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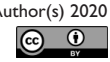

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Book Review

Youth, Class and Everyday Struggles. Steven Threadgold. London: Routledge, 2019. 246 pp., £36.99 (pbk). ISBN: 9780367354893

There is much of value in Steven Threadgold's engaging and inspiring book, *Youth, Class and Everyday Struggles*. The book departs from a broadly Bourdieusian perspective to explore young people's various dimensions of struggle, particularly in relation to social class and neoliberal conditions of precarity. These issues are examined by drawing on media representations of 'bogans' and 'hipsters' as well as on interviews with participants in an Australian underground DIY music scene. What I especially take from this book is Threadgold's productive attempts to develop Bourdieu's conceptual tools. Struggle here serves as an overarching concept which 'represents the day-to-day challenges and choices we all face and deal with along the trajectory of our lives' (p. 22). The lens of struggle is used to interpret a whole range of practices, strategies, and trajectories, ranging from reflexive forms of deliberation to routine practices. There is always a risk that such a broad notion lacks analytical clarity. But Threadgold situates struggle by deploying not only Bourdieu's traditional triad of capital, habitus, and field, but also the concepts of illusio, doxa, and social gravity to analyse the differing ways in which young people's everyday struggles involve certain investments and trajectories in particular social fields. Moreover, he draws on research in cultural theory on affect and emotion, such as Sara Ahmed's work, to conceptualise the affective dimensions of Bourdieu's concepts, which at best are only implicit in the latter's own analyses. Thus, for instance, Threadgold suggests that class distinction is affective as much as it is symbolic and that social fields have 'affective atmospheres' (p. 68).

In his analysis of media representations, Threadgold argues that the hipster and bogan are figures whose formation is tied to classificatory struggles in 'the field of representation' (p. 76) over symbolic class boundaries. To this end, he contends that moral panics have emerged around both figures. The White working-class bogan is the object of much mockery and denigration, although sometimes also affection. The middle-class hipster is denigrated as well, which is evident in, for example, the criticism of 'hipster sexism' and 'hipster racism', but generally a more ambiguous and contested figure than the bogan. There is a generational element at play here as the two figures are 'folk devils' created by an older generation to whom they 'embody an affective "threat"' (p. 129) and are blamed for 'new forms of class-based anxieties' (p. 126) under conditions of precarity.

Threadgold convincingly draws out the contested and sometimes diffuse ways in which class boundaries are maintained and challenged through public representations of the two figures. Yet, his analysis could have benefited from unpacking the generational

oppositions, moral panic processes, and affective dimensions that he argues are bound up with class distinction more clearly in dialogue with the empirical material. It can also be noted that the theoretical framework, centring on people's everyday struggles and strategies in various social fields, does not seem to entirely fit a type of the empirical material such as public representations. It is rather in Threadgold's interviews with members in a DIY scene that his theoretical framework really comes alive and gains analytical power. He shows how members struggle over the core meanings and values in the scene, including notions of authenticity and the meaning of DIY. Threadgold's analysis also examines how a female-led movement for recognition successfully challenges doxic practices governed by masculine and heteronormative norms which serve to marginalise female and non-binary participants in the scene.

Moreover, he explores how participants negotiate work and careers under neoliberal forms of precarity. Guided by an ethos of self-reliance, many of Threadgold's interviewees live a hand-to-mouth existence to be able to engage in creative work in the DIY scene. His point is that they are reflexively aware of how the odds are stacked against them in this endeavour, 'but the social gravity of the illusio is still strong enough for someone to invest themselves, despite knowing that the likelihood of success is low' (p. 192). Overall, the book gives a rich, timely, and multi-faceted account of young people's classed struggles. I would highly recommend it to anyone interested in youth culture, youth transitions, social class, or the work of Bourdieu.

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