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sociologists, deserve introduction in this review.

In Chapter 2, R. Stephen Warner compares Korean immigrant churches with the earlier white and other contemporary immigrant churches. His comparative perspectives help us to understand Korean immigrant churches' unique characteristics. For example, while many earlier immigrant groups suffered a shortage of available clergy leadership, the Korean immigrant community has an abundance of pastors, which in turn, has contributed to the propensity for schism in Korean immigrant churches.

Chapter 4, by Kwang Chung Kim and Shin Kim, entitled "The Ethnic Role of Korean Immigrant Churches in the United States," is significant because it offers new comparative data involving Korean, African American, Latino, and white Presbyterians, deriving from the Presbyterian Panel Study and Racial Ethnic Panel Studies of 1997–1999. Their data reveal that 78 percent of Korean Presbyterians attend their congregation's Sunday worship every week, compared to 34 percent of African Americans, 49 percent of Hispanics, and 28 percent of Caucasians. Several researchers previously emphasized Korean immigrants' exceptionally high levels of participation in the congregation, but a conclusive argument could not be made about it until this kind of comparative data was made available. The comparative data also confirm that Korean Presbyterians' donate more to their church than other Presbyterian groups. Donations of \$2,000 or more were reported by 62 percent of Korean respondents in the previous year, compared to 35 percent of African American, 26 percent of Hispanic, and 40 percent of white respondents.

In Chapter 9, Karen Chai proposes a new theoretical model to explain how a Korean church in Boston has established a successful ministry for second-generation Korean Americans. According to an influential theory, a church can flourish when it is strict in maintaining a sectarian tension with its surrounding culture and demanding a high level of commitment from its members. However, Chai argues, the success of the Korean church's English ministry was not the result of strictness. Instead, she claims, "maintaining boundaries through distinctiveness" was the key to the success of the second-generation ministry. Through distinctiveness, the second-

generation Korean ministry set itself apart from several competing groups: Korean immigrant congregations, the secular group, non-Korean evangelical churches, and second-generation non-Christians.

In the introductory chapter, the editors emphasize gender, along with generation and transnational ties, as a key analytical framework for understanding Korean American churches. But the book does not include any chapter focusing on gender hierarchy in Korean immigrant churches or moderation of gender hierarchy in the second-generation Korean ministry. Also, no chapter is devoted to Korean Catholic churches, even though Catholics compose 15–20 percent of Korean immigrants. The failure to include either topic weakens the book's comprehensiveness. In addition, two chapters written by theologians/pastors, suggesting possible solutions to intergenerational conflicts in Korean American churches, are superficial in scholarly analysis. The inclusion of these chapters weakens the overall cohesiveness and scholarly sophistication of the book. Despite these weaknesses, this is the most significant book to examine Korean immigrants' religious practices and one of the most important books to examine the role of religious congregations in the lives of post-1965 immigrants in American society.

Thinking Through Television, by **Ron Lembo**. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 254 pp. \$54.95 cloth. ISBN: 0-521-58465-5.

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Television viewing is one of the most ubiquitous forms of entertainment, and it is arguably one of the least understood. Perhaps not coincidentally, television viewing is also one of the least valued topics considered worthy of sociological inquiry. That is certainly not the case among cultural studies scholars in the humanities here and abroad, who have eagerly laid claim to the study of television, viewing, and viewers through analysis of the practices and power of media institutions, ideologies, and discourses. This book seeks to rectify sociologists' neglect of the importance

of media such as television in the lives of the vast majority of people by conceptualizing and then analyzing the cultural activity that comprises television viewing.

Lembo argues that there is, in fact, a “viewing culture” that emerges from the dynamics of television’s everyday use. That culture is organized around the “social facts” of viewing—the ways in which work and nonwork activities start, stop, and occur simultaneously with television viewing. But those facts are not a simple reduction to readily observable (or reportable) behavior, such as how many times a week a soap fan watches a favorite serial, whether a viewer logs onto the Internet while watching a show, or finding alternate viewing times through mastery over the videocassette recorder. Neither are social facts equivalent to the interpretative process as shaped by powerful discourses and practices of media institutions.

Lembo argues that the concept of “sociality,” which he defines as the meanings, meaning-making, self (and identity) formation, and construction of cultural forms that are present in media use, is central to a viewing culture. Lembo takes seriously, from *viewers’* standpoints, the varied, mindful, and emotional relations they have with one another (either at the time of viewing or in different settings altogether), and more important, between viewers and television itself as a social institution. The latter includes the ways in which viewers turn to television, interact with programming imagery per se, and leave television and fit it back within daily life. The crux of Lembo’s argument is that sociality organizes, at a far more fundamental level, viewers’ say over what and how they watch, and the significance they attach to it. In short, when sociologists empirically examine what people actually think and do in television viewing, and how they choose to do it, a “capability for action” is revealed that cultural studies scholars fail to recognize or accept as a cultural practice.

