

## Journal of Amish and Plain Anabaptist Studies

---

Volume 5

Issue 2 *Special issue (2 of 2): Past Reflections  
and Future Directions in Amish Studies*

Article 6

---

2017

### Bourdieu in Plain Anabaptist Studies? A Symposium Review of Out of Place: Social Exclusion and Mennonite Migrants in Canada

Jeffrey Longhofer

Steven Reschly

Luann Good Gingrich

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/amishstudies>

 Part of the [Social Work Commons](#)

Please take a moment to share how this work helps you [through this survey](#). Your feedback will be important as we plan further development of our repository.

---

#### Recommended Citation

Longhofer, Jeffrey, Steven Reschly, and Luann Good Gingrich. 2017. "Bourdieu in Plain Anabaptist Studies? A Symposium Review of Out of Place: Social Exclusion and Mennonite Migrants in Canada." *Journal of Amish and Plain Anabaptist Studies* 5(2):258-69.

This Symposium is brought to you for free and open access by IdeaExchange@Uakron, the institutional repository of The University of Akron in Akron, Ohio, USA. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Journal of Amish and Plain Anabaptist Studies* by an authorized administrator of IdeaExchange@Uakron. For more information, please contact [mjon@uakron.edu](mailto:mjon@uakron.edu), [uapress@uakron.edu](mailto:uapress@uakron.edu).

## **Bourdieu in Plain Anabaptist Studies? A Symposium Review of**

### ***Out of Place: Social Exclusion and Mennonite Migrants in Canada***

by Luann Good Gingrich

Associate Professor of Social Work, York University

Good Gingrich, Luann. 2016. *Out of Place: Social Exclusion and Mennonite Migrants in Canada*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

**Editor's introduction**—This symposium offers the reviews of two authors who, without sparing whatever criticism can be mustered, hold her work up as archetypal for rigorous methods and theory in plain Anabaptist studies. I have little more to say about Luann Good Gingrich's work than that it is has been long, *long* in waiting. But let me add just a bit more and say why.

Now here is a study where a researcher has brought thick theory to interpret meticulously collected and presented interview data about a plain Anabaptist group (Old Colony Mennonites) in the context of broader forces. Yet, with her findings, she rejects the classic pattern in Amish and plain Anabaptist studies to engage in topical incest; instead, she pollinates larger theory with new life. Situated in social work, Good Gingrich's research has broad implications for the social sciences, both for strengthening Bourdieu's theories and in bringing into focus from the Old Colony Mennonite case the inherent contradictions in the Canadian welfare and market system. Good Gingrich's investigation of these Mennonites is fresh food for thought, instantly palatable, to the hungry scholar in Amish and plain Anabaptist studies. For one, she avoids the long-rooted dichotomy of insider/outsider and instead explores the permanent temporality of separatist Mennonites engaging the world (and vice versa), an umbrella for many other suspended contradictions in both Mennonite and state habituses and fields. The Mennonites are, ultimately, socially excluded (marginally included) by both self-imposition and the Canadian social field.

Her work should be emulated in at least three ways. First, transcribed quotes are extensive. Not only are the conclusions drawn from data verifiable in the text but her respondents are given voice far beyond the small snippets—or even absence—of voice in most other monographs about plain people. Second, she feels no obligation to entertain the readers with factoids and descriptive passages about Old Colony Mennonites, but, after presenting necessary data and background, moves for a page—or even pages—into theorizing that may make little to no direct mention of Mennonites. Her focus is broadly conceptual and purposive, not a stream of Mennonite trivia. Finally, her conclusions are cautious and, ultimately, inconclusive, far from the boastful, publicity-conscious, definitive-sympathetic-authoritative-comprehensive study of an insider. The study opens more questions than answers, inviting other scholars to contribute.

