The Social Construction Of What Ian Hacking

Lost in the raging debate over the validity of social construction is the question of what, precisely, is being constructed. Facts, gender, quarks, reality? Is it a person? An object? An idea? A theory? Each entails a different notion of social construction, Ian Hacking reminds us. His book explores an array of examples to reveal the deep issues underlying contentious accounts of reality. Especially troublesome in this dispute is the status of the natural sciences, and this is where Hacking finds some of his most telling cases, from the conflict between biological and social approaches to mental illness to vying accounts of current research in sedimentary geology. He looks at the issue of child abuse—very much a reality, though the idea of child abuse is a social product. He also cautiously examines the ways in which advanced research on new weapons influences not the content but the form of science. In conclusion, Hacking comments on the "culture wars" in anthropology, in particular a spat between leading ethnographers over Hawaii and Captain Cook. Written with generosity and gentle wit by one of our most distinguished philosophers of science, this wise book brings a much needed measure of clarity to current arguments about the nature of knowledge.

Social constructivism is one of the most prominent theoretical approaches in the social sciences. This volume celebrates the 50th anniversary of its first formulation in Peter Berger and Luckmann's classic foundational text, The Social Construction of Reality. Addressing the work's contribution to establishing social constructivism as a paradigm and discussing its potential for current questions in social theory, the contributing authors indicate the various cultural understandings and theoretical formulations that exist of social construction, its different fields of research and the promising new directions for future research that it presents in its most recent developments. A study of the importance of a work that established a paradigm in the international sociology of knowledge, this book will appeal to scholars of sociology with interests in social theory, the history of the social sciences and the significance of social constructivism.

This short treatise looks at how we construct a social reality from our sense impressions; at how, for example, we construct a 'five-pound note' with all that implies in terms of value and social meaning, from the printed piece of paper we see and touch. In The Construction of Social Reality, eminent philosopher John Searle examines the structure of social reality (or those portions of the world that are facts only by human agreement, such as money, marriage, property, and government), and contrasts it to a brute reality that is independent of human agreement. Searle shows that brute reality provides the indisputable foundation for all social reality, and that social reality, while very real, is maintained by nothing more than custom and habit.

Widely regarded as a classic in its field, Constructing Quarks recounts the history of the post-war conceptual development of elementary-particle physics. Inviting a reappraisal of the status of scientific knowledge, Andrew Pickering suggests that scientists are not mere passive observers and reporters of nature. Rather they are social beings as well as active constructors of natural phenomena who engage in both experimental and theoretical practice. "A prodigious piece of scholarship that I can heartily recommend."—Michael Riordan, New Scientist "An admirable history. . . . Detailed and so accurate."—Hugh N. Pendleton, Physics Today

This book explores the social construction of age in the context of EFL in Mexico. It is the first book to address the age factor in SLA from a social perspective. Based on research carried out at a public university in Mexico, it investigates how adults of different ages experience learning a new language and how they enact their age identities as language learners. By approaching the topic from a social constructionist perspective and in light of recent work in sociolinguistics and cultural studies, it broadens the current second language acquisition focus on age as a fixed biological or chronological variable to encompass its social dimensions. What emerges is a more complex and nuanced understanding of age as it intersects with language learning in a way that links it fundamentally to other social phenomena, such as gender, ethnicity and social class.

This groundbreaking collection of classic and cutting edge sociological research gives special attention to the social construction of race and ethnicity in the United States. It offers an in-depth and eye-opening analysis of (a) the power of racial classification to shape our understanding of race and race relations, (b) the way in which the system came into being and remains, and (c) the real consequences this system has on life chances. The readings deal with five major themes: the personal experience of classification schemes; classifying people by race; ethnic classification; the persistence, functions, and consequences of social classification; and a new paradigm: transcending categories. For individuals who want to gain a fuller understanding of the impact the ideas of race has on a society that is consumed by it.

