by her sense of responsibility with the legacy of other people's remembered pain. She is also supremely aware of the ephemeral nature of being and the fragility of human existence.

She takes her mission seriously. In doing it justice she is both capable of producing stunning observations about the human condition while, on occasion, not being able to escape the Sisyphean nature of her search for truth – the harder you try to define something, the more elusive it becomes. Once in a while these convolutions of thought are ones not easily followed. Ultimately, however, the satisfaction is Eva's; her re-creation in new surroundings is deep enough for her to finally regain the self she had lost for many years.

Other citations for *Lost in translation* praise it as 'deep and lovely', 'tender and memorable', '... capturing the very essence of exile experience'. Indeed it is and does, and also has the power to humble. Even (especially?) readers who have lived abroad and speak more than one language will find her response to her challenges awe inspiring. More than any other book I have read she made me understand the extent to which loss of language and transplantation from one culture to another control and shape the self that is constantly in formation.

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Animating relationships between research, policy and practice

Biographical methods and professional practice: an international perspective. Prue Chamberlayne, Joanna Bornat and Ursula Apitzsch editors. 2004. Bristol: Policy Press; ISBN 1861344929 pbk, 352 pp., £24.99.

This book is a collection of 21 essays comparing the biographical work of a wide variety of social researchers in Germany, Britain, France, Israel, New Zealand, Poland, Denmark, Finland and Russia. Their intention is to 'demonstrate how comparative work can generate new understandings of welfare contexts and welfare processes, social relations and resources, and processes of social change', and that, given the right conditions, biographical methods can 'animate relationships between research, policy and practice' (Chamberlayne, p. 21). These papers highlight the capacity of biographical methods to illuminate discrepancies between the realities of lived experience, the related but often disconnected social policies, and pertinent current research. It is encouraging that, as Chamberlayne notes, this potential is recognized and valued by agencies in all seven countries

involved in the studies, leading to proposals for further collaboration in biographical research.

The book is organized in five parts. The essays in Part One concern 'Putting the subject in policy and practice', and are grouped around the theme of 'ethnic entrepreneurship' in migrant communities. Apitzsch demonstrates the use of biographical methods to subvert 'the possibility of scientific work either reproducing or even producing ethnic categories' which might serve to confirm erroneous assumptions underpinning many EC welfare policies. Kontos shows how this works in Germany, where state policies assume that educational capital is a prerequisite for entrepreneurial success, and therefore deny support to those lacking this resource. Kupferberg demonstrates the way in which biographical study can subvert such normative assumptions, showing how two immigrant workers' self-concepts of their own entrepreneurship redefine accepted notions of 'innovation'. Together, these studies have profound implications for welfare policies, suggesting that more regard should be taken of 'the different motivational capital' migrant workers bring with them (Kupferberg, p. 87).

Part Two considers the contextuality of the subject. Cooper introduces the topic of 'emotionality', arguing that traditional hermeneutics can present an 'over-rationalistic view of human nature' (Cooper, p. 98) in biographical studies. Bar-On counters this argument by suggesting that psychoanalytic approaches are equally limited if they fail to be 'historically and socially contextualised' (Bar-On, p. 102). Using a broader hermeneutic conception, he demonstrates the complex and extensive ramifications of human experience through his on-going studies of holocaust survival and suffering. Semenova provides an example of the use of single case biographical study to illuminate the wider society, in this case, professional workers' attitudes to the emergent private employment sector in Russia. The business management motif is continued by Nagel in a study of East German managers. The study highlights the potential of biographical research to elucidate the dynamics operating at the interface between social policy, practice and the individuals concerned, and to provide useful heuristic tools for the practitioner.

David Gadd opens Part Three with a reflection on interpretive issues in relation to theoretical and practitioner perspectives on domestic violence. Rickard presents a critical overview of current and potential uses of biography in health studies, and Kazmierska discusses the ethical ramifications of biographical narrative analysis. Temple addresses ethical issues in cross-cultural interviewing and translation of transcripts. Collectively, these critical reflections on the limitations and potential difficulties of biographical research supply a necessary counterpoint to what could otherwise appear overly optimistic claims for this research method in some other parts of the book.

