BOOK REVIEWS

Marx on Suicide. Edited and with introductions by Eric A. Plaut and Kevin Anderson. Translated by Eric A. Plaut, Gabrielle Edgcomb and Kevin Anderson. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1999.

Reviewed by Murray E.G. Smith.

Marx on Suicide is an unusual work, with an arguably misleading title. The core of the book is an essay that Karl Marx published in 1846 entitled "Peuchet on Suicide," which consists of a four-paragraph introductory note by Marx and an edited and abridged translation of a discussion of suicide by the French police administrator, economist and statistician Jacques Peuchet (1758–1830). A comparision of Marx's German translation with the French original reveals that Marx took some considerable liberties with Peuchet's text. Not only did he add several thoughts of his own to the latter; he also altered the meaning of at least one passage written by Peuchet. While this raises questions about Marx's ethics as a translator, it also indicates that Marx sought to use the text as a vehicle for expounding his own ideas. Since Marx was never again to return to the subject, the editors seem justified in treating Marx's version of the Peuchet text as the closest thing we have to an exposition of Marx's own views on suicide.

The editors have done an exhaustive and exemplary job in presenting all of the materials required for a meticulous scholarly appraisal of the significance of Marx's "Peuchet on Suicide." The volume contains the editors' own annotated English translation of the latter (31 pages), as well as Marx's abridged and altered German translation of Peuchet (25 pages) and the original French text by Peuchet, "Du Suicide et de ses causes" (44 pages). In addition, the editors have provided two thoughtful and thought-provoking introductory essays which together pose most of the theoretical and scholarly issues that arise from a reading of "Peuchet on Suicide." Taken as a whole, the volume is an excellent piece of scholarship, even though for many English speakers it probably provides much more than is pedagogically useful (specifically, the German and French texts that comprise about half of the book).

The pedagogical utility of the book should be apparent to anyone who teaches social theory. Not only does it afford the opportunity to compare and contrast the theoretical and methodological commitments of Marx with other, more influential writers on suicide (in particular Emile Durkheim and Sigmund Freud), but it also opens a new window on Marx's views on gender. Of the four case studies of suicide that Marx highlights, three concern women. Moreover, all three of these cases depict the oppression of women within the bourgeois

family. Marx's interest in the social conditions that would compel three relatively privileged women to end their own lives is palpable in this work and refutes the ignorant, but widely-accepted notion that Marx was concerned only with issues pertaining directly to "class." In his introductory essay, Kevin Anderson reminds us that Marx's ultimate goal was human liberation and that his critique of bourgeois society was concerned with the alienating, oppressive and stultifying conditions visited upon all members of that society. To be sure, only the working class has the consistent historical interest, strategic location and politico-organizational capacity to dissolve capitalist society and end its many depredations. However, this did not mean that for Marx wage labourers were the only victims of bourgeois social relations and their attendant institutional forms. As Marx put it in his introductory note, Peuchet's discussion "may show the extent to which it is the conceit of the benevolent bourgeoisie that the only issues are providing bread and some education to the proletariat, as if only the workers suffer from present social conditions but that, in general, this is the best of all possible worlds" (p. 45).

Peuchet's text serves Marx's purpose well in exposing the dehumanization and gratuitous cruelties to which individuals are subjected by modern "family life" and the bourgeois morality that supports it. In the first case study, a young woman spends the night with her fiancé, whom she is to marry the following day. When her parents discover that she has lost her virginity, they berate her furiously and enlist their neighbours in publicly humiliating her. She drowns herself in the Seine on the very day she is to be married. Marx interjects his own comment into his translation, part of which reads: "Those who are most cowardly, who are least capable of resistance themselves, become unyielding as soon as they can exert absolute parental authority" (p. 53).

The second case study centres on spousal abuse. A mentally-unstable and physically deformed husband subjects his younger wife to daily jealous tirades and other forms of verbal abuse, sometimes leading to sexual assault. Before those sympathetic to her situation can intervene, the young woman drowns herself in the Seine. Marx remarks that the "unfortunate woman was condemned to unbearable slavery and [her husband] exercised his slaveholding rights, supported by the civil code and the right of property" (p. 57).

The third case study raises the issue of abortion rights. A young woman has an affair with her aunt's banker husband and becomes pregnant. She signals to a doctor that she will commit suicide unless she obtains an abortion. The doctor refuses to help her and later experiences guilt after the eighteen-year-old drowns herself.

In the final case study cited by Marx, a member of the Royal Guard is laid off suddenly from his job due to cutbacks. Unable to find other employment, he commits suicide so as to avoid living on as a "burden" to his now-destitute family.

Peuchet himself provides several comments that complement Marx's socialist conviction that only "a total reform of the organization of our current soci-

ety" (p. 50) could significantly reduce the incidence of suicide. These include: "The revolution did not topple all tyrannies. The evil which one blames on arbitrary forces exists in families, where it causes crises, analogous to those of revolutions" (pp. 50–51). And further: "Suicide is only one of the thousand and one symptoms of the general social struggle ever fought out on new ground" (p. 51).

Though interesting in its own right, Marx's "Peuchet on Suicide" provides only a few insights into the distinctive character of Marx's social theory. Fortunately, the editors have provided two excellent introductory essays that serve to render explicit what is only implicit in Marx's text. Sociologist Kevin Anderson offers a gem of an essay entitled "Marx on Suicide in the Context of his Other Writings on Alienation and Gender," in which he provides a highly readable and insightful introduction to Marx's "revolutionary humanism," some basic concepts of historical materialism, and Marx's treatment of gender issues ranging from his youthful writings to the *Ethnological Notebooks.* Even when he errs (for example, when he implies that Marx affirmed the "continuing importance of idealism for a revolutionary outlook"), Anderson's discussion is both instructive and provocative. His comparative discussion of Marx and Durkheim will be especially welcome to sociologists concerned with their different treatments of issues pertaining to gender and the family. Of particular interest is Anderson's point that Marx and Peuchet chose to focus on a form of suicide that Durkheim regarded as relatively unimportant, but which afflicts women disproportionately. This is the "fatalistic" form of suicide which Durkheim says derives from "excessive regulation" and which involves "persons with futures pitilessly blocked and passions violently choked by oppressive discipline."

