The contest for social science: relations and representations of gender and class


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Abstract

Opening in the period of revolutions between 1789 and 1850, this book explores the contention over social science from above and below. It breaks away from orthodox interpretations of the development of social science to explore the subject as a contest for class and gender power. The author gives a picture of the experiences which made men and women passionate about the social science project, and explores how different groups aimed at self-liberation, or power over others. She details the contribution made by working-class people and by women to the social science story, and shows how language and metaphor were used to construct social identities. This account of the production of knowledge as a contestable process, in its historical perspective, constructs a new politics of knowledge. The book may be important to those interested in social and cultural history, the history of natural and social science, gender and women's studies, social policy, social work and social action.

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The Contest for Social Science: Relations and Representations of Gender and Class by Eileen Janes Yeo (Rivers Oram Press xx + 396 pp.) Death in the Victorian Family by Pat Jalland (Oxford University Press xii + 464 pp.) The science of society arrived clearly stamped by utilitarianism, conceived by the philosophic radical, James Mill, in terms of the individual's pursuit of 'Wealth, Power, Dignity, Ease'. In The Contest for Social Science, Eileen Janes Yeo points out that his restricted 'roll call of desire' omitted salvation, morality, love, friendship, benevolence and... She documents the differing meanings given to 'social motherhood' which could cast the working-classes as children or savages to be protected from themselves, or judge sinners and reward the chosen. With social class and gender, The Great Gatsby contains another set of major themes. The 1974 adaptation, starring Robert Redford and Mia Farrow, can be seen as being more geared towards putting emphasis on the depiction of class differences. This in turn would make the 2013 version one that is more fixated on depicting excess, lavishness and masculinity. The next chapter will deal with several definitions and understandings of class. Furthermore, examples of how class works will be given and elaborated on. The last part of the chapter will address and explain the basic class-structure which will be implemented in the analysis chapter.