—Cory Anderson, editor, *Journal of Amish and Plain Anabaptist Studies*

**Review #1: Jeffrey Longhofer, Professor of Social Work, Rutgers University**

I am not prone to sycophantic hyperbole in reviewing books. I try my best to find the ground somewhere between the freshly tilled soil and the deep roots and often I expose a place where the author has not probed deeply enough, into the data or into the fit between theory and data. Luann Good Gingrich is an exception. Few scholars accomplish what she has in making nuanced moves among macro social theory, psychological theory (i.e., object relations), and the experience-near sites of social exclusion and suffering. This is a scrupulous consideration of the forces shaping the interactions among the recipients of social welfare services, clients and communities, and their unique social positioning as they circumnavigate national boundaries, shifting neoliberal state projects, privatization of social services, managerialism, and sometimes intersecting and conflicting identities (of welfare workers and clients). With concepts from Bourdieu—habitus, social field, and capital—and her carefully crafted moves between the macro and micro, what she has accomplished in her book is nothing short of spectacular. And she does so without losing the singularity of the human experience. For example, during her research, as she reflects on her Mennonite history and habitus, she acknowledges her own singularity. This she accomplishes by fully recognizing and engaging countertransference with her subjects, and by refraining from the use of her own identity as a condition for engagement, by avoiding what Bourdieu called the scholastic fallacy.

And while she does not use or cite Bourdieu's work on the scholastic fallacy, she accomplishes precisely what Bourdieu describes as reflexive practice: the researcher, the "objectifying subject," must objectify their own practices. She writes that a truly reflexive practice compels "researchers, professional helpers, or concerned citizens to consider the ways in which we think and talk about people and the social problems as if we occupy a place outside, as if we have no place in this social world that we are trying to articulate" (p. 63). Her work makes a major contribution to the often experience-distant accounts of habit and reflexivity in social work practice (Berger 2015; D'Cruz, et al. 2007a; D'Cruz, et al. 2007b).

Throughout her work, Gingrich interrogates the mostly hidden assumptions that produce and reproduce social work practice methods, assign significance to social problems, valorize particular interventions and research, and prescribe research methods and representation of findings. Good Gingrich offers us an exceptional, experience-near account of how the social field of social work's hidden assumptions requires a social science of social work research practice. Good Gingrich, moreover, avoids the tendency, common among those oversubscribed to Bourdieu's thinking, to assign undue importance to habit and thereby fail to account for the many ways practitioners monitor and scrutinize acquired practice habits. It's too bad that she did not read and develop a conversation with Jerry Floersch's (2002) important work on what he called, and she also calls, the "helper habitus," and his earlier work on reading the case record, both important contributions to our understandings of how social work practice is both subject to the formation of the practice habitus and also forms of resistance to it (Floersch 2000).

Bernard Lahire (2003), perhaps the most important and sympathetic of Bourdieu's critics, would find in this work a reasonable corrective to what he sees as Bourdieu's conceptual erasure of singularity and problematic understanding of reflexivity. And among the less sympathetic of Bourdieu's critics, Margaret Archer (2010) would also find here a significant move toward resolving what she calls the problem of central conflation: the collapse of subjectivity and objectivity "so that agents and structures lose their relative autonomy."

The Old Colony Mennonites offer to Gingrich a way not only of thinking about the complexities of mobility and migration and the various scenes of cultural collision. Canada, the site of her research, is also a place where she explores in detail—using and considering the complexities and many contradictions produced by Canadian exceptionalism—how cultural identities and help seeking behaviors are a matter less of ethnographic fact than of political contestation. Old Colony Mennonite immigrants from Latin America are used to explore not the exotic and quaint but how imagined communities, Canadian and Mennonite, are in uncertain and unstable states. Her work shows us how welfare states, welfare state actors, and human service actions lack unity, unless determined by particular unifying historical conditions. Likewise, she shows how in their forms of resistance, immigrants—communal and individual—also lack unity. Finally, modes and ethics of caring—i.e., human services, delivered by state and non-state actors—will also be largely determined by a lack of unity and the disorder found in late capitalist societies.