Eric A. Plaut offers a brief essay entitled "Marx on Suicide in the Context of Other Views of Suicide and of his Life," in which he addresses Marx's view of suicide from three standpoints: "its relationship to the literature on suicide, the issue of suicide in the Marx family, and the connection between these two and Marx's worldview." The most interesting part of this discussion, in my opinion, is his comparison of Marx's views to those of Freud and Durkheim. Plaut argues that in both content and form Marx's essay "stands halfway" between the psychologistic account of suicide offered by Freud and the sociologistic account given by Durkheim. Like Freud, Marx seems to be interested in the proximate *individual* motivations and experiences that result in suicides, and he uses case studies to reveal these. For Marx, alienation is something that is experienced subjectively by individuals, and, accordingly, it is a phenomenon with potent psychological implications. On the other hand, Marx draws close to Durkheim when he identifies the evils of existing society as the "causative factor" in suicide. Moreover, although he does not comment on it, Marx reproduces one of Peuchet's statistical tables on suicides in Paris for the year 1824, a table which foreshadows Durkheim's famous empirical analysis of suicide statistics later in the century.

What is perhaps contestable in Plaut's discussion is his suggestion that while alienation is caused by society, it is only a "characteristic of individuals." The implication is that human alienation finds no expression at the supraindividual level. But it is precisely the burden of Marx's value-theoretic critique of capitalist society that generalized commodity production results in the *collective alienation* of the human species from an authentic human praxis. Among the consequences of this collective alienation are the oppressive and alienating conditions that may lead, in certain individual cases, to the decision to take one's own life.

Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race, by Matthew Frye Jacobson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998. 338 pp.).

Reviewed by Stacy K. McGoldrick.

Matthew Frye Jacobson, in his book *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*, seeks to trace the lineage of racial designations around "whiteness" in the United States. Jacobson argues that historians have underestimated the use of "race" as a method of distinction between Irish, Italians, slaves, Jews, etc., during the 1840–1924 period. Those writing or speaking about the Italian "race" during that time did not mean "ethnicity," as many historians have argued, but meant to discuss, for example, the Italian race as a race distinct from other races, white and black. Jacobson starts from the presumption that groups and peoples have been racialized and de-racialized throughout American history and tries to trace when and where this process occurred. In particular he looks at how whites have moved back and forth between a pan-whiteness (constructed as superior to black) and variations of whiteness (each still superior to black).

Jacobson begins with an observation. The 1790 naturalization law limited citizenship to "free white persons," a simple, clear concept denoting a world of whites and nonwhites. In contrast the 1924 Immigration Act distinguished and created quotas around all kinds of variations of whiteness: Greeks, Italians, Poles, Russians and many others. Following this idea back to anti-immigration sentiment and eugenics, Jacobson argues that between 1840 and its "high-water mark" in 1924, whites were divided up into distinct races who were thought to be more and less civilized and worthy of citizenship rights. However, all of these white races were still conceived as more worthy than African-Americans, and used the contrast between themselves and blacks to argue their cases for inclusion in whiteness. Jacobson illustrates this point well in describing Japanese, Chinese, and Indian men who went to court to argue for their inclusion in white citizenship. The boundaries around whiteness were contentious, and it is through these efforts to police those boundaries that the stretched and confused logic of race and racism is demonstrated. There are three periods in Jacobson's

typology: 1790–1840, a period of white vs. black dualism; 1840–1924, when whiteness was further divided into a variety of white races; and 1924–1960's when whiteness was again monolithic and distinguished only from blackness.

Jacobson uses an impressive array of sources to further his argument. His use of novels, movies, newspapers, journals, court documents, and congressional debate demonstrates changing meanings and various distinctions through time. Jacobson explains these shifts in terms of historic forces (immigration, World Wars I and II), intellectual projects (scientific racism, eugenics, and the post-WWII denouncing of anti-Semitism), cultural production (novels and movies around whiteness and race like *The Jazz Singer*) and government processes (court decisions and use of precedents, congressional debate). Through all these sources the reader gets the sense of a movement in cultural sensibility toward the idea of a variety of European races and away from it again toward a single conception of white or "Caucasian" race. Jacobson never reduces this movement to something consensual or even coherent, but addresses continually the debates between ideas, as well as the persistence of old ideas that hang on in the next sensibility. When Jacobson stops to analyze a particular source in detail, like *The Jazz Singer* or George Schuyler's *Black No More*, his lucid and aggressive analysis makes for fascinating reading and goes far to promote his argument about sea-changes in attitudes towards the constitution of whiteness. This work is not only about tracing ideas about whiteness, but about the interplay between scientific, cultural and governmental discourses in shaping each other as well as popular conceptions around race.

However, use of such a variety of sources leads to some methodological questions that are never addressed in the work. For example, Jacobson never makes clear the impact of a particular source during the time of its appearance. Communist party newsletters and the literary journal *Common Ground* are given considerable space and while this analysis is fascinating, Jacobson does not gauge the actual reach of such publications. Compare these with, for example, the film *Birth of a Nation*, a racist romanticization of the Ku Klux Klan seen by hundreds of thousands of people. The reader has the impression that all sources carry equal weight, at least in the eyes of Jacobson, and therefore does not quite trust the characterizations he presents.

Such a large number of sources also begs the question of why some events are examined and others not. Most strikingly, Jacobson never takes on the issue of Jacksonian politics in his analysis of the pre-1840 period of monolithic whiteness. It seems obvious that changes in suffrage away from land holding and towards white status (and the accompanying disenfranchisement of free blacks) and Jackson's white-man populism had a lot to do with this, but changes in voting rights and presidential politics are not discussed.

Besides the question of what may be missing from the story, this lack of prioritizing leads to theoretical problems as well. It is never clear which event—the cultural, intellectual, historic, or governmental—is affecting which opinion or outcome. Although Jacobson says he wants to trace the idea of whiteness

and never claims to explain it, and the various angles do give the reader a sense of a general movement within popular opinion that Jacobson is concerned with, it is still unsatisfying to be left wondering, "but why?" Jacobson does present an argument around whiteness saying "The contending forces that have fashioned and refashioned whiteness in the United States across time, I argue, are capitalism (with its insatiable appetite for cheap labor) and republicanism (with its imperative of responsible citizenship)." (1998: 13). However, he does not come back to this point enough through the course of the work to fully develop the argument.

