In a world I never made

The title of this chapter comes from a line in A. E. Housman’s famous poem *The Shropshire Lad*, from the section that starts:

THE laws of God, the laws of man,
He may keep that will and can;
Not I: let God and man decree
Laws for themselves and not for me;
And if my ways are not as theirs
Let them mind their own affairs.
Their deeds I judge and much condemn,
Yet when did I make laws for them …

I, a stranger and afraid
In a world I never made.

For a much fuller account of the ideas contained in these opening paragraphs, and indeed the whole chapter, read: Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann’s *The Social Construction of Reality* (1976 orig.; 1990 reprint), Allen Lane. More briefly, see Peter Berger’s *Invitation to Sociology* (Penguin, 1966, chs 4–6). These are now old books, but books that inspired me to become a sociologist.

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The idea of ‘thrownness into the world’ is a philosophical one derived from the philosopher Heidegger in *Being and Time*. It is linked the philosophical tradition of existentialism. This is not an easy idea – but if you are interested look at Simon Crichley’s comments: [http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/belief/2009/jun/29/religion-philosophy](http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/belief/2009/jun/29/religion-philosophy)

For the quote from Durkheim – ‘come to each one of us from outside and ... sweep us along in spite of ourselves’ – see: Emile Durkheim, *Rules of Sociological Method* (pp 52–3), which was originally published in 1895 and is considered to be *the* classic statement of sociology.

See also the Durkheim website at: [http://durkheim.itgo.com/main.html](http://durkheim.itgo.com/main.html)
The standard biography of Durkheim is Steven Lukes’s *Emile Durkheim* (Allen Lane/Penguin, 1973).

‘How we adapt and conform, rebel and innovate, ritualise and withdraw’
This is a very short summary of a major sociological essay by Robert King Merton from his *Social Theory and Social Structure* (Macmillan, rev. edn 1968).

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I have taken these estimates of the Spanish Inquisition from Wikipedia and they may not be reliable. It is a major topic of investigation. Modern historians have begun to study the documentary records of the Inquisition. The archives of the Suprema, today held by the National Historical Archive of Spain (Archivo Histórico Nacional), conserves the annual relations of all processes between 1540 and 1700. This material, however, is far from being complete.


For discussions and details of the figures on global deaths, see: Matthew White, Deaths by Mass Unpleasantness, http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/warstat8.htm. (White is neither a sociologist nor even an academic, but he does put together a lot of information and provides sources.)

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Voltaire’s famous satire Candide (1759) remains very influential. In it the Panglossian optimism is espoused in the line: ‘everything is for the best in the best of all possible worlds’. This is not Votaire’s view – which is to be found at the end of the book: ‘We had better’, he says, ‘cultivate our own gardens. And here we may find some happiness in the world.’

Pages 8–9
Airports and flying
In 2006, there were some 4.4 billion passengers around the world and around 1.9 billion flights. At Heathrow, London alone, some 68 million people moved through the airport. (Atlanta is the world’s busiest airport, with 85 million passengers per year.) There are around 1,200 international airports. There are amazingly complex timetables in place.

On airports, see: Alain de Botton, A Week at the Airport (Vintage, 2010) for a slight account; Mark Gottdiener’s Life in the Air (Rowman & Littlefield, 2001) for a sociological account. For more analysis, see the work of John Urry, and especially his book Mobilities (Polity, 2007, ch. 7). IATA (The International Air Transport Association) provides basic fact sheets: http://www.iata.org/

The ending of the Richard Curtis’s film Love Actually (2003) shows the arrival gate. This closing scene – especially the closing credits – is worth a view, and has for a long while been accessible on YouTube.

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The September 11 attacks (often referred to as September 11th or 9/11) were a series of coordinated suicide attacks by al-Qaeda upon the United States on September 11, 2001. Nineteen al-Qaeda terrorists hijacked four commercial passenger jet airliners, intentionally crashing two of the airliners into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City and killing everyone on board and many others working in the buildings. (The hijackers crashed a third airliner into the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, just outside Washington, DC; and a fourth plane crashed into a field near Shanksville in rural Pennsylvania.) A total of 2,976 victims and the 19 hijackers died in the attacks. You can watch the event in detail on the YouTube. It has, over the past decade, shaped the course of history.

