

Reviews

THE POPULAR CULTURE STUDIES JOURNAL REVIEWS

Introduction

Ever since I was a kid I have been fascinated by the way movies and television could both reflect and shape the world around me. I could learn about a culture or a previous decade simply by turning on the television. At six-years-old I had already developed an obsession with the fifties and sixties. Given my early bouts of insomnia, I watched a lot of early morning television such as *My Three Sons*, *Leave it to Beaver*, and *The Dick Van Dyke Show*. As I did, I began to see that the world was once far different than what I was observing as an eighties kid. The problems of those times seemed so simple compared to what I was hearing my parents talking about, and seeing on the news. Flash forward to today and movies and television continue to both reflect and shape society.

While not a special topic issue you will soon see that many of the reviews written for this issue tackle a number of themes racing across our various screens. Multiple reviews reflect the current climate of resistance and activism, including themes of immigration. While other books examined the challenges created because of the social media we engage with. Finally, texts about visual representations of resistance, gender, and race were reviewed. Each of these books provide insight on complex issues while challenging a variety of social norms.

Beyond these conversations, reviews for this issue also provide insight on how we as scholars are examining popular culture. Linguists, Communication scholars, and Media Critics have provided a wealth of knowledge as they have created encyclopedias, reference guides, and

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detailed examinations of various mediums. Pieces that could serve as texts for a class or simply fantastic references. However, not all the reviews focused on serious issues. The section also includes books on some of our favorite movies, music, and television shows.

Taking on the role of reviews editor has been an exciting and challenging undertaking. Our previous editor Jennifer Dunn created a wonderful foundation and I am grateful for her encouragement and assistance this year. I am also grateful for the immeasurable help of my assistant reviews editor Jessica Benham. Seriously, you are an amazing human! To each of the reviewers, thank you for your service and contributions to the journal. This has been a wonderful experience and I am looking forward to continuing to work with the many people that make this journal possible.

On that note, I am excited to say that, in the near future, the reviews section of *The Popular Culture Studies Journal* will be expanding. We will, of course, continue to review the outstanding books we receive. But given that popular culture is not limited by printed media, we have decided to open reviews to other mediums including films and games. More information and the call for reviewers will be coming soon. In the meantime, enjoy the following. I hope they inspire you to get your own copy of some of these amazing books.

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Jenkins, Henry, Sangita Shresthova, Liana Gamber-Thompson, Neta Kligler-Vilenchik, and Arely M. Zimmerman. *By Any Media Necessary: The New Youth Activism*. New York, New York University Press, 2016. Print.

By Any Media Necessary: The New Youth Activism explores the relationship between young people and political engagement due to changing mechanisms for communication. As a critical rhetorician, I appreciate that the book relies upon activists' experiences to broaden our understanding of agency. Rather than simply chart the decay of power within traditional institutions or the potential created from expanding social spheres, this text carefully depicts evolving risks and opportunities from using media. As part of the Media, Activism and Participatory Politics group at the University of Southern California, Henry Jenkins, Sangita Shresthova, Liana Gamber-Thompson, Neta Kligler-Vilenchik, and Arely M. Zimmerman documented five diverse case studies. These accounts help the authors to portray the enlargement of "civil pathways" for political engagement facilitated by the internet and social media (257).

By Any Media Necessary bypasses simplistic discussions of activism through a method of storytelling, artifact examination, interviews, and ethnography, which is evident in Chapter Two's analysis of Invisible Children (IC). The researchers initiated their study of this organization three years before they released the film *Kony 2012* on social media, which shot IC to the forefront of public attention by accumulating 100 million views within a week (61). Yet, people critiqued the film for promoting ethnocentrism and counterproductive solutions. At the heart of the conflict rests a tension between creating an entertaining message that easily spreads and retaining the issue's complexity. The researchers' perspective given the longevity of their observations produced a contextual narrative that balances IC's material contributions from working in Uganda and potential flaws (76-77). Although the organization

essentially collapsed, the dispersion of IC's leaders throughout other groups like Giving Keys prompts attention to the opportunities and limitations from films like *Kony* (100).

In chapter three, Jenkins et al. argue that the Harry Potter Alliance (HPA), Imagine Better and Nerdfighter formed new cultural spheres that probe at political issues. These groups “use fictional narratives and imaginary worlds in order to make sense of, relate to, and act upon issues in our real world” (108). Reminiscent of Robert Putnam's classic analysis of civic functions within bowling leagues, the authors' term “fan activism” captures the transformation from a group merely based on a shared activity into spaces for sustained agitation. Following Harry Potter as a series creates the condition for a community, while its characters, plot, and themes provide shared vocabularies and motives. The Harry Potter as a Tool for Social Change workshop organized by a HPA chapter in Southern California is touted by the authors as an excellent example. Similarly, Imagine Better, an offshoot of HPA that resists through storytelling, and Nerdfighter, a group formed around the YouTube VlogBrothers John and Hank Green, provides additional cases that show resistance emerging from non-traditional networks. Yet, this agitation risks inaccessibility for some people. Pierre Bourdieu's scholarship on taste demonstrates the exclusivity of a politics based on shared experiences within a class, which likely explains HPA's whiteness (144).

Communities connected by the Muslim Public Affairs Council and Muslim Youth Group employ storytelling to strengthen bonds between people. In 2009, Bassam Tariq and Aman Ali started the 30 Mosques project, where they toured New York City and collected narratives to share on their blog. Jenkins et al. contends that storytelling activates a powerful force against oppression by problematizing the basis for stereotypes and energizing people to hold onto their culture (166). Yet, expanding digital presence poses constraints. Surveillance, both from rapid governmental expansion post 9/11 and hurtful peer comments, forces

decisions concerning what information to reveal and conceal. These groups operate through a “*precarious* balance between vibrancy and fragility, empowerment and risk, and voice and silence” (150). Jenkins et al. conclude the chapter by suggesting that humor charts pathways for challenging surveillance and fostering community.

Considering the immigration quagmire confronting American politics with Donald Trump’s election, the authors, in chapter five, deliver culturally relevant and politically necessary information by looking at videos of undocumented immigrants coming out. After two representatives introduced the DREAM Act in 2001, a group emerged in support of the bill and expanding opportunities for immigrants. Sharing videos exposing one’s identity, even without concrete markers like a name, holds four functions: catharsis, awareness, unification, and mobilization (199). Jenkins et al. contend that DREAMers face unique difficulties due to deportation. Yet, some activists like Viridiana Martinez or Lizbeth Mateo employ civil disobedience with the intent to be deported. Recordings on YouTube describe the reasoning for their decisions, which activates another channel for creating community and awareness (217).

While most scholars of resistance tend to scrutinize the Left, examining libertarians in the Student Liberty Movement extends focus on political engagement through media across partisan politics. Distrust and concern with institutions thematically connects the Left and the Right, which Chapter Six supports by considering popular memes from libertarian Facebook groups. One example includes an image with Drew Carey as the background and the message “Welcome to politics, where the rules are made up and the votes don’t matter” (240). In lieu of this style for engagement, the Student Liberty Movement uses social media as a form of “DIY citizenship” that changes public opinion to undermine governmental overstretch (248). Yet, the stigma facing other groups within the project highlight the relative cultural privilege accessed by these activists.

By Any Media Necessary persuasively walks the dialectic between valuing the potential of new “civil pathways” for participation and crushing agency given equally expanding risks. I particularly appreciated their balance of theory with historical and contemporary cases. Jenkins, Shresthova, Gamber-Thompson, Kligler-Vilenchik, and Zimmerman offer a compelling analysis for readers of this journal since “[p]opular culture facilitates shared affective investments that bond members together, providing a vision of change that is empowering, meaningful, and pleasurable as they conduct the often hard and discouraging work of political activism” (258). This book should find its way into undergraduate and graduate courses with an intriguing digital extension via accompanying website and as a stasis point for future research into (sub)cultures manifesting online, media activism, and political communication.

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Reeves, Joshua. *Citizen Spies: The Long Rise of America's Surveillance Society*. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2017. Print.

The 1964 murder of Kitty Genovese has served as a cautionary tale for concerned citizens and students in sociology seminars for decades. How could a woman's murder in a densely-populated city meet such an underwhelming response from her knowing neighbors? The 2012 killing of Trayvon Martin serves a similarly unsettling example, though for different reasons. What compelled George Zimmerman—a Neighborhood Watch volunteer—to ignore the advice of authorities, pursue, enter altercation, and kill Martin? As these cases illustrate, the often-deleterious effects from modern norms of communication and surveillance culture are wide-ranging.

These cases also function as different points on a continuum of examples explored in Joshua Reeves' excellent book, *Citizen Spies: The Long Rise of America's Surveillance Society*. Reeves' book isn't merely about social living gone wrong, though. It is a study of how modes and habits of surveillance facilitate different performances of public behavior. Reeves, a professor of media and communication studies at Oregon State University, works from the premise that habits of surveillance—including Neighborhood Watch programs, cautionary messages, and technological for reporting crime—help constitute our relations to systems of power and one another.

Using Foucault's concept of "responsibilization," he argues that public behavior is often "both the target *and the technology* of government," meaning state authority is "carried out *through...*citizens' bodies, particularly through their capacities for surveillance and communication" (11). In five analytical chapters, Reeves teaches readers how practices of surveillance have become incrementally and narrowly cast in terms of

“seeing and saying” that reinforces state power at the expense of social cohesion.

The first two chapters explore the power relations that follow from the technological means of reporting crime. Using customs from fifth-to-seventh-century Britain, Reeves argues that contemporary crowdsourcing trends (such as *America’s Most Wanted*) were presaged by community law enforcement. Customs like the “frankpledge” and the later “hue and cry” networks respectively ensured that financial losses from crime were held to all members of a community, and that ordinary citizens often pursued criminals to justice. Such protocols “effectively conscripted the entire English populace into the policing apparatus” (26). Practices changed with new forms of communication (including print posters, telegraphs, telephones, social media, and apps), leading, Reeves argues, to “a loss of local independence,” and “new means for extracting citizen police labor and rechanneling sovereign power through the bodies of its subjects” (33). In each change, policing has become more reactive while citizens are encouraged to function as little more than messengers of crime.

In chapters three and four, Reeves explores how community groups often extend the reach of state control by reinforcing certain habits of seeing/saying. In other words, popular organizations that seek to deter crime habituate participants to see fellow citizens as “information that becomes valuable only to the extent that it...facilitates the determination of suspicious and unsuspecting activities” (92). Duty to the community and its members, in other words, becomes “overshadowed by—and often redefined as—duty to the state” (107). This, Reeves speculates, partially explains the death of Trayvon Martin by the internalization of state surveillance and community suspicion performed by “wannabe cops like Zimmerman” (108). Even widely popular programs like D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) function to reinforce “snitch culture”, and encourage children—in an impressionable and naïve stage— “to act like cops” (110-111). The issue for Reeves is not that such programs

encourage awareness, but that they consistently re-route the communicative and disciplinary channels that might otherwise go to parents or peers back to the police apparatus.