Because he does not come back to the interconnectedness between race and class often enough, Jacobson misses the opportunity to prioritize his argument and address the question of why these changes in opinion occurred. When Jacobson discusses immigration to the United States in the mid 19th century he connects it to both cheap labor and the sense that those who are worthy of being cheap labor may not be worthy of citizenship, and thus may not be worthy of whiteness (1988: 41–43), but then drops this argument, only picking it up again in his discussion of the American communist party. Although he addresses the need for cheap labor, he does not discuss, for example, the impact of the Great Migration on working-class politics or the congealing of whiteness in relation only to blacks. This is unfortunate because there is some hinting of the intimacy between race and class. For example, chapter seven, "Naturalization and the Courts" (1998: 223–245) outlines cases of men who occupied the murky area between whiteness and nonwhiteness at the end of the 19th century, and their cases for naturalization seemed to rely heavily on their class status. Their class (if nothing else, their ability to pay for court costs) helps along their argument that they should be included in "whiteness." This is not the entirety of their argument, but the relationship between upstanding potential citizen—whiteness—and class actor is clear. This could suggest that part of what kept immigrants from full white status during the 19th century was their position as cheap labor.

Jacobsen *does* critique what he sees as race-essentializing arguments in authors such as David Roediger and Theodore Allen, and were he to follow this line of argument further it might take him away from his fascinating analyses of intellectual projects and cultural artifacts. However, Jacobsen's chronology of white races and their coalescence around a period of industrialization and cheap labor points to this joint status of "cheap labor" and "whiteness" as a hard sell. Jacobsen raises the issue, but not in the careful and systematic way that it deserves as a counterpoint to Roediger and Allen.

Despite this missed opportunity, to his credit, Jacobson does not wish to use his research to further any sophomoric effort to dig up oppression for the purposes of negating responsibility for white privilege. He is quite explicit throughout the book that this racializing and deracializing of varieties of whiteness had everything to do with continuing racism toward African Americans and about contested areas of white privilege as opposed to comparisons between these

groups of whites and the experiences of African Americans. Jacobson takes on this issue directly in the beginning and the epilogue of the book, and argues quite well that understanding debates around inclusion into whiteness and varieties of white races not only helps to explain why some whites would seek to deny contemporary white privilege or at least the lineage of colonialism and slavery—"I'm not white, I'm Italian"—but also explains why that argument is so problematic. Jacobson contributes to "whiteness studies" without falling into its major pitfalls (with the exception of a lack of serious consideration of class). Jacobson's arguments are never reductive, and he takes on with considerable dexterity the complexity of whiteness and blackness during the time-line of his study. I would recommend this book, but to be read in a series with other histories of the time, particularly those around industrialization, class, and presidential politics.

Painting By Numbers: Komar and Melamid's Scientific Guide to Art, edited by JoAnn Wypijewski. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999.

Reviewed by James Dickinson.

A book this interesting requires a few preliminaries. In a market economy producers typically spend a great deal of time and money finding out about consumer preferences. Indeed, they must. As Marx's distinction between exchange value and use value makes clear, capital accumulation on the basis of commodity production is only possible so long the economy produces utilities, things ultimately of use to someone. Thus we find at the bedside of capitalism an attending physician in the form of market research. Using surveys, focus groups, product trials, and the like, producers endeavor to find out what consumers want and continually fine-tune product features, even develop the product range, in light of this knowledge. Indeed, production without detailed knowledge of the marketplace risks a warehouse full of unsold goods. This is true for products as diverse as automobiles, candy bars, election campaigns, TV shows, and Hollywood film endings. Notwithstanding the power of producers to shape preferences and behaviors through advertising, the consumer society is a democracy of sorts, dependent for success on the steady flow of information gleaned from open and direct communication between producers and consumers.

Not so in the modern art world, or en francais, the cultural field. No longer disciplined as they once were by the academy to supply art to traditional patrons such as church, state or aristocratic household, artists now produce, like everyone else, for the impersonal and anonymous market. But artists typically initiate production with only the haziest idea of marketplace preferences. Eschewing profits for reputation, they embrace an "art for art's sake" philosophy, each artist focusing on developing a signature style which they hope will serve to differentiate their product in the marketplace. Thus individual creativity and

stylistic innovation become the norm, and the history of art unfolds as the story of a succession of avant-garde styles. Moreover, with the symbolic (and hence commercial) value of art dependent on visible evidence of the mark or touch of the master, artists remain committed to an antiquated (in societal terms) handicraft mode of production—a labor intensive method of working which, rejecting machine technology and a factory division of labor, perpetuates low output and high prices—even for work by mediocre as well as unknown or beginning artists.

With no direct link between producers and consumers, intermediaries come to occupy a crucial position in the art world. Dealers, critics and curators labor to give value and meaning to symbolic goods, consecrating artists and circulating what they produce among audiences who consume (buy or look) on the basis of their acquired ability to decode established meaning. In Bourdieu's terms, the cultural field thus organizes the production and accumulation of cultural capital, a system of (symbolic) wealth and power that runs parallel to, and complements, the material economy. The power of these intermediaries is considerable. Artists who subvert them by organizing disposal of their own work in the marketplace (Andy Warhol's Factory comes to mind, as well as the artist Thomas Kinkade who currently operates 248 retail outlets dedicated solely to the sale of his work), by taking on the reputation-making and entrepreneurial functions typically reserved for dealers and galleries owners (British artist Damien Hirst of pickled sharks and bisected pigs fame first made his reputation as a maverick art exhibition organizer), or by usurping the role of the critic (R.B. Kitaj once wrote his own critical interpretations to hang alongside his canvases in the gallery) are likely to encounter massive opprobrium, earning a reputation for crass commercialism, unbridled ambition, or kitsch, or worse.

These structural mediations reinforce the bifurcation of art into high and low. Many art world intermediaries, originating in preindustrial systems of patronage and inequality, find it more profitable to attend to the art needs of the super-rich rather than to the aesthetic needs, such as they might be, of the masses. Indeed, here the art world is more akin to alchemy than to business, for it regularly turns a few dollar's worth of paint and canvas into millions. Moreover, since critics' own reputations and careers are built on ability to manufacture symbolic meaning, they promote art which is, more often than not, difficult to decode without the requisite amount of social capital (investment in education, upbringing, social connections, etc.). Likewise, the job of curators and arts administrators is to bring together periodically scattered works for ritualistic confirmations of art's auric power. When art reduces to the collecting habits of the super-rich, the aesthetic needs of the masses are all but ignored. Too poor to purchase original art and lacking the necessary sophistication to decode or enjoy it, the cultural needs of ordinary people are consigned to the nether-region of low art—commercially and mechanically produced products such as posters, postcards, pop records, TV shows, pot-boiler novels, and the like. Thus at every point in its production and consumption, high art becomes

separated from life, its precious, elitist and restrictive properties standing in marked contrast to the more open, egalitarian and democratic tendencies within the consumer society.

We are now in a position to appreciate the convention-busting, even revolutionary, potential of the book at hand. Painting By Numbers proposes a radical reworking of the modern art system by using the same market research and polling techniques employed by corporations and politicians to put art-making on a scientific, possibly democratic, footing. The volume includes detailed results of a major survey of art preferences in the United States, surreal paintings by Russian emigre artists Vitaly Komar and Alekandr Melamid made on the basis of data from this and other national surveys of taste, an extensive interview with the artists, a guide to the statistics employed, and interpretive essays by art world heavyweights—all expertly edited into a coherent and beautiful whole by JoAnn Wypijewski. (My only gripe here is that information necessary to make sense of the various illustration plates is relegated to a list of art credits at the end of the volume.) The enterprise is a good deal of fun but is also deadly serious in its effort, at least on the part of the artists, to move art beyond the collecting habits of the super-rich.

Nearly a third of Painting By Numbers comprises results of a comprehensive 1993 survey of the US population sponsored by The Nation Institute to find out what people like and don't like about fine art—particularly painting. Data on respondents' preferences with respect to subject matter, style, colors, size, and so on in art are cross-tabulated with income, education, age, sex, race, ethnicity, and region, thus allowing the parameters of taste in the population as a whole to be tracked and described. With the exploding significance of art in the post-modern "symbolic economy" (to use Sharon Zukin's term), it is surprising just how little basic empirical data exists on patterns of taste. So right out of the gate Painting By Numbers makes an important contribution to the sociology of art.

The results are a treasure-trove, confirming the extent to which popular taste in the United States deviates from the sophistication of high art. For example, blue is by far the favorite color, top choice of 44% of respondents (its popularity, however, drops somewhat with income and among ethnic groups). Green is the second most popular color. Red is favored by 11% of Americans, its appeal increasing with education and is highest among residents of the Northeast and among liberals. Yellow, the color of which van Gogh is the acknowledged master, never attracts more than 3%. Eighty-eight percent prefer paintings of outdoor scenes; 63% reject themes related to religion. Stylistically, taste runs in the direction of visible brushstrokes and blended colors. The broad preference is for medium-size autumnal landscapes featuring wild animals and groups of (fully clothed) people. Small "geometric" abstracts with sharp edges are universally disliked. Nearly half of respondents say they have never heard of Jackson Pollock (museums of modern art everywhere, please note), whereas only 7% claim to be unfamiliar with Norman Rockwell. In a world where

paintings regularly sell for millions, three-quarters of the population wouldn't spend more than $500 for a painting, even one they really liked. However, all is not doom. Over 70% of respondents claim to have non-family photographs, original paintings or drawings, and sculptures at home. A large majority report they would be willing to pay extra taxes to support the arts, and few would discourage their children from becoming artists, or object if they wanted to marry one.

Highlight of the volume (indeed, its raison d'être) are paintings by Komar and Melamid which incorporate into a single canvas as many of the aesthetic likes and dislikes revealed by the survey as possible. Educated in the Soviet Union under the dictates of socialist realism, an art system which opposed formalist "art-for-art's sake" experimentation, stressed the social responsibility of artists and promoted styles and subject matter thought to have broad appeal, Komar and Melamid are uniquely suited to this task. Their masterful summary of national taste, the painting "America's Most Wanted," is in its own way as important as Marcel Duchamp's famous Readymades, for the painting likewise proposes a fundamental remaking of art, in this case on the basis of scientifically-established knowledge of the marketplace. Staggering to behold even as reproduced in the book, "America's Most Wanted" is a "dishwasher-size," predominately blue, "realistic-looking" early fall landscape featuring lakes, mountains, trees, and wild animals as well as several figures (historical and contemporary, famous and ordinary) who are depicted fully clothed (of course) and "at leisure." The companion piece, "America's Most Unwanted," is a genuinely repellent "paperback-book-size" geometric abstract in gold, teal, orange and peach designed to capture just about everything people say they don't like to see in art.

With information from other national surveys, Komar and Melamid apply the same procedures to create "most wanted" and "unwanted" paintings for ten additional countries including China, Russia, Kenya, Turkey, Finland and France, effectively depicting thereby the aesthetic preferences of a third of the world's population. Although Komar and Melamid interpret global taste as leaning strongly towards the blue landscape, their pictures incorporate subtle national differences revealed by the polls. For example, the Chinese have a preference for domestic rather than wild animals, so China's "most wanted" includes a farm animal rather than a deer or hippopotamus; likewise, Russia and Finland's paintings reflect those nations' preference for figures to be portrayed at work rather than at rest. Because they like politicians, the Dutch get Bill Clinton. (The traveling exhibition, "The People's Choice," features 33 paintings made in connection with this project.)

Scaled down, the technique of using survey data to shape art can produce niche or boutique canvases for any group for which information on art preferences might be known—prisoners, for example, or sociologists, or residents of a small town. Indeed, a "most wanted" for Ithaca, NY is included in the volume. (Yes, there's nudity here: it's a university town.) Or the technique can be applied to other arts such as music or poetry. In fact, a step in this direc-

tion has already been taken by the Dia Center for the Arts which, with Komar and Melamid's blessing, has released a recording of a "most wanted" and "most unwanted" song composed using data from a poll on musical preferences. (The latter composition especially restores a healthy dose of humor. Over 22 minutes long, the "song" varies wildly in volume, speed and pitch, has abrupt transitions, uses bagpipes and harps, and features an operatic soprano who raps advertising jingles and political slogans; the results, it is claimed, appeal to "fewer than 200 individuals of the world's total population"!)

