

broad the scope of the diffusion of innovation could be when focused on objects and mechanisms rather than on actors. Because of its new genre, Rossman's book cannot expect the easy path of exogenous diffusion. It must diffuse endogenously. This particular surrogate consumer hopes that it reaches its tipping point soon. If this book is radio's swan song, it's a good one.

Lest there be any suspicion of payola, note that I reviewed this book while at the University of Chicago. Rossman did not know that I was reviewing his book until after I was offered my current position at UCLA.

The Dynamics of Auction: Social Interaction and the Sale of Fine Art and Antiques. By Christian Heath. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. xvi+244. \$99.00.

Charles W. Smith
Queens College

This multifaceted book explores a range of different subjects. As indicated by its title, the primary focus is upon the "dynamics" of auctions, or more specifically, aspects of fine art and antique auctions. The dynamics here refer primarily to embodied practical actions as framed in ethnomethodology and conversation analysis with auctions serving as the primary research site. Using various ethnomethodological and conversation analysis tools, *The Dynamics of Auction* documents and explores how these auctions manage to do what they need to do. To be more specific, Christian Heath illustrates how particular actions of auctioneers manage to maintain the order, generate the trust, and promote the competition that are necessary to foster successful auctions. While these auction components have previously been noted and described in some detail in numerous publications, most of which are cited in this book at one time or another, this book contains the most detailed behavioral data to illuminate how these auctioneers do this. Heath has managed to do so by utilizing not only oral recordings framed in conversation analysis form but also visual representations of the same practices.

While powerful and useful tools for documenting certain aspects of interactions, including auctions, these study objects also tend to be quite limiting insofar as they can grasp only specific aspects of such behavior and can be acquired only under certain conditions. Heath is clearly aware of this, as the subtitle of the book, *Social Interaction and the Sale of Fine Art and Antiques*, suggests. While "fine art and antiques" auctions constitute a significant segment of auctions, they constitute only a small part in both numbers and monetary terms. The book attempts to adjust and

compensate for this by including accounts of other types of auctions and citing a wide range of references dealing not only with auctions, but markets of varying sorts. Lacking the types of recorded data used in analyzing the auctions focused upon, it is clearly beyond the scope of this book, however, to examine these different types of auction in the same way. What we end up with as a consequence is a somewhat slanted view of auction dynamics and actions. This slant is reflected in the term “sale” included in the subtitle of the book. Many art and antique auctions do, in fact, function primarily as “sales,” but auctions tend to be about a lot more than the allocation of a particular object to a particular buyer for a particular price. While this book makes references to different types of bidding systems—English, Dutch, and so on—as well as the emergence of new online auction platforms such as eBay, it does not unpack how different types of items, different objectives, different criteria for participating, and even different governing laws vary from auction to auction. There are, for example, significant differences in the ways bids are solicited and announced when spotters are used, when nonsales are not acknowledged, when simultaneous bidding is allowed, and when multiple negotiations are simultaneously in play. I say this not as a criticism of what this book does accomplish but rather as a caution against overlooking the complexities and richness of other types of auctions as future research sites for further explorations.

It would be fascinating, for example, to document some of the many different types of embodied auction practices common to other types of auction. The parameters of order, trust, and competition would be an interesting place to start, as they differ significantly in different types of auctions. While the two-person-run system used to order bidding described in this book is common in these types of auctions, for example, in most commodity auctions in which multiple lots are commonly auctioned off in sequence at pretty much the same price with multiple bidders active in any given moment, rotating the allocation of lots entails a quite different dynamic and communicative system. At the same time the auctioneers are operating, there is also a complex system of communicative exchanges among the various buyers. There are various other dynamics in maintaining order in what are often referred to as collectible auctions that would be worth exploring, including the use of the fast hammer with professional buyers when bidders are hesitant to participate and the auctioneer needs to speed things up if he or she hopes to complete the number of sales desired. These dynamics are of particular importance when allocation of goods is the central issue and price is of secondary importance. Other dynamics come into play when price is primary and allocations need to be orchestrated among the various buyers to generate a consensual price, as

commonly occurs in commodity auctions. While it would be difficult to document and compare these different dynamics given the highly closed nature of many of these auctions, such findings would be priceless.

Even the more limited findings presented in this book, however, go a long way toward revealing the inherently social and interactive character of auction markets, whatever their particular form. This book clearly shows that auctions entail considerably more than simply revealing participants' preferences, as assumed in classical economic models. Another important social dynamic of auctions implicitly presented in this book is the extent to which the meaning of various embodied actions emerges only when coupled with the various responses that are generated. The manner in which split bids are treated, for example, is fascinating not only insofar as they are treated differently at different times, but also insofar as pretty much everyone, including often the auctioneer, is uncertain what he or she will do until he or she has actually done it. When cultural differences are added to the various varieties of difference already noted, the riches that auctions offer for sociological research remain many. For anyone interested in ethnographically exploring these possibilities, this book provides a compendium of starting points. I hope the publishers might consider offering it at a lower opening price.

Coding Freedom: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Hacking. By E. Gabriella Coleman. Princeton, N.J.; Princeton University Press, 2012. Pp. xiv+254. \$60.00 (cloth); \$24.95 (paper).

Tim Jordan
King's College London

The rise of free and open-source software (F/OSS) has played a central role in the social, cultural, and political changes associated with computer and Internet technologies, and while much discussed, there has not been a great deal of detailed research on their social and cultural dimensions. E. Gabriella Coleman's *Coding Freedom* substantially fills this gap, in which only Christopher Kelty's *Two Bits* (Duke University Press, 2008) has so far provided a close engagement with the practices of free-software hackers and only Steven Weber's *The Success of Open Source* (Harvard University Press, 2005) and my own *Hacking* (Polity, 2008) offer a political science-based engagement and a cultural studies-based engagement. Coleman develops not only novel and insightful accounts of F/OSS practices but also clearly articulates the political dilemmas that are posed. Coleman's book is powerful and essential reading, both because it contains excellent research eloquently written, and because it addresses central issues for societies in which code is a core cultural, legal, and political issue. Coleman