Especially notable is the way Good Gingrich conceptualizes social exclusion. Social work practitioners and researchers will need to read Good Gingrich to deepen their understanding of social exclusion. Here, Good Gingrich is worth quoting at length:

The application of social exclusion as an individual kind through a categorical perspective, fixed on its material outcomes, reinforces and perpetuates the common sense belief that those who suffer the social ills of society—poverty, unemployment, inadequate housing—collude intentionally or unwittingly in their own economic and social hardship. (p. 56)

Finally, let me note my great worry about this work. I fear that it will not be discovered by social work researchers and those interested in the complex forms welfare states take in the neoliberal era. The title of the book, *Out of Place: Social Exclusion and Mennonite Migrants in Canada*, does not begin to describe the true nature of this work. Likewise, I fear this work will be read mainly by scholars with an interest in Anabaptist communities and history. And they too may find this work outside the scope of their usual interests.

## **Review #2: Steven Reschly, Professor of History, Truman State University**

"[M]igration is about *preserving*, even as it threatens to destroy" (p. 174; emphasis in original). Luann Good Gingrich, Associate Professor of Social Work at York University in Toronto, investigated the paradoxes of migration in *Out of Place*. However, her research is far more nuanced than a simple binary of success or failure. The book interweaves the stories and

experiences of Old Colony Mennonites in Canada and Latin America, the “reflexive sociology” of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002), and the social services institutions and practices as they have existed and shifted in Canada in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Even more generally, the book is about social exclusion and inclusion, the neoliberal political economy, the fusion of market and state in late capitalism, and the invention and persistence of unequal distribution of capital, in all its forms, in global populations. In this complex matrix, Old Colony Mennonites are “both unique and typical” (p. 25), as they represent numerous “insiders” and “outsiders” all over the world, marking this study as both local and global, both particular to specific times and places and representative of global trends in economics, labor markets, migrations, and inequities. Tracking all these topics makes the read difficult, but rich and rewarding.

Obligatory disclaimers and observations: It is important for *JAPAS* readers to understand that *Out of Place* is not a book about Old Colony Mennonites, in the sense of an anthropological ethnography. I know precious little about Old Colony Mennonites or the Russian Mennonite groups and traditions more generally. I know even less about Canadian politics, economics, and systems of social services. Like many scholars in the English-language world, I used parts of Bourdieu’s research and theoretical writings in my dissertation and resultant book, *The Amish on the Iowa Prairie* (2000). My own research experience is situated in Anabaptist groups from the Swiss, South German, and Alsace-Lorraine regions of Central Europe. Despite—or perhaps because of—these caveats and limitations, I learned a great deal by reading *Out of Place*. “Intersectionality,” a current catchword not used in the book, certainly describes the experience of working through its many layers and connectivities.

Writing a summary, per a normal book review, of *Out of Place* is nearly impossible; that is, to condense adequately and fairly its several component parts. My impression is that the author had enough material for at least five books. Instead, it may take five readings—for me at least—to digest its content. The present volume represents nearly 20 years of research and reflection, distilled into one dense and intense tome. The author described her hesitancy in publishing information about a group that prefers to remain private and separate, in the Acknowledgements as well as in Chapter 1 (pp. xix 20-22), hence some resulting delay in publication. Since others were, and are, publishing about plain groups in general and Old Colony Mennonites specifically, she realized that not publishing would not protect their privacy. Good Gingrich included many Old Colony voices from her own field notes, transcriptions of interviews by translators and other researchers, as well as voices of social service personnel. On the other hand, further research may be stymied by increasing resistance from informants who believe they are being intruded upon and misrepresented (pp. 229-30, note 32). I wonder if the Mexican feature film, “Silent Light,” and the recent Canadian Broadcasting Corporation TV series, “Pure,” could be playing a role in this hesitancy. In any case, there is a maturity and wisdom in *Out of Place* that one seldom finds in a writing that began life as a dissertation.

