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**Review of *Dead Artists Live Theories*. Stanley Aronowitz.
Reviewed by John W. Murphy, University of Miami.**

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a life support system. To resuscitate itself, sociology must revisit and rediscover its intellectual roots; to recapture the things it did best and could still do well. Myopic empirical exercises must be replaced by broader theoretical questions and a willingness to engage in research less bent on proving what researchers want to have happen. (Horowitz cites James Coleman's unhappy exodus from sociology precisely because his data on school desegregation did not support what most sociologists wanted to believe.)

I found myself captured by Horowitz's analysis and the passion of his prose. I liked better his analysis than proscription for change but even there his writing is very thought-provoking. If he does nothing else, he will have served an important purpose in holding a mirror up to sociology (and its practitioners) and telling them: "Here's what I see. What do you see?" The knee-jerk reaction by many sociologists, I suspect, will be to disagree with Horowitz. They will neither like his analysis nor his proscription. A more detached, dispassionate, reflective reading, however, may lead them to my own conclusion. To wonder about where we are as a discipline and what future we have—in and out of the academy. Like Pogo, Horowitz has "met the enemy and it's us." I wonder. I wonder enough that I recommend the book as a "must read" for sociologists and social scientists more generally since his message must be heard and considered by them as well.

William W. Falk
University of Maryland

Stanley Aronowitz: *Dead Artists Live Theorists*. New York: Routledge, 1994. \$49.95 hardcover, \$16.95 papercover.

This book represents a genre of literature that has come to be known as cultural criticism. To borrow from Tony Bennett, these writers examine "cultural practices from the point of their interaction with, and within, relations of power". Within this context, the exercise of power is broadly defined to exist in economic leverage, class domination, symbolic violence, gender discrimination, the literary canon, and a host of other covert and overt sources of influence and coercion. The aim of this kind of work is to demonstrate how power is both accumulated and undermined

through cultural practices. In many ways extending the writing of the Frankfurt School, cultural critics operate at the nexus of aesthetics, theory, and politics.

A quick glance of this book reveals that this is precisely the juncture at which Aronowitz stands. The focus of this collection of articles, he maintains, is "contemporary cultural politics and political culture" (xi). For example, there are essays devoted to postmodernism, the Frankfurt School, Roland Barthes, Mikhail Bakhtin, Raymond Williams, and Jurgen Habermas. The earliest of the fifteen chapters was published in 1977, while two, in addition to the Introduction, are appearing for the first time.

Readers who are looking for a primer on cultural criticism, however, will have to search elsewhere. There is a key problem with this book that is common to books of this type. Stated simply, each of these pieces was written at a different time, and thus holding them together is extremely difficult. Although unifying themes are present—and which are also at the heart of current debates among cultural critics—they are not prominent. Therefore, trying to ascertain Aronowitz's perspective or interest can be very frustrating. At times, this book appears to be directionless, or at least peripherally related to the concerns of most contemporary cultural critics.

Nonetheless, a persistent reader will find several points that are central to current cultural critiques. For example, Aronowitz seems to take a stand on the legitimacy of dualism. This controversy relates to whether subjectivity or *praxis* can be categorically removed from objectivity. He scoffs throughout this book at the attempt made by exponents of high art to rescue Cartesian dichotomies from the criticism levelled by postmodernists and other radicals. Yet a thorough examination of dualism is never forthcoming.

Related to the debate over dualism is the relationship between language and reality. In a manner similar to Lyotard, Aronowitz suggests that reality is mediated fully by language. "Works of fiction and other art forms", Aronowitz writes, "are signatures that indicate domains without representing them" (xi). And while discussing Bakhtin's view of speech, language is acknowledged to constitute the space-time dimension (154). Raymond Williams is also applauded for uniting language use and the social

world (170). But despite numerous examples, this topic is still approached only circuitously.

The link between objectivity and theory is handled a little more comprehensively. Reminiscent of Stanley Fish, Aronowitz apparently agrees with the postmodern position that truth is underpinned by ideology (43). While citing Robbe-Grillet, the practice of science is recognized to "constitute a 'reading' of reality" (65). Furthermore, in his evaluation of critical theory and Bachelard's philosophy of science, Aronowitz conveys the idea that scientific knowledge is inundated by theory and not valuefree (113–114). With respect to the objectivity of science, Aronowitz tends to side with those who argue that scientific knowledge rests on certain assumptions that are not necessarily universal.

Hardly any attention is devoted by Aronowitz to the issue of whether morality is reinforced by a reality *sui generis* or is dialogical. Mostly while discussing the work of Bakhtin and criticizing Habermas, Aronowitz seems to reject the Durkheimian claim that the centerpiece of moral order must be an ahistorical referent. According to followers of Durkheim, society will devolve into chaos unless an Archimedean point of available to support morality. Although Aronowitz does not find this prediction convincing, he fails to provide a serious assessment of dialogical morality.

In sum, Aronowitz's effort is interesting in places and convoluted in others. He is not very easy on his readers. So, anyone who wants to penetrate this book better be patient, and not expect immediate clarity or insights.

John W. Murphy
University of Miami

Judith S. Modell, *Kinship with Strangers: Adoption and Interpretations of Kinship in American Culture*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994. \$35 hardcover.

"Mom, my teacher said I have to do a family tree." My adopted daughter's words triggered yet another bemused reverie on the questions that beset those affected by adoption: Which family? What is family? What does it mean to be kin? Such quandaries are not exclusive to members of the adoptive triad (birthparents,