rightly indicts them for their tendency to divide the human and social world into a subjective, emotional, and "feminine" half and an objective, rational, "masculine" half and then to hypostatize the latter into a positivistic sociological method that confirms and justifies the bifurcation.

In his conclusion Kandal argues that sociological theory must renew itself by incorporating Marxist, Freudian, and "historical" perspectives and by employing the empathetic "insider knowledge" method employed by Simmel to create a "sociology that includes both sexes." Such pleas have been made previously on behalf of other victims of positivist social science: the poor, ethnic minorities, and colonized peoples. The merit of Kandal's book is to have exposed decisively the historic male sociological bias against a class of victims that constitutes half the human species.

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An Early Anthropologist

A Stranger in Her Native Land. Alice Fletcher and the American Indians. JOAN MARK. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1989. xx, 428 pp., illus. $35; paper, $16.95. Women in the West.

As an addition to the University of Nebraska Press series on Women in the West, this book has a ready readership in the fields of women's studies and western history, but it deserves a wider audience. It is a revealing, meticulously researched contribution to the history of anthropology, documenting the era dominated by F. W. Putnam, John Wesley Powell, F. W. Hodge, and others whose names as founders of American anthropology were to be overshadowed by those of Franz Boas, Alfred Kroeber, Robert Lowie, and others of their generation. Finally, the book discloses that scientists' all too human foibles not only make fascinating reading but are significant to historical understanding.

Fletcher was born in 1838, but her career as an anthropologist did not begin until she was about 40. Her professional life (she died in 1923) spanned the development of anthropology from an enterprise of largely self-trained archeologists and ethnologists whose home base was in museums into an academic discipline requiring formal degrees.

Mark writes sensitively and in an engaging style about Fletcher's enigmatic, touching, and exasperating personal traits underlying a very publicly oriented life. It was her public life as an anthropologist for which

Fletcher wished to be remembered. Her early years are only scantily known, and she distroyed her papers relating to her life before she took up anthropology. Besides ferreting out scattered clues in trying to understand Fletcher, Mark acknowledges a debt to Gertrude Stein, who felt people revealed themselves through their "repeatings." The themes of "struggle" and being "alone in the world" were recurrent in Fletcher's letters, diary, and even some publications. The title of the book also reflects Fletcher's self-image, coming from a statement quoted as she had directed on the bronze plaque marking the placement of her ashes in the patio of the Art Museum she helped to establish in Santa Fe: "Living with my Indian friends I found I was a stranger in my native land."

Fletcher's first interest was in organizations devoted to the "woman question." When she began anthropological study among the Omaha, her concern with social reform was transferred to "the Indian question" and lobbying for the allotment policy that late in her career she conceded was too abrupt and sweeping to succeed as intended. As she matured anthropologically along with the discipline itself, Fletcher embraced a sense of cultural relativism and devotion to the careful gathering of facts, including statistical data, for comparative purposes. She was a respected peer among the people who helped to shape the beginnings of American anthropology. In her final years new ideas and new people passed her by, but her legacies of scholarly writing and "struggles" in the interests of anthropology remain.

In her study *Four Anthropologists*, (Neale Watson, 1980) Mark published a "sex-blind" account of Fletcher's work, but as she developed this full-fledged biography she became increasingly aware of the relevance of Fletcher's sex in the male-dominated science and society of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Of particular interest are the strong, supportive female network Fletcher could turn to and the importance of highly personalized philanthropy on the part of wealthy women in the funding of scientists generally.

Fletcher also was profoundly influenced by two men, Putnam, who introduced her to anthropology and to whom she turned for guidance long after she was professionally established, and Francis La Flesche, an Omaha Indian 17 years her junior, who began his career in anthropology as her interpreter and assistant. Fletcher and La Flesche soon defined the pleasure they found in each other's company as a loving relationship of mother and son. Plans for legal adoption were forestalled because La Flesche would have been required to take Fletcher's name, which neither wanted. La Flesche lived in Fletcher's home in Washington, D.C., also shared for several years with Fletcher's erstwhile field assistant E. Jane Gay (see Gay's *With the Nez Perces: Alice Fletcher in the Field, 1889–1892*, University of Nebraska Press, 1983).