This book explores the stark stratification and struggles over classifications in US academia from a relational perspective, looking beyond material differences and tracing its roots to symbolic power relations. Based on a mixed methods study drawing on both interview and quantitative data, it offers an account of the workings of academia, shedding light on the structures that permit elite departments to define categories and impose legitimate scientific definitions, to which the non-elite must adhere. With a focus on two scientific disciplines, the author shows how the translation of objective structures into mental structures establishes a relationship of power with regard to the definition of scientific categories, thus determining access to resources and opportunities to participate and move within the academic field. A study of the unequal intrusion of economic logics into the academic domain, this volume will appeal to scholars, policy makers and institutional leaders with interests in higher education, inequality within science, academic careers, power relationships and competition in the academy.

This illuminating book explores the theme of social constructionism in legal theory. It questions just how much freedom and power social groups really have to construct and reconstruct law.

Representing Development presents the different social representations that have formed the idea of development in Western thinking over the past three centuries. Offering an acute perspective on the current state of developmental science and providing constructive insights into future pathways, the book draws together twelve contributors with a variety of multidisciplinary and international perspectives to focus upon development in fields including biology, psychology and sociology. Chapters and commentaries in this volume present a variety of perspectives surrounding social representation and development, addressing their contemporary enactments and reflecting on future theoretical and empirical directions. The first section of the book provides an historical account of early representations of development that, having come from life science, has shaped the way in which developmental science has approached development. Section two focuses upon the contemporary issues of developmental psychology, neuroscience and developmental science at large. The final section offers a series of commentaries pointing to the questions opened by the previous chapters, looking to outline the future lines of developmental thinking. This book will be of particular interest to child psychologists, educational psychologists and sociologists or historians of science, as well as academics and students interested in developmental and life sciences.

There are many different forms of rationality. In current economic discourse the main focus is on instrumental rationality and optimizing, while organization scholars, behavioural economists and policy scientists focus more on bounded rationality and satisficing. The interplay with value rationality or expressive rationality is mainly discussed in philosophy and sociology, but never in an empirical way. This book shows that not one, but three different forms of rationality (subjective, social and instrumental) determine the final outcomes of strategic decisions executed by major organizations. Based on an argumentation analysis of six high-profile public debates, this book adds nuance to the concept of bounded rationality. The chapters show how it is socially

constructed, and thus dependent on shared beliefs or knowledge, institutional context and personal interests. Three double case studies investigating the three rationalities illustrate how decision makers and stakeholders discuss the appropriateness of these rationalities for making decisions in different practice contexts. The first touches more on personal concerns, like wearing a niqab or looking at obscene art exposed in a public environment; the second investigates debates on improving the rights and position of specific minorities; and the third is based on the agreement on instrumental reasons for two kinds of investments, but the cost arguments are regarded less relevant when social norms or personal interests are violated. The Social Construction of Rationality is for those who study political economy, economic psychology and public policy, as well as economic theory and philosophy. The volume demonstrates the suitability of the theory of social constructivism in portraying and analyzing the diversity of the phenomenon of corruption. The approach of social constructivism taken in this volume is able to reconstruct the 'construction of corruption' both from a societal perspective, by assessing it as generally accepted or tolerated behaviour in more or less standardized rule-governed social situations, and from the perspective of actors who perceive corrupt behaviour as problem solving in everyday life. The volume proves the usefulness of a social construction perspective for empirical research. It contains case studies of social definitions of corruption in eleven European countries that contribute in different ways to establishing a grounded theory of the phenomenon of corruption.

This book provides an original and provocative combination of ethnomethodological analysis and the concepts of linguistic philosophy with a breadth and clarity unusual in this field of writing. It is designed to be read by sociologists, psychologists and philosophers and concerns itself with the contributions of Wittgenstein, defending the claim for his relevance to the human sciences. However, this book goes some way beyond the usual limitations of such interdisciplinary works by outlining some empirical applications of ideas derived from the Wittgenstein tradition.