Good Gingrich defined terms with great care. “Dietsch” (noun) and “Dietsche” (noun and adjective) refer to Old Colony migrants between and among Canada and Latin American countries (Deutsch and Deutsche/deutsche in High German). These terms are partially derived from the language, “Plautdietsch” or Low German (Plattdeutsch in High German), and partially derived from an intention to differentiate the author’s research from other recent terminologies, such as Altkolonier, Kanadier, “Mexican Mennonites,” and horse-and-buggy Mennonites. (Im)migrant is intended to represent the complexities of migration—emigration, immigration, “circular migration,” return migration, and other types of global population relocation. The author meant (im)migration “to signify the Dietsche Mennonite supranational disposition” (p. 18), that is, Dietsche habits of movement, nearly assumptions that migrations will be part of their lives. (The discussion of terminologies takes place on pages 15-19 and the associated notes on pages 227-28, notes 19-24.) “Disposition” will require further thought as *Habitus*.

Good Gingrich made extensive and sophisticated use of the theory and research praxis of Pierre Bourdieu, represented most efficiently by the phrase “reflexive sociology.” The researcher must situate him/herself within the research, such that the subject-object binary, or the we-they and self-other differentiations, become “we.” As the author stated, citing Bourdieu, researching the social world “must involve recognition that we are seeing and theorizing ourselves” (p. 63). In fact, *Out of Place* is a rare English-language example of doing Bourdieusian sociology. There are many publications that explain Bourdieu’s sociology methods and theories, and many (like my own) that use selected parts of Bourdieu’s ideas but almost none that do research that is theorized and that develop theory supported specifically by empirical research. The only ones I know of are the works of French-American Loïc J. D. Wacquant, Bourdieu’s colleague, collaborator, and mediator to the English-speaking world. Good Gingrich cited Wacquant—and co-authored works by Bourdieu with Wacquant—quite often, though not nearly as often as Bourdieu himself. See *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* by Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992).

*Habitus*, Field, and Capital are essential terms to read Bourdieu and, therefore, to read *Out of Place*. Bourdieu rejected the common binaries that bedevil social theory: internal-external, idealism-materialism, individual-society, self-other, structuralism-functionalism, sacred-profane, left-right, insider-outsider, and many others. Thus, *Habitus* (the habits of mind, the inner world of human beings, or dispositions) and Field (the external, social world) are mutually influential. In Bourdieu’s terms, this is “the internalisation of externality and the externalisation of internality,” or the “mutual penetration” of “structuralist constructivism” and “constructivist structuralism” (quoted p. 66). I used *Habitus* and field in historical research and began to despair of those terms finding wider acceptance; I thus proposed “structured intuition” for *Habitus* and “intuitive structuring” for field. After reading this book, I may wish to return to Bourdieu’s original terms. I made little use of capital, which has a large presence in *Out of Place*. Capital takes economic, social, and cultural forms, resulting in “symbolic capital,” all of which position persons and groups in the social field. Differential access to and possession of capital results in hierarchical inequality as persons and groups are labeled “insider” or “outsider” in the

social field. Bourdieu was interested in the creation and application of power, especially symbolic or hidden power that is more powerful for being virtually and intentionally invisible. One reads “cultural capital” and “social capital” in writings focused on Plain communities, as well as in studies of education and other disciplines, but taken out of a Bourdieusian context, they are essentially meaningless terms.

Good Gingrich demonstrated that Dietsche, as well as other marginal persons and groups, are often forced into a liminal, in-between (*entredeux*) existence, torn socially and within themselves by fidelity to colony traditions—such as mutuality, language, placing community ahead of individual, and so forth—and the competitive individualism of the neoliberal market-state, based on wage labor and conformity to atomized economics. She makes an interesting distinction between “making a living”—which may mean for Dietsche piecing together many different seasonal agricultural jobs in Ontario in which many family members earn cash income in an “informal economy,” sometimes wintering in Mexico, for example—and “wage labor”—which separates families, isolates women, and leaves children uninvolved or in school, perhaps too much school. She utilized a late-career concept from Bourdieu, “divided *Habitus*” or “cleft *Habitus*” (the latter I find to be a particularly striking phrase), that is, Dietsche may find themselves separated from colony and church, from distant extended family members, from members of their own nuclear families, and even from parts of themselves. Choosing English over *Plautdietsch* is but one example. These choices are imposed by the social welfare system as it changes in Canada toward neoliberal ideologies, such as individualism, market economics, and limited government. As welfare services become more constricted, marginal persons and groups receive less assistance to include themselves in Canadian society and thus find themselves excluded, or they find it more difficult to choose freely to remain separate in a more communal lifestyle.

