Best of the Week #21

ACADEMIC

**The SARS, MERS and Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Epidemics, the Newest and Biggest Global Health Threats: What Lessons Have We Learned?**
Noah C Peeri, Nistha Shrestha, et al | International Journal of Epidemiology

"...Compared with SARS and MERS, COVID-19 has spread more rapidly, due in part to increased globalization and the focus of the epidemic...We did not learn from the two prior epidemics of coronavirus and were ill-prepared to deal with the challenges the COVID-19 epidemic has posed."

**Why Shakespeare? Irony and Liberalism in Canonization**
Jeffrey R. Wilson | Modern Language Quarterly

"...Shakespeare's elevation in the early nineteenth century resulted from the confluence of his strategy as an author and the political commitments of his canonizers. Specifically, Shakespeare’s ironic mode made his drama uniquely appealing to the political liberals at the forefront of English culture..."

**A Contribution To the Critique of Worthless Education: Between Critical Pedagogy and Welfare Sociology**
Mariusz Baranowski | Globalisation, Societies and Education

"The article aims to critically analyse the changes in the area of education after the neoliberal turn. [By using] the concept of ‘worthless education’ [one begins to] see the overt and covert consequences of the ongoing transformations on many levels of society..."

**The Mirage of Madrid: Elusive Ambition on the Horizon**
Charlotte Streck | Climate Policy

"The [Madrid Climate] Conference was to deliver the final rules for a global carbon market. It was also supposed to send a strong signal on increased ambition, ahead of countries revising the climate targets... [It] failed to deliver on both accounts."

**The Geopolitics of Renewables: New Board, New Game**
Daniel Scholten, Morgan Bazilian, et al | Energy Policy

"...while renewables will eventually render energy relations more horizontal and polycentric, achieving a smooth transition will not be easy. Renewables alter arenas of energy interaction, transforming markets and shifting trade partners, and reshape patterns of cooperation and conflict among countries."

**Farmers' Upheaval, Climate Crisis and Populism**
Jan Douwe van Der Ploeg | The Journal of Peasant Studies

"This article aims to unravel underlying reasons for the enigmatic outburst of farmers' fury that swept large parts of Europe in the autumn of 2019. It does so by focussing on the Netherlands where the upheaval was particularly striking. Farmers' resentment against ‘agribashing’ was a common theme in the many protests..."

**Left Divergence, Right Convergence: Anarchists, Marxists, and Nationalist Polarization in the Ukrainian Conflict, 2013-2014**
Volodymyr Ishchenko | Globalizations

"...The liberal and libertarian left supported the Maidan movement on the basis of abstract self-organization, liberal values and anti-authoritarianism. In contrast, the Marxist-Leninists attempted to seize political opportunities from supporting more plebeian and decentralized Anti-Maidan protests and reacting to the far-right threat after the Maidan victory..."
Between Environmental and Ecological Democracy: Theory and Practice At the Democracy-Environment Nexus
“...We argue for stronger dialogue between environmental political theory and empirical, policy-oriented research on democracy and sustainability, as well as further exploration of complementarities between ecological and environmental democracy. We identify four main areas of challenge and opportunity for theory and practice...”

Rearing Children of the Market in the “You” Decade: Choose Your Own Adventure Books and the Ascent of Free Choice in 1980s America
Eli Cook | Journal of American Studies
“This article examines the historical forces behind the meteoric rise of interactive Choose Your Own Adventure (CYOA) children’s books in the 1980s...The incredible success of solely text-based CYOA books stemmed largely from the cultural ascent of individual market choice to the heart of American notions of agency, liberty, subjectivity and selfhood in the 1970s and 1980s.”

Some Notes on 'Populism'
Jon Elster | Philosophy & Social Criticism
“The article criticizes the idea that we can find the 'real meaning' of populism and focuses instead on six psychological attitudes and political programmes that the term 'populism' can invoke: Lake Wobegon populism, short-termism, Trumpism, the attraction of simple solutions, responses to inequality, and direct democracy.”

BOOKS

The Force of Nonviolence: the Ethical in the Political
Judith Butler | Verso Books
“Butler’s new book shows how an ethic of nonviolence must be connected to a broader political struggle for social equality. Further, it argues that nonviolence is often misunderstood as a passive practice that emanates from a calm region of the soul...”

