

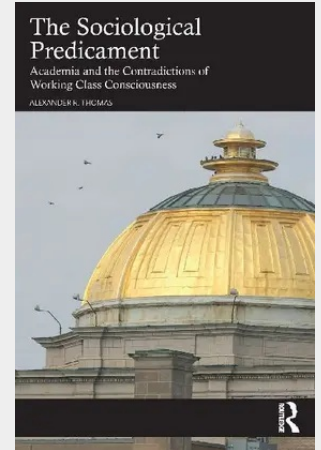
Thomas

The Sociological Predicament

Academia and the Contradictions of Working Class Consciousness

A sociological phenomenon afflicts sociology itself: academics think of themselves as the vanguard of the working class despite the fact that they are not working class, as the noble willingness to side with the oppressed contrasts scholars' reliance on authority to bolster their politics. While there are no simple solutions to this contradiction, a necessary beginning is for sociologists (and other academics) to acknowledge the reality of their own class privilege as members of the professional-managerial class. The Sociological Predicament is then a conscious and deliberate work of professional self-loathing that traces the evolution of ideologies found in academia from the mid-twentieth century to today, which demonstrates the ways in which biases around class have given short shrift to the concerns of working class Americans in deindustrialized cities and towns that have ultimately turned away from and then against them. Intellectuals have not historically been on the side of the oppressed but have been instrumental in developing ideologies that sustain the status quo, and this book crucially asks whether academics' presence on the left ultimately serves conservative ends.

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