Defining and describing these “double binds” of dispossession and alienation can result in exceedingly complex language. I had to read many sentences and paragraphs several times, and will need to read them again. This is not a criticism. My sense is that, similar to reading German philosophy or other French social and linguistic theorists, the complexity of the language is necessary to signify the discourses of intricate, ambiguous, paradoxical, contested, and byzantine ideas in the operations of social and cultural power. These writers make few concessions to what passes for “popular” tastes for the *hoi polloi*.

As a historian, the best compliment I can offer is that *Out of Place* caused me to think of many other historical processes: industrialization and the gendered separation of home and workplace, and thus the creation of the “housewife,” but only for certain classes and races; the writings of E. P. Thompson and the shift from task-oriented work to industrial timed and disciplined wage labor; immigration historiography and the assimilation paradigm (many migrant groups moved to conserve, “transplanted” rather than “uprooted”); the internalization of colonization by the colonized described by Frantz Fanon; the contingent historical invention of the nation-state, as in Eugen Weber’s *Peasants into Frenchmen* (1976); creating the welfare and

warfare state in the first half of the twentieth century, now being intentionally dismantled (well, the welfare side), as traced by Good Gingrich; the neoliberal paradigm shift led by Reagan, Thatcher, and their successors; the recurrent transfer of wealth toward the already wealthy and the greater impoverishment of the already poor in nearly all of human history; the dominance of agriculture and the recent changes to industrial and then to service/information political economies; and many other enduring questions and issues. Some of this longer historical perspective could have been included in the book, but it seems petty to ask for even more from such a productive piece of research. Perhaps it is no accident that this book shares its title with Edward Said's memoir (1999); like the Dietsche, persistently between cultures and nations.

I should note that I am not including the final chapter on "Social Inclusion" in this review. When juxtaposed with the rest of the book, it seems moralistic and prescriptive, even as I wholeheartedly agree with the necessity to be "tenaciously subversive" in the (quixotic?) quest to overcome the "systems of values and beliefs" (p. 220) that characterize the neoliberal market-state. Working toward reconciliation and "restorative justice" (p. 247 n. 6) seems a prototypical Anabaptist assumption of permanent minority standing, whereas in the rest of the book, Good Gingrich worked very hard to position the Dietsche narrative in Canadian national and provincial political economies.

*Out of Place* illustrates the potential rewards of situating minority histories and sociologies in national and global histories, and of utilizing national and global histories to contextualize minority and subaltern histories. Following Bourdieu in his rejection of binary habits of scholarship, scholars of Anabaptist and plain communities can benefit from situating the local in the global and making global trends specific in localities. Another binary that needs to be left behind, for example, is the false choice between viewing Amish communities as constructed solely upon their history and theology, no matter what the social and political contexts may be; and, on the other hand, viewing the Amish as mired in constant struggle with external technological forces, while disregarding the impact of their historical experience and religious beliefs.

The theory and praxis of Pierre Bourdieu surely offers one solution to these scholarly cul-de-sacs, but no one is arguing that he is the only way out. Good Gingrich, to her credit, cited many other writers and scholars, for example, in tracing the development of neoliberalism and its operations in the early decades of the twenty-first century. Her dominant muse, and thus the dominant theorist in this review, was Bourdieu. Finding routes out of the isolated and insulated world of plain scholarship is critical. Here's hoping that many more scholars will follow Good Gingrich's lead in researching the chronically undertheorized branches of plain Anabaptist studies.