Social construction addresses the cultural factors and social dynamics that give rise to and maintain values and beliefs. Drawing on postmodern philosophies and critical, social, and literary theories, social construction has become an important and influential framework for practice and research within social work and related fields. Embracing inclusivity and multiplicity, social construction provides a framework for knowledge and practice that is particularly congruent with social work values and aims. In this accessible collection, Stanley L Witkin showcases the innovative ways in which social construction may be understood and expressed in practice. He calls on experienced practitioner-scholars to share their personal accounts of interpreting and applying social constructionist ideas in different settings (such as child welfare agencies, schools, and the courts) and with diverse clientele (such as "resistant" adolescents, disadvantaged families, indigenous populations, teachers, children in protective custody, refugee youth, and adult perpetrators of sexual crimes against children). Eschewing the prescriptive stance of most theoretical frameworks, social construction can seem challenging for students and practitioners. This book responds with rich, illustrative descriptions of how social constructionist thinking has inspired practice approaches, illuminating the diversity and creative potential of practices that draw on social constructionist ideas. Writing in a direct, accessible style, contributors translate complex concepts into the language of daily encounter and care, and through a committed transnational focus they demonstrate the global reach and utility of their work. Chapters are provocative and thoughtful, reveal great suffering and courage, share inspiring stories of strength and renewal, and acknowledge the challenges of an approach that complicates evidence-based evaluations and requirements.

Contemporary theorists use the term "social construction" with the aim of exposing how what's purportedly "natural" is often at least partly social and, more specifically, how this masking of the social is politically significant. In these previously published essays, Sally Haslanger draws on insights from feminist and critical race theory to explore and develop the idea that gender and race are positions within a structure of social relations. On this interpretation, the point of saying that gender and race are socially constructed is not to make a causal claim about the origins of our concepts of gender and race, or to take a stand in the nature/nurture debate, but to locate these categories within a realist social ontology. This is politically important, for by theorizing how gender and race fit within different structures of social relations we are better able to identify and combat forms of systematic injustice. Although the central essays of the book focus on a critical social realism about gender and race, these accounts function as case studies for a broader critical social realism. To develop this broader approach, several essays offer reworked notions of ideology, practice, and social structure, drawing on recent research in sociology and social psychology. Ideology, on the proposed view, is a relatively stable set of shared dispositions to respond to the world, often in ways that also shape the world to evoke those very dispositions. This looping of our dispositions through the material world enables the social to appear natural. Additional essays in the book situate this approach to social phenomena in relation to philosophical methodology, and to specific debates in metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophy of language. The book as a whole explores the interface between analytic philosophy and critical theory.

Though the composition of the populace of industrial nations has changed dramatically since the 1950s, public discourse and scholarship, however, often remain welded to traditional concepts of national cultures, ignoring the multicultural realities of most of today's western societies. Through detailed studies, this volume shows how the diversity affects the personal lives of individuals, how it shapes and changes private, national and international relations and to what extent institutions and legal systems are confronted with changing demands from a more culturally diverse clientele. Far from being an external factor of society, this volume shows, diversity has become an integral part of people's lives, affecting their personal, institutional, and economic interaction.

Traditional security concerns, historical aspirations, and human agency are all examined to illustrate Russia's need for collective self-esteem and desire for international status which drives their international, national, and security interests and policy. A theory of "aspirational constructivism" is presented as to how Russia has formed this new national identity with reconfigured national interests.

First published in 1992, David Kirk's book analyses the public debate leading up to the 1987 General Election over the place and purpose of physical education in British schools. By locating this debate in a historical context, specifically in the period following the end of the Second World War, it attempts to illustrate how the meaning of school physical education and its aims, content and pedagogy were contested by a number of vying groups. It stresses the influence of the culture of postwar social reconstruction in shaping these groups' ideas about physical education. Through this analysis, the book attempts to explain how physical education has been socially constructed during the postwar years and, more specifically, to suggest how the subject came to be used as a symbol of subversive, left wing values in the campaign leading to the 1987 election. In more general terms, the book provides a case study of the social construction of school knowledge. The book takes an original approach to the question of curriculum

change in physical education, building on increasing interest in historical research in the field of curriculum studies. It adopts a social constructionist perspective, arguing that change occurs through the active involvement of competing groups in struggles over limited material and ideological (discursive) resources. It also draws on contemporary developments in social and cultural theory, particularly the concepts of discourse and ideological hegemony, to explain how the meaning of physical education has been constructed, and how particular definitions of the subject have become orthodoxes. The book presents new historical evidence from a period which had previously been neglected by researchers, despite the fact that 1945 marked a watershed in the development of the understanding and teaching of physical education in schools.

