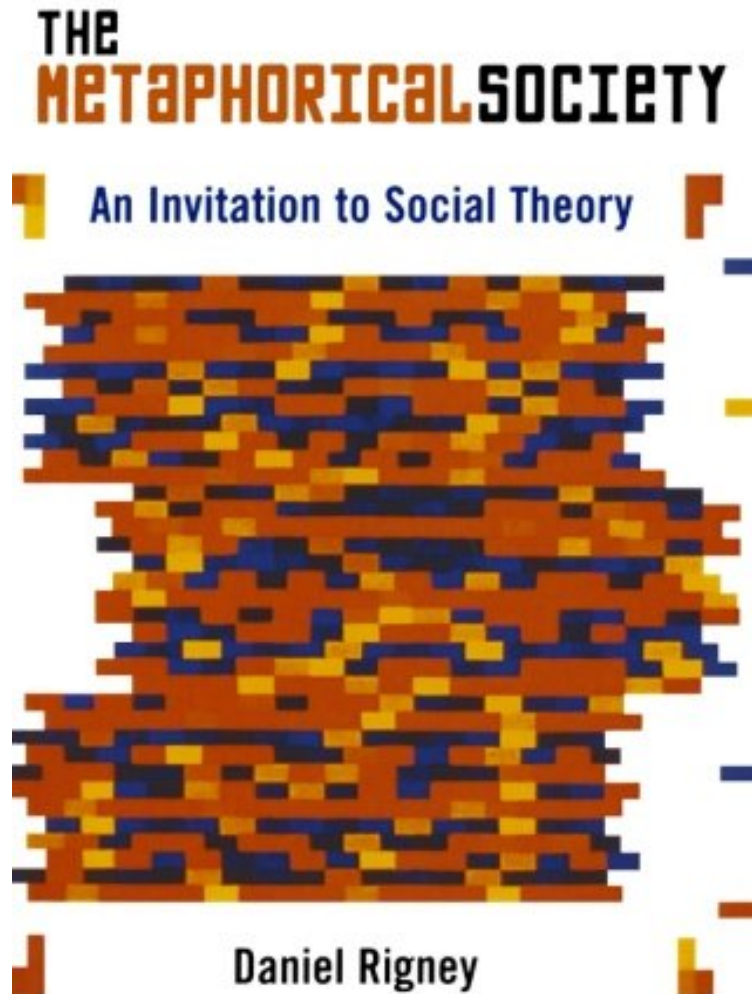


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# The Metaphorical Society: An Invitation to Social Theory

*Daniel Rigney*

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**Daniel Rigney : The Metaphorical Society: An Invitation to Social Theory** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Metaphorical Society: An Invitation to Social Theory:

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Social theory : mataphorsBy pushyamSocial theory is explained by means of metephorical model of society.Book shows by means of metaphor, roots of social theories like functionalism , system theory , conflict theory, exchange theory, rational choice theory and symbolic interactionism.Metaphors used

are society as organism, machines, wars, legal systems, economic markets, games, theatres and discourses. Human societies, like biological organisms, are complexly structured systems composed of innumerable subsystems, each performing one or other vital functions for the system as living whole. Society as a 'set of interconnected and mutually interacting elements' this is intertwined with the development of functionalist theory and also system theory. Metaphor machine, it pictures human societies as artificial mechanisms analogues to technological inventions which can be designed and redesigned to accomplish human goals. Metaphor war, considers conflict as a central dynamic of human history which is viewed by Machiavelli, Hobbes and Karl Marx. Conflict theorists often discern subtle forms of economic, political and psychological violence occurring in the routine operations of social institutions. So conflict theory is considered. Metaphor law, or society as legal order, by this means, we are by nature the makers, followers, breakers, adjudicators, enforcers of social norms both formal and informal. Metaphor market place, it depicts society as an elaborate network of exchange relationships among individuals and groups. Inspired by Adam Smith's classical economics and developed by social exchange and rational choice theorists, this metaphor views that in prevailing culture of capitalism, social relations as transactions based on self interested calculations of reward and cost. Metaphor game, depicts social life as a spirited and intensely competitive quest for prizes and payoffs. It highlights strategy, tactics, deception, team loyalty in social relations. Metaphor theatre, depicts people as social actors playing their prescribed roles in accordance with received cultural scripts. Lastly, metaphor discourse explained symbolic interactionism. Image of human societies as linguistic creations-artificial realities constructed socially through the medium of symbols.

This book introduces the novice reader to modern social theory through the creative exploration of eight major metaphors that have shaped Western understandings of human society. Rigney vividly yet concisely examines each major theoretical perspective in sociology, including functionalism, conflict theory, rational choice, and symbolic interactionism. He shows how each of these theories is rooted in a particular metaphorical tradition. Over decades and centuries, Rigney argues, social theorists have variously likened societies to organisms and living systems, to machines, battlefields, legal systems, marketplaces, games, theatrical productions, and discourses. Most interestingly, Rigney deftly shows how nearly all Western social theories fit with one or more of the metaphors. He emphasizes a humanistic understanding of society with an emphasis on the creative agency of social actors and communities. The book offers students a rich understanding of social theory, yet it is simultaneously concise and broad ranging, allowing instructors to further pursue detailed exploration of any perspectives they choose.

A highly readable and innovative work one that deserves a wide audience. By articulating eight major metaphors in social theory, Rigney opens vistas for interpreting present-day social and cultural reality. (Gideon Sjoberg, University of Texas) Social science and social life both depend on imagination. Rigney's *The Metaphorical Society* offers tools for understanding the world and an engagement in the critical task of seeing what each tool obscures and what it reveals. (Craig Calhoun, president, Social Science Research Council; professor of sociology and history, New York University) A nicely compact book that covers nearly every kind of social theorizing imaginable not just sociology, but the array of academic disciplines, plus politics, poetry, business and industry, religious and military reasoning, common sense, and on and on: They are all there, side by side, though sociology is predominantly featured. The prose is wonderful, smooth, conversational, lucid, and flowing. Citations are detailed and the bibliography thorough. (Contemporary Sociology) This book will prove useful not only to the beginner who is trying to develop a sense of what is involved in the practice of theorizing, but also to sociologists and theorists who want to develop an understanding of how they use language, and language uses them. (BSA Network) Exceptionally well written and learned. . . . Should find a significant readership in undergraduate and graduate courses. (Ben Agger) About the Author Daniel Rigney is professor of sociology and director of the honors program at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas.