

G.T. Marx

I. Blurbs for Colleagues' Books

Ever competitive, and perhaps insecure in their status as head, rather than, hand workers in a pragmatic, populist themed American society (“those that do, do; those that don’t, teach”), competitive academics worry a lot about their status. This is reflected in measures that are easy to quantify such as citations, as well as less easily quantifiable (or widely known) indicators such as job offers, invitations to speak and write, including writing introductions to, or blurbs for, colleague’s books. A much better measure would be the number of students taught who go on to become decent and productive members of society. As part of the biographical project of an octogenarian creeping toward becoming a nonagenarian, in filling in the back spaces of a life well and fortunately lived, I gathered some of the blurbs written over the years as a chronicle of the issues that were contemporary at the time. These, as well as introductions to colleague’s books map the journey.

One takes the time to write these for many reasons: reciprocity, manners, a sense of duty, a desire to help the next generation, wanting to be seen by others as the kind of person asked to write a blurb or an introduction. It also calls attention to your book and affiliation listed after your name, and of course it can keep one current and still in the game. It is also nice honor good books, perhaps some of the luster of a fine work even rubs off. It also can be fun and a distraction from your real work. The cost-benefit ratio is good, relative to the time required to write a book review. Yet in trying to be supportive, or at least to keep or win friends, one must be on guard for the shoals of disingenuousness. Given the frequent time pressures to produce a blurb, I wonder what percentage of the time a book is carefully read. Is the praise expressed because of prior confidence in the author or because of this product?

II: A Pretty Complete List

August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, 1973. *CORE: A Study in the Civil Rights Movement, 1942-1968*

This careful bending of historical and sociological perspectives sets a standard rarely achieved by studies of social movements. Rich in detail, vast in scope, inter-disciplinary, literary, compassionate yet objective, it is a major contribution to our understanding of the struggle for black equality.

Inge Bell, 1990. *This Book Is Not Required*

It is a treasure filled with things every student should hear. It triggered a number of thoughts and made me very much want to share it with my two sons and my small seminar on American society. The chapter on careers is masterful...

Oscar H. Gandy, Jr., 1993. *The Panoptic Sort*

With clarity, grace, and erudition Oscar H. Gandy critically analyzes the ever-growing information technology octopus. Comprehensive, integrative, and provocative, the book is must reading for those seeking to understand the multiple challenges of contemporary panoptic systems.

Murray Davis, 1993. *What's So Funny?*

"*What's So Funny*" is a stellar achievement and a clear contribution to knowledge. Davis has imagination and vision and is an original. This book is simply the best thing ever done by a sociologist on humor...It will become a model and a classic for understanding humor, as well as society.

Ethan A. Nadelmann, 1993. *Cops Across Borders: The Internationalization of U.S. Criminal Law Enforcement*

Like a meteorite, Ethan Nadelmann has burst upon the academic scene bringing light, heat, and deep impressions. *Cops Across Borders* opens up a new field of inquiry and must be read by anyone concerned with U.S. foreign policy and criminal justice.

Craig Calhoun, 1994. *Neither Gods nor Emperors: Students and the Struggle for Democracy in China*

Craig Calhoun has written a very moving, informative, and carefully reasoned book—a model of academic breadth, integration and clarity of expression. He effortlessly combines the narrative skills of the historian with the analytic perspective of the student of social movements. While focused on the heroic six-week student protest, the book deals with many enduring issues of our time—cultural crisis, the role of intellectuals, mass communication, the public sphere, the weakening of national borders, and the meaning of democracy.

Paul Chevigny, 1995. *The Edge of the Knife*

An important contribution... Chevigny, a leading scholar of police for twenty-five years, has written a deeply depressing, yet very hopeful book. It is depressing in its careful documentation across diverse societies of what happens when, to paraphrase Yeats, "the state is the mob that howls at the door." It is hopeful in showing that variations in police abuse are associated with the policy choices a society makes.

Serge Gutwirth, 2001. *Privacy and the Information Age*

Serge Gutwirth impressively draws on Dutch, German, French and English language sources to develop a strong argument regarding the centrality of privacy to personal freedom and the challenges to that sacred connection posed by new and increasingly omniscient, information technologies. A most welcome addition to the comparative literature on privacy and technology.

Mark Monmonier, 2002. *Spying With Maps*

Mark Monmonier's latest book offers a cornucopian corpus of the latest cartographic techniques, analyzed with clarity, balance, and precision.

Kenneth D. Tunnell, 2004. *Pissing on Demand: Workplace Drug Testing*

An informative and thought-provoking book. Tunnell locates drug testing within its broader social context and in so doing demonstrates the importance of a dynamic and interactive approach to a complex topic...Necessary reading for anyone interested in technology and social control.

Mark Andrejevic, 2007. *iSpy: Surveillance and Power in the Interactive Era*

A stunning empirical, logical, and moral analysis and a clarion rebuke to the Alice in Wonderland snake oil purveyors of the dominant version of asymmetrical ‘interactive’ communications media.

Colin J. Bennett, 2010. *The Privacy Advocates: Resisting the Spread of Surveillance*

In this concise, clearly written and highly informative little volume Colin Bennett continues his scholarly illuminations of the elusive (and sometimes illusive) concept of privacy. However hard to pin down and variable across cultures, there is an increasing, nearly universal sense that many technologically enhanced personal data collection practices go too far. Most of us grimace and bear it, but not those Bennett calls the privacy advocates who form a loose transnational network. This is their story—told with affection and objectivity, and thoughtfully grounded in the contemporary research literature.