Heightened concerns of terrorism amplify the surveillance culture in many unsettling ways. Chapter five informs readers that while fear of terrorism is not new, its threat carries important changes in scope and procedure. When the preferred citizen response is narrowly cast in terms of “seeing/saying as an essential means to protect the homeland” for a threat that “cannot be easily translated into coherent local discourses of risk, responsibility, and prevention,” the result is often unproductive (138-139). As one example indicates, the volume of suspicious activity reports from the Los Angeles Joint Regional Intelligence Center indicate the number and kind of citizen tips submitted are “overwhelming useless for—if not counterproductive to—the gathering of antiterrorist intelligence” (155).

The looming question in the face of this relevant study remains: *what now?* Reeves’ concluding chapter offers three solutions that are admittedly at odds with one another: silence, solidarity, and sousveillance. Silence becomes “a somewhat radical move” (173), Reeves notes, insofar as police agencies rely on citizen involvement. By this reasoning, if the cause is unjust, people should cease participation. Solidarity, by contrast, means finding ways to perform citizenship beyond the confines of surveillance. The neighbors of Kitty Genovese didn’t *fail* to act, as is commonly assumed. Instead, Reeves argues, their misdeed is that they too narrowly “associated neighborly duty with calling the police” (174). Solidarity means exploring “new forms of direct communal action that eschew suspicion, vigilance, and the state’s rechanneling of our social responsibility” (175). Finally, sousveillance can help by watching the watchers—using surveillance technology in such a way that citizens can “turn their gaze against the state,” and “capture and publicize police brutality and other offenses” (176).

Reeves does not land on one solution as preferable to others. Though his study includes ample cases of citizens following—and sometimes rejecting—suspicion and surveillance, the overarching remedy to the problem identified in *Citizen Spies* seems to reside in enhancing public judgment. That is, we need to (re)learn how to properly identify a situation and the appropriate response: when it is appropriate to report to the cops (or record the cops); to fear a neighbor (or fear the motives of Neighborhood Watch); to enact silent resistance (or report crime on a mobile app). Such preparation is a gradual and informal process. Joshua Reeves' book helps us recognize the many ways our habits of language and action help reinforce systems of power, and—maybe—how we can remake and improve such relations in the future.

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Herrmann, Andrew F. and Art Herbig, editors. *Communication Perspectives on Popular Culture*. London: Lexington Books, 2016. Print.

Andrew F. Herrmann and Art Herbig's *Communication Perspectives on Popular Culture* sets out to examine popular culture's integral role in public discourse with the premise that "Popular culture is both a tool for memory and a means for expressing we are in the present" (xi). Herrmann and Herbig admit that each chapter, which focuses on different communication theories, is just a starting point novice and intermediate researchers, introducing them to research using relatable popular culture artifacts. In that vein, some of the analyses seem to be abbreviated or less complex in an effort to nudge readers to think critically and connect the

dots on their own, which makes the text useful in stimulating classroom discussions as well as examples of how to conduct research.

Topics of discussion in this 17-chapter text range from television and movies to video games, music, politics and organizational complexes such as prison, education, and workplaces. Consequently, the analysis includes a good mix of contemporary artifacts, such as *Orange is the New Black*, Coke's advertising campaigns, and *Disney Pixar's Inside Out*, and classic artifacts such as *Alien*, *The Golden Girls*, and *The Cosby Show*. The mix of contemporary and classic artifacts ensures that there's something of interest to everyone regardless of level of engagement with popular culture. Analysis themes appear across multiple artifacts in chapters so if readers are not familiar with an artifact such as *The Golden Girls* they can see how the same themes appear in another, such as *Inside Out*.

Each contributing author quickly establishes useful context for the need to study popular culture and make connections to communication theory as well. The repetition of this formula helps to focus each chapter toward accomplishing the book's primary goal: to better understand public discourse and the role those discourses play in everyday life. This collection of studies takes care to include discussions on intersectionality when examining the prison complex with *Orange is the New Black* and an interrogation of anti-feminism movements, beginning by showing the constraining system of power in affirmative action policies that only allowed black women to file paperwork as a woman or as African American, but not both. The *Orange is the New Black* chapter details one character, Tastee, and her life experiences in and out of prison, constrained to retail and fast food jobs instead of a career. In doing so, Michelle Kelsey Kearn walks the reader through how Tastee experiences racism and sexism in her cyclical relationship with the prison complex. The inclusion of intersectionality in chapters such as this encourages readers to think about how representations of minorities in popular culture creates and

sustains ideologies of inferiority and superiority by focusing in on the lived experience of an African American female character.

One of the most prominent themes that emerge throughout the book is how we interact with popular culture. Whether it's interacting with *Minecraft* or participating in Coke's advertising campaign or engaging with second screen experiences of today's popular television shows, each chapter effectively weaves in our relationships with the artifacts of study. For example, in setting up his analysis of *Alien* Adam Tyma describes "a moment—an experience—that defines what we do and what we are into...It is something that sticks with you" (49). Whether the experience is, as Tyma describes, seeing *Star Wars* for the first time in 1977 with his parents or experiencing a shared gaming culture with a *Minecraft* community, it is our relationships with these artifacts and experiences that shape our understanding and identity.

Expanding beyond our engagement with popular culture, Jimmie Manning's "Rethinking Studies of Relationships and Popular Culture" shines a spotlight on a variety of approaches in studying relationships including dyadic and multimatic interviews, diary methods, and auto ethnography to better understand individual and relational engagement with artifacts. In doing so, it may be easier for young researchers to find which perspectives, if any, are marginalized or completely silenced in relating popular culture to our relationships with others.

The final chapter fittingly discusses the use of popular culture in pedagogy to reach groups of students that may be at a disadvantage (i.e. low-income and first-generation college students). Beyond using popular culture to connect with these students, Kristen L. McCauliff and Katherine J. Denker argue that using popular culture in the classroom creates a space that encourages students to work through controversial ideas that are often discussed and dissected in college curriculum. Moreover, that popular culture helps students to make connections between the political world and their lives, empowering them to not only imagine ways to better the world

around them, but to take action. One of the most significant problems to overcome when examining popular culture artifacts in the classroom is that many artifacts are *too white* and require careful, thoughtful planning to present a variety of examples. In widening perspectives of sexuality, the authors changed from readings and artifacts that focused on Ellen DeGeneres to artifacts that featured Laverne Cox, a transgender woman of color. In doing so, examples resonated more with the students, but one problem still remained: how to move from academic articles about topics to other sources without the nonacademic sources losing authority. Answering such a difficult question takes reflection, a point of emphasis throughout the 17 chapters in this book.

Overall, Hermann and Herbig's *Communication Perspectives on Popular Culture* offers a strong foundation of relevant terms and definitions to begin studying and understanding popular culture from a variety of theoretical perspectives. Building on the foundation, this book also does well to consider intersectionality in its analyses. Because of its desire to be a starting point, there's plenty of room to expand, enhance, and discuss the applications of communication theories on popular culture in the classroom. The text is written for novice researchers. Terminology is accessible, as are the theories and context used to set up each chapter. Consequently, this book is ideal for upper class undergraduate students and beginning graduate students.

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Corkin, Stanley, *Connecting the Wire: Race, Space and Postindustrial Baltimore*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017. Print.

As part of the Texas Film and Media Studies Series, Stanley Corkin provides a deep and detailed analysis of the underlying themes presented in David Simon's HBO Series *The Wire* (2002-2008). After a thorough introduction to the characters, storylines and relationships that make up the show's five seasons, the University of Cincinnati Film and Media Studies professor breaks down each of the seasons by devoting an entire chapter to each. The nearly 200 pages of episodic analysis provide considerable material for reflection, discussion and further study.

The examination prepared by Corkin goes beyond the surface of the television series itself, delving into the geography and exploration of urban life which uses the city of Baltimore as its backdrop. Seeing the show as more than another entry in the crime drama genre, the analysis looks past the city's reigning drug gang and examines how the operations and lifestyle create ripple effects throughout an entire culture. Attention to specific locales and history enables the show's creators to successfully blend reality and fiction into a finished product that provides depth of content which extends beyond the normal prime-time network television offerings. This overview provides the context for the episode by episode breakdown that follows.

The television show is traced back to noir and film gris antecedents such as *Naked City* (1948), Rossellini's *Rome, Open City* (1945) and De Sica's *Shoeshine* (1946). Although *The Wire* may not be considered particularly successful either commercially or artistically (winning a Peabody Award in 2003), this book makes a solid case regarding the value of further study of the production. Corkin points out Simon built on his cinematic treatment of the power of addiction, which he began with an earlier HBO mini-series, *The Corner*, in 2000.

The text provides extensive analysis of not only the thematic and sociological components of the series, but also production aspects such as the camera work and compositional strategy. The coverage of the technical aspects gives the book a film studies aspect to compliment the media studies and popular culture discussion of each season. Although the text does not follow a strict chronological journey through the episodes, it is well organized in regards to themes and common threads within seasons.

As each chapter works its way through a narrative of plotlines, applicable cultural theories, and film production considerations, the author also provides a detailed analysis of both major and minor characters. This analysis and running commentary enables the reader to view the series in a much different contextual light. There is also a focus on the economic situations of the characters and the impact the drug trade and other forms of commerce have on both the local and global economics.

Despite *The Wire's* run on HBO ending in 2008, many of the themes and topics examined are still relevant today. For example, Corkin's analysis of Season 5 includes a section on "Crime, News and the Neoliberal City". He writes, "While this season presents a critique of the mainstream media, the broader view of the *Sun* is one filled with nostalgia. The name of the larger-than-life *Sun* editor and Baltimorean H.L. Mencken is invoked more than once; and we hear multiple conversations between editors and reporters noting the glory days of the urban press." (p. 162). The book's concluding chapter summarizes some of Simon's perspective on the media as he was winding down production of the final season and elaborates on some of the running commentary in the program on the media, particularly the downfall of the urban daily newspaper.

The author wraps up the final chapter by reminding readers of the significance of the program and HBO's commitment to carrying five full seasons. He sees the show as a reflection of twenty-first-century media, a device that relies on niche audiences and a delivery platform that is not

necessarily part of the mainstream. In this sense, *The Wire* was successful using metrics other than audience numbers or Emmys and may have been ahead of its time. The views of writers Margaret Talbot and David Henry are used to provide a context through which to reflect upon the underlying ideas and concepts present in the show's ongoing storylines.

Connecting the Wire provides a comprehensive resource for utilizing the HBO series as a device for further geographic, sociological, and media studies research and discussions. Whether a loyal viewer of the series while it aired, or someone only vaguely familiar with the show (which can easily still be binged watched today), Corkin's treatment of the television show provides depth, insight and context for what the back cover touts as "critically acclaimed as one of the best television shows ever produced". This edition proves to be a strong addition to the Texas Film and Media Studies Series edited by Thomas Schatz.

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Perry, Leah. *The Cultural Politics of U.S. Immigration: Gender, Race, and Media*. New York University Press, 2016. Print.

