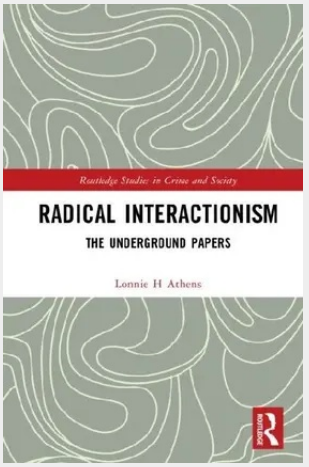
Athens

Radical Interactionism

The Underground Papers



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Radical Interactionism: The Underground Papers focuses on the radical interactionist perspective, which posits that everyday human social life is fundamentally organized around power and domination rather than mutual cooperation. The book should be considered as a companion to Athens earlier volume, Dominion and Subjugation in Everyday Life, published over a decade ago. The difference between these two volumes is that the first focused on the collective act and the formation of its two different types: cooperative acts and conflictive acts. It emphasized that both these two forms of action are based on the principle of domination and neither one is made more important than the other, which serves to distinguish radical interactionism from conventional interactionism, based on the opposite principle of sociality that makes cooperative acts more important than conflictive ones. Radical Interactionism: The Underground Papers moves beyond its earlier companion volume because it uses the radical interactionist perspective, a term that Athens coined, not just to explain how cooperative and conflictive collective acts unfold, but how the human self inserts itself into this process and how the larger social habitat in which these collective acts are embedded impact their unfolding. When both of these books are combined together, they provide the most authoritative and complete account not only of collective action, the self, and the social habitat, but also how they change over time from a radical interactionist perspective. Both volumes underscore that, unlike conventional symbolic interactionism, radical interactionism respects rather than ignores that human beings are born into and die in dominance orders and in between their birth and death, must fight to maintain or improve their positions in them using whatever sources of power they have at their immediate disposal or can later muster. The significance of the present volume's title derives from conservative interactionists unsurprising hostility to radical interactionism and desire to deflect attention from its emergence.

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