

ess. The use of Q methodology seemed more creative and applied than more traditional teaching methods. Personally, I found the approach to be a way to experiment with Q, learn more about the technique, and keep motivated. Perhaps too ambitious for a first attempt, I plan to use a similar approach again in interpersonal and other communication courses.

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#### BOOK REVIEW

*The Social Construction of Lesbianism.* By Celia Kitzinger. London and Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1987. 230 pp. \$16.50 paper.

*The Social Construction of Lesbianism* by Celia Kitzinger is a lively and intellectually engaging work which advances our knowledge of lesbian subjectivities. It is also a significant contribution to the literature of social constructionism in social science. Kitzinger's primary task in this book is to argue that liberal "gay affirmative" research toward homosexuality in general, and lesbianism in particular, advances the continued oppression of lesbians in ways equally pernicious as earlier research orientations which emphasized homosexuality as pathology. In "gay affirmative" research lesbianism fulfills the liberal humanistic goals of personal happiness, sexual fulfillment, and the achievement of better personal relationships. Understood in this way, lesbianism represents a sexual preference, an alternative lifestyle, or perhaps a route to self-actualization. According to Kitzinger, the liberal characterization of

lesbianism robs it of its political import. In contrast to the depoliticized view implicit in the liberal perspective, radical feminist lesbianism stands in political opposition to male supremacy. In this view lesbianism "represents women's refusal to collaborate in our own betrayal" (p. viii).

Kitzinger advances her thesis on several levels. Her discussion of the role of social science in the liberal humanistic construction of lesbianism is an admirable analysis of the ways in which social science creates the conditions of its own legitimacy, and the ways in which liberal social scientists establish truth, and thereby perform the political function of helping to sustain established institutions and social practices. This discussion entails an analysis of liberal ideology itself, and here, Kitzinger focuses on liberalism's positivistic epistemology, its atomistic metaphysic of self, and its politics of privatization. She argues effectively that where the liberal social scientist sees "fact," all that exists is ideology. Moreover, the very conception of self posited by liberal theory is politically repressive. Whether understood as a Cartesian self-defining self or a bundle of conflicting forces, the atomistic individual advanced in liberal humanistic social science is an ideological construct.

In contrast to the liberal humanism of contemporary psychology, Kitzinger argues that the self is socially constructed. Thus, liberal social science is an instrument of social control insofar as it creates subjectivities for lesbians and male homosexuals that correspond to the depoliticized identities of liberal-humanistic ideology. She writes,

Central to this argument is the assumption that our "inner selves"--the way we think and feel about and how we define ourselves--are connected in an active and reciprocal way with the larger social and political structures and processes in the context of which they are constructed. It is for this reason that, as many radical and revolutionary movements of oppressed peoples have argued, "the personal is political." (p. 62)

Evidence for the conflation of the personal and the political is found in the results of three Q studies presented in the text. Each of the instruments (the "accounts of lesbian identity" Q sort, the "politics of lesbianism" Q sort, and the "attitudes to lesbianism" Q sort) revealed parallel factor structures when completed Q sorts were subjected to standard Q-analysis procedures. Kitzinger's discussion of the five major factors which emerged in the accounts of lesbian identity Q sort clearly reveals the ideological components of these identity accounts. Three of these factors relied heavily upon liberal-humanistic categories and rhetoric. The fourth perspective understood lesbianism in radical terms, and the fifth understood lesbian identity as pathology (in both religious and social scientific terms). In the event the point has not yet been made, the ideological categories which gave structure and meaning to the self reports modeled in the Q sorts were provided by the subjects themselves. It is their standpoint which Kitzinger reports.

Kitzinger's arguments are provocative. Liberal social scientists will probably not agree with the major points of her central thesis, yet careful attention to Kitzinger's discussions should disabuse some of the notion that social science is non-ideological.

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## NEWS, NOTES & COMMENT

### *Recent and Forthcoming Scholarship*

William Stephenson, "William James, Niels Bohr, and Complementarity: V--Phenomenology of Subjectivity," *Psychological Record*, 1988, 38, 203-219.