Leah Perry has centered her research around issues of gender and race as it transgresses borderlines via unstable immigration status. This is illustrated in her previous studies of the rhetoric of amnesty and the interrogation of the liminal space that undocumented migrants of color occupy and the ways in which white ethnics are elevated in the neoliberal moment. She continues to explore the relationship between immigration and neoliberalism in her book, *The Cultural Politics of U.S. Immigration: Gender, Race, and Media*. Couched in terms of policy, Perry highlights the role of the media and popular culture to help reify crimmigration as the

place in which the neoliberal polity values the labor produced by transnational bodies while summarily criminalizing bodies that are marked as “other” through their non-whiteness. Legal scholars assert that crimmigration is the process by which “immigration control is increasingly adopting the practices and priorities of the criminal justice system” and Perry extends their argument in the context of the media (Miller 612). In the milieu of the current political moment under a Trump presidency, Leah Perry’s book is an insightful text that accurately asserts the pernicious ways in which neoliberal crossings are mediated through film, television, newsprint, and news media.

Situated at the intersections of Latina/o Studies, Whiteness Studies and Asian American scholarship, Perry’s text helps to provide a foundation for her comparative analysis of white ethnics and gendered racial projects. The connections between 1980s immigration policy and neoliberalism are key for Perry. They serve as the basis for Perry’s argument that the immigration discourses of the 1980s, not the 1990s as Melamed (2011) avers, “were crucial to the rising neoliberal project because they managed difference in policy, news media, and pop culture” (Perry 219). She makes the case using the term, *neoliberal crossings*, which explains, “the gender and racial formations that cohered and were contested through 1980s immigration discourses in law and popular culture inaugurated the paradigm for neoliberal immigration” (Perry 3). Thus, Leah Perry examines neoliberalism in the context of the tropes of immigration, valuation, and devaluation via the dialectic of the “nation of immigrants” and “immigrants as emergency” to complicate the ways in which we understand the legacy of Reagan era immigration policy both on the congressional floor and in popular culture. Popular culture’s power to maintain and enforce stereotypes is not new; however, Perry challenges us to consider the ways that popular culture promotes and mirrors 1980s political discourse and becomes consumable by U.S. polity, which is a strength of her text.

The Cultural Politics of U.S. Immigration explores the various shifts in immigration policy over time and its intersection with popular film, television, and music. In chapter one, Perry discusses the 1980 Mariel Boatlift and the changing language of “nation of immigrants” to “immigrant emergency” with *Scarface* as its primary source text that facilitate the shift in immigration discourse. In chapter two, she explores the policy of family reunification through changing discourse and near-queer family structures in *The Perez Family*, *The Golden Girls*, and *Perfect Strangers*. She examines, in chapter three, the relationships between language and policy about welfare and racially coded media discourse, while, in chapter four, she interrogates the criminalization of Latin America and Latin@s in media, policy debates, and law. In the fifth chapter, Perry uncovers the ways in which “nation of immigrants” conceals neoliberalism’s exploitative and violent structure by examining the “overlooking” and “looking over” of white ethnics and immigrants of color. Thus, immigrants of color are “impossible subjects” (Ngai). Finally, Perry concludes by making the case for rejecting the paradigm of neoliberal crossings.

Perry provides a number of popular culture references that illustrate how audiences consume the rhetoric of immigration, which helps to make sense of the occasionally overwhelming immigration policy presented in the text. The discussion of family reunification and cosmetic, rather than redistributive, equality in overlooking difference are strong examples of the potency of Perry’s argument. In the chapter on family reunification, Perry writes that “the inclusion of people of color, women, and immigrants makes U.S. global hegemony seem democratizing and just despite neoliberalism’s dependence on inequalities” (Perry 87). Perry illustrates this through congressional debates that used diverse immigrant family structures to highlight immigrant economic activity and labor contributions, which provide neoliberal evidence of their value. Moreover, the subsequent popular media spotlights on hardworking immigrants and

television sitcoms help to galvanize support from wider (public) audiences. However, as Perry masterfully argues throughout the text, debates privileging immigrant labor distill human bodies to dollars and cents. Immigrant laborers are then subject to whatever policies are instituted as the need for labor declines and rises, which promote the neoliberal project.

Similarly, Perry investigates the commodification of Selena Quintanilla and Jennifer Lopez and the privilege afforded to Gwen Stefani, Lady Gaga, and predominantly male Irish punk bands. Embedded in immigration discourse, racialized bodies hold value insofar as they are monetarily relevant to the neoliberal agenda. Quintanilla and Lopez's (as well as other Latin@ artists) popularity rose during the Latin explosion, which encouraged the consumerism of products and an economic embrace of Latin America. The racialized and racially ambiguous roles played by Lopez helped to frame Perry's argument in unexpected ways. Lopez's career enabled her to overcome the boundaries of her ethnicity; nonetheless, suspicion surrounding her success guaranteed that her ethnicity was always present. The arguments in chapters two and five are strong because they explicitly explain how society's entrenchment in media results in the consumption of subtle mediated messages without critique. Moreover, the film, television, and music that Perry explores appear to challenge the status quo but, upon closer evaluation, continue to perpetuate the structural inequities in the neoliberal project.

The Cultural Politics of U.S. Immigration may be useful for audiences interested in public policy, law, communication(s), race, and gender. Its strength lies in the popular culture analysis, which helps to distill complicated and voluminous policy and law arguments. While the text may leave the reader discouraged, the reader is better equipped to recognize the insidious ways that neoliberalism inflects policy and popular

culture that have material consequences in the lives of immigrants, people of color, and women

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Hitchcock, Jayne. *Cyberbullying and the Wild, Wild Web: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2016. Print.

With our increasing use of social media, Jayne Hitchcock's book is an absolute must-read. Hitchcock argues that as the Internet has become more accessible and provides more opportunities for connections, it also brings out the worst, cyberbullying and cyberstalking, leaving anyone with the potential to become a victim. In each chapter, she provides rich stories of cyberbullying victims and powerful tools to help individuals address

cyberbullying. While the book focuses heavily on children and teenagers, the book offers practical guidelines and advice for anyone who communicates online.

The first part of the book focuses on understanding the impact of cyberbullying. In the first two chapters, Hitchcock opens with stories from cyberbullying victims. She integrates research from websites devoted to cyberbullying to highlight the demographics of cyberbullies, reasons for cyberbullying, and how social media is used for cyberbullying. Through stories from victims, Hitchcock provides a realistic picture for readers to really comprehend the severity cyberbullying. In chapter three, Hitchcock discusses the laws around cyberbullying. She uses accounts from victims in both Canada and the United States to highlight the challenges victims face when fighting back against cyberbullying. These stories reflect the inconsistencies in how law enforcement and schools manage cyberbullying situations. Hitchcock argues that the lack of action taken against cyberbullies stems from both a lack of awareness and education for how to handle online situations. She pinpoints a shared concern, “most experts agree on one thing: some schools ‘get it’ and have cyberbullying policies in place to try to curb it and deal with it on a case-by-case basis whereas other schools continue to ignore it” (29).

After chapter 4, Hitchcock examines specific cyberbullying situations, providing more concrete guidelines for parents of victims and bullies as well as for educators. The remaining chapters fit together by increasing awareness of cyberbullying from different perspectives. Hitchcock changes direction in chapter five by focusing on parents of cyberbullies. To do this, she provides guidelines to help parents identify warning signs that their child or teen may be a cyberbully. She presents practical tips to educate parents, providing them with tools to help them to communicate with their children. In chapters six and seven, Hitchcock focuses on additional cyberbullying situations. Chapter six highlights the ways that cyberbullying victims fight back against their bullies. Hitchcock features

stories of different teens who found ways to deal and support others through songwriting and singing about their experiences. These stories empower readers by showing what standing up to cyberbullies can look like. In chapter seven, Hitchcock shifts the focus drastically, looking at sexting and sextortion.

Hitchcock examines different cyberbullying environments in chapters eight through ten. She looks at how cyberbullies use social media apps and websites (chapter 8), cell phones and smartphones (chapter 9), and online gaming (chapter 10). She provides comprehensive advice about the steps to take for anonymous attacks. While this might seem like common sense advice, these steps serve as an excellent checklist of steps to use social media apps and websites safely. These chapters are an excellent educational tool for parents, raising awareness about privacy concerns online as well as practical tips for safer communication online.

In chapter eleven, Hitchcock focuses on adults as cyberbullies. While most of the material in this book is applicable to everyone, she uses an example of cyberbullying and the ultimate outcomes using a failed online transaction as an example. As the story unfolds in the chapter, Hitchcock takes a close look at the messages exchanged and provides advice for the reader as if he or she was involved in this specific situation. Walking the readers through this chapter with the example helps to pinpoint specific bullying behaviors as well as specific ways to communicate to take a stand against cyberbullies.

In the final two chapters, Hitchcock provides clear tips for educators and parents of both victims and cyberbullies as well as general tips for online safety. She incorporates several online resources that give parents and educators the tools needed to communicate with both victims and bullies. Hitchcock closes the book with a range of tools to educate and empower readers, helping them to take concrete steps to be safer online.

One of the major strengths of Hitchcock's book is bringing in a range of real stories from victims. While readers may know that cyberbullying

occurs, Hitchcock selected stories to humanize the experience, opening her readers' eyes to the different online situations that occur. She provides detailed guidelines and resources to help make internet use safer. In chapter 11, Hitchcock discusses adults as cyberbullies. Hitchcock uses one example of adult cyberbullying and walks readers through the specific online exchanges and messages between the victim and the bully. Hitchcock discusses these interactions and provides guidance for how victims can communicate. This increases awareness and educates readers through tips for safety and communication. In other chapters of the book, it would be helpful to include detailed advice for how to communicate in a range of cyberbullying situations.

Although the book targets educators and parents, as well as middle and high school students, Hitchcock provides tools and resources to make Internet use safer for everyone. She takes crucial step in increasing awareness as well as providing specific advice to help individuals think about how to handle different cyberbullying situations. Her suggestions and resources arm readers with the awareness of what different online situations look like and the knowledge for safer Internet use.

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Courtland, Lewis. *Divergent and Philosophy: The Factions of Life*. Chicago, IL: Open Court Books, 2016. Print.

Could the popular dystopian novel and movie series *Divergent* have deeper applications for modern social and political life? The editor of this volume, Dr. Courtland Lewis, argues that readers can make many valuable connections between the events in the series and current philosophical dilemmas. Dr. Lewis serves as Program Coordinator of Philosophy and

Religious Studies at Owensboro Community College in Owensboro, Kentucky. His area of research interest is the intersection of philosophy and pop culture. He has published extensively on pop culture topics such as Dr. Who, X-Files, and Futurama. He compiled this edited volume to explore the philosophical, ethical, and moral themes to be found in Veronica Roth's *Divergent* series of books, and the subsequent feature films.

The edited volume is described in the introduction as a "textbook for *Divergents*," and would be of interest to *Divergent* fans, scholars, and lovers of popular culture. The common goal of the essays is to draw parallels between plot elements of the *Divergent* stories and modern philosophical dilemmas. The book would be of interest to students of rhetoric, popular culture, ethics, philosophy, and sociology. It would also make an engaging supplemental text for courses in film criticism or political science. The book's content would be suitable for undergraduates.