Argues that versions of realist and social constructionist ways of thinking about the social world are compatible with each other. This volume grew out of a discussion between the editors at the Society for Experimental Social Psychology meeting in Nashville in 1981. For many years the Society has played a leading role in encouraging rigorous and sophisticated research. Yet, our discussion that day was occupied with what seemed a major problem with this fmely honed tradition; namely, it was preoccupied with "accurate renderings of reality," while generally insensitive to the process by which such renderings are achieved. This tradition presumed that there were "brute facts" to be discovered about human interaction, with little consideration of the social processes through which "factuality" is established. To what degree are accounts of persons constrained by the social process of rendering as opposed to the features of those under scrutiny? This concern with the social process by which persons are constructed was hardly ours alone. In fact, within recent years such concerns have been voiced with steadily increasing clarity across a variety of disciplines. Ethno methodologists were among the first in the social sciences to puncture the taken-for-granted realities of life. Many sociologists of science have also turned their attention to the way social organizations of scientists create the facts necessary to sustain these organizations. Historians of science have entered a similar enterprise in elucidating the social, economic and ideological conditions enabling certain formulations to flourish in the sciences while others are suppressed. Many social anthropologists have also been intrigued by cross-cultural variations in the concept of the human being.

This 2001 book presents a history of the uses, regulations and representation of the world-ocean, from approximately 1450 through the present. This history is told through a 'territorial political economy' lens, borrowing from world-systems theory, economic-geographic studies of the spatiality of capitalism, political-geographic work on the history of territoriality, and post-structural work on social conflict in the production of space. Just as the modern era has been characterized by a conflicting set of dynamic and contested spatiality on land, so has it been characterized by a conflicting set of spatial functions at sea. Evidence is marshaled from legal texts, literary and artistic creations, cartographic representations, advertisements, commercial and military history, and policy debates. The book concludes by considering how lessons learned from the history of the ocean may be applied to emerging spaces, such as cyberspace, where there is a similarly problematic 'fit' between social processes and the institutions of state governance.

This book takes a fresh look at secondary urban English classrooms and at what happens when students and their teachers explore literature collaboratively. By closely examining what happens in English lessons, minute by minute, it reveals how literary texts function not as a valorised heritage to be transmitted, but as a resource for the students' work of cultural production and contestation. The reading that is undertaken in classrooms has tended to be construed as either a poor substitute or merely a preparation for other reading, particularly for that paradigmatic literacy event, the absorbed and simultaneously discriminating consumption of the literary text by the independent, private reader. This book argues for a different understanding of what constitutes reading, an understanding that is informed by historical and ethnographic perspectives and by psychological and semiotic theory. It presents the case for a conception of reading as an active, collaborative process of meaning-making and for a fully social model of learning. Drawing extensively on data gathered through classroom observation and filming of English lessons taught over the course of a year by two teachers in a London secondary school, the book explores students' engagement with literary texts and the pedagogy that facilitates this engagement. The book offers new insights into reading, and reading literature in particular. It challenges the paradigm of reading that is offered in government policy and the assumption, common to much work within the field of 'new literacies', that 'schooled literacy' is the already-known, the default, against which the alternative literacy practices of homes and communities can be defined. It will be valuable reading for researchers, teachers, teacher educators and postgraduate students, and will have particular appeal for those with an interest in the fields of English studies and literacy.

What made ancient cities successful? What are the similarities between modern cities and ancient ones? The Social Construction of Ancient Cities offers a fresh perspective on ancient cities and the social networks and relations that built and sustained them, marking a dramatic change in the way archaeologists approach them. Examining ancient cities from a "bottom up" perspective, the authors in this volume explore the ways in which cities were actually created by ordinary inhabitants. They track the development of urban space from the point of view of individuals and households, providing new insights into cities' roles as social centers as well as focal points of political and economic activities. Analyzing various urban communities from residences and neighborhoods to marketplaces and ceremonial plazas, the authors examine urban centers in Africa, Mesoamerica, South America, Mesopotamia, the Indian subcontinent, and China. Collectively they demonstrate how complex networks of social relations and structures gave rise to the formation of ancient cities, contributed to their cohesion, and sustained their growth, much as they do in modern urban centers. The authors' analyses draw from ancient texts as well as archaeological surveys and excavations of urban architecture and other material remains, including portable objects for daily use and comestibles. They show clearly how early urban dwellers consciously developed dense interdependent social networks to satisfy their needs for food, housing, and employment, forged their own urban identities, and generally managed to thrive in the crowded, bustling, and competitive environment that characterized ancient cities. Not least of all, they suggest how urban leaders and urban dwellers negotiated a consensus that enabled them to achieve both mundane and extraordinary goals, in the process establishing their unique ritual, legal, and social status.