Painting by Numbers is about politics, literally the politics of representation. Politicians use polls to shape their campaign messages and get elected; why not artists as well? As Komar and Melamid point out in a fascinating interview, the idea that a people's art might consist of a single masterpiece expressing or summarizing popular preference (in much the same way elected leaders in liberal democracies claim to represent the people) suggests an affinity between market research and socialist realism; in fact, according to this perspective, they are each sides of the same authoritarian coin. From their own experiences of living and working across the Cold War divide, the artists are aware that both systems are imperfect democracies. They see on the one hand the democratic promise in socialism, on the other the tyranny of majority rule; only under socialism was a people's art taken seriously; yet only under capitalism can it be realized. Seen in this light, "America's Most Wanted" is the aesthetic equivalent of the one-party state, reproduction of a world where "the portrait of Uncle Joe is replaced with portrait of Uncle Majority" (p. 18).

The real question arising from this "scientific guide to art" is consequently not whether master representations of national taste are, can, or should be beautiful paintings but, as critic Arthur Danto notes in his essay, how is it that a "painting that is supposed to reflect the integrated aesthetic utility curves of Everyone" ends up reflecting the "aesthetic utility curves of no one at all" (p. 138). As project statisticians John Bunge and Adrienne Freeman-Gallant caution in their discussion of the validity of the national surveys, while a person chosen at random is statistically most likely to prefer paintings with features highlighted by Komar and Melamid, "whether that 'representative' person would want all those features in one painting . . . is an entirely different matter" (p. 91). At the level of individual choice, then, the authority of the single masterpiece breaks down. Indeed, this paradox is manifest in the continuous tickertape running along the bottom of every page where a succession of people describe their preferred paintings, few corresponding in detail to the imagery incorporated into "America's Most Wanted." (At random: ". . . My bedroom ceiling like the Sistine Chapel by Michelangelo . . . Two nudes intertwined, one male one female, tastefully done; include symbolic representations of the animal kingdom, earth and sky, celestial bodies, plant kingdom, balance, water; colors are earthy tones emphasizing blue, specks of gold.")

But this curiosity goes largely unexamined in the accompanying essays which concentrate instead on the philosophical and art-historical heavy-lifting needed

to educate the unaided eye in appreciation of the "witty, sardonic and philosophical" qualities of Komar and Melamid's work (p. 126). Danto works in a terrific number of references to artists (Emil Nolde, Marcel Duchamp, Gerhard Richter, Sigmar Polke, Andy Warhol, and Roy Lichtenstein), movements (Pop art, American trompe l'oeil, visible jokes) and philosophers (Wittgenstein). But in all this Danto seems to miss an opportunity to discuss an important precursor to "America's Most Wanted" in Komar and Melamid's own "Sear's style" art where earlier they had used the color codes, materials and surfaces of mass produced corporate products like refrigerators and cookers to investigate the mysteries of American taste. Wypijewski's essay takes up the issue of the meaning and significance of color for language and culture generally, asking whether the global preference for blue is evidence of "the long-craved universal language" (p. 57). By following Komar and Melamid on a road trip, she also shows how they use public meetings and forums to deepen their knowledge of popular taste. However, somewhere along the line the cumulative effect of the contextualizing and cross-referencing seems more to secure for Komar and Melamid a place within the New York avant-garde (their entire lives appear as inevitable steps in this direction) than to explicate the implications of their approach for a radical restructuring of art. By working so hard to turn the painting-by-numbers strategy into instant art history, Komar and Melamid's potential for disrupting the conventions of modern art is contained and domesticated.

Also unexplored is the uncanny ability of some artists to tap into popular taste without recourse to surveys or science. For example, Maxfield Parrish's pastoral tableaus were once so popular that in the 1920s lithographs of his painting, "Daybreak," were said to be in a quarter of American homes. Also Norman Rockwell seems to have been pretty good at producing appealing images. Today, paintings by Thomas Kinkade—described by one critic in the New York Times as "light-dappled renderings of frothing oceans, fantastical cottages and feverishly colorful gardens"—are sufficiently in demand to support a 100,000 square foot production facility, dozens of workers, and a nationwide network of 248 dedicated galleries. (Kinkade is the only artist listed on the New York Stock Exchange.) Subject matter alone, however, does not account for the success of these artists; each also self-consciously developed a painting technique which, contrary to the sensibility of high art, favored mechanical reproduction over display of the original. Nor does anyone seem willing to take on the world of those weekend "starving artists" sales where, miraculously, sofa-size landscapes almost identical to "America's Most Wanted" are on sale for $59.95. Here among stacks of anonymous paintings which somehow effortlessly approximate Komar and Melamid's more intellectually-labored images, America obviously finds what it wants, and, moreover, at a price it likes.

By clinging to the authority of the single masterpiece, Painting By Numbers ultimately reproduces the (high) art and (mass) society distinction which it hopes to escape. Despite its intent to remake art, the project inadvertently demon-

strates the limits of traditional hand-crafted art with respect to meeting the complex and varied aesthetic needs of the masses once they are known. Democratization of art means going beyond market research and polling, which in the case of "America's Most Wanted" and its companion canvases only revolutionizes what the artist depicts but otherwise keeps intact conventional art making techniques. But a genuine revolution in art is one that will make more people artists, thus obviate the need for the mediations, skill and sensibility of the master artist. Such a revolution depends upon overturning the conventions of hand-crafted art in favor of a democratization of technique. Precisely how this revolution might occur is hard to say. Among the possibilities are mass produced paint-by-number kits which will allow individual to complete, if not create, an infinite array of pre-designed masterpieces (disappointingly, only a crude do-it-yourself version of "America's Most Wanted" is included on p. 140); computer programs which crank out individualized "most wanted" paintings (or musical scores, or poems, or novels) when supplied relevant preferences; or a Bob Ross TV channel which, through the magic of a "wet on wet" technique, can surely turn us all into expert painters (but of landscapes only, for while it is easy to teach the untalented how to render a tree, mountain, or rocky outcrop, painting a convincing and sophisticated likeness of the human form is another matter entirely).