The book is comprised of 19 essays divided into five thematic sections. Editor Lewis introduces the book with a brief summary of the structure of the *Divergent* stories: in a future, dystopian Chicago, citizens have been divided into five "factions;" Abnegation, Amity, Candor, Dauntless, and Erudite. At age sixteen, citizens take a test to determine the faction to which they naturally belong. In the rare event that a citizen's test results indicate a predilection for more than one faction, that person is labeled as a "divergent," a category that has been deemed dangerous to society. The main character in the stories, Beatrice (called Tris) is a divergent, and the plotlines center around her struggles to balance her multiple abilities while hiding her divergent status from those around her, and from the government, which considers divergents a threat to the social order.

In the first thematic section, "Are You Divergent?," authors Jessica Seymour, Christopher Ketchum, Marjorie E. Rhine, and Laura Mallalieu

explore how we treat divergents in real life, and the ways in which we label one another by “faction.” For example, Seymour’s essay “Drugging the Kids” discusses how our education system often fails children with learning issues or unconventional learning styles. When we treat such children with ADHD medication, she contends, it is a form of societal control over someone who is different from the norm. Like the government agents in *Divergent*, our culture identifies narrow modes of proper behavior, and considers those outside those norms to be a threat to our social order.

The second section, “How to Make Everyone Less Evil,” explores the roles of compassion and neighborly love in the world of *Divergent*. Authors Chad Bogosian, Trip McCrossin, and Courtland Lewis consider the place of selflessness and altruism in a society that values strict obedience to rules and norms. For example, in McCrossin’s essay “Tris’s Compassion and the Problem of Evil,” the author explores evil in both religious and secular terms, and the ways in which living in community with others sometimes demands choosing our actions for the greater good.

In the third thematic section, “Today We Choose,” authors Greg Littmann, Jillian L. Canode, Trip McCrossin, and Nicholas Michaud/Jessica Watkins examine issues of choice and social class. For example, Jillian L. Canode’s piece “Class Warfare in Chicago” encourages readers of the *Divergent* series to view the faction system in terms of social class, and to consider the ways in which the lower classes (particularly the “factionless,” who live on the streets without any social support) become invisible in society. Those who belong to one of the five designated factions are able to live a middle-class life, while those in government positions enjoy higher privileges. This system is in danger of collapse when members of any given class take an interest in other classes; for instance, if a faction member chooses to help the factionless, or to question members of the government “bureau.” The sense of social peace

created by the class system of *Divergent* is only effective if all citizens remain in their designated roles.

In section four, “Wisdom Before Faction,” authors Deborah Pless, Gregory L Bock/Jeffrey L. Bock, and Cole Bowman consider issues of courage and truth telling in relation to faction norms. In “Tell the Truth at All Costs,” Bowman examines the tenets of the “Candor” faction, which values honesty above all else. This faction, which adheres to Kant’s Categorical Imperative, considers dishonesty to be the root of evil. However, the truth-at-all-costs mandate does not allow for the individual to consider the nuances of context, or to develop a personal philosophy of truth and honesty. Thus, the citizen is stripped of a form of personal agency.

The fifth and final section, “Know Thy Faction, Know Thy Self,” encourages the reader to examine their fit with the various fictional factions of *Divergent*, and how they themselves might be a divergent. Authors John V. Karavitis, Jessica Seymour, Jordan Pascoe, and Kyle A. Schenkewitz explore issues of knowing ourselves and identifying our talents. In Karavitis’s essay “What Do We Really Owe Our Parents?,” the author examines how children adapt to, or break away from, their family’s values. In the *Divergent* series, children are raised in the faction of their parents, but when they reach the age of sixteen, they take part in a “choosing ceremony” to determine the faction in which they will live for the rest of their lives. This may be their faction of origin, or a different one, in which case they would no longer have interactions with their family of origin. Karavitis likens this to the life choices all modern young people must make, and the social and emotional costs of those choices.

The book provides both breadth and depth in examining the connections between the dystopian world of *Divergent* and modern America, especially in terms of life choices and the philosophies that ground them. The authors examine a wide range of ethical perspectives and how these are enacted by the characters in the series. The edited

volume provides ground for deeper thought and group discussion of social systems, and the ways our personal belief systems and talents affect how we function in community with others. The drawback to using this book in a classroom setting would be the necessity for students' familiarity with a series of books and/or movies that is less ubiquitous in the media landscape than other dystopian series such as *The Hunger Games*. Students would need to be familiar with at least the first novel in the series for *Divergent* and *Philosophy* to be useful in the classroom.

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Murguia, Salvador, editor. *The Encyclopedia of Japanese Horror Films*. Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016. Print.

Beyond *Godzilla* and a brief early 2000s fascination that culminated in a pair of sleek Americanized remakes of Japanese horror films (*The Grudge* and *The Ring*), the history, themes, and style of J-horror are largely unknown to Western cinema audiences. *The Encyclopedia of Japanese Horror Films* (2016) offers an accessible starting place for horror fans inside and outside the academy seeking to access decades of Japanese horror cinema ranging from iconic to obscure. It serves as a useful resource for aficionados and film scholars seeking to draw connections across genres, directors, and cultural tropes.

Edited by Salvador Murguia and featuring 199 unique entries from 57 contributors from around the world, *The Encyclopedia of Japanese Horror Films* advertises itself as “the only *encyclopedia* on the English-speaking market that takes up the specific content of the J-horror genre” (xiii), one

that incorporates “virtually every major horror film production made in Japan from the past century to date” (xiii). By approaching its vast subject matter with a wide scope— its definition of *horror* incorporates “comedy horror, science fiction horror, hyper-violence, Japanese cyberpunk horror, ero guru (erotic grotesque), *tokusatsu* horror (live-action special effects), and anime horror” (xiii-xiv)—the text offers remarkable breadth. Consistent with its encyclopedic form, its breadth comes at the cost of depth of analysis across the contents of its 383 pages. That said, in addition to its impressive breadth and its uniqueness to the lexicon of horror literature, its entries and contributors flash impressive critical insight at times. Consuming the entire text is a rewarding experience when recurring themes and figures coalesce into a more holistic understanding of J-horror, if not horror in sum.

The Encyclopedia of Japanese Horror Films is organized alphabetically and includes entries for single films, film series, genres and tropes, and significant figures: directors, writers, actors, manga artists, and production houses. Most entries span 1-2 pages. Unsurprisingly, the Godzilla franchise gets the longest accumulative treatment, with 10 pages dedicated to an overview of the series from 1954’s *Godzilla* through the 2014 U.S. reboot, as well as a detailed capsule of the first film in both its Japanese and American incarnations.

A majority of entries are dedicated primarily to plot synopsis for films and biographies for people; these may be augmented with succinct moments of critical insight or reflection on the subject’s place in the larger J-horror lexicon. Films discussed range from those relatively familiar and accessible to Western horror fans — *Ju-on*, *Ringu* (remade as the aforementioned *The Grudge* and *The Ring*, respectively), *Battle Royale*, *Cure*, the Death Note series — to more violent and notorious cult fare such as *Audition*, *Ichi The Killer*, *Horrors of Malformed Men*, *Wild Zero*, and the *Guinea Pig* series. The richest moments to be found among the book’s entries see the writers situate their subject within broader Japanese

culture or draw critical connections across films or genres. Though acknowledging even half of the text's meaningful critical insights is beyond the scope of a single review, the following representative highlights serves as samples of the book's peak informative strokes.

For example, early in the book, contributor Michael Crandol introduces readers to *bakeneko* (ghost cat), a recurring Japanese ghost trope derived from traditional folklore. As Crandol explains, "According to legend, a cat that laps the blood of a murder victim has the power to take on the person's *urami* (emphasis in original) or hatred, giving the animal the ability to seek revenge against those responsible for the crime" (14). Crandol traces cinematic representations to *bakeneko* to the early twentieth century, and this initial overview of the trope is reinforced over the course of the text through capsule descriptions of films featuring *bakeneko*: *Black Cat Mansion*, *The Ghost Cat of Arima Palace*, *The Ghost Story of Saga Mansion*, and the critically acclaimed *Kuroneko*. The *bakeneko* trope is revisited in Crandol's biography of iconic actress Sumiko Suzuki, "Japan's first genuine movie star" also known as "the *bakeneko* (ghost cat) actress" (304-05). Such intersections of actor, film, and genre help the reader situate individual elements of J-horror into the larger picture.

Among the work of recurring contributors, the writing of Jim Harper stands out as particularly insightful. Harper locates the *Bloodthirsty* series of loosely connected vampire films within the larger international vampire genre and comparing them to Europe's Hammer films (28). Later, Harper explains an otherwise lack of slasher films in Japan in his entry on the film *Evil Dead Trap* (70-72) and contextualizes the prevalence of found-footage films in Japanese culture within his entry on *P.O.V.: A Cursed Film* (249-50).

Similarly, informative interpretive work is featured in Yuki Nakayama's discussion of *Blind Beast vs. Killer Dwarf*, in which the author interweaves auteur and genre criticism to explain how "the film

engages with erotic desire that straddles boundaries of beauty and the grotesque” (24). Crandol’s entry on 1959’s *The Bloody Sword of the 99th Virgin* Japan’s primordial take on the “savage, inbred mountain dwellers” genre (29), combines genre analysis and historical critique of the film’s depiction of the real-life tragic plight of Japan’s *Burakumin* subaltern class (29-30). Insight into Japanese racism, this time against Africans, returns later in Carolyn Mauricette’s capsule on 2009’s *Vampire Girl Vs. Frankenstein Girl* (351-52). Japanese attitudes toward gender (*Audition*, 13), family and patriarchy (*Dark Water*, 45; *Kanashimi No Beradonna*, 171-72), and feminine desire (*Ugetsu Monogatari*, 343-44) offer further insight into Japanese art and culture in addition to discussing the plots and particulars of the cinematic texts.

Through succinct and fruitful insights into the Japanese culture as depicted in classic and modern J-horror films, readers glean knowledge of culture, folklore, and history. And for those readers singularly interested in pursuing encyclopedic knowledge of all J-Horror has to offer from *The Birth of Japan* to *Tokyo Gore Police*, *The Encyclopedia of Japanese Horror Films* fulfills its advertised promise, too.

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Neibaur, James L. *The Essential Jack Nicholson*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016. Print.

Talking about freedom and being free—that’s two different things. So goes the renowned recitation of George Hanson (Jack Nicholson) seated around the campfire with Billy (Dennis Hopper) and Wyatt (Peter Fonda) in the summer of 1969 classic, *Easy Rider*. This role gave us our first true glimpse into what Nicholson could be and would become. For more than

five decades, Jack Nicholson has performed tirelessly from stage to screen to become one of the most beloved and recognized actors in film history, including three Oscars and twelve Academy Award nominations—more than any other male actor.