Shumeet Baluja, 2011. *The Silicon Jungle*

The Silicon Jungle is an engaging and welcome addition to the literature of dystopia. The connections drawn between people, places, products, and internet usage, as well as the data mining scientists in this suspenseful and alarming novel, show us that the decline of individual freedoms can occur not through weapons and coups, but through profiles germinated by algorithmic seeds.

Hans Toch, 2012. *Cop Watch*

Toch's latest book is a wise, judicious, and compassionate meditation on the enduring issues of police violence and community conflict informed by this master craftsman's half-century of inquiry.

Simon Brown, 2015. *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*

With flair, creativity, and intellectual breadth, Simone Brown illuminates the historical and contemporary surveillance ordering of (presumed) biologically based racial identities. With an expansive interdisciplinary reach and drawing on helpful concepts such as racializing surveillance, dark surveillance, epidermalization, and bordering, the book is a welcome contribution to an emerging field.

David L. Altheide, 2017. *Terrorism and the Politics of Fear*

Unfortunately, if ever a book on the expanding plethora of frights and worries brought to us by media prevarication and manipulation was needed, it is now. Fortunately, in extending his pioneering work on media, Altheide meets that need. With its logical framework and fresh concepts and data, this book explores the marketing of anxiety, whether for political or consumption purposes. Necessary reading for anyone who listens, watches, or reads!

T. Timan, B.C. Newell, B. Koops, 2017. *Privacy in the Public Spaces: Conceptual and Regulatory Challenges*

A most welcome book on the most neglected of topics by a pioneering team of interdisciplinary scholars. It should be in the library of anyone interested in the social, policy and ethical implications of information technologies.

Bryce C. Newell, 2021. *Police Visibility*

Significantly advances our understanding of police and society and the politics of information under the deluge of creeping (or perhaps better) galloping new surveillance technologies. Newell's clear headed inter-disciplinary exploration drops gentle rain on the arid parade of unreflective, optimistic narratives viewing the cameras and their visual records as salvation. A foundational text for scholars and practitioners!

Full quote: Newell has written a most welcome volume which significantly advances our understanding of police and society and the politics of information under the deluge of creeping (or perhaps better) galloping new surveillance technologies such as police worn cameras. His clear headed inter-disciplinary exploration drops some gentle rain on the arid parade of unreflective, optimistic narratives viewing the cameras and their visual records as salvation. The cameras exist within contexts of informational and other forms of inequality and current approaches that do not adequately deal with the unintended consequences and privacy and publicity related harms that occur from un- or inadequately regulated tools. His carefully reasoned, empirically informed normative approach, in arguing for preemptive regulatory policies based on principles such as independent oversight, access, redaction and private space helps redress the problem. A basic foundational text for scholars and practitioners!

The Center for AI and Digital Policy, 2021. *Artificial Intelligence and Democratic Values*

Mushrooms do well in the dark, but sadly, so do barely visible technologies such as AI. In bringing light, this innovative volume offers an ethically and empirically grounded, international approach to law and policy that must be at the center of 21st century human rights' protections. If the respect for human dignity and democracy the standards call for are not heeded and publicly applied to new technologies, the rapid movement from dystopias as science fiction to science, whether junk or otherwise, will be further accelerated.

Anon Collective, 2021. *Writing Anonymity*

Writing Anonymity is a stunning achievement! It is luxuriantly interdisciplinary, highly original, and deeply reflective. It has the power to shock/provoke the reader into examining the taken for granted assumptions associated with a communication. These involve what is not, as well as what is, offered by the author. It should be in the library of anyone concerned with information control and revelation issues, as these touch anonymity and identifiability, privacy and publicity and secrecy and transparency. Whether involving scholarship, activism or art, the varied articles strike at the very core of contemporary new technology communication issues such as trust, legitimacy, access, authority and power, and the principled reciprocity central to the social bond and a decent (or, when these are lacking, an indecent) society.

D. Altheide, 2022. *Gonzo Governance*

With *Gonzo Governance* David L. Altheide, Regents' Professor Emeritus at Arizona State University again creatively extends our knowledge of the political and social implications of developments in media ecology. Changes involving transmission, feedback, and visualization have fundamentally altered politics and must be considered apart from message content. A central theme of the book is that Trump's success was because of "how he *was communicated*" not "how *he communicated*" [italics added]. With clear prose and interdisciplinary reach, Altheide explains how, in an unprecedented communications environment, digital technologies are skillfully manipulated to offer scripted, fear-inspiring and yet seductive messages. They entertain, even as they disinform and wreak havoc on truth and democracy. Given the gravity of its theme, creative analysis and ameliorative suggestions, I hope it will be widely read.

Hualing Fu and Weitseng Chen, 2022. *Beyond Regime Type: The Transformation of Police in Asia*

A most welcome volume that should be in the library of any scholar or practitioner concerned with aspirations for decency and democracy in the governance provided by, and of, police, the law and political leaders.

The case studies of diverse east Asian societies make clear that an independent legal system and police professionalism can do much to protect citizen rights and wellbeing, even with dictatorial leaders and colonial and authoritarian pasts.

There is no single, let alone simple, road to becoming, and remaining, a democratically policed society. Such societies are fragile, ever threatened from above and below. This volume is essential reading for those committed to democracy and decency in government. The realism and knowledge the book provides with its' attention to paradoxes and ambivalences in a rich, nuanced, interdisciplinary tapestry significantly expands understanding. It sets a high standard for comparative international studies of policing and democracy and will become a classic.

J. Byrne and D. Hummer, 2023. *The Handbook of Crime and Technology*

This pioneering volume must be in the library of any scholar or practitioner concerned with the radical upending of crime and responses to it brought by new information technologies. Never in the history of criminology have changes come so quickly, nor been so poorly understood. The book offers a cornucopia of concepts, data and constructive suggestions to help understand and respond thoughtfully to the challenges.