Despite its reluctance to grapple with these populist alternatives to the notion of great art, Painting By Numbers raises important questions about the relation between individual taste and the ideology of the masterpiece. All those connected with this fascinating and original book can take satisfaction in knowing they have lobbed a particularly interesting shell into the art wars of the next millennium.

Cutting the Edge: Current Perspectives in Radical/Critical Criminology and Criminal Justice, edited by Jeffery Ian Ross. Praeger: Wesport, CT, 1998.

Reviewed by R.S. Ratner.

This book is a collection of recently authored articles intended to bring us to the theoretical and research borders of critical criminology, pointing the way to a dramatic overhaul of what has been disingenuously labeled the "criminal justice system".

In a clever foreword by Dorothy Bracey, the moral complacency of a hypothetical ERCC ("Eminent and Respected Conservative Criminologist") is contrasted with the rage felt by critical criminologists over the systemic injustices rife within the so-called criminal justice system. The promise of "cutting-edge criminology," she believes, is that the insights it yields can stimulate thought and action towards rectification of those injustices. This high expectation would be difficult for any single text to authenticate, and this

particular set of readings does not rise to that challenge as the editor might wish, although the quality of the included articles does make it a useful collection for senior undergraduates in the criminology field.

In his preface, Jeffery Ian Ross baffles the reader somewhat by praising the collection as suitable for both advanced and introductory students. One wonders how an introductory work can also double as a paradigm-breaker, raising doubts about whether this text is merely another commercial product or a scholarly venture. The preface also smacks unnecessarily of political correctness in the editor's self-acclaimed efforts to recruit contributors from diverse backgrounds (gender, racial, ethnic, etc.), momentarily inclining this reader to sympathize with the disdainful old ERCC. In Ross's opening chapter, I was also befuddled by his referring to five books that he regarded as good examples of the "radical/critical criminology enterprise," followed immediately by 13 undocumented reasons for why those very books are sorely inadequate and outdated, making improbable his contention that "radical and critical criminology has matured into a diverse body of work" (p. 1). I am also troubled by Ross's early and unexamined assumption that "having a single definition of radical or critical criminology is impossible and not advisable" (p. 2). Not only is there an unwarranted conflation of "radical" and "critical" criminology, but there is no compelling reason to assume that plural interpretations of the field signal its ascent to "maturity". While I do not mean to carp about Ross's introduction, I believe it misleads the reader in failing to identify the questions that ought to be raised at this juncture in the development of critical criminology and which might better serve as criteria to evaluate the articles in the text, particularly as to whether they can be considered "cutting-edge". In my view, these questions are the following: (1) What is the distinction between "radical" and "critical" criminology, assuming the terms are not interchangeable, and what does this difference mean for progressive praxis? (2) In what sense is the knowledge gleaned from radical and critical criminology cumulative and programmatic, with the various currents contributing to a new paradigmatic tradition? (3) How do radical and critical criminology contribute to an understanding of the social control policies evolving under the ideological mantle of neoliberalism? (4) Does the centrality of economic globalization call for an interpretation of criminality that ties diverse theoretical threads into an anti-capitalist perspective? A cutting-edge text that does not address these questions hardly qualifies as an advance in radical/critical (r/c) criminology, and while the articles in this book do occasionally allude to these concerns, they do not take them up in ways that provide clear directions for critical research.

Thomas O'Connor's essay begins the theory section of the text by indicating how r/c criminology can be further developed through a re-reading of the sociological masters—Marx, Weber, and Simmel. This is a useful reminder, except that O'Connor draws only narrowly on all three, exploring their relevance to problems of social psychology, legitimacy, and public deception, respectively. There is something specious, in my view, about constructing an agenda for radical criminology founded on the assumption that "Pluralist, humanitar-

ian objectives in the short run, are preferable to long-range schemes involving more rhetoric than reality" (p. 4).

By contrast, Robert Bohm equates "radical" with "neo-Marxist" criminology (p. 18) and urges radical criminologists to focus on the fundamental yet curiously neglected causes of crime, such as "class struggle" and "mode of production". Bohm quotes liberally from previous neo-Marxist theorizing, but does not offer any new analytic directions for the contemporary period, ending sanguinely by stating that, "Perhaps the production and distribution of the necessities of life will be 'socialized' while the production and distribution of luxury items and services will remain in the province of a free market" (p. 33). Tell that to the legions of hungry and freezing.

Gregg Barak stresses the importance of developing an "integrated" critical criminology that will be both transformative and interdisciplinary, and buttressed by a "newsmaking criminology" crafted to persuade the media, politicians, and popular culture to take the "replacement discourse" of critical criminology seriously. Although Barak concedes the relevance of structural causes (class, race, gender), he adopts a vague "integrative" position that calls attention to "intersecting social relations" and denies the centrality of any one factor. How this differs from the jumbled pluralism of liberal criminology and how this approach helps to articulate r/c theory beyond its current limitations is difficult to fathom.

In an interesting piece that potentially sheds light on the discursive production of crime, criminals, and the behaviour of the criminal law, Bruce Arrigo finds Lacan's theorizing a "bona fide conception of agency, and a non-linear understanding of historical change" (p. 44). Lacan's analysis of the interdependence of self and society (each mutually constitutive through language) "offers greater possibility for considering the role of the desiring subject in the process of making sense of crime" (p. 57). Indeed, Lacan's work does seem to provide a theory of the subject that is lacking in Marxist conceptions (e.g., giving embodiment to desire), yet how this ultimately delineates a "fuller articulation of crime as it is experienced and lived" (p. 57) escapes this reader, leaving the whole exercise in a fog of aesthetic mystification.