## Reply by Luann Good Gingrich: More Thoughts on Reflexivity

It seems that serious engagement with theory has fallen out of fashion, even in the academy, as scholars are pushed to develop “university-industry partnerships” and to produce neatly packaged and marketable “outputs.” Theory development does not lend itself to simple policy and practice “innovations.” Over the years, as I have presented my work on social exclusion at dozens of academic conferences, my 15 or 20 minute presentations have been consistently met with voyeuristic curiosity about the case example (Dietsche communities), and the theory often falls flat. So to begin, I wish to express my deep appreciation to Cory Anderson for initiating this scholarly conversation. I’m also very grateful to the two reviewers, Jeffrey Longhofer and Steven Reschley, for the respect and intentionality with which they engaged my work. This is indeed high praise.

Surely a book provides extended opportunity and encouragement for others to engage in the theory—the focus of my work—yet finding words to invite the reader in, language for storytelling, was a constant challenge in my writing. I was aware of trying to “trick” the reader into theory—to take the reader by the hand, to point out what is there to see and learn beneath the surface of common preconceptions and beyond the peculiar “otherness” of the people in the story. Honoring both the people and the theory was also a struggle for me in naming the book. Titles are difficult—reductionist, almost certainly. I take Longhofer’s point that the title “does not begin to describe the true nature of this work.” Yet, I was also aiming to catch the attention of various audiences—practitioners, academics, students, even curious “lay” people. This continues to be a perplexing problem for scholars, I think—to engage in conversations beyond ourselves, to move outside of the “scientific ‘community’ defined by its commitment to objectivity, probity, and a presumed independence from worldly interests,” to accept the risks of investing “artistic or scientific competency in civic debates” (Bourdieu 2003, 18). But if ever there was a time for the “public intellectual,” it is now.

Just as *Out of Place* went to press and became available (the summer of 2016), alarming social and political shifts all across the world were coming to light, renewing my resolve to invite us to think differently about ourselves in relation to the “other” we identify in our everyday lives. Since then, we have witnessed the rising popularity of openly xenophobic ideals expressed by populist movements led by (ironically) wealthy elite who dismiss the resentments they manipulate. All across the globe, people who identify with the conservative right *and* the liberal left are inscribing hard and fast lines demarcating “them” from “us”. To simply condemn these rising leaders and their followers is to respond in kind. Furthermore, “to indict anti-intellectualism [...] does not exempt the intellectual from this critique to which every intellectual can and must submit himself or herself or, in another language, from *reflexivity*, which is the absolute prerequisite to any political action by intellectuals. The intellectual world must engage in a permanent critique of all the abuses of power or authority committed in the name of intellectual authority [...]” (Bourdieu 2003, 19).

The thoughtful and informative reviews of my work inspired me to consider again Pierre Bourdieu's reflexivity, in particular the epistemic reflexivity that is crucial to rigorous and truthful social research. I have chosen to focus the remainder of my response on these reflections.

If we are to take seriously the project of reflexivity, as Bourdieu suggests, we will be compelled to pay attention to those who breathe life into growing populist movements. Almost 20 years ago, in a provocative reflexive consideration of the Christian church, Old Testament theologian Walter Brueggemann posits the "coming of exile with the loss of Jerusalem" as a close analogue for our time, and offers these rather prophetic words:

For the truth is that Western culture as we have counted on it is in a serious state of collapse [...] Specifically, *old modes of power, old patterns of certitude* – liberal and conservative – and *old claims of privilege* on which we commonly count are in deep jeopardy[...]. Ours is a like loss, concrete and political, religious and symbolic, wherein the old, white male privilege of the West is gone, and we are in a season of displacement and wilderness [...]. I believe the consequence of such loss, moreover, is enormous rage, which shows up variously in family abuse, in absurd armament programs and budgets, in abusive prison policies, in passion for capital punishment, and assaults upon the poor in the name of "reform". All of these, I submit, are displaced practices of anger that end in brutality. (Brueggemann 2000, 36; 61)

The public intellectual of today will only add fuel to these raging fires unless we acknowledge the grievances of those for whom our institutions and social systems have never worked, those who are left with little more than empty promises, those from whom our own privilege and certitude and domination was stolen. Reflexivity requires us to accept our intimate connection with and investment in "these old realities of certitude, privilege, and domination" (Brueggemann 2000, 59).