James L. Neibaur's *The Essential Jack Nicholson* maintains a very clear objective: that is, the book is written for mainstream movie fans rather than scholars—for those interested in the nature and nuances of his performances rather than a complete and comprehensive overview of his career. As such, Neibaur not only presents us with compelling glimpses of the movies that have helped define Nicholson's growth as an actor, but also a fascinating foray into the inner workings of cinema history and the multitude of versatile producers, writers, and filmmakers that animate that history, including Roger Corman, Monte Hellman, Bob Rafelson, Mike Nichols, Hal Ashby, Roman Polanski, Milos Forman, Stanley Kubrick, Warren Beatty, James L. Brooks, John Huston, Tim Burton, Rob Reiner, Alexander Payne, and Martin Scorsese, among others.

The Essential Jack Nicholson consists of thirty-two chapters, each describing the varied dimensions of the films, from production to critical reaction and commercial reception and accolades that have come to define Nicholson's legacy. Interestingly, Neibaur illustrates that much of Nicholson's potential and greatness is directly connected to the filmmakers and the cultural moments they all inhabited, each mutually benefiting the other to the point it becomes difficult (if not impossible) to determine who helped make whom. The strength of the book, however, is its breadth and resourcefulness. For instance, in highlighting a broad range of his films, highly successful classics alongside marginalized B-movies, Neibaur elucidates both Nicholson and film history simultaneously. In chapters two, three, and four, for example, Neibaur opens an important window into *how* Nicholson developed his craft by focusing on prominent B-film master Roger Corman, who pioneered low-budget guerilla filmmaking and helped propel the early careers of Francis Ford Coppola,

Martin Scorsese, Peter Bogdanovich, Ron Howard, Joe Dante, John Sayles, Jonathan Demme, James Cameron, and of course, Jack Nicholson. In other words, we learn specifically how *The Little Shop of Horrors*, *The Raven*, and *The Terror* set the stage for the next season of Nicholson's career.

Moreover, in chapters four and five, Neibaur offers a fuller picture of Nicholson as both actor and screenwriter by giving attention to his work with Monte Hellman in *The Shooting* and *Ride in the Whirlwind* as well as his collaborative relationship with Bob Rafelson. With *Head*, for example, Nicholson and Rafelson shared screenwriting credit and teamed again with *Five Easy Pieces*. Their subject in *Head* (*The Monkees*) helped Rafelson establish the equity needed to fund the quintessential *Easy Rider*. Overall, the remainder of the book continues to establish credibility for Nicholson's greatness through an exploration of his many memorable characters in films like *Chinatown*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, and *The Shining*.

In sum, the films discussed include (in chronological order) *The Cry Baby Killer*, *The Little Shop of Horrors*, *The Raven*, *The Terror*, *The Shooting*, *Ride in the Whirlwind*, *Head*, *Easy Rider*, *Five Easy Pieces*, *Carnal Knowledge*, *The Last Detail*, *Chinatown*, *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Goin' South*, *The Shining*, *Reds*, *Terms of Endearment*, *Prizzi's Honor*, *The Witches of Eastwick*, *Ironweed*, *Batman*, *A Few Good Men*, *Hoffa*, *The Crossing Guard*, *As Good as It Gets*, *The Pledge*, *About Schmidt*, *Anger Management*, *Something's Gotta Give*, *The Departed*, *The Bucket List*, and *How Do You Know*. In essence, *The Essential Jack Nicholson* is both a proclamation and an invitation. As a proclamation, Neibaur makes a case for Nicholson as a Hollywood icon, someone who challenged industry conventions and caused us to broaden our notion of a leading man. In turn, this declaration becomes an invitation to discovering (or perhaps

rediscovering) the stories that helped make Jack Nicholson one of our most beloved actors.

And though Nicholson unofficially “retired” in 2010, citing, “I had the most chilling thought that maybe people in their twenties and thirties don’t actually want to be moved anymore” (xii), he maintains an aura of esteem among fans and filmmakers alike the likes of which are reserved only for the Hollywood pantheon.

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D’Amico, LuElla. *Girls’ Series Fiction and American Popular Culture*. Lexington Books. 2016. Print.

Girls’ Series Fiction and American Popular Culture, edited by LuElla D’Amico, presents a empowering collection of choice, chance encounter and conviction inspired by the literary adventures of more than a century’s worth of admired and spirited female protagonists. Much more than a collection of critical essays detailing the adventures of young female heroines, “Girls’ Series Fiction and American Popular Culture” offers a unique opportunity to better understand the historical, social and political contexts in which their adventures occurred.

The collection offers the historical scholar, of any discipline, a valuable lens into the world of the young female, past and present. The collection, broken down into 14 chapters, is organized and grouped loosely by time period and subject. The breadth of the collection is one of its greatest strengths.

The collection opens with reflections on Louisa May Alcott’s work (*Little Women, Little Men, Jo’s Boys*) and an intriguing review of Susan Coolidge’s work (Katy novels) and the relationship between feminism,

queerness and disability. The work closes with a review of more recent series including *Fancy Nancy* (geared toward younger readers); the *Vampire Academy Series* (and its “fantastical world in which complex characters - humans and vampires - cohabit” along with “Third-Wave feminism”) (p. 251); and, finally, *Pretty Little Liars and Their Pretty Little Devices* (a 21st century work examining the influences of technology and technological change). This journey through time, shared from the perspective of a dynamic group of scholars (representing a variety of fields and backgrounds) presents, almost by chance, an animated historical timeline of feminist growth and progress. As Nichole Bogarosh observes in her entry titled “Nancy Drew and Trixie Belden”, “[t]hink of the changes that could be made if more people came to identify as feminists and truly embrace the dictionary definition of feminism: the political, social, and economic equality of all genders” (Bogarosh, p. 144). Irrespective of one’s political, social or economic ideals, the historical breadth of D’Amico’s collection offers researchers and readers poignant examples of the females’ long and winding march towards equality.

The collection is just as valuable as a window into the female adolescent’s personal challenges and struggles - those that have persisted and transcended historical periods. The collection of essays, alone and together, support a broader, deeper definition of what it means to be a “girl”. Whereas Nancy Drew, for example, is often thought of as “the definition of wholesome”, Trixie Belden is more often referred to as “wildly imperfect” (p. 92) or “perfectly imperfect” (p. 122). Taking the reader well beyond the “boy-crazy, drama-queen” too often highlighted in the popular culture (Waldron, 2010; Weber, 2014), the collection raises awareness of the depth and complexity of the female adolescent as she grows and transitions towards adulthood.

D’Amico’s collection simultaneously immerses readers in memories of the literature, series or otherwise, that impacted their personal and professional life choices. While our memories of the books are often

“more impressionistic than specific” (D’Amico, p. 137), the very real impact of the series genre on its readers remains without doubt. Presenting a comprehensive review of both the longevity and the variety (with subjects exploring, in part, race, class, gender, and equality) inherent to the genre, the collection offers valuable insights into the influence of girls’ series fiction on generations of young readers.

Perhaps most importantly, the collection is, at its core, celebratory. The work successfully resolves and reconciles any doubts regarding the power of the female protagonist and of the girls’ series fiction genre, both as a voice and a source of inspiration to generations. Whether emulated or rejected (see p. vii), heroines of series books dating back to the mid-nineteenth century are plentiful and powerful. The collection’s essays share a deep respect for the female heroine, a young girl as a protagonist, the unexpected feminist, and a sometimes-unlikely role model. Themes of honesty, curiosity and resilience thread throughout each entry. Essays explore, for example, *Cherry Ames*, *Student Nurse* (complex career-related messages); *Betsy-Tacy* (queries on journaling, self-disclosure and identity); the American Girls series (political consciousness, privilege, social injustice and consumption); and the *Baby-Sitters Club* (one of Scholastic Inc.’s most successful juvenile fiction series, raising questions about the distinction between literature and product) (Mary Bronstein, p. 205) with rich detail and perception. Taken as a whole, the collection serves as a moving reminder of the power, diversity and strength of the female heroine.

Finally, the collection offers its readers a compelling dose of inspiration. *Girls’ Series Fiction and American Popular Culture* opens with an Introduction that astutely describes “the power of the series genre as a guiding influence on [the] future life trajectories” of at least three of our United States Supreme Court justices (*Girls’ Series Fiction*, p. vii). While the esteemed Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Sandra Day O’Connor and Sonia Sotomayor are cited in the collection’s opening paragraphs

(D'Amico, p. vii), the series genre has undoubtedly served a similar role for thousands of young readers of all genders.

In many ways, the success of the girls series genre is much more than a result or consequence of literary prowess. The achievement, like D'Amico's collection of essays, is also a result of girl prowess, as well as empowerment and complexity. Literary critics argue that the plots are "formulaic", the characters arguably too predictable, the conflicts too contrived (D'Amico, p. viii). In many ways, these traits give way to the genre's grace and power as an empowerment tool. Readers are free to dream, live, and aspire - in an arguably contrived and predictable universe where great achievements are realized. *Girls' Series Fiction and American Popular Culture* celebrates that remarkable freedom.

As the collection closes, I was reminded of a fiery scene in *Feud*, an 8-hour TV series featuring two iconic actresses: Bette Davis and Joan Crawford. In a heated exchange, the two observed that while favored films are cyclical, the actors who wish to star in them are not (NPR, 2017). *Girls series heroines*, in contrast, remain perpetually influential. *Girls Series Fiction and American Popular Culture* successfully shares and celebrates this influence. Whether read in sequence, sporadically, in its entirety or on a whim, the text's readers are challenged to revisit the role of female characters in series novels (past and present) and, at the same time, reflect upon the role such series had on their upbringing and growth. I close with a deep sense of gratitude both to the original authors who had the imagination and the courage to develop such powerful role models as well as to the scholars who continue to explore, debate and acknowledge their impact.

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Aldama, Frederick L. and Christopher González, editors. *Graphic Borders: Latino Comic Books Past, Present and Future*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press. 2016. Print

Comic books have long been a staple of popular culture around the world from their newspaper origins in the 1930s to their position as a mediated powerhouse in today's globalized society. The comic book allows readers to escape through stories of fantasy but also engage in a cultural appreciation of a story's foundations, a dynamic that Aldama and González's collected volume, *Graphic Borders: Latino Comic Books Past,*

Present and Future, engages directly. This volume is an essential addition for any reader looking to better understand Latino culture as well as simply learn more about the depth of comic books in general. While the collection itself speaks more to notions of Latino culture and comic books in popular culture, the volume is wisely constructed to convey critical looks toward various dynamics of culture as a whole. The authors open the book with an introduction that lays the groundwork for diverse sets of analysis that the fourteen essays will explore. Aldama and González describe how modes of satire, science fiction and noir are present in Latino comic books, revealing complex dynamics of gender, identity, power, and border rhetorics that guide their collected work. Their opening cleanly sets readers up with the line of popular and academic scholarship their work fits with, segueing into their preview and central premise toward the multivariate dimensions of Latino comic books.