Jeff Ferrell's article celebrates (perhaps prematurely) the marriage of postmodern and critical criminology, both "founded on the critique and negation of existing arrangements, including conventional criminology . . . one of the pillars of the intellectual and legal machinery of modernism" (p. 63). In its embrace of ambiguity, uncertainty, and plurality, Ferrell contends that r/c criminology constitutes an "undercutting edge" of criminology since its delivers " a critique that folds back on itself so as to undermine its own encrustation" (p. 74). One wonders whether such an evanescent critique possesses the substantiality to pass judgment even on conventional criminology.

David Friedrich's article surveys the landscape on r/c contributions to the study of white collar crime, reaching the conclusion that peacemaking, postmodernist, left realist, and feminist varieties of critical criminology have contributed relatively little to an understanding of the corporate forms of white

collar crime. Nevertheless, Friedrich counsels against focusing on already documented "structural inequalities," urging instead that research concentrate on the "sources of social consciousness that continue to distort understandings of crime and shape differential support for public policy" (p. 90). As with other vaguely postmodernist sympathies expressed by authors in this text, the pyramid appears to have no base.

Part II of the volume present r/c perspectives on "traditional concerns in criminal justice" beginning with Ross's own examination of municipal policing in which he unaccountably dismisses a class analysis of contemporary policing despite the growing privatization of security forces and their collusive sharing of power with officially mandated police. Michael Welch contributes a very useful essay on the current actuarial strategies employed by American corrections, aimed much less at reducing crime and "correcting" offenders than at simply removing and managing (through prison warehousing) the huge surplus population of mainly blacks and hispanics who allegedly threaten "public safety". This 'new penology', Welch contends, is the true sub-text of American corrections, bent on social control of lower-class offenders rather than on the advertised "crime control". This is one of the few pieces in the Ross collection that illuminates the relationship between social class and neo-liberal control policies. Stephen Richards lends the authority of his own experience as a former prisoner and parolee to underscore the amoral logic of the growing American gulag. One poignant dilemma that he notes (which should be cause for further r/c inquiry) is the use of courts to prosecute men for domestic disputes, the federal felonization of child support laws, and the current crusade to lock up sex offenders (many of whom are mentally ill or mentally retarded)" (p. 133), all policies of ostensible crime control that have swelled the number of prisoners in the American gulag and spread the "darkness" into more and more spheres of private life.

Jeanne Flavin argues persuasively for a standpoint feminist approach to corrections (and particularly sentencing policy) that would reveal the "complex intersections of class, race, ethnicity, and gender," challenging non-critical mainstream research on the sentencing of women offenders and producing "new knowledge about historically marginalized groups" (p. 160). Putting women and minority men at the centre of the current phase of the feminist transformation of criminology that she outlines, is one important "cutting-edge" that feminist criminologists are brandishing to raze the wall of androcentric, classist, and racist assumptions that typify mainstream correctional policies. It is a mark of the entrenchment of these policies that Flavin and her cohorts are still dwelling on the "promise" of the critical feminist approach and not yet evaluating its implementation.

In the final essay of the text, Peter Elrod surveys the history of juvenile justice policy development, noting the ironic similarities between supposedly competing conservative and liberal youth justice policies, neither of which address the structural and material conditions that produce crime. Strangely, yet in

keeping with the ambivalent directives recommended by other authors in this text, Elrod presses for fundamental changes in juvenile justice policy, but concludes paradoxically that, "To the extent that critical policies call for revolutionary change in the economic, political, and cultural make-up of the United States, (and) . . . to the extent that critical criminologists are unwilling to accommodate diverse points of view . . . (they) will continue to be left out of the policy debates of the future" (p. 178). This strikes me as a craven prescription for more of the same.

In sum, the articles in this collection are well-written, provide informative updates on some aspects of the development of criminological theorizing and research in various sub-fields of criminology, and offer some critical insights that could provide grounds for alternative policies and interventions. On the negative side, many of the pieces suffer from a strained eclecticism that undercuts the potential "cutting-edge" of r/c criminology, especially when they dilute or omit a still pivotal "class" focus. Such an approach makes little sense in view of the swelling ranks of proletarianized 'offenders' held for unconscionable stretches of time in the American penitentiary system. If r/c criminologists hope to influence a genuine change in social and crime control policies, it is time to marshall intellectual and popular forces around clear-cut analytic vectors, not take refuge, once again, in the academic warrens of interdisciplinarity or in the benign rhetoric of pluralist accommodation.

No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies, by Naomi Klein. Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2000.

Reviewed by Graham Cook.

The video's style is immediately identifiable as a parody of a series of Gap ads for khaki pants, in which handsome, multiethnic A recent music video by the band Rage Against the Machine presents a tableau with which television viewers are all too familiar: an all-white set with symmetrically-placed actors (in this case, the band members), a smoothly-panning camera view that swoops around them and a catchy tune playing as backdrop. Dancers "Jump, Jive, and Wail" and express the youthful exuberance that only 1950s-style khakis and tank tops can unleash. But what's this? As the first riff of RATM's "Guerrilla Radio" ends, we cut from the band members to a different white-backgrounded tableau, this time with rows of sewing machines and multiethnic (well, non-white) garment workers stitching up khaki pants with grimaces on their faces. As singer Zack de la Rocha reaches the crescendo of his confrontational lyrics, he whispers "What better place than here? What better time than now?" The anti-WTO protests of Seattle (and the American party conventions, and the anti-globablization rallies in Prague) have a new theme song.

Ironically, of course, the video is presented to us by a channel like MTV,

an arm of a media conglomerate (Viacom) that subsists on revenues from Gap-style ads. And a certain queasiness arises when fraternity brothers walk the campus wearing Che Guevara t-shirts with "Rage Against the Machine" printed underneath. Which sweatshops did they come from? Advertising parody relies on a pitch-perfect evocation of commercial "speech"; is this simulation really a case of "subvertising," or is it ultimately a concession to the hegemonic language of the market?

Toronto journalist Naomi Klein negotiates this terrain *skilfully* in her brilliant book *No Logo*, linking the ubiquity of the big brands and big media with the political-economic shifts towards globalization and "flexible accumulation." Previous armchair observers who attempt a popular account of these shifts have not always fared well—Benjamin Barber's *Jihad Vs. McWorld* is an example of what happens when a close read of the *New York Times* stands in for deeper empirical and theoretical work. In contrast, Klein has travelled to Philippine sneaker factories and small-town Wal-Marts to talk with those on the front-lines of McDonaldization, and done so with an ear for the subtleties of power relations between corporation and consumer, corporation and worker, and activists North and South. Her book charts macro-changes and micro-events through a compelling central argument and clever, accessible prose.

