

starting point. It allows a professional to utilize the framework therein and, if anything, guides the reader into thinking about various approaches that should be used.

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doi:10.1093/bjsw/bcm162

Human Behavior and the Social Environment: Models, Metaphors, and Maps for Applying Theoretical Perspectives to Practice,

J. A. Forte,

Belmont, CA, Thomson Brooks/Cole, 2007, pp. 634, ISBN 0495006599, US\$73.95

Student social workers and practitioners in the UK have long been conversant with texts of social work theory written by established UK-based academics, such as Payne, Dominelli and Lishman. It could therefore be argued that there is no need for yet another textbook on social work theory. Forte, however, has provided an excellent new contribution to the available literature and compiled a comprehensive collection of social work theories and critiques thereof.

The book's intention is to 'act as translator' and assist students to make sense of incomprehensible theoretical constructs. In this way, Forte proposes to extend the reader's understanding of theories through dissecting the dialectics and providing the reader with a variety of different tools—the models, metaphors and maps referred to in the book's title. A broad range of social work theories are covered, ranging from the familiar ecological perspective, psycho-dynamic theories and behavioural models to the less familiar applied economic, applied symbolic interaction and applied biological theories. As the book focuses on human behaviour and the surrounding environment, some social work theories popular in UK texts such as crisis intervention and task-centred practice are excluded from Forte's collection.

Each of the chapters relating to a theory is organized in a similar fashion, making it easy to find the relevant information and dip in and out of the book. Forte invites the reader to do this through his clear indexing and signposting of the theoretical material. He encourages readers to embrace different theories and instigate multi-theory dialogues rather than to defensively stick to one theory alone. This is achieved through clear linkage of theories and highlighting the similarities and differences of each model and its applicability to practice. Not only is the theory explained in accessible language, but students are also directed to related schools of thought and other relevant proponents of the theory. For example, the chapter on applied behaviourism begins with a short summary of the theoretical model, and then expands on this to explain how it links to social behaviourism, social learning theory and behaviour modification. Forte then highlights the leading proponents of the

theory, such as Pavlov, Watson, Thyer and Skinner. This is the ‘model’ of the title. He then moves on to discussing the ‘metaphors’, such as ‘the person as animal’, ‘the society as laboratory’ and ‘the social worker as behavioural engineer’. The core assumptions of applied behaviourism are then explored and helpfully critiqued. After this, Forte ‘maps’ the theory by relating it in ecosystem terms and providing a helpful analysis that enables readers to anticipate how the theory can be applied in social work practice.

As the above suggests, this book therefore is appealing not only to the student social worker, but also to the practice assessor who needs to guide the student in learning how to apply social work theories practically. Readers are also signposted to additional web-based resources to further their study, as well as a companion website that includes tutorial quizzes and hotlinks to other relevant websites. Exercises are also suggested that could be incorporated into classroom-based teaching.

Forte compares the social work knowledge base to an ever increasing library with many rooms and a few poorly signposted corridors. *Human Behavior and the Social Environment* is his contribution to providing social work practitioners at all stages of their career with an appropriate map, and, as such, it deserves a place on every social worker’s bookshelf.

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doi:10.1093/bjsw/bcm163

Youth Justice: Ideas, Policy, Practice (2nd edn),

Roger Smith,

Cullompton, Willan, 2007, pp. xiv + 258, ISBN 978 1 84392 224 7, £19.50

This is the second edition of a book first published in 2003. A second edition is justified and will be useful because, typically, New Labour has not left well (or ill) alone since the set of reforms it introduced shortly after being elected in 1997, but has continued to tinker through further legislation and new policy initiatives. The basic character of its reforms has not changed, however; it has continued to be shaped mainly by what Smith calls ‘populist authoritarianism and managerialist operational strategies’ (p. 210), in line with the proclamation of *No More Excuses* (Home Office, 1997), which was the government’s first statement of intent in this field.

Smith’s first chapter, on ‘Lessons from history’, deals with the 1980s, when, despite the government’s ostensibly hard line on law and order, increasing numbers of young offenders were diverted from the formal system, and decreasing numbers were sent to custody. His second chapter asks ‘Where did it all go wrong?’, and argues that there was a sharp discontinuity in policy from the early 1990s, signalled in particular by the dismantling of the 1991 Criminal Justice Act and the adoption of an overtly punitive stance on young