While Aldama and González are a joy to read in their introductory discussion, the book is most valuable to readers through the diverse set of collected essays and the arguments they bring to the volume. Fourteen essays broken into five major parts present a well-organized and careful look into the Latino cultures captured in comic books. Part one of the collection focuses on the critically acclaimed works of Los Bros Hernandez, three brothers whose cartooning and imagination transformed the Latino comic scene. While the collection of works in part one is mostly celebratory in nature, Hamilton and Aldama's pieces argue that their efforts were transformative of the comic medium. The section closes with a contribution by González, who adds to the argument that Los Bros Hernandez shifted the comic book genre as a whole, presenting a utility in comic books that explores notions of sexuality and challenges dominant modes of thinking toward Latino identity. Part two opens a discussion of the body through works focused on baseball icon Roberto Clemente and another on luchadores. González's piece on Hall of Fame baseball and philanthropic icon Roberto Clemente illuminates the visual potency of

bodies toward narrative development. Through both essays in this section we see an argument for the visual power of body rhetorics. The authors in this section notes how dynamic storytelling of the body displayed on a comic panel implicitly argues for dynamics of heroism with Clemente, and challenges to patriarchy through the luchadores.

Aldama and González's text is a step forward in considerations of border cultures, a discussion that occupies much of parts three and four of their volume. In today's contentious understandings of national, state, and urban borders, the use of comic books lays out an intriguing history of these political dynamics. Fernández-L'Hoeste opens this dialogue through a look at the dynamics of identity and assimilation these comic books offer. Coupled with Poblete's essay, readers are presented a nuanced look at the complicated dynamics of border rhetorics and cultural identity. This section is, I would argue, proves to be the richest of the book given its commentary on the struggles of cultural identity and bordering policies presents a critical vision toward Latino culture that is hard to come by in similar texts. This section very much runs in a similar vein to DeChaine and Cisneros' works on the rhetorics of bordering, but approaches the phenomenon through a unique presentation in comic books.

The theme toward history and cultural tensions continues into the fourth part of *Graphic Borders*, where the text approaches the shades of other-ness and subjugated histories that comic books offer. In these works, *Graphic Borders* offers an honest and unmitigated look into the historical experiences of the Latino communities wrestling with perceptions of self. Readers interested in the origins of these conflicts will find immense value in these works, as they shed light on the issue from a medium like comic books, detailing the widespread anxiety to remain true to self but also exist in our constantly shifting world. Sections four and five of the book move our focus into the twenty-first century and beyond, looking at the possibilities of Latino comic books as a series of artifacts that engage Latin culture like no other. These works are optimistic, yet cautious in

nature, divulging the taken-for-granted Latino elements present in comics like *Spider-Girl*, while also reflecting on the hegemonic control over comic book content, and by extension, culture. These authors illustrate how the maintenance toward representing Latino culture in a productive manner is certainly a complex and uphill effort, but as history illustrates, is well worth the effort.

In all, *Graphic Borders* is a collection that deserves consideration on the bookshelf of any reader interested in subjects like Latino culture, comic book history, and mass media as a whole. While the collection holds the depth and content necessary to consider it as a must-have, the abrupt close to the text after Montes' piece on Spider-Man opened a window for discussion that Aldama and González never closed. This critique aside, *Graphic Borders* is a thorough look at Latino culture and comic books that engages subjects like borders, gender, history, politics, and sexuality in a cohesive collection of essays. As such, Aldama and González's work advances our knowledge on the subject of Latino culture and the comic book medium in a way that places it as one of the premier recent texts to consider for popular culture scholars and enthusiasts.

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Calvente, Lisa B. Y. and Guadalupe García, eds. *Imprints of Revolution: Visual Representations of Resistance*. Rowman & Littlefield International, 2016. Print.

The word revolution has a rich connotation that evokes an immediate imagination of a wide range of political, economic, technological, historical, and sociocultural events happening around the globe. This

edited collection of chapters, *Imprints of Revolution*, tells nine different stories about the discursive formations of revolution in a century-long time span and across the borders of countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The editors of this volume set the discourse of revolution in an intersectional position with the visual representation in order to explore a mutual influence on the struggle over hegemony and the ongoing (neo)colonial(ity) narrative (7). As the editors point out, the concept and the act of revolution grew out of the encounter and interaction between Western empires and the colonized world. Through revolution, the indigenous, the colonized, and the enslaved ruptured and transformed the (Western) modern world that values humanity, freedom, and rationality. In the process of transformation, “visual representations materialized as the impetus for the ongoing processes of decolonization, global revolution, and justice” (5). Therefore, the editors’ intend to examine how visual images contribute to the articulation and interrogation of revolutions in different contexts and help to understand the new colonial relationship in a highly globalized environment.

The nine chapters are case studies of revolutionary protests across spatial and temporal axes. The volume begins with Theresa Avila’s discussion of several prints of Emiliano Zapata (1879-1919), the national hero whose personal narrative records the details of Mexico in the process of democratization, such as agrarian reform and rebellions against the decentralized government. By a close reading of these prints, Avila presents and reconstructs a specific periodization of Mexico through the eyes of the revolutionary icon.

In chapter two, Alison Hulme describes the changed rhetoric of industriousness in Mao’s period and the post-Mao era (1949-present) in China by an examination of the posters from different times. Through this description she argues that under different political ideologies, the industrious revolution in China may have changed the economic, social, and cultural environment, but there is always the continuity in the quest

for the good life. Similar to the search for a good life in China, Lisa B. Y. Calvente and Guadalupe Garcia, in chapter three, look for a unifying identity among the Cuban masses. The authors examine the roles various visual arts such as photographs, posters, billboards, and magazines have played in the articulation of the revolutionary meanings in Cuba after 1959, with a particular focus on how these artistic forms have been utilized and transformed in order to fit into the changing political, economic, and international environment.

Brynn Hatton in chapter four examines multiple examples of antiwar arts about Vietnamese revolutionary subjectivity produced in geographically disparate contexts. In her analysis, social categories such as race, nationality, class, and political orientation serve as cohesive rather than divisive factors. She argues that re-visiting the art movement that features global solidarity at a specific historical moment facilitates a better understanding of the power of contemporary visual products. Following the theme of global solidarity, Meron Wondwosen, in chapter five, discusses a variety of paintings, sculptures, posters, and photographs of three critical historical moments of Ethiopia. Such discussion paints a clearer picture of how these public visual representations have reflected the Ethiopians' engagement in different movements and in the construction of a global African identity.

Unlike other chapters that examine revolutions at a given historical moment, Silvia Nagy-Zekmi and Kevin J. Ryan Jr., in chapter six, see revolution as a way to reconstruct power relations. In particular, they argue that, as a commodified heritage site, Peru's world-renowned historical tourist site Machu Picchu has lost its cultural agency. The possible solution is to empower the indigenous inheritors to form the core of the site so as to resist cultural domination in the post-colonialist era.

Chapter seven and eight discuss the use of visual strategies by the empowered and the disempowered. Joshua Frye introduces *iconic associationism*, a visual rhetorical concept, to analyze how the Venezuelan

president Hugo Chavez strategically appropriates the image of the nineteenth-century cultural icon Simon Bolivar to establish and solidify his political power and to reconstitute Venezuela's national identity. In contrast, Leonora Souza Paula analyzes how the activist Grupo de Arte Callejero in Buenos Aires uses signs and symbols to disrupt the norms established by the dominant and to dispel the traumatic past brought by military dictatorship and economic chaos. It is clear that the Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez was imposing his political power on the masses with the help of visual images while the masses in Argentina, led by an activist group, were using visuals to interrogate and challenge the empowered.

The last chapter brings readers back to contemporary Mexico. Nasheli Jimenez del Val examines how Mexican student activists initiated various protests by using a wide range of visual media to interrogate the controversial presidential candidate who had manipulated the media to create his biased public image during the electoral campaign in 2012.

Bloody upheaval and chaotic nightmare may be demoralizing and frustrating, but the overturn of the hegemonic and the ultimate success of democracy can be motivating. Throughout the case studies in this collection, *revolution*, with the aid of various visual images, is reconstructed and rearticulated. Colonialism and imperialism still exist in our world and people still fight for democracy, justice, and human rights. This book collection offers a fresh angle on this ongoing battle.

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Oring, Elliot. *Joking Asides: The Theory, Analysis, and Aesthetics of Humor*. University Press of Colorado, 2016. Print.

In his new book, Folklorist and humor scholar Elliot Oring contextualizes and advances his previous writings on jokes and their function in society. *Joking Asides* contains a compilation of Oring's scholarship integrated with summaries, explanations and analyses of contemporary humor theories. Readers of any academic discipline will benefit greatly from this text that covers centuries of scholarship regarding humor theories and their potential to advance a greater understanding of comedy and its role in public culture. Oring explains the rationale for his new book as follows: "This volume is meant to offer challenges to our conventional understandings of humor; understandings of what humor is; how jokes function; who the targets of comedy are; what the basis might be for the identification of a humorous repertoire with a particular social group; how the subgenres of jokes might be defined; and how jokes might relate to those forms of expression considered to be art" (218).

Oring accomplishes the above and more by providing thoughtful and thorough representations of multiple and ongoing conversations about jokes. Some of the conversations included, but were not limited to, Freud's *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*, the General Theory of Verbal Humor, Blending and Humor, Benign Violations, False Beliefs, Jokes on the Internet, Narrative Jokes, Jewish Jokes, and how joke analyses should more explicitly frame this discourse as an art-form with its own aesthetics. Every chapter benefits from frequent examples of jokes and humorous situations, clear summaries, and even the occasional graph/chart that explain complex and confusing formulas. Oring encourages other scholars to add their voices to these ongoing conversations by explicitly articulating specific areas for future research throughout the book.

A recurring topic across several chapters is Oring's own theory, Appropriate Incongruity, which he both summarizes and applies to multiple examples: "this perspective claims that all humor depends upon the perception of an incongruity that can nevertheless be seen as somehow appropriate [to] capture what is going on in the joke without any precommitment to the categories of a formal theory" (25). Oring's concept is intentionally vague, which privileges the critic in constructing a context to both establish and apply this perspective. Part of this context must be historical, and Oring's excellent work in uncovering the particular myths and assumptions of Jewish humor in Chapter 10 serve as a stellar model for scholars concerned about uncovering erroneous assumptions about jokes and how they function within a specific moment in history. I found the repeated inclusion of Appropriate Incongruity helpful in not only clarifying how this theory can be used productively, but also in noting some of the limits of other theories covered in this volume, notably that Benign Violation Theory is essentially a "clone" of Oring's concept (80). Indeed, Oring's book serves as an excellent showcase for how his theory continues to be productive in contemporary joke scholarship.

However, Chapter 6, "Framing Borat," would have benefitted from *more* inclusion of Oring's concept by noting explicitly how Appropriate Incongruity theory could be used to analyze the provocative faux-documentary, *Borat*. As the shortest chapter in the book, I was left wanting more application of Appropriate Incongruity and how it applies to a work of humor that encompassed two discrete audiences: the cinematic audience aware of the comedic content due to generic form and those individuals that appear within the film as unwitting dupes necessary to advance said comedic content. Given Oring's frequent calls for future scholarship into humor studies, perhaps this is but one more path he identifies; it is up to a reader to begin a productive journey in addressing how awareness and/or consciousness plays a role in humor reception.