Lembo artfully and skillfully makes his case. In the first of three parts, Lembo systematically lays out the contributions and limitations of the leading schools of thought on the media. He argues that social theorists outside of cultural studies embrace a “top down” understanding of the institutional processes and ideological power of the media and neglect the world of its everyday use. Social

science scholars approach the topic with a conceptual and methodological precision, but they can only struggle to acknowledge and incorporate the meanings generated by users themselves. Finally, cultural studies scholars, whose insights into discourse, text, and discursive practice are arguably the most sophisticated regarding television use, are ultimately too normative and abstract to capture the agency, autonomy, and power viewers actually already have as they engage television. In criticizing each approach, Lembo demonstrates how the key features of viewing culture that they overlook can be understood by applying his concept of sociality.

The second part of the book is devoted to the analysis of responses and observations of 60 employed men and women from Northern California about their “turn to television” at home after work. A few participants oriented exclusively to viewing in ways that a casual observer might consider habitual, but Lembo’s repeated participant observation revealed that their choices were deliberate and mindful, intended as a playful engagement with the medium that represented an escape and separation from their work lives. A “less mindful” pattern prevailed for another small group of participants, who selected television viewing from a range of after-work activities. However, even these individuals were reflexive about their choice of television relative to other activities, and contrary to the assumptions of hegemony theorists, they were at times aware of the medium’s power over their lives. The predominant pattern, unanticipated by Lembo, was one in which participants simultaneously turned to television while engaged with other activities. Viewing itself ranged from intermittent to focused, opening up the parameters of the interpretative process, and thus limiting television’s hegemonic power over viewers’ lives.

By emphasizing the social forms of viewing, Lembo transcends the focus on discourses and identities characteristic of cultural studies approaches. In doing so, the operation of television’s hegemonic power is contextualized and made observable. Lembo shows that viewers do not make “identity-based contestations of normative power.” Nor are viewers passive and uncritical. Instead, in Lembo’s words, “acts of monitoring, evaluating, or judging, and especially, the expectation that these acts will continue to occur become

inscribed as capabilities that express the self's agency" (p. 234). His findings affirm just how complicated television viewing actually is, and how nuanced analysts should be when studying it.

Talk of Love: How Culture Matters, by **Ann Swidler**. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001. 300 pp. \$30.00 cloth. ISBN: 0-226-78690-0.

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The "turn to culture" that has transformed many disciplines in the social sciences and humanities—from anthropology, history, and English to the emergence of new interdisciplinary fields of inquiry, such as Cultural Studies—has remained curiously marginal in sociology. But this deceptively short, complexly argued, and theoretically rich book brings it directly to center stage in our discipline. And there are few sociologists better positioned to engage the questions of how culture actually works in the lives of ordinary Americans than Ann Swidler, whose previous work on rationality, love and adulthood, cultural tools, and the worldviews of middle-class Americans is carefully woven together in the themes of this important book.

Despite the title of the book, Swidler's study is more about the nature of culture—what it is, how it works, and how we might think about it in more complex ways as the source of social action—than it is specifically about love, marriage, or the nature of personal relationships. The ways in which 88 suburban white middle-class interviewees between the ages of 20 and 60 talk about love, however, serve as an effective illustration of the cultural resources that Americans variously draw on and use to make sense of their experiences in this important arena of personal life. The central puzzle of the interview data is how and why the "mythic ideal" of romantic love—the belief that love is "exclusive, all-or-nothing, transformative, enduring" (p. 122)—continues to hold sway even when most Americans adopt a much more "prosaic-realistic" understanding of love in their own lives. Around this core cultural dilemma, the contradictions, ambivalence,

doubts, and certainties that ordinary Americans express in their discourse on love open a window onto the ways people mobilize or reject the cultural resources available to them, make sense of social experience, and are often led to act.

Swidler first debunks the idea that culture works primarily as a completely coherent worldview. When individuals lead settled lives and societies enter relatively stable historical eras, culture often seems so closely integrated with experience as to be invisible and natural, the stuff of unexamined common sense. But unsettled lives and times make cultural resources more self-consciously visible and problematic, allowing people to try out a variety of new styles, skills, beliefs, and activities that shape their responses, or "strategies of action." During such times of social change, ideologies may proliferate and traditional cultural modes may be refashioned to meet new conditions; but these ideologically driven cultural responses, in their explicit attempt to provide a rigidly coherent and unified worldview, are always potentially subject to challenge because their fit with experience is still incomplete.

More often, most of us think about the world and act by drawing from a wide range of inconsistent cultural responses—a repertoire of possibilities—always malleable, shifting according to social cues and contexts, and more or less self-conscious. In adopting the metaphor of culture as "repertoire" over an earlier emphasis on culture as a "tool box," Swidler is better able to explain how individuals can simultaneously make conscious use of culture, even as cultural and institutional constraints set the limits on their choices. She argues that individuals have different "cultured capacities" that they are able to draw on as they forge strategies of action. Values, rather than directly motivating people to act in consistent ways, are only one of the many resources that people have available to them when they choose a course of action. The great strength of this book is in the author's careful development of a complex explanatory framework that allows us to understand how people's vastly different motivations and individual capacities to draw on and to use culture can still produce patterned social responses as they confront similar historical and social conditions and institutional constraints.