The book is divided into four sections: No Space, No Choice, No Jobs, and No Logo. "No Space" describes the threats to public space wrought by corporate expansion into our everyday lives, especially in the industrialized North. The relatively recent business emphasis on "shareholder value" and increasing returns to equity—not only year-to-year, but quarter-to-quarter—along with regulatory changes under neoliberal governments have led to the "hollowing out" of transnational corporations. No longer do many of these companies focus on making a product, or developing a loyal workforce; instead the emphasis is on marketing and creating a deep emotional connection between consumers and the brand. Nike, for example, is paragon of this sort of "weightless" corporation. While a casual observer might see Nike as a shoe company, CEO Phil Knight describes it as "a marketing-oriented company, and the product is our most important marketing tool" (22). Better still if the brand is completely separate from the product: Nike may always mean "sports," but Richard Branson's Virgin label has been stuck to everything from airplanes to CDs to banks to radio stations. Under this new branded world, argues Klein, the brand begins to muscle out not only independent businesses but other, weaker brands. This leads to oligopoly in the market and the colonization of previously public space, from Burger King contracting for fast-food provision in high schools to Disney's "branded town," Celebration, Florida. In perhaps the strongest chapter of the book, "Alt.Everything," Klein analyzes the voracious appetite of corporate media for the marginal, the fringe, the resistors-of-the-mainstream, and the increasing skill of corporate "cool hunters" in assimilating that resistance.

The "No Choice" section continues in this vein, discussing the impact that corporate mergers and consolidations have had on consumer selection and

broader public freedom. In a more nuanced argument than that of a simple "homogenization," Klein identifies different corporate strategies for increasing brand ubiquity and profits. Some corporations choose the price-war model, *à la* Wal-Mart's big-box invasions, crushing competitors with low prices based on massive buying power (133). (This has continued to the point that Germany's anti-trust department recently forced Wal-Mart, and two of its German competitors, to **raise** prices which were being kept artificially below cost.) Other corporations "cluster": Starbucks, for example, builds several outlets near existing, successful coffee shops, saturating the market and leading to cannibalization from the only remaining competition—other Starbucks outlets (134). The end result of both strategies is the same: to crowd out space not only for small business, but for non-market-mediated ways of life. In this world, shopping malls may become quasi-public space, but don't try to hand out political leaflets; Starbucks becomes our contemporary salon, as long as we don't ask pressing questions about where the coffee beans come from.

"No Jobs" links the macro picture of corporate synergies and the privatization of public space to the front-line effect on workers. In the North, workers face downsizing, contracting out, and increasingly contingent and insecure work; in the South, new factory jobs represent not a step up on the ladder of "development" but a downward slide that is part of an international "race to the bottom." These are not new claims, but Klein ties them together with evocative stories from North and South, in particular from the Export Processing Zone in Cavite, Philippines.

Finally, in the concluding "No Logo" section, Klein charts what she sees as a growing insurgency against the "brand bullies." Here she deconstructs the advertising deconstructors like *Adbusters* magazine—the inspiration for parodies like the Rage Against the Machine video. Recognizing some of the inherent contradictions of such forms, she points to more self-reflexive artists and activists who are linking cultural critique to practical political change. "Today's media activists are concentrating on shattering the impenetrable shiny surfaces of branded culture, picking up the pieces and using them as sharp weapons in a war of actions, not images" (124). This section serves as a prophetic precursor to the way activists did their stuff in Seattle and elsewhere in 2000, and some of the hazards that corporate branders face in developing a deeply emotional, but therefore deeply volatile identification with big brands.

While convincing overall, Klein's claim that the brand buildup has become a teetering house of cards seems overstated. She is occasionally too quick to ignore some of the very real **material** benefits that the current system offers for much of the public in the North. The reduction of consumer prices, for example, is an economic boon to low-income people, particularly in staples such as food and clothing. Of course we shouldn't sell our freedom for a cheap toaster, but cheaper toasters **do** improve the lives of the increasing numbers of people who can afford them. Klein also might have looked at some of the non-cultural threats to brand dominance. For example, the Chapters book chain

(the Canadian equivalent of Barnes and Noble) is currently in crisis thanks to rapid overexpansion. Other big-box retailers like Toys 'R Us and internet mega-brands like Amazon face similar perils. In addition, Klein's focus on "corporations" rather than "capital" or a particular "regime of accumulation" risks a loss of attention to the **systemic** imperatives of capitalist systems. Changing the behaviour of corporations through regulation, Klein's goal, does not necessarily challenge the underlying logic that the market should still be the **prime** means of allocating resources.

Finally, one might ask whether Klein is fetishizing the mom-and-pop operation of yore. Certainly chain stores can be alienating to work for, but many who have toiled in the service industry for a small employer with a bad attitude would prefer the cold-hearted but consistent corporate veneer. Here Klein has a convincing counter-argument. "Flexible" production often means insanely "flexible" work hour requirements for part-time workers, to the point that labour is arranged in a "just-in-time" fashion at stores like Wal-Mart and Gap, with two- or three-hour shifts timed for the biggest customer rushes (243). Not only that, but Starbucks and McDonalds pay considerably lower than the average retail wage (237)—the McJob is no misnomer.

Perhaps the most significant contribution of Klein's book is her emphasis on hopeful scenarios within an otherwise dystopian picture. For one, she argues that behind the popularity of brands like Starbucks, Bennetton, and Nike is a resonance with the genuinely utopian ideals of the public—for community, diversity, health and wellbeing, even for intellectual advancement and creativity. Although Klein doesn't mention Gramsci, she recognizes one of his key insights—that hegemony is achieved through resonance with something genuine and latent in a society, not through imposition of completely "foreign" values. The contradition is that a profit-seeking corporation can never deliver on these humanistic promises. As Klein so effectively analyzes, it is that disjunction between ideal and ideology that presents the inspiration, and cultural weaponry, for the resistance movement that Seattle represents.