

The text of the Teaching Sociology book review begins on the next page. On this page, I offer a response to Bulman's review.

First, Let me express gratitude for Bulman's careful reading, synopsis, and thoughtful response to *The First Year Out*. It is a privilege to be reviewed by *Teaching Sociology*, and an honor to be included among such an august collection of authors.

Second, I agree that it would have been intriguing to follow my students another couple years beyond their high school graduations, and I wish I had had both the time and resources to make that happen. I am presently looking at young adults during and after their college years – so I plan to take up some of these matters in future publications.

Third, let me clarify why I choose the foci of family, faith, and community in chapter 2. It is because these are the chief socializing agents of youth and thus deserve attention for their potential impacts, and because I found them to be the chief calibrators of youth trajectories during the first year after high school.

Finally, I admit that I cover a lot of topics and issues in the book. That is because I sought to understand teen moral culture, to convey that to readers, and to connect that moral culture to its antecedents and its implications. Sometimes I may have taken on more than my data warranted, but I judged it better to engage issues in their complexity, to propose interpretations, and to foster readers' own consideration of such matters than to ignore select topics because my data were limited.

limits of state control. Chapter nineteen provides a basis for that debate by making the opposite argument from Feld, suggesting that the system is rediscovering its rehabilitative roots because of the failure of “get tough” approaches.

Serious Delinquency represents a useful classroom tool appropriate for lower and upper division undergraduate students alike. The anthology is comprehensive and well-balanced, if inadequate in places. Instructors will find it easy to cover any shortcomings with excerpts of other texts and short articles. I recommend Bernard’s anthology to those who desire a text that not only gets students up to speed on the basic terrain of the American juvenile justice system, but also gets them thinking about how and why the system came to be as it is and what concerned citizens might do to make it better.

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The First Year Out: Understanding American Teens After High School. Tim Clydesdale. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. 2007. 265 pages. \$20.00

I teach in a four-year liberal arts college that has a high-minded mission statement about service to others, faith in God, and intellectual exploration of the liberal arts. For all of us who teach first year college students and like to think that we are opening up a world of intellectual excitement for them, this book will sober us up. Perhaps we few who pursue careers in the academy remem-

ber fondly our own intellectual excitement in college and expect (or at least hope) that all of our students will react similarly. Our efforts, apparently, are a waste of time.

Tim Clydesdale spent one year hanging out at a New Jersey public high school. He also conducted in-depth interviews with a core sample of 50 “culturally mainstream” high school seniors, interviewing them again after their first year out of high school. He asked them about their school work, paid jobs, leisure time, religious faith, political commitments, career goals, and relationships with family, friends and significant others. Contrary to the grand ideals that we professors have of the transformative power of a liberal arts education, Clydesdale finds that most students merely tolerate our lessons, but do not integrate them into their sense of self. They are not the critical thinkers we want them to be. They certainly don’t examine their own lives with much intellectual curiosity, nor are they very engaged civically. However, if teens behave this way we should not be surprised. After all, as Clydesdale reminds us, few American adults live their lives with such lofty purpose either.

Clydesdale has written an engaging and accessible book about how American teens experience their school life, family life, work life, religious life, peer life, and leisure time. It is filled with delicious nuggets of information as well as thoughtful (and sometimes surprising) claims about who American teens are, why they are the way they are, and what, if anything, “we” can do about it. According to Clydesdale, student identities in the first year out of high school remain rather untouched by their new experiences. Most young adults after high school are unconcerned with intellectual ideas, existential questions, or a commitment to making the world a better place. They resist efforts that educators make to challenge their taken-for-granted views of themselves and the world. They secure their existing and comfortable sense of self in an “identify lockbox” for the duration of their first year after high school.

Instead of thinking critically about their lives and the world, students are heavily invested in struggles to manage their daily lives, negotiate relationships, and express themselves through sexuality, shopping, and substance use. The good news, according to Clydesdale, is that they are actually very skilled at managing rather complex demands in their daily lives. They learn how to attend class, complete their school assignments, participate in athletics, pursue romantic relationships, earn money in a part time job,

go shopping, do their laundry, watch television, and socialize with friends.

Clydesdale systematically compares how teens navigate relationships and gratifications in high school and how they do so after their first year out (Chapter 3), how they relate to work, money and spending in high school and how they do so one year out of high school (Chapter 4), and how they relate to their school work in high school and how they do so one year after high school (Chapter 5). The longitudinal nature of the research is much appreciated and helps to shed some light on how teens do and do not develop one year after high school. These three chapters are the heart of the book and they offer the strongest and most interesting arguments. For instance, rather than criticizing teen behavior as self-destructive and amoral as many cultural observers tend to do, Clydesdale sensitively shows how teens actually are pretty responsible and effective at living their day-to-day lives. At the same time, Clydesdale is not a Pollyanna about teens. He also argues that teens have a relatively narrow view of the world and, as individualistic Americans, see education as an inconvenient necessity in the pursuit of stable employment.

While I generally find his arguments well supported, I would have been much more satisfied with his findings had he followed up with the students after another couple years. Some of the changes we would like to see in college students might take more than a year to develop. In fact, Clydesdale hints that perhaps juniors in college are better able to look critically at their lives and to appreciate some of the lessons their professors urge them to learn. However, Clydesdale's research design doesn't allow him explore this possibility. Also, it should be noted that Clydesdale's sample is limited in that most of his subjects do go on to college. We don't get much of a sense about how life is different for students who go straight to full-time work.

In Chapter 2, and at times throughout the book, Clydesdale attempts to show how the foundational platforms of family, faith, and community affect the ways in which teens relate to relationships, gratification, money, and school work. However, this is the least satisfying part of the book. It's not clear why Clydesdale chose to focus on these three platforms and it isn't always clear how these three "starting points" are relevant in each of his arguments throughout the book.

This is a reflection, I think, of a problem Clydesdale has in conceptualizing just what this

book is about. Is it about teens and faith, about teens and family, about teens and community, about teens and school, about teens and work, about teens and relationships, about teens and consumption? He tries to make all of these subjects a part of the story he tells, but the data is often too thin to sustain an argument about the relationship between all of these aspects of teens' lives. I would have been much more satisfied had he focused on one primary question (for instance, why are American teens not engaged intellectually or politically in college) rather than a host of questions.

Despite these shortcomings, this book has much to recommend it and I encourage educators to read it in order to gain some insight about the worldview of the people they intend to educate. Also, I would not hesitate to assign it in an upper-division sociology of adolescence class. I think it is thought provoking and, ironically, might actually get college students to reflect critically on their lives. I'm not sure that the book would fit well into traditional ways of teaching sociology of education or sociology of religion. If, however, there was a course on the college experience then the book would be ideal.

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Gender and the Media. Rosalind Gill. Cambridge: United Kingdom: Polity Press. 2007. 296 pages. \$64.95

In the past few years social relations in terms of gender and its representation in the media have changed considerably. Alterations in gender relations, innovations in information technologies, transformations in the regulatory processes regarding copyrights and control and the ever-changing process of globalization have initiated serious discussions in the academic arena about the portrayal of gender in the media. One project that gender scholars have undertaken is to reengage in a more detailed analysis of the construction of gender in today's media.

In *Gender and the Media*, Rosalind Gill approaches this task by addressing an inherent paradox concerning how gender is constructed in the current media: on one hand powerful images of women are presented that reflect the empowerment of women and, on the other, women are still viewed as mere objects of commoditization and oppression. She writes that, "everywhere, it seems, feminist ideas have become a kind of common sense, yet feminism has never been