An affordable primer to sexuality written from a sociological perspective.

As identity and authenticity discourses increasingly saturate everyday life, so too have these concepts spread across the humanities and social sciences literatures. Many scholars may be interested in identity and authenticity but lack knowledge of paradigmatic or disciplinary approaches to these concepts. This volume offers readers insight into social constructionist approaches to identity and authenticity. It focuses on the processes of identification and authentication, rather than on subjective experiences of selfhood. There are no attempts to settle what authentic identities are. On the contrary, contributors demonstrate that neither identities nor their authenticity have a single or fixed meaning. Chapters provide exemplars of contemporary research

on identity and authenticity, with significant diversity among them in terms of the identities, cultural milieu, geographic settings, disciplinary traditions, and methodological approaches considered. Contributors introduce readers to a number of established and emerging identity groups from sites around the world, from yogis and punks to fire dancers and social media influencers. Their conceptual work stretches from the micro-analytic to the ethno-national as authors employ a variety of qualitative methods including ethnographic fieldwork, interviewing, and the collection and analysis of naturally-occurring interactions. Several of the chapters look directly at identification and authentication while others focus on the social and cultural backdrops that structure these practices – what unites them is the adoption of social constructionist sensibilities. This book will appeal to anyone interested in understanding identity and authenticity.

Albert Dadas suffered from a strange compulsion that led him to travel obsessively, often without identification, not knowing who he was or why he traveled. Medical reports of Dadas set off at the time a small epidemic of compulsive mad voyagers, the epicenter of which was Bordeaux but which soon spread throughout France to Italy, Germany, and Russia. Today we are besieged by mental illnesses of the moment, such as chronic fatigue syndrome and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. The debate rages about which of these conditions are affectations or cultural artifacts and which are "real." In Mad Travelers, Ian Hacking uses the Dadas case to weigh the legitimacy of cultural influences versus physical symptoms in the diagnosis of psychiatric disorders. He argues that psychological symptoms find stable homes at a given place and time, in "ecological niches" where transient illnesses flourish.

An anniversary edition of an influential book that introduced a groundbreaking approach to the study of science, technology, and society. This pioneering book, first published in 1987, launched the new field of social studies of technology. It introduced a method of inquiry—social construction of technology, or SCOT—that became a key part of the wider discipline of science and technology studies. The book helped the MIT Press shape its STS list and inspired the Inside Technology series. The thirteen essays in the book tell stories about such varied technologies as thirteenth-century galleys, eighteenth-century cooking stoves, and twentieth-century missile systems. Taken together, they affirm the fruitfulness of an approach to the study of technology that gives equal weight to technical, social, economic, and political questions, and they demonstrate the illuminating effects of the integration of empirics and theory. The approaches in this volume—collectively called SCOT (after the volume's title) have since broadened their scope, and twenty-five years after the publication of this book, it is difficult to think of a technology that has not been studied from a SCOT perspective and impossible to think of a technology that cannot be studied that way.

Ron Mallon explores how thinking and talking about kinds of person can bring those kinds into being. He considers what normative implications this social constructionism has for our understanding of our practices of representing human kinds, like race, gender, and sexual orientation, and for our own agency.

The classic work that redefined the sociology of knowledge and has inspired a generation of philosophers and thinkers In this seminal book, Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann examine how knowledge forms and how it is preserved and altered within a society. Unlike earlier theorists and philosophers, Berger and Luckmann go beyond intellectual history and focus on commonsense, everyday knowledge—the proverbs, morals, values, and beliefs shared among ordinary people. When first published in 1966, this systematic, theoretical treatise introduced the term social construction,effectively creating a new thought and transforming Western philosophy.

