Wagner-Pacifici

Theorizing the Standoff

This book combines original theoretical analysis with real life case studies to examine the nature of the standoff. Starting with the standoffs of Wounded Knee, MOVE, Ruby Ridge, Waco, Freeman of Montana, Tupac Amaru, Republic of Texas, the author explores the archetypal patterns of human action and cognition that move us into and out of these highly charged situations and seeks to theorize the contingency of all such moments. As an emergency situation where interaction is both frozen and continuing, the standoff evokes original ideas about time, space and appropriate or anticipated action and individuals and organisations often find their standard operating procedures and categories deflected and transformed. By tracking and analysing such impositions and deflections, this book aims to develop a theory of the fundamental existential indeterminacy of social life and the possible role that improvisation can play in navigating this indeterminacy and preventing a violent and destructive conclusion. Co-winner of the 2001 Best Book Award given by the Sociology of Culture Section of the American Sociological Association.

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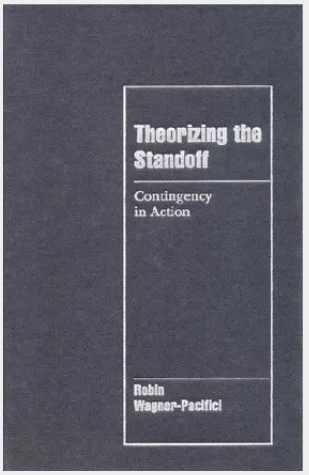

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