The theme of Part Four is 'disempowerment', and opens with Gunaratnam's case study examining racialized and gendered attitudes in palliative care. She argues that findings from biographical study have the power to undermine disempowering social stereoptypes. The following essay, by Bornat and Walmsley, questions 'some of the claims for empowerment through biographical research' (p. 222), and presents a matrix for use as a self-evaluative tool. Used to assess one of their own studies, the matrix demonstrates the fluid nature of power relations in qualitative research. Through a study of Venetian welfare services, Kyllönen demonstrates how the current trend for incorporating biographical considerations into all aspects of professional care – with the aim of 'individualizing' that care – can inadvertently 'normalize' recipients' biographies by interpreting their needs in terms of available (therapeutic style) interventions. All the studies in this section, including the last (Schluker's reflections on a student study of homeless men), show the diverse and ingenious ways in which individuals who feel disempowered resist depersonalization by authorities, and reframe their experiences, in narration, to demonstrate their perceived power over others (real or fantasy).

Part Five examines the different uses of and approaches to biographical study in learning environments. Chanfrault-Duchet reflects on the collection of career-orientated life stories, within an ethnographic framework, in teacher training, and Du Plessis *et al*. discuss training sociology students in the skills of collecting life stories. West brings out the essential reciprocity of *auto*/biographical research, between researcher and participant, in his study of the relationships between learning, identity and emotions for inner city GPs. Inowlocki *et al*. close the book with a discussion of their biographical work amongst 'foreign' university students in Germany, concluding that 'educational processes are connected with biographical knowledge' (p. 326), and that sharing biographies can break down cultural barriers and enhance learning for all concerned.

The range of essays clearly shows the rich diversity of academic disciplines which can legitimately and fruitfully be brought to bear on the study of human experience, and, overall, the editors have succeeded in their aim of demonstrating the value of biography in social research. Any criticisms of this book are relatively minor. As always with short pieces summarizing large studies, some of the conclusions drawn seem tenuous, but the reader must assume that the fuller work justifies the interpretations. The literary style of some of the essays makes difficult reading at times, with rather convoluted language, and over-long sentences which take several readings to apprehend. This may result from translation issues, which the editors note as having been problematic. In places this is exacerbated by discipline-specific terminology which may mystify readers from different academic spheres to the writer, a matter worth

considering in the multidisciplinary environment of biographical studies. The book undoubtedly repays effort however, and as the publishers assert, it 'provides a valuable comparative perspective' which is 'a stimulating read'.

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Bridgebuilders Training

Rembrandt and his Jewish neighbours

Rembrandt's Jews. Steven Nadler. 2003. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ISBN 0226567362, pbk, 250 pp., £12.25.

This interesting account of Jewish history in Amsterdam starts with a fascinating description of building works taking place next door to Rembrandt's house on Sint-Anthonisbreestraat. We are immersed in a convincing account of the noise, dust and upheaval and are told that the canny builder, knowing of Rembrandt's reputation for non-payment of debts, did not even bother to charge him for his share of the building works. Nadler, a distinguished Jewish philosopher and historian, places Rembrandt firmly in the Jewish quarter where he lived for most of his time in the city. He alternates lively descriptions of his visits and experiences in present-day Amsterdam with learned research on the influx of both Portuguese and later Ashkenazim Jews from Germany, Poland and Lithuania. The tensions between the two disparate Jewish camps is explored. The religious toleration of the people of the Netherlands, astonishing for its time, is explained by the practical, economic advantages of allowing prosperous merchants to settle and carry on their trade within Dutch cities. This religious tolerance at first took the form of a compromise: Jews were allowed to worship God in their own way, but could not flaunt their faith or festivals. Jews were allowed to settle but precautions were taken against their ability to proselytize their faith; they could not employ Christian servants or send their children to schools in Amsterdam. The situation, on the whole benefited both sides and Nadler quotes Rabbi Uziel who proclaimed life for Jews in Amsterdam was 'tranquil and secure'.

Nadler guards against the temptation to romanticize Rembrandt's interaction and fascination with the Jews. He says that his 'heartfelt respect for their traditions arose from his personal encounters along Breestraat'. In this, Nadler disagrees with Gary Schwartz, who in his *Rembrandt: his life, his paintings* believes that 'Rembrandt did not penetrate deeply into the Jewish community'. Nadler points out the difficulty of determining which of Rembrandt's works are purportedly Jewish subjects. There is no solid