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Book notes

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Jefferson D Pooley

James W. Carey and Communication Research, Peter Lang: New York; Bern; Frankfurt; Berlin; Brussels; Vienna; Oxford; Warsaw, 2016; 234 pp.: £36.00

James Carey undoubtedly has a significant place in the history of communications research, but what is the nature of that significance? This is not easy to explain, and the

difficulties involved provide Jefferson Pooley with his starting point. The book's central focus is the dynamics of reputation. Carey certainly had a well-deserved and highly positive reputation within his own field, with the 1989 collection of essays, *Communication as Culture*, cementing it, but more than the influential themes in his work, for Pooley it is his presence as an intellectual talisman that is crucial. Intellectual life for Carey took the form of engaged humanist conversation and exhibited a committed anti-positivism. In this, he resonated and gained prestige among many scholars in the field. Jefferson offers an informative and absorbing account of Carey's career and work, from discussion of his 1963 dissertation at the University of Illinois onwards. His trenchant criticisms of mainstream communications research in America are fully treated, as is his approach to journalism and public life. The book overall is both an accessible introduction to Carey's work and a fitting tribute to its interpretivist values and virtues.