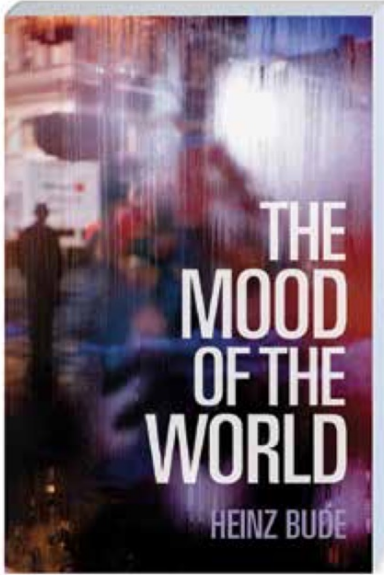


A highly original account of how collective moods shape our social and political life



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The Mood of the World

HEINZ BUDE

Translated by Simon Garnett

In many Western societies today the optimism of the 1990s and early 2000s has given way to a deep unease and a dark sense of foreboding. In the aftermath of the financial crisis, many people feel worse off and the future seems bleak. The mood has changed – that’s clear to everyone. But what is “the mood”? How can feelings be shared by many people, and how do these shared feelings shape the course of events?

In this short book, the sociologist Heinz Bude offers a highly original analysis of this vital but neglected topic. Moods, he argues, are ways of being in the world. Moods shape how we experience the world, which feelings and thoughts suggest themselves to us and which are excluded. But moods are not purely private: on the contrary, they form the basic tone or colouring of our collective existence and experience of the world. Moods are as vague as they are ephemeral, yet they are crucial in determining our political outlook and preferences, our attitudes and identities, and they provide much of the energy that underlies forms of collective action, including the sudden appearance of social movements that seem to arise from nowhere.

Bude analyzes the characteristics of collective moods, explores their role in different spheres of social life and examines their effects. With the growing significance of a politics of discontent, his analysis of the power of collective moods could not be more relevant. This book will appeal to anyone wanting to understand how our societies and politics are changing in these profoundly uncertain times.

HEINZ BUDE is Professor of Sociology at the University of Kassel.

“He’s done it again! Bude once more takes the pulse of modern societies, focusing here on the power of mood and mood swings. In elegant, jargon-free prose, Bude demonstrates that sociology can still tease out and describe meaningful shifts in our societies. He shows that a critical anamnesis of the main societal conditions and drifts of our time constitutes the first step towards recovery, and perhaps even improvement.”

– Andreas Hess, University College Dublin

“Bude resembles the pioneering Freud.”

– Financial Times