

Encouraging Debate: the influence of Gerard Duveen

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Gerard's party in 2008, attended by over 200 friends, colleagues, students and family members, paid testimony to what kind of man Gerard was. The sheer numbers of students (past and current postgraduate and undergraduate) showed what an inspiring teacher, supervisor and mentor Gerard was. Colleagues attended from across the different academic institutions around the world where Gerard had built up creative connections – having fostered rigorous intellectual debates, successful collaborative projects (like the Inter-University Graduate Conference) and meaningful friendships. He had clearly touched the lives of many – and we were all deeply saddened by the knowledge that he had terminal cancer and the party was Gerard's typically unconventional and paradoxically understated way of saying farewell.

One of Gerard's great gifts was a rare ability to promote genuine reflection and debate through really listening to the perspectives of others. Bringing together an extensive and diverse collection of papers, from people who knew Gerard and/or knew his work well, including empirical papers, theoretical debates and personal reflections seems an appropriate way to pay tribute to the influence he continues to have on Social Psychology, Social Representations theory and many of us. Clearly Gerard's work and his character inspired many as the numbers of authors wanting to acknowledge this by contributing good quality work to the special issue has been quite overwhelming. Hence this is an unusually large special issue: we launch the issue with ten papers, but there are a few others in the pipeline that will be published over the coming months. As a whole the papers demonstrate the importance of Gerard's work for many salient issues of our time and the value of social psychology for understanding of society and culture. While his work is firmly grounded in classic social psychology, with some reference to sociology and

anthropology, he revisited and updated many central debates of social psychology with a methodological sensitivity and a creativity rarely found in academic research. As a consequence, his writings contain a vitality that invites and inspires further debate, demonstrated by the papers of this special issue.

First, Serge Moscovici knew Gerard's work in detail and here offers insight to the profound influence of Piaget on Gerard's own epistemology and practice of research. What this highlights is that Gerard had his own way of relating to, constructing and defining the object of knowledge in research, and this has important lessons for social research generally. The next two papers take this up in further detail. Sandra Jovchelovitch examines the central concerns across Gerard's work from his PhD research to his final paper published in 2008. She gives a thoughtful and moving account of his attempt to integrate social and developmental psychology, and the ways in which his scholarship works with and against both Piaget and Freud in defining 'the cognition of the social'. Ivana Marková continues this theme through a scholarly analysis of Gerard's approach to epistemology and particularly to the genesis of knowledge, pointing out that his studies on child development are mainly influenced by Piaget's epistemology while his socio-cultural studies relate more directly to Serge Moscovici. As Ivana concludes, we can see this as a form of cognitive polyphasia which reveals a deep scholarship and a thorough understanding of 'the needs for different epistemologies in relation to different fields of enquiry' characteristic of Gerard's work.

The fourth paper is Alex Gillespie and Flora Cornish's rich account of ways in which Gerard's approach to identity continues to inform their own research, focussing attention onto the social and historical constraints to identity or the ways in which 'hierarchies constrain what can be said and heard'. Next is Glynis Breakwell's theoretical piece which gives an interesting account of the connections and tensions between Gerard's approach to identity and her own *Identity Process Theory*. This highlights important parallels between her work on coping strategies and threatened identities and Gerard's rich insights into resistance as an aspect of all identities. Some of Gerard's most important work on social identity was done with his PhD supervisor, Barbara Lloyd, and so a paper from her describing the development of their project and their collaboration is really informative. From this we can appreciate the importance of her influence on his work, particularly in terms of her previous research into cross-cultural

psychology and anthropology. Then I give a review and reflection on one of Gerard's most important studies: *Gender Identities and Education*, with Barbara Lloyd. My aim is to provide an opportunity to reflect on the theory and method developed by Lloyd and Duveen and the lessons these have for contemporary studies of identity. In an empirical paper, Gordon Sammut presents a thorough analysis of Maltese identities in Britain which connects Duveen's work to other fields of identity studies, such as acculturation studies. This also works well as an illustration of and an extension of Duveen's account of different identity positions, with a timely focus on inclusive bicultural identities. In a second empirical paper, Annelie Andersén applies the work of Lloyd and Duveen on gendered identities in British primary schools to examine the impact of representations of Swedish folk schools on the identities and ambitions of pupils at these schools. Once again, we see the themes of resistance and possibilities for social change re-occurring. Finally, Brady Wagoner offers a short but thoughtful piece on Gerard's remarkable attitude towards his illness and reflects on what this tells us about the possibilities for connection, or 'the reintegration of self in social relationships' following acute personal rupture, such as the diagnosis of terminal illness.

These papers, and the ones that shall follow, demonstrate what impact Gerard had on the discipline of social psychology as well as on individuals' academic careers and approach to their work. This is very much the case for myself as one of his first undergraduate students at Cambridge: without Gerard's ability to connect with others, encourage us to find our own voice and confidence, and his quiet determination to get to what you really thought about something – I doubt I would have survived academia. By way of offering my own tribute to Gerard, I hope it is not too indulgent to explain.

In my first term of fascinating lectures for the BA in *Social and Political Science* I was struck by an almost religious reverence for the past – past studies, historic explorations and sacred texts. I immersed myself in many of these classics – finding to my delight I had lived in some of places explored long ago such as Papua New Guinea and Fiji. However, the university's reverence for past scholarship seemed to leave little room for such personal connection or reflection. It was at this point that I wrote an essay on Vygotsky and Luria for Gerard. I worked hard on this, being fascinated by cross-cultural psychology, and read everything I could lay my hands on. I did not agree with all I read and found some implicit assumptions about cultural

difference troubling. However I did not dwell on this and stayed up late many nights to produce what I hoped was a good essay. I was disappointed when Gerard didn't seem particularly interested in this! Gerard was incredibly generous with his time to all students, and over a period of two hours or more he slowly got me to discuss my own ideas and experiences – and ultimately how I could use this to explore the texts I had read and possibly develop a critique.

If there is one moment that had real bearing on my future academic career – that was it. I will never forget standing on the steps outside his office on Trumpington Street, drinking in the winter evening and seeing the world of academia open up – and become a world full of possibility and debate: a world where thought, innovation and creativity were valued, and this was immensely exciting. I think that this shows that Gerard actually practiced the form of Social Psychology he strove to foster. This connects social influence and resistance at all levels: in the detail of individual exchange (microgenetic), in our psychological development (ontogenetic) and societal transformations (sociogenetic). We can see this in his intellectual writings, in his detailed empirical studies and in his mentoring and supervision of students and friendship with colleagues. Despite his intellectual calibre and vast knowledge (not only of Psychology, but across the Social Sciences, Philosophy, parts of Natural Science as well as music, literature and films), Gerard was a humble and generous man. He was fundamentally interested in human interaction and our unsuppressible ability to debate, reflect and, fundamentally, to think.

It is in this spirit that I proposed this special issue on *Social Representations and Social Identities – Inspirations from Gerard Duveen*. Some of the contributors were students of Gerard's and will relate to my own reflections above. Others worked alongside him, collaborated ideas and projects with him and may have been quite critical of his work. Others were his mentors and friends. This diversity makes the collection very rich, and should do much more than simply pay homage to his work. Gerard started an important and difficult debate in Social Psychology, centred on the possibilities for resistance and social change, and I think all contributors will join me in hoping that this special issue helps to ensure the debate continues.

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