What is the role of the senses in how we understand the world? Cognitive sociology has long addressed the way we perceive or imagine boundaries in our ordinary lives, but Asia Friedman pushes this question further still. How, she asks, did we come to blind ourselves to sex sameness? Drawing on more than sixty interviews with two decidedly different populations—the blind and the transgendered—Blind to Sameness answers provocative questions about the relationships between sex differences, biology, and visual perception. Both groups speak from unique perspectives that magnify the social construction of dominant visual conceptions of sex, allowing Friedman to examine the visual construction of the sexed body and highlighting the processes of social perception underlying our everyday experience of male and female bodies. The result is a notable contribution to the sociologies of gender, culture, and cognition that will revolutionize the way we think about sex.

Often lost in the debate over the validity of social construction is the question of what is being constructed. Particularly troublesome in this area is the status of the natural sciences, where there is conflict between biological and social approaches to mental illness, and in other areas. Ian Hacking looks at the issue of child abuse, and examines the ways in which advanced research on new weapons influences not the content but the form of science. In conclusion, Hacking comments on the "culture wars" in anthropology, in particular the spat between leading enthnographers over Hawaii and Captain Cook.

Describes Michael Polanyi's role in the way the philosophy of science was seen as a social enterprise, not relying entirely on empiricism and reason alone.

First published in 1994. Anthropological and archaeological enquiry are shaped by the historical times in which they are formulated. This collection of essays examines how mainstream scholarship constructs the past - in the case of anthropologists, usually the past of other peoples. By creating another people's cultural history, scholars appropriate it and turn it into a form of domination by one group over another. Mainstream scholarship has often failed to recognize the intellectual and scholarly contribution of subjugated peoples . This volume looks at the way 'postcolonial' scholars are redefining the nature of scholarship, and themselves, in order to develop a more egalitarian discourse. Social Constructions of the Past examines labour, race and gender and its relationship to power and class. It includes essays on a broad range of topics, from the role of intellectuals in restructuring a non-apartheid South Africa, to Haitian working-class women using sexuality to resist domination.

Based on in-depth interviews designed to determine what trust is, how it is built, and how it is destroyed, this important new resource provides extensive insight into the fundamental process of interpersonal trust in the day-to-day lives of average people. It furnishes qualitative data

analysis and offers a detailed definition of trust in a sociological context. This unique text is a valuable reference for sociologists, social and clinical psychologists, and students in these disciplines.

Inspired by the work of the philosopher Judith Butler, influenced by Marx's theory of alienation and intrigued by theories of death, this book develops an anti-methodological approach to studying working lives. Distinctions are drawn between labour (the tasks we do in our jobs) and work (self-making activities that are carried out at the workplace): between the less than human, zombie-like laborer and the working human self. Nancy Harding argues that the experience of being at work is one in which the insistence on practising one's humanity always provides a counter-point to organisational demands.

With the emergence of "cultural studies" and the blurring of once-clear academic boundaries, scholars are turning to Subjects far outside their traditional disciplines and areas of expertise. In Higher Superstition scientists Paul Gross and Norman Levitt raise serious questions about the growing criticism of science by humanists and social scientists on the "academic left." This paperback edition of Higher Superstition includes a new afterword by the authors.

The Social Construction of Communities draws on archaeological research in the Southwest to examine how communities are created through social interaction. The archaeological record of the Southwest is important for its precise dating, exceptional preservation, large number of sites, and length of occupation—making it most intensively researched archaeological regions in the world. Taking advantage of that rich archaeological record, the contributors to this volume present case studies of the Mesa Verde, Rio Grande, Kayenta, Mogollon, and Hohokam regions. The result is an enhanced understanding of the ancient Southwest, a new appreciation for the ways in which humans construct communities and transform society, and an expanded theoretical discussion of the foundational concepts of modern social theory.

Kaplan redefines American realism as a genre more engaged with a society in flux than with one merely reflective of the status quo. She reads realistic narrative as a symbolic act of imagining and controlling the social upheavals of early modern capitalism, particularly class conflict and the development of mass culture. Brilliant analyses of works by Howells, Wharton, and Dreiser illuminate the narrative process by which realism constructs a social world of conflict and change. "[Kaplan] offers some enthralling readings of major novels by Howells, Wharton, and Dreiser. It is a book which should be read by anyone interested in the American novel."—Tony Tanner, Modern Language Review "Kaplan has made an important contribution to our understanding of American realism. This is a book that deserves wide attention."—June Howard, American Literature

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