Despite gossip about a romantic liaison between Fletcher and La Flesche, fueled by the early breakup of his marriage and Gay's departure to care for an ailing relative, the relationship appears to have been of the kind that might have evoked comment about apron strings had they been actually related. The discussion of their collaborative research, in which La Flesche persisted in gaining recognition as an anthropologist in his own right, straining the relationship until Fletcher accepted his intellectual independence, is an added bonus of the book, which ends with La Flesche's career until his death in 1932.

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Marine Ecosystems

Continental Shelves. H. POSTMA and J. J. ZIJLSTRA, Eds. Elsevier, New York, 1988. x, 421 pp., illus. \$189.50. Ecosystems of the World, vol. 27.

Continental shelves are the relatively shallow (generally less than 200 meters deep) and slightly inclined underwater portions of continental masses extending from the shoreline to the comparatively steeper continental slope. Spanning all climatic regimes on earth, they also are diverse in width (to 1500 kilometers), depth (to 550 meters), and bottom topography. Interest in shelf regions can be traced historically to their substantial living resources, which now, from 7% of the ocean's surface area, contribute approximately 90% of world fisheries yield. This interest has been heightened and broadened in recent years by numerous environmental concerns, including climatic and direct anthropogenic influences. Thus *Continental Shelves* addresses a timely topic. The biological productivity of shelves and the overlying "shelf seas" is influenced by atmospheric, oceanic, and terrestrial inputs and by tidal energy, and this volume presents an overview of these subjects and a close look at several systems as examples.

The editors provide a brief and useful introduction. This is followed by a chapter devoted to physical and chemical oceanographic aspects and one on the geology of shelves. The authors have done an excellent job of presenting these subjects in a manner that will be useful to a biologically inclined readership. I found only a few topics that might have been further developed in light of current emphases in biological work. These include turbulence and dispersion (both horizontal and vertical), wind stress and upwelling rates, cross-frontal exchange, eddies, and convergence-divergence processes.

The remaining eight chapters deal primarily with biological properties. The first three characterize the plankton, benthic fauna, and fish populations and related fisheries. These chapters, like the earlier ones, provide good overviews with an assortment of specific examples; generally, they have diverse geographical representation. Enough is said about methods of data collection to give the reader an understanding of the types of statements and comparisons made. The chapter on fish and fisheries emphasizes commercially harvested species and is subtitled "their perturbations, natural and man-induced." The reader should not be surprised to encounter considerably more philosophy and speculation here than in other chapters, owing to a number of characteristics of fisheries data collections as well as to the fishes' trophic positions. This chapter and the one following, on energy flow in marine ecosystems, introduce the reader to some of the broader challenges facing our understanding of continental shelf ecosystems.

The final four chapters (40% of the volume) describe specific shelf systems: the Barents Sea, the North Sea, the eastern United States continental shelf, and the Gulf of Thailand. Considerable interdisciplinary work has been done in the first three systems, and this is reflected in the chapters, which begin by addressing physical oceanography and proceed through the trophic system to fish and fisheries. Discussion of the Gulf of Thailand is restricted mostly to harvestable resources. Since no tropical shelf system seems to have been studied in as much detail as the temperate and subarctic ones, a chapter describing characteristics and rates from a variety of tropical studies would have been illuminating. Also missing from this group of chapters is a narrow continental shelf, which might have been represented by the well-studied west coast of the United States. Antarctic shelf ecosystem studies were in their infancy at the time the volume was compiled, so the absence of a chapter on this region is understandable.

In general, the book is nicely illustrated and printed and reflects the thinking of a number of noted scientists. Its price may restrict it to institutional collections, but there it should prove useful to students,