Bourdieu's concept of reflexivity is commonly drained of meaning, rendering its application in research to a rather awkward contemplative introspection and self-disclosure of the researcher's "internal conversations" or deliberations over one's social place and personal concerns. To reiterate the obvious, Pierre Bourdieu's reflexive sociology is the study of *practice*—not beliefs, or motivations, or intentions. Indeed, these internal ruminations, variously available to conscious thought, remain beyond the reach of empirical research or even self-reflection. The best we can do is to examine *representations* (or stories) of beliefs, motivations, or intentions, which are always contaminated with relational interests and investments. The subjective cannot be considered outside of or apart from the social context in which it is engaged. Similarly, it seems all too common to selectively take up Bourdieu's concepts (capital, social field, habitus) as if they retain their depth of meaning when taken apart. This piecemeal approach generates false cognitive divides between agency and structure, between the micro and the macro, between the subjective and the material. It is tempting to rupture the individual from the social, as this permits neat and manageable compartments of thought that comply with the binary fallacies of market individualism. Even more, the ironic "neoliberalisation" of Bourdieu's

epistemic reflexivity feeds the social and cognitive divides promoted by popular ideological trends such as identity politics, the politics of victimhood, and, what Bourdieu refers to as, a “narcissistic reflexivity that is celebrated by some ‘postmodern’ writers, for which the analytical gaze turns back on to the private person of the analyst” (Wacquant 2007, 273). Such narcissistic reflexivity denies or disavows the very essence of the self as a social being, as necessarily and inherently engaged in social relations of power.

I am aware that these reflections on reflexivity may seem to echo the “moralistic and prescriptive” tone, according to Reschly, of the final chapter of my book. This chapter, in large part, was written in response to the question “So what?” with which I was first confronted in my doctoral oral exam. Perhaps this is a fair and necessary question for scholars, especially for theorists whose primary objective is to influence, in some way, common understandings through analysis of what is. After all the analysis, *so what?* Sometimes, maybe even most times, I am of the opinion that robust critical reflexive analysis *is* enough, because it pushes us to see and know and understand ourselves and our place in the physical and social world with more honesty, humility, and compassion. In this case, because I drew on a social “problem” to develop the theory, I felt some pressure, primarily from practitioners, to say something about how to solve the “problem.” This turn away from analysis toward synthesis risks jettisoning a Bourdieusian framework, especially, as is common, when one orthodoxy is traded in for another. In my defense, I wish to be explicit about my objectives and efforts in this chapter, following Reschly’s specific critiques.

First, Reschly comments, “Working toward reconciliation and ‘restorative justice’ seems a prototypical Anabaptist assumption of permanent minority standing.” Here, I am reminded of the danger of using commonplace language to communicate uncommon ideas. I hasten to clarify that the term “reconciliation” is not used to signal restorative justice practices in criminal courts or Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) contexts. Although these reconciliation processes are important and promising in some ways, these efforts are specifically geared toward reconciling an individual or group that has been wronged with those responsible for wrongdoing. This is the reconciliation of victims and offenders, and requires us to know who’s who. In Canada, although the TRC has encouraged listening and some recognition of past wrongs since its initiation in 2008, the process thus far has changed little in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous peoples. This is the perpetuation of social exclusion, in my opinion: to offer some symbolic capital (or recognition), but only as victims, which functions to reinforce the devaluation of possessed cultural and political capital. Indigenous peoples are made visible and drawn inside, but to devalued and dispossessed places. This sort of reconciliation is little more than re-colonization. So I insist that I do not relegate Dietsche to minority or victim positions, as Reschly asserts. This would undo much of the analysis of the book and would return us to a commonsense binary “vision of divisions.” Rather, I am referring to the reconciling of social divides and the healing of fractured relationships that involve all of us, not only Mennonites.

