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Longing and Belonging: Parents, Children, and Consumer Culture. Allison J. Pugh. Reviewed by Cheryl Najarian Souza.

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"quintessentially American," and only "ignorant and stupid bigots" refuse to recognize this fact. This book combines quantitative research, such as census data, with personal interviews and is written with an insider's understanding and compassion. It is solid scholarship for the fields of immigration and ethnic studies, of American studies, of race and culture studies, of diasporic studies, and of American history and American sociology in general. It is written with lucidity and conciseness and thus a good book for college students in above-mentioned disciplines.

Shehong Chen, University of Massachusetts Lowell

Allison J. Pugh, *Longing and Belonging: Parents, Children, and Consumer Culture*. University of California Press, 2009. \$55.00 hardcover, \$21.95 papercover.

In *Longing and Belonging: Parents, Children, and Consumer Culture*, Allison Pugh has written an engaging book about consumerism, children, and how they negotiate social class, racial, and other forms of difference. Her argument that children navigate an "economy of dignity" is one that should be considered by sociologists, feminists, parents, and policy makers. Her largest contribution is to show that, despite differences, children, in "middle childhood" or between the ages of five–nine (some were eleven or twelve by the end of the study) and of varying social classes, share a similar desire to belong.

Pugh argues that it is necessary to put childhood in a context that considers consumption as a kind of care. The book is based on three years of observational fieldwork at Sojourner Truth (an after-school center in a poor community in Oakland, California which has children from grades K-5) and six months each at two affluent schools in Oakland, which she names Arrowhead (a private school for children in grades K-6) and Oceanview (a public school for children in grades K-8). Using these data, along with interviews of fifty-four family members and observations of family shopping habits, Pugh puts forth a rich analysis that is grounded in everyday experiences.

Pugh analyzes how children establish a sense of belonging in their schools through the "economy of dignity" that is rooted

in their talk of consumption. Though the specifics of children's discussions vary by social class, she finds similar themes which cut across social class, including being cool, old enough, and wealthy enough to be visible to peers. She also identifies four kinds of strategies that children use when navigating their experiences including bridging labor, claiming, patrolling, and concealing. "Bridging labor" was the strategy used by children who did not have as much as others did as they worked to be included. For example, at Arrowhead, an African-American third grader described her father's blue-collar job of putting in driveways to peers from affluent families by stating that it was "really cool ... [because] he's been to all sorts of famous people's houses." "Claiming" involved children in both poor and affluent locales who suggested that they owned what they did not. "Patrolling" was a strategy when children evaluated, challenged, or affirmed others' dignity claims. "Concealing" was when children worked to conceal differences from their peers that they perceived as negative.

The parenting strategies of affluent and low-income families differed in regards to consumption. Affluent families gave children things willingly only when it pertained to their children's sense of belonging, thus exercising "symbolic deprivation." Low-income families, on the other hand, practice "symbolic indulgence" where they strategized to maximize the use of their money in their purchases for their children. These parents had to carefully plan their purchases and buy things, such as electronic devices, that carried the most symbolic weight and also kept their children inside and safe from the harm of unsafe surroundings.

"Pathway consumption," Pugh argues, where parents spend on the opportunities that shape children's lives, involves a combination of aspiration and uncertainty, which might be identified as "hope" where parents try to socialize and educate their children so as to have better futures. Most of the affluent parents take a "luxury of difference" approach when choosing schools and social events; however, by looking at affluent African American families, she finds that race also plays a role along with class. She concludes that consumption is part of children's meaning-making and relates to care as well as "pathway consumption."

Pugh's study is impressive. She acknowledges that future research might include adults and their consumption patterns with regard to the economy of dignity. It would also be interesting to see how children and parents who are disabled fit into this research. This book makes an exciting contribution to scholarship on consumption, childcare, and social policy. It is a riveting account of how parents and children negotiate being a part of the economy of dignity and how they struggle to belong.

Cheryl Najarian Souza, University of Massachusetts Lowell

Thomas O'Hare, *Essential Skills of Social Work Practice: Assessment, Intervention, and Evaluation*. Chicago, IL: Lyceum Books, Inc., 2009. \$39.95 paperback.

Several texts on social work practice have survived the test of time, undergoing numerous revisions to include practice knowledge, skills, and competencies. Consequently, the author of any new practice text is challenged to present solid foundational content in addition to offering something new and relevant that will capture the interest of educators and students alike. Thomas O'Hare of Boston College is the author of a new text, designed for upper level BSW and MSW students. The text provides foundations for effective casework and a framework for advanced social work practice.

The text's focus is consistent with a practitioner-scientist model where social work direct practice is informed by empiricism. O'Hare contends that social workers need not be researchers themselves but should have current knowledge of the literature regarding the validity of theory and the efficacy of interventions. Emphasis is placed on the need for social workers to be critical consumers of interdisciplinary developmental and practice research to enhance their lifelong learning and practice.

Four prominent practice theories (i.e., psychodynamic, cognitive behavioral, family systems, and phenomenological/humanistic) are briefly presented along with an apparently thorough review of their respective empirical support and contributions. This content may provide a