The book in its entirety is certainly a must read for any contemporary humor scholar; however, Oring's summary of Freud's writing on jokes is a particular standout. *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* is frequently cited and referenced, but Oring exposes how often people relying on Freud's work fail to accurately depict the contents of the primary text. The first chapter, "What Freud Actually Said about Jokes," is a comprehensive overview that clarifies the relationship between jokes and dreams, the comparison at the center of Freud's book. In Oring's estimation, the differences are more salient than the similarities because jokes are intentional and (potentially) have a socially relevant impact: "In sum, the joke emerges not as a manifestation of unconscious forces seeking release but as a literary construction that authorizes the communication of conscious, though prohibited, thoughts in public settings" (12). Oring frames Freud's book as essentially a *rhetorical theory* of the joke, particularly the practice of tendentious humor. This observation – and the multiple examples of jokes explored to support Oring's viewpoint – was nothing short of enlightening for this rhetorical scholar of humor.

Oring has an obvious agenda with this book: to ensure that those endeavoring to engage in academic scholarship related to humor get up to speed on the past and present of this discipline in order to make their own impact and allow for future progress in understanding that jokes have an important role in public culture. He ends the book thusly: "Meanwhile, the conversation is ongoing and those who would acquaint themselves with the issue, the materials, and previous research are more than welcome to put their two cents in" (219). Oring provides readers with the relevant talking points from this ongoing discussion to facilitate the addition of new voices.

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Ouellette, Laurie and Gray, Jonathan, editors. *Keywords for Media Studies*. New York: New York University Press, 2017. Print.

Modeled after Raymond Williams' 1983 book, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, and very much in its spirit of historicity, dynamism and the cartography of words, the authors address media studies keywords in terms of definitions (some hotly contested or evolving), history and explanatory examples, and salience for future media studies research. The authors are all particularly suited to their subject matters, many already having made substantial scholarly and professional impact in their areas of contribution. The book is structured as 65 alphabetically listed entries of approximately two to four pages each. Of course, no book can be expected to cover every possible important term or to create a definitive canon, as the editors readily admit. Still, the book's authors deftly tackle an admirable breadth of concepts, some of which previously have not received treatment in such a book (e.g., play, intersectionality, reflexivity).

Three of the book's considerable strengths serve here to commend it to readers. First, the authors give familiar terms some novelty in one or more aspects, such as their definitions, significance or future research directions. For instance, what would media studies be without the sustaining food for thought of representation? In this iteration, however, a rich treatment of visibility regarding various groups is juxtaposed with the notion that "representation...must capture...the world as we feel it and as we would like it to be," (175) not just the way it is. To put a poignant fine point on the matter, the author reminds us of children's television host Fred Rogers' assertion, "if you know someone's story, you will love them" (176). Another familiar term, technology, points toward the things that matter in society rather than holding importance in its usual conception as object. Thus, the author urges media studies "away from a fascination and awe of technological things to the more difficult but useful interrogation of

technological culture" (193). As its own popular area of inquiry, memory is integral to media studies, but its definition ("the modality in which the past is made new again and again" 121) coupled with the observation that "remembering and forgetting are not just things that people do, but also things that are done to people," (122) give this brief discussion a fresh feel.

Another asset, essential to a book such as this, is its synergistic treatment of the terms without redundancy. For example, the domesticity entry argues the term is a "foundation for the richness of media" (65) and discusses it in terms of identity politics (gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and class), ultimately locating it in the realm of the "emotionally fraught" (63). Given the nature of cultural and critical studies, some overlap can and should occur. Yet, related terms such as power and hegemony, audience and public, taste and aesthetics, or commodification and brand, cover productively overlapping terrain from distinct angles, avoiding repetition while reinforcing their centrality to media studies.

Most important is the book's critical interrogation of key terminology, leading in many cases to fruitful future directions. The volume is rife with incisive caveats and conclusions that provide non-intuitive insights, and generally discuss the kind of hidden relationships that media criticism proffers at its analytical best. One such notion is that of reflexivity as harboring the danger of demobilization "because it caters to a debilitating savviness" (171). Similarly, the usual understanding of resistance as being in service to social change becomes a conservative strategy instead, "resist(ing) what is new to conserve the old" (179). The reader learns that resistance "with its eyes always upon its adversary does little to provide a vision of the new world to come" (179). Appropriately, the discussion of play provides a delightful example of how this concept can advance media criticism: from the terse descriptions of its nature (as "doing" and as "being," (138); "as precocious as it is precarious" (138); "unrelentingly fuzzy" (139); and "beyond language" (140)), to the media function of play

("magic circle generators" 139), to the social conditions on which play is predicated ("a leap of faith" 139), there is simply "no media culture without play" (139). Studying play's experiential complexity reinforces the idea that media culture consists of "lived, meaning-making acts" (138). In the end, being open to the vulnerability of play will illuminate ourselves and our media.

Some contributions particularly exemplify all the book's strengths simultaneously. That they are too numerous to mention here is itself a testament to the book's caliber. The four-page entry on celebrity is a case in point. Its connection to media studies seems obvious and natural, yet an examination of the shifting boundary between "exceptionalism and ordinariness," (28) and the democratization of fame posits some keen insights on the changing nature of celebrity, and explores its role in serving a "politics of distraction," (31) enriching but not overlapping with discussions of fandom or the popular.

In barely a page and a half, the entry on irony manages to pinpoint its nature, unpack its mechanisms for creating meaning, and elucidate its utility ("challenging received truths and deconstructing pieties" (115)) as well as its pleasures (e.g., social connection). Its connections to myth, hegemony or play, for example, are stimulating and heuristic.

This is more than an extended glossary. Though short, the entries are complexly rich, so this is far from light reading, and perhaps not intended or recommended to be done at one time. Alphabetic arrangement is extremely useful for quickly locating particular entries, but because many of these terms have relationships among one another, a "see also" listing might be helpful at the bottom of each entry.

With clearly written prose and no presumption of background knowledge, this book is appropriate for students, but generative and analytical enough to appeal to more mature scholars as well. Its explanatory background material, future research directions, and effort to problematize each term and to locate it within the larger cultural studies

project provide thought-provoking intellectual engagement. Thoroughly satisfying and provocatively brevilouquent, this book was found to be far more enjoyable than an academic text has a right to be

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Reinhard, Carrielynn D. and Olson, Christopher J., editors. *Making Sense of Cinema: Empirical Studies into Film Spectators and Spectatorship*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2016. Print.

Editors Carrielynn Reinhard and Christopher Olson have gathered a diverse cast of studies that highlight both the various ways in which spectators interact with and are impacted by specific films as well as the journey researchers take to complete such studies. The collection, *Making Sense of Cinema*, covers a considerable range, taking on everything from *Lord of the Rings* to *Fight Club*, from intense J-horror film festivals to children in the 20s and 30s. The book certainly meets the goals Reinhard and Olson set in the introduction—one of which they describe as such: “[t]he goal is to demonstrate what can be done—what can be studied and how, to what end, and with what benefits and drawbacks—when applying empiricism to make sense of film spectators and film spectatorship” (13). However, in addition to the vivid details of the empirical process, each

study also produced fascinating and sometimes shocking results and told captivating stories.

The book opens with an introduction by Reinhard and Olson in which they outline a brief history of the modern study of spectators's interactions with films and describe the theory behind these studies in a way that is easily comprehensible. In Chapter Two, Annie Dell'Aria takes us to three large cities in order to observe how spectators interact with public art. Jessica Hughes's Chapter Three brings us along to the Fantasia International Film Festival to catch the a few J-horror films and the fans' reactions to the extreme gore. In Chapter Four, Darren Waldron seeks to study how well Spanish and UK LGBTQ audiences can relate to a French film—*Les Invisibles*—which chronicles the experiences of older members of France's LGBTQ community. In Chapter Five, Alexander Geimer asks a group of teenagers to question their lifestyles based on themes found in *Fight Club*. Chapter Six's Martin Baker shares *Lord of the Rings* fans' reasoning behind their favorite characters. Amanda Fleming's Chapter Seven travels back to the 20s and 30s to revisit early studies on children's taste in films and to critique the bias of similar studies. In Chapter Eight, Andrea Russell, Jenny Robinson, Darrin Verhagen, Sarah Pink, Sean Redmond, and Jane Stadler use *Saving Private Ryan* and *Monsters Inc.* to explore how sound affects viewers' gazes. In Chapter Nine, Craig Batty, Adrian Dyer, Claire Perkins, and Jodi Sita investigate how viewers experience an animated film—in this case, *Up*—using eye-tracking technologies. In Chapter Ten, Katalin Bálint and András Bálint Kovács study viewers' attachment to films' characters in two Hungarian short films. Carrielynn Reinhard's Chapter Eleven studies fourteen non-American viewers' reactions to American superhero movies. In Chapter Twelve, Sermin Ildirar tests to see whether or not there are disparities in the abilities to use different cues in art films to understand the film between men and women as well as those who most frequently watch art films and those who most frequently watch commercial films. In Chapter

Thirteen, Thorsten Kluss, John Bateman, and Kerstin Schill use eye-tracking technologies to investigate spectators' visual expectations for romantic comedy, science fiction, and horror thriller films. The book concludes with Christopher Olson's Chapter Fourteen, reflecting on the successes and limitations of the studies in the collection, yet expressing hope that *Making Sense of Cinema* might be able to act as a guide for students and amateur researchers.

Indeed, one of the strengths of this collection is the range of methods presented in the twelve studies it showcases. From found research to questionnaires to eye-tracking technologies, the researchers demonstrate the capabilities and limitations that are part of the journey to understanding (or beginning to understand) spectators' interactions with various films. Together these studies and others in this collection illuminate the timeline and scope of film studies, giving us a sense as to how the field has evolved over time and insight, perhaps, into the future. The studies work together to create not only a collection of valuable contributions to the field of film studies but also various maps for conducting empirical research, which makes *Making Sense of Cinema* invaluable for students and researchers, established and aspiring alike.

However, a collection of tools for beginners would be utterly useless if the tools were made inaccessible through overly technical language. While there certainly are studies that are technical in nature, the process of the study is described in a way that could be not only clearly understood by such beginners but also engage with. Any graphics or tables that appear in relation to data are clearly explained and analyzed; they plainly bolster any points that the author or authors may make. The graphics and tables, too, present a plethora of examples for researchers to draw from when mounting their own studies.

Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of *Making Sense of Cinema*—which Olson touches on in Chapter Fourteen—is that the studies explore many niches of global society (Chapter Three and Chapter Four),

while also featuring that which the public may be more familiar with, including the public art in Chapter Two and the superhero films of Chapter Eleven. Reinhard and Olson's collection clearly exhibits the variety that our society offers on a global, making it a wonderful representative to those new to the field. The message for young researchers here is clear: whatever you care about, there are always new ways to examine it. Here are some tools; go out and explore.

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Khabeer, Su'ad A. *Muslim Cool: Race, Religion, and Hip Hop in the United States*. New York University Press. 2016. Print.