Killer Apps: War, Media, Machine
Jeremy Packer, Joshua Reeves | Duke University Press Books
“This book provides a detailed account of the rise of automation in warfare, showing how media systems are central to building weapons systems with artificial intelligence in order to more efficiently select and eliminate military targets.”

Billionaire Wilderness: the Ultra-Wealthy and the Remaking of the American West
Justin Farrell | Princeton University Press
“This book reveals how the ultra-wealthy are buying up the land and leveraging one of the most pristine ecosystems in the world to climb even higher on the socioeconomic ladder.”

JOURNALISM & ESSAYS

Data Governance and the New Frontiers of Resistance
Anita Gurumurthy, Nandini Chami | ROAR
“The 21st century corporation is using algorithmic-based intelligence to accumulate data on a massive scale. Social movements need to grasp this change quickly.”

Adventure Tourism, Colonization, and the Mount Everest Mystique
Caitlin Myers | Current Affairs
“Rich people love testing themselves by climbing Mount Everest, sometimes at fatal cost to themselves and everyone around them.”
“For years, China’s booming internet sector has symbolized the innovative spirit in its economy. But a grueling work culture is exhausting a generation of young tech professionals. What does this mean for China’s future?”

REPORTS, DISSERTATIONS, & MISCELLANEOUS

Can Pollution Cause Poverty? The Effects of Pollution on Educational, Health and Economic Outcomes
Claudia Persico | American University
“This report finds that children who were exposed prenatally to industrial pollution have lower wages, are more likely to be in poverty as adults, have fewer years of completed education, and are less likely to graduate high school.”

A Noi! Income Inequality and Italian Fascism: Evidence From Labour and Top Income Shares
Giacomo Gabbuti | University of Oxford
“A century after Mussolini’s seizure of power, distributive trends during Interwar Italy are only partially known. This paper presents new evidence on inequality, contributing to the ‘classic’ debate on Fascism’s origins and legacy.”

Modernist Theatre, Theatricality and Twentieth-Century Physics
Amos A. Abrahams | Edinburgh Research Archive
“As physicists were forced to reassess the basis and the potential of their method, Beckett, Brecht and Stein were able to similarly reformulate the mechanics and assumptions of theatricality.”

VIDEOS

Socialist Alternatives To Capitalism: Marx To Hayek
Duncan Foley | Socialism: Past and Present
“This talk surveys the development of the concept of socialism, from a ‘top-down’ system resting on political institutions, to a problem of the allocation of resources, and later to Hayek’s shifting of the ground of discussion from class relations to information revelation.”

The Emergence of Language
Chris Knight | Radical Anthropology
“In order to reconstruct how speech first evolved, [this talk] pieces together the wider context in which it must have emerged. After all, language was not invented by farmers or city-dwellers, but by people who lived by hunting and gathering in Africa...it embeds its insights in a theory which focuses on uniquely human patterns of cooperative childcare together with laughter, song, dance as well as political egalitarianism.”

Adorno’s Minima Moralia: Malignant Normality and the Dilemmas of Resistance
Shierry W. Nicholsen | Institute for the Humanities
“If we ask what is ‘malignant’ about the malignant normality that Adorno addresses, the answer is simple: it is inhumane and brutal - it promotes suffering. [And] it is normal because the brutality is couched in accepted social norms, and because the conjunction of brutality and social norms is experienced as being without exception ... as just the way things are.”

PODCASTS

In the Shadow of the Vatican
Mario D. Pero | Cambridge American History Seminar Podcast
“This episode explores the history of Pentecostalism and the Waldensian movement in Italy; concerns about the pressures of the Vatican on the Italian state; and the constant spectre of communism that loomed over debates regarding religious practice and the growing American presence in Europe in the years following the WWII.”
Happiness, Marx and Progress
Ashley Frawley | This is John Galt

"Is there happiness to be found in the pursuit of happiness itself? Can happiness be conceptualised? Can there be a consensus about the nature of it? Could people march under a banner with its name? Is happiness even achievable? Even then, is it a value?"

Artificial Intelligence, Big Data & China
Martin Schmalz | Modern Wisdom

"This episode reveals why a phone’s nighttime GPS data might affect a credit score, how the speed at which a user completes an online form in could change its price and where the real computing power behind AI is being deployed at the moment."

You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.

Copyright © 2020 The Syllabus, All rights reserved.