

decades it has come to shy away from figuring, precisely as an anthropological 'problematic'. The 'new universalism' that has marked incest theories since the establishment of their 19th-century cultural ubiquity aligns with those immanent to liberalism, Connolly suggests (p. 226), and has had a tendency to naturalise concomitant normative configurations of family, kinship and sexuality. This remains pertinent: most of the eventual psychoanalytic and late 20th-century newly clinical frames of incest can be seen honouring this tendency, often in studied defiance of anthropological, or postcolonial or historical, frames.

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**Davis, Donna Lee. 2014. *Twins talk: what twins tell us about person, self, and society*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press. 321 pp. Hb.: US\$64.00. ISBN: 139780821421123.**

Despite a longstanding interest of researchers in twins, identical twins' own lived experiences of twinship have rarely been studied. In twin research the most attention goes to twins as research objects that are instrumental in furthering insight into how and when human behaviour is informed by genetics (nature) and how and when by upbringing (nurture). As an identical twin and anthropologist, I was delighted to finally read a study focusing on the lived experience of identical twins.

*Twins talk* seeks to privilege the voices of identical twins and to use this to critically examine hegemonic twin research's treatment of twinship. The focus in the book is on twins who do not only look alike but also share place and space, at least during the formative

years. Central questions to *Twins talk* are: What do identical twins themselves tell us about the experience of being twins in a singleton world; about dichotomies such as self and other, same and difference? How do identical twins' own narratives about how they enact their twinship relate to narratives of researchers who have made twins instruments of research?

The author draws on interviews with 22 identical American twin-sets aged 22–77; her own and her twin sister's experiences with twinship; participation with her identical twin in International Twin Association (ITA) conventions and participant observation at two international twin studies conferences (2007). The twins were interviewed in 2003 in the research pavilion at the Twins Days Festival at Twinsburg, Ohio, USA. The author and her identical twin sister interviewed together the 22 identical twin sets, resulting in four-way conversations. The approach deployed in the book is cultural psychology: twins' own lived experiences are systematically compared with twin researchers' discursive treatment of twins.

More precisely, emic lived experiences of twinship (twinscapes) are compared with dominant etic conceptualisations of twins. Themes covered include: body performance of twinship at twins festivals; twins as clones; twins' identity as individuals and as part of a dyadic unit; the twin bond; the splitting up of twin sets.

Davis acknowledges the contributions of twin research, in particular to paediatric care, but is for the most part highly critical of hegemonic twin research. A main point of contention with Davis is the medicalisation of the twin condition; twins tend to be seen as at risk of developing an incomplete individual identity or insufficient individual autonomy. Davis is also critical of the naïve or simplistic conceptualisation of culture

underlying most twin research, including twin researchers' lack of reflection on their own cultural biases.

While reading *Twins talk*, I wondered whether Davis herself is fully aware of how her own American background affects her analysis. For instance, in Chapter 3 Davis stresses that the term monozygotic twins favoured in twin research does not resonate with her own and informants' lived experiences. However, *monozygotic twins* are closer to the vernacular Dutch and German terminology – *eeneiuge tweeling* and *eineiuge Zwillinge* (literally one-egg twins) – than the English vernacular *identical twins*. The latter suggests that researchers' linguistic-cultural backgrounds may matter in analysis.

The title of the book – *Twins talk* – I found somewhat misleading. Davis does privilege identical twins' emic perspectives, but not twins' voices in the strict sense; only in Chapter 7 are twins' words or talk cited in abundance. Moreover, Davis does not engage in serious analysis of verbatim twins' talk (but she discusses the use of the pronoun *we* that figures prominently in informants' talk). It is also not clearly reflected in the subtitle that informants' talk is primarily used as an instrument to critically examine the underlying cultural assumptions of hegemonic twin research. *Twins talk* may be because of the latter be of particular interest to scholars who study science as a cultural practice.

The author hopes to foster awareness and reflection on the assumptions underlying hegemonic twin research. The careful explanation of the interpretive research paradigm and of jargon when it cannot be avoided fits with this aim. However, Davis provides little or no advice on how, for instance, twin researchers operating in the dominant research paradigm who want to engage with Davis's critiques may best do so.

All in all, *Twins talk* offers some valuable insights into the lived experience of twinship, but there remains much to be explored. And time will tell whether Davis's book is a help in tackling biases in hegemonic twin research.

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**Deville, Joe. 2015. *Lived economies of default: consumer credit, debt collection and the capture of affect*. Abingdon: Routledge. 212 pp. Hb.: US\$140.00. ISBN: 978-0-415-62250-9.**

What happens when people are unwilling or unable to pay their debts? The problem of default has been increasingly in the public spotlight since the subprime mortgage crisis of 2008 and beyond. Far less attention has been paid, however, to default on consumer credit debts amassed through means such as credit cards, payday loans or rent-to-buy arrangements. And, yet, debt burdens incurred through these means have a significant impact on individuals, households and society. Mental health issues, family breakdowns and economic recession are all linked to unmanageable levels of personal debt.

Throughout this book's introduction, five chapters and conclusion, Joe Deville turns our attention to the relationships between defaulters and debt collectors in the United Kingdom and the devices that mediate them. He describes how debt collections agencies put affect to work for them through the credit card statement, the collections letter and even debt collectors themselves, all of which are devices deployed to create a psychological response in debtors and prompt repayment.

The book is both highly empirical and highly theoretical. Deville collected three kinds of data: 'devices' (credit card