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The three ‘T’s

**A sociology of tomatoes**

Mark Harvey, Steve Quilley and Huw Benyon, _Exploring the Tomato: Transformations of Nature, Society and Economy_ (Elgar, 2002). The book provides a ‘conceptual framework of “instituted economic process”’ and demonstrates how different tomato forms are an expression of dynamic processes in capitalist economies and societies during the twentieth century. As both an early pioneer in mass production and a contemporary contributor to the creation of global cuisines, the tomato has been subject to intense innovation. Computerized total ecologies under glass, producing fresh tomatoes of all shapes, colours and sizes, compete with sun and southern climates across the world. To enter the variety of tomato worlds is to discover the variety of capitalism.’ (Book blurb)

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**A sociology of toilets**

An important entrance to this field is the sociology of sanitation. See: Maggie Black and Ben Fawcett, _The Last Taboo: Opening the Door on the Global Sanitation Crisis_ (Earthscan, 2008). A good general read on this topic is: Rose George, _The Big Necessity_ (Portobello Books, 2008).

In the text, I mention the film _Q2P_ (2006). This shows how gender and class inequalities are revealed through toilets; something we normally take for granted. Set in Mumbai, India, where women going to the toilet alone is stigmatized, the film looks at who is queuing to pee, and how urban centre design becomes gendered by this social prohibition. This Indian documentary is made by Paromita Vohra, a filmmaker and writer. Her writing for film includes the feature films _Khamosh Pani_ (dir.: Sabiha Sumar), with which she won the Best Screenplay award at the Kara Film Festival, 2003; and the Indian adaptation of Ang Lee’s _Eat Drink Man Woman_ (in development, dir.: Arjun Sajnani).

_Tea Room Trade_ (orig. 1969; Aldine, 1975) is by Lauv Humphreys (1930–88). There was major controversy about this book when it was first published in the late 1960’s and became much discussed in debates about the ethics of research. He showed how toilets could be used by heterosexual men for homosexual pickups, with routine users remaining unaware of the homosexual activities that were taking place. On Lauv Humphreys, see: John F. Galliher, _Laud Humphreys: Prophet of Homosexuality and Sociology_ (University of Wisconsin, 2004).

On gender and toilets, see:

Olga Gershenson and Barbara Penner (eds), _Ladies and Gents: Public Toilets and Gender_ (Temple University, 2009).

On the sociology of toilets more generally, see the now defunct website of Francesca Bray:

http://www.anth.ucsb.edu/faculty/bray/toilet/amodern1.html

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The Harvey Molotch book discussed in the text was originally a conference at New York University and the Center for Architecture: ‘Outing the Water Closet: Sex, Gender, and the Public Toilet’, on Saturday 3 November 2007: http://sca.as.nyu.edu/object/scaevents/fall_2007.html

Harvey Molotch’s course is called ‘The Urban Toilet’. Consider a few of the texts:

- Week 3: Intimate Pollution (Contemporary)
- Week 7: Race, Class & Gender
- Week 8: Sexual Spaces

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The sociology of telephones

This has become a very popular area of study and there is a lot written. For a selection, see:

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There are some sociologists who conduct ‘breaching experiments’, making strange our everyday life experiences. On this, see: the case studies by Harold Garfinkel in his classic Studies in Ethnomethodology (1967; Polity, 1984).

Strangers and the outsider in sociology

Sociologists have long expressed interest in a wide range of people who do not fit in. These are the Strangers (Simmel, Schutz), migrants, outsiders (Camus, Becker), ‘marginal men’ (Stonequist), ‘invisible man’ (Ellison), the alienated, the romantic (Gouldner), the gothic and the queer, the Appolian and the Dynosian (Nietzsche) and the Master–Slave morality. They are also ‘the wretched of the earth’ (Fanon), the female eunuch (Greer) and the second sex (de Beauvoir). There is a history of talking about those who wear ‘the mask’ or ‘the veil’: it is a sociological story well paralleled in history. James Baldwin’s Stranger in the Village; Herman Hesse’s Steppenwolf; Santayana The Idler and his Works (1957). There is also Ralph Ellison’s ‘Invisible man’.... They all have their own heroes and histories. But they also have much in common. See also: Montesquieu’s Persian Letters, de Tocqueville’s Democracy in America, Fanon’s The Wretched of the Earth... and a horde of literary figures: Shakespeare’s King Lear, Don Quixote, Virginia Wolf, James Baldwin, Richard Wright, Walt...
Whitman’s chorus of Eidolons, Camus, Samuel Beckett, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. Sociologists at their best join this outsider tradition.

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Zygmunt Bauman uses the phrase ‘defamiliarise ourselves with the familiar’ in his *Thinking Sociology* (Blackwell, 1990), which is an excellent introduction to sociology.