

Summaries

RUDOLF DEKKER

*The legacy of Jacques Presser:
Egodocuments in historical research*

In the mid-1950's, historian Jacob Presser introduced a new word: egodocument, meant as a term to indicate autobiographies, memoirs, diaries, personal letters and other texts in which the author writes explicitly about his or her own affairs and feelings. The word was quickly adopted in the Dutch language, but otherwise the timing was bad. Presser's colleagues were more than ever reluctant to use such texts. Since the 1980's, the new cultural history has returned to egodocuments. Among the reading public egodocuments have always remained popular, which explains the paradox of the diary of Anne Frank, widely read, but until recently little studied.

KATHY DAVIS & HELMA LUTZ

*Travelling theorists:
On biographical border crossing and feminist imagination*

The figure of the 'stranger' has played an important role in sociology as well as in women's studies, where women have been conceived of as the prototypical 'other'. Many scholars who write about 'strangers' have also had experiences leaving their country of origin, living in exile, or wandering from place to place as intellectual nomads. In this article, we will explore the interconnections between biography and theory, using three well-known feminist 'travelling theorists' as case in point. Each has developed metaphors for thinking about migration, and each has herself undergone multiple border crossings which she draws upon, more or less explicitly, in her work. By exploring the interconnections between the life and work of these travelling theorists, we seek not only to show how biographical analysis can help make sense of critical social theory, but also to discuss what is at stake, more generally, in theorizing about strangers.

HALLEH GHORASHI

*Crying, getting frightened, laughing, in short travelling with the other.
The value of life stories in social science research*

In this paper, I present the ways that collecting life stories contributed to understanding the life of Iranian women political activists in exile, in the Netherlands and the United States. In my research, conducted between 1995-2000, I listened to 20 life stories of Iranian women in both countries who were politically active within leftist organizations during the revolution of 1979. These women experienced internal exile after 1981 in Iran and became external exiles when they fled Iran. The context of the new country in which they have lived for several years has had a decisive impact in the ways they view, the past, the present and the future. As an internal exile in Iran and external exile in the Netherlands since 1988, I have been very much involved in this research. The combination of this involvement and the use of the life story method have contributed in the way that these women felt the space and freedom not only to express themselves verbally but also to be able to communicate through their emotions. In this way it became possible to go beyond the expressive level in the stories in order to include also emotional communication as one of the bases for analysis.

MARJO BUITELAAR

*The voices of Tahara:
The orchestration of different self-representation in the life-story of a Dutch
Muslim woman of Moroccan background*

This article presents the life story of Tahara, a well-known daughter of Moroccan migrants in the Netherlands. It explores how she presents herself in her life-story, why the story does so well in the Dutch media, and how the repeated telling of it contributes to the construction of her identity. By analysing the voices that represent her various I-positions in Dutch society, it is argued that several audiences are addressed simultaneously. It is demonstrated that the prophetic Muslim voice is dominant in the story. This voice allows Tahara to express her religious identification and to translate the Islamic discourse in which she frames it into a Dutch political discourse. It is more particularly her 'mission' to explain why she covers her head that allows her to combine the religious and political voices in her story with the as yet hesitant female voice. It also helps her to create a sense of coherence in her multiple self-representations.

Lessons of life:

Female dancers on ambition and choices

The life story approach can offer new insights into the power relations and the position of dancers in the ballet world. This article focuses on the common assumption that female dancers have to live as nuns and dedicate their lives completely to their ballet career. By comparing the life stories of dancers who are going through different stages in their careers and by unravelling the individual stories the author is able to uncover the symbolic boundaries that the ballet world sets for its members. The ballet world is unmasked as a greedy institution that harbours uneven power relations. But at the same time, dancers are presented as knowledgeable subjects who make their own choices.

GERHARD NIJHOF

Heterogeneity in the legitimating of hearing voices

In the Western world hearing voices is generally considered as a pathological phenomenon, as a sign of mental disorder. However, some psychiatrists promote a different view by advocating the acceptance of hearing voices, and believe that they might be a reaction to personal problems. In one of the projects following this approach, 16 men and woman who say they hear voices told their life stories. The research question is whether, and how, they are able to legitimate their hearing voices. The subsequent analysis of the discursive construction of legitimating hearing voices is based on a text-sociological methodology. Society expects people to apply generally accepted discourses in order to achieve legitimacy. Refusing these particular discourses would mean a contradiction of the discourses that they adhere to. The research revealed seven of such legitimating discourses: 'naturalness', 'intrusive cause-special effect', 'self-determination', 'personal growth', 'support', 'knowledge and ability' and 'acceptance of the inevitable'. The heterogeneity of these discourses, both on a personal and group level, is considered to be an indication of the lack of a generally accepted legitimization of hearing voices, and in addition, of the informants 'work' in developing an acceptable legitimacy for accepting their voices and for listening to them.

HUGO RÖLING

Recollections of fear in Dutch and Flemish people's memories of youth, 1750-1970

In the long-term process in which childhood was recognised as an important phase of life in its own right, opinions on children's fears have changed. It appears that as everyday life became less dominated by fear, after about 1750 the distance between adults and children grew in consequence of children's relatively more imperfect control over their fears. In the nineteenth century, the conquest of fear became an important goal in educational thinking. In the twentieth century, it was recommended more and more strongly that anything that could frighten children be avoided. In this article, how children's fears are described in people's memories of their youth is analysed as a representation of changing circumstances.

CHRISTIEN BRINKGREVE

A life split in two:

On the autobiographical novel s-1 by Bram van Stolk

This article is about the autobiographical novel *s-1* of the sociologist Bram van Stolk. It unravels the connections between themes in his life, his sociological work, and his novel, with particular reference to the relations between the established and the outsiders. In *s-1*, Van Stolk wrote about his longing for love and heroism and writes about homosexuality in a different vein from that found in his sociological work. The book can be seen as a vital act of resistance to the physical deterioration, which was a result of his illness.