Yet I argue that Mennonites as Anabaptists *do* take up minority status, with intention, but not by my doing. (I note that Statistics Canada lists “Mennonite” as an ethnic minority category in some of their national surveys, such as the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics.) The Anabaptists of the sixteenth century were radicals in their challenge of the dominant political and social structures of the day. They stubbornly practiced self-imposed social exclusion, as do plain Mennonite and Anabaptist groups today. However, my point is that a minority identity does not need to represent lesser. This is critical to my analysis: difference can be valued, must be valued, to keep limits on extremism and to move us toward healthier relationships, communities, societies.

Finally, my main objective in the final chapter is to draw attention to a counter-cultural (or counter-hegemonic) worldview—to remind the reader that market logic is not all there is, even though it is everywhere and is our common sense. Given that market logic is profoundly moralistic and prescriptive in its own terms, and functions to dismiss and devalue all that challenges it, such a principled (even moralistic) standpoint is necessary. If my urgings to look to spaces of exclusion for inspiration are taken up as prescriptive, however, I have been misunderstood. To the contrary, my aim is to help the reader identify counter-hegemonic worldviews with which they are familiar. So I do not prescribe a specific moral imperative or ideology—I only argue that those who challenge our sensibilities and expectations around “fitting in” and conformity (such as Dietsche) offer a critique of dominant norms and ideals (the way things are) that is worth careful and respectful consideration. To recognize that we *have* a worldview that is not the only way to view the world requires being confronted with something different. Indigenous peoples, disenfranchised youth, even fundamentalists and extremists (on the right and the left) offer counter-point to the prevailing “vision of division” that has wrought the social and environmental crises we now face. “We” have much to learn from those we often judge most harshly. If we understand poverty, social exclusion, to be fractured relationships in need of healing, and if we understand the need to “restore” the essential social nature of humanity in our thinking and ways of being, then alternative worldviews are necessary. The “cult of the individual and ‘individualism’, the basis of the whole of neoliberal economic thinking” (Bourdieu 2005, 11) will not get us there. I attempt to nurture a reflexive posture, with full awareness that “our” way—the “Canadian” or “American” way—is not necessarily better, or right, or even normal, and does not work for everyone, maybe no longer even for “us.”

## References

- Archer, Margaret. 2010. “Can Reflexivity and Habitus Work in Tandem?” *Conversations about Reflexivity* 123-143.
- Berger, Roni. 2015. “Now I See It, Now I Don’t: Researcher’s Position and Reflexivity in Qualitative Research.” *Qualitative Research* 15(2):219-34.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794112468475>

- Bourdieu, Pierre. 2003. *Firing Back: Against the Tyranny of the Market* (2). Translated by Loïc JD Wacquant. New York, NY: Verso.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 2005. *The Social Structures of the Economy*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre, and Loïc JD Wacquant. 1992. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Brueggemann, Walter. 2000. *Deep Memory, Exuberant Hope: Contested Truth in a Post-Christian World*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- D'Cruz, Heather, Philip Gillingham, and Sebastian Melendez. 2007a. "Reflexivity: Its Meanings, and Relevance for Social Work: A Critical Review of the Literature." *The British Journal of Social Work* 37(1):73-90. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcl001>
- D'Cruz, Heather, Philip Gillingham, and Sebastian Melendez. 2007b. "Reflexivity: A Concept and Its Meanings for Practitioners Working with Children and Families." *Critical Social Work* 8(1):1-18.
- Floersch, Jerry. 2000. "Reading the Case Record: The Oral and Written Narratives of Social Workers." *Social Service Review* 74(2):169-92. <https://doi.org/10.1086/514475>
- Floersch, Jerry. 2002. *Meds, Money, and Manners: The Case Management of Severe Mental Illness*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press. <https://doi.org/10.7312/floe12272>
- Lahire, Bernard. 2003. "From the Habitus to an Individual Heritage of Dispositions: Towards a Sociology at the Level of the Individual." *Poetics* 31(5-6):329-55. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2003.08.002>
- Wacquant, Loïc JD. 2007. "Pierre Bourdieu." Pp. 261-77 in *Key Sociological Thinkers* edited by Rob Stones. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Weber, Eugen. 1976. *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.