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I would like to thank Sean Hier and Josh Greenberg for taking the time to respond to my review article (Murakami Wood 2009). In retrospect, rereading what I wrote, I am not surprised at the emotional tenor of their response; I expect I would feel the same if a work that I had spent a long time compiling and crafting was subjected to such a critique. Indeed I welcome the passion with which they defend their contribution. I do not wish to spend much time defending myself against allegations of academic gatekeeping or a kind of exclusionary conspiracy, other than to say that there is no such agenda on my part¹. My only interest is in promoting “Surveillance Studies” and, in this piece, considering what it is, where it is and where it is going. In this regard, I have no difficulty in recognizing that Hier and Greenberg have produced important scholarly works, and I welcome their new edited collection (Hier and Greenberg 2009) as a solid contribution, for which I am more than happy to provide another reference.

I do not believe that the rationale for my approach in the review article was disrespectful to the authors. I took these works seriously because of their importance. Both books are milestones in the history of this interdisciplinary field of study. For the first time we now have a reader (Hier and Greenberg 2007), and we have an introduction (Lyon 2007). Soon, we will also have a handbook (Ball *et al.* forthcoming), and no doubt there will be many more such works. This shows that Surveillance Studies has arrived and is going somewhere. My question is: where? I admit I misjudged in using these two works to make a wider point of my own and consequently not concentrating simply on the merits of the works themselves. But the fact that these books are so significant is also the reason for their special treatment. If they were not important, I would not have bothered taking the time to write such an in-depth and argumentative review – which identified what I regard as lacunae in both works. Academic reviews of late seem to have lost the fire and energy that gives rise to productive debate. Just being nice about everyone's work is good up to a point and certainly provides for a supportive atmosphere for disciplinary development. But whilst I do not approve of the pointless personal sniping that characterizes some of what passes for debates in literary criticism, for example, we might do well to recover at least some of the same fire and passion (as opposed to hot air and ego) in our discussions. This, however, should be combined with respect. So I regret that the authors felt slighted. That was not my intent and it seems to have overshadowed the considerable work I put into what I thought was a strong argument for considering Surveillance Studies as something more than a subdiscipline of Sociology.

¹ It is only fair that I should correct a significant misapprehension about process and responsibility contained in the response. It was not my decision to review these books or ultimately to publish the review, which was also moderated by the Review Editor in the normal manner; in fact, the piece went through three rounds of moderation to make sure it would not be seen as the ‘unprovoked attack’ that Hier and Greenberg claim it was. I did ask if I might review the books as a special review article, and suggested that the authors be encouraged to respond. Both suggestions were accepted. I wrote, as I write this response, as an individual scholar; in my other role as Managing Editor, reviews are outside my responsibility. Linked to this, I cannot respond as an individual on behalf of the Board to the question of the letter. I can only encourage Hier and Greenberg to take this up with the Board if they want a response. In my view, in any situation like this, if bridges need to be rebuilt and fences mended, then I hope that everyone involved would make an effort to do so.

Another misjudgement was to try to combine this argument with a lighter touch. This was supposed to undercut and soften the harsh edge of criticism. So my references to David Lyon as a ‘grand old man’ and to Sean Hier and Josh Greenberg as ‘hip young tyros’ were meant to be a touch of exaggeration to emphasize a point (about the contrasting treatments of recent developments) and provide some light relief. Of course neither characterization is literally true, and again, if, in the context of what I had not realized already felt like an attack, this caused offense, then I apologise. Clearly, I will have to give up my long-held comedic aspirations, or at least keep my tongue even further away from my cheek when I write.

The Reader, as I said, does what it does well. As I am now in a Department of Sociology for the first time, I will be using the work in my undergraduate courses on surveillance. My arguments with its content were indeed to do with what was absent. However this was not just because, as the response claims, that I would have liked *The Reader* to include everything – that is an understandably emotional caricature rather than a realistic representation of my argument. Instead it was because the framing – what one chooses to present as representing something defined as ‘Surveillance Studies’ – matters to the future of the field. I was merely pointing out that if one sets one’s boundaries by a discipline (in this case, Sociology), one cannot hope to encompass a field that is interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary. If those are to become more than just fashionable (or according to my spellchecker, non-existent) terms, then the multiple origins and research streams that feed into Surveillance Studies must be recognized. If the substance of the article was a kind of annotated bibliography, this was no accident: the long set of references I provided was both to illustrate the diversity of Surveillance Studies and provide a useful resource on which curious readers could draw – *in addition to* the works being considered. Again, in this spirit, I welcome Hier and Greenberg’s additions to this list with their own references, and their spirited and entirely pertinent presentation of their own research agenda – which I certainly did not criticise, either directly or indirectly.

Was my argument ultimately divisive? Did I create a straw man to knock down? Neither of these were my intention. Cut a couple of sentences that caused unnecessary offence and I see what I wrote as being potentially as much a celebration of what we share and the beginning of a new conversation than the drawing of a line in the sand demarcating where we disagree. The piece was my flawed attempt to write a shared lineage for Surveillance Studies, and I should have made more certain that it read that way. After all, when it comes to the substance, Hier and Greenberg’s agenda is exactly the kind of committed and engaged research that will help define the next generation of Surveillance Studies, and I offer encouragement and support for the direction they are taking.

Acknowledgements

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References

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