Su'ad Abdul Khabeer's *Muslim Cool: Race, Religion, and Hip Hop in the United States* examines the connection between young Black and non-Black Muslims through the hip-hop movement. Khabeer argues that regardless of race and nationality, these youth connect as members of the hip-hop generation, engaging and challenging racism in the United States and within their community. *Muslim Cool* is a discussion of the ways Muslim youth utilize Blackness, as typified by hip-hop culture, as a source of identification. While Khabeer employs in-depth analysis to show how their dress, style and even activism is influenced by Black culture, this analysis would have benefitted from more time focused on the youth.

Khabeer's ethnographic study takes place over the course of two years while working at the Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN), a Muslim non-profit community center in Chicago. She refers to the participants as "teachers" and shares not only their experiences, but also her own within the community. Khabeer's thesis is centered on an aesthetic she terms "Muslim Cool." *Muslim Cool* is the demonstration of

Blackness, as defined in hip hop culture, in which young Muslims challenge ideals established by traditional Muslim culture on one side and White American culture on the other. For these young Muslims, their relationship with Blackness is complicated with elements of anti-Blackness. Typical Arab and South Asian communities in America adapt negative attitudes about Black people from white communities that see them as both model minorities and perpetual foreigners. In protest of these ideas, those exhibiting Muslim Cool embrace hip-hop and the cultural stylings associated with the genre. It is clear in their interactions with traditional Muslim youth that they are outsiders by choice. Rather than considering this appropriation, Khabeer asserts that they use this connection to hip-hop to become activists in their own right. While it is not appropriation in its most traditional sense, the connection between the youth and hip-hop seems tenuous, at best. Some of the youth connect with hip-hop culture not in a philosophical way, but as a way to rebel against the mainstream. For example, when asked if hip-hop helps her to become Muslim, teacher Rabia says, “Yeah, imagine if I was listening to Nicole Richie? . . . Well then, Hannah Montana! Imagine if I was listening to that Nickelodeon crap!” (64). Rabia goes on to distance herself from “typical desi girls,” young Muslim women who focus on family, community and school. She is not just rebelling against the dominant white culture; she is defying her traditions as well. While this is not necessarily appropriation, only time will tell if this young woman’s protests will amount to youthful indiscretion later.

In the next section, Khabeer introduces the history of hip-hop and the influence that the Muslim religion has on the genre. This influence is evident through rappers, their lyrical content and their style of dress. In her exhaustive history, Khabeer argues that hip-hop artists who were part of the Nation of Islam (NOI) and Five Percent Nation continue to influence young Muslims today. She connects the lyrics of artists such as Big Daddy Kane and Public Enemy, and speeches from Khalid Muhammed, leader

within the NOI, to underground rappers within the Muslim Cool movement. Her argument is that, while the NOI is not accepted within traditional Muslim sects, it has an influence on hip-hop and has imbued the audience with ideals of Black Nationalism, exceptionalism and a spirit of resistance. This assertion is clearly influenced by Khabeer's history as a self-defined hip-hop head and not traditional Muslim thought, but is also the clearest example of Muslim Cool in action.

For example, within this discussion Khabeer describes a performance by a multi-cultural group of Muslim rappers featuring teacher Man-O-Wax on the turntables titled the Turntable Dhikr. In this performance, Man-O-Wax mixes different audio clips from hip-hop songs that mention Allah. Traditional Muslims in the audience considered the performance to be "haram upon haram upon haram" (79), meaning forbidden on multiple levels. Khabeer recalls that a handful of men stood at the corner of the stage complaining, determined to end the performance because they believed that Man-O-Wax was scratching over the name of Allah, which is prohibited. For the performers, however, this tribute served not only as a devotional, but also as an act of defiance against those traditionalists. This section is one of the strongest in the book. As Khabeer describes the tension in the performance hall, a distinction is made between the traditional Muslim participants and the performers who wanted to push the traditionalists out of their comfort zone. In this instance, the power of Muslim Cool becomes clear.

The timing of the release of *Muslim Cool* in the market is perfect, especially considering the United States' current relationship with the African American and Muslim communities. Khabeer ends the book with a discussion of the Black Lives Matter movement and how it challenges not only the state, but also those traditional methods of protest within the older civil rights community. While impassioned, this coda seems disconnected from earlier chapters. Perhaps including the teachers in the

discussion of Black Lives Matter and how they participate as Muslims within the movement would have helped with this connection.

Muslim Cool is a fascinating examination of the intersection between race, religion, and popular culture. While Khabeer's analysis is exhaustive, the book would benefit from more dialogue from the youth teachers. While we are introduced to an eclectic group of young people who offer different experiences crucial to the book's main premise, Khabeer tends to rely on her own voice toward the end of the book. This is a shame because their words could provide insight into the struggles that young Muslims are currently dealing with both within and outside of their communities. In addition, it would be interesting to read the ways in which they navigate the changing world of hip-hop and Muslim identity within it. Despite this departure, *Muslim Cool* is worth reading to gain insight into a fascinating world not often explored.

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Winters, Paul E. *Pressing Matters: Vinyl Records and Analog Culture in the Digital Age* London: Lexington Books, 2016. Print.

Pressing Matters is a loose collection of essays about the “discursive formation” of vinyl as a technology and aesthetic form (viii). The subject matter is timely, and the scope of the author's research suggests the possibility of a comprehensive historical argument, although, ultimately, such an argument appears only in sketch form. The author's central question—how and why vinyl made its comeback—seems to have been supplanted by perhaps more interesting lines of inquiry. *Pressing Matters*

instead addresses how listening, consuming, and collecting vinyl produce self-disciplining subjects, among other things. To this end, Winters often cites Foucault, or secondary sources on Foucault, and the phrase “in the Foucauldian sense” crops up throughout the book. The project, however, reads less like a genealogy than an unexpected mash-up of cultural theories.

Several chapters attempt to chart, through often disparate examples and concepts, the advent of sound technology and the corresponding production of subjects. For example, in chapter one, “‘Dogs Don’t Listen to Phonographs: Nipper, ‘His Master’s Voice,’ and the Discourse of ‘Fidelity,’” the author considers how ideas about sound fidelity produced “the listening subject”(2). Winters’ begins with the image of the Victorola mascot “Nipper,” the little dog with cocked head who listens into the “talking machine. “Nipper” and his story will be familiar to those who study early twentieth century sound technology. Winters, however, offers some novel insights about the context of Victorian realism, and makes a thorough pass through secondary literature on notions of fidelity. A different “listening subject” appears in Chapter Two, “The Beatles on itunes and Vinyl Reissue: Aesthetic Discourse and the Listening Subject.” Here, Winters briefly restages the Adorno/Benjamin debates about reproducible art. Benjamin wins this round, and the rest of the chapter ruminates on “aura” and authenticity. In this case, the “listening subject” emerges only peripherally, as an audiophile who imagines that the materiality of vinyl brings him closer to the origins of sound.

Finally, the “listening subject” becomes a more explicitly disciplinary subject by Chapter 6, “You spin me round (like a record).“ Here, Winters moves from the act of listening to other kinds of embodied practices involved in vinyl collection: storage, cleaning, maintenance, etc. (118). The true connoisseur understands that “correct use” preserves the collection and, in turn, the well-preserved collection certifies the

connoisseur. Winters insightfully locates the disciplinary mechanism in the physical and habitual repetitions that vinyl collecting seems to require.

Ultimately, however, Winters fails to illuminate the material and historical conditions that transformed the “listening subject” of the early twentieth century into the fetishistic collector of late capitalism. In the chapters that describe the production of sound subjects, Winters’ scattershot use of theory make his genealogical arguments less cogent. In the first chapter, for instance, Winters addresses the visual dynamics of the “Nipper” advertisement with select bits of John Berger’s *Ways of Seeing* (4). The analysis that follows fails to consider that Berger’s arguments about art and advertisement, particularly when he describes “the gaze,” often refer to *images of women* in art and advertisement, not necessarily to an object like “Nipper.” Lodged inside this paragraph on Berger is also a cumbersome quote about Foucault’s notion of the gaze, attributed to secondary source. These citations are dropped into arguments about the subject of *sound* with little explication or synthesis; both veer from Winters’ otherwise solid argument about how early twentieth century advertising worked to “domesticate” the turntable. While theorists of visual modernity may help to account for the discursive formations produced in part through print advertisement, Berger and Foucault never considered the modern soundscape. Winters might have made more coherent arguments by synthesizing theories about visual and auditory culture, or by omitting some of those theories altogether.

Winters’ genealogical ambitions are best realized in the chapters where textual and material examples ground and limit his use of theory. Chapter Five, “‘Cabinets of Wonder’ or ‘Coffins of Disuse?’: Reissues, Boxsets, and Commodity Fetishism,” stands out for its clear conceptual framework and well-chosen examples. As the title suggests, Winters examines the boxset in the context of its cultural and material packaging. Conversations surrounding two distinct reissues of *Credence Clearwater Revival* make for a rich start to the analysis. Winters also unpacks the

concept of commodity fetishism with a great deal of lucidity. Marx, it seems, works better for his purposes than Foucault. Similarly, the final Chapter, “The Vinyl Anachronist: The Role of Social Media in the Creation of Communities of Vinyl,” finds its moorings, after a lengthy review of literature on cyber communities, in a solid textual analysis of websites used by vinyl collectors. Ultimately, Winters suggests that online communities allow vinyl users a certain degree of self-invention, in tandem with the disciplinary mechanisms that produce the same “listening subjects.”

Despite problems with cogency, *Pressing Matters* makes a contribution to the booming cannon of sound and music studies. Winters offers keen insights about commodity fetishism and the disciplinary collector in the digital age. The theoretical bent of Winters’ essays likely will appeal to graduate students and research scholars interested in the secondary literature on sound and music studies.

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Olson, Christopher J., & Carrielynn D. Renhard. *Possessed Women, Haunted States: Cultural Tensions in Exorcism Cinema*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2017. Print.

In *Possessed Women, Haunted States: Cultural Tensions in Exorcism Cinema*, Olson and Renhard analyze gendered, racial, and ethnic tensions in what they refer to as “the traditional exorcism narrative,” which consists of narrative tropes and metaphors that inform and shape the exorcism film genre. They argue that the traditional exorcism narrative’s two components—the possessed individual (generally women) and the holy

figure in the film (generally a man)—“reflect the tensions and struggles that societies and cultures often face with regard to issues of women’s empowerment” (23). One of the most notable strengths of their analysis is their use of a multi-decade and multi-subgenre framework through which they deconstruct films such as *The Exorcist*, which inspired exorcism cinema and the exorcism genre, and other films including *Kung Fu Exorcist*, *Exorcist II*, *Repossessed*, and more. Utilizing cultural, critical, postcolonial, and feminist frameworks as their theoretical lenses, Olson and Renhard ultimately conclude that the exorcism genre 1) constructs women as problematic beings whose agency, voice, and sexuality threaten the patriarchal, masculine order and 2) constructs and marginalizes racial, ethnic, gendered, and queer minorities as abhorrent, problematic beings that require the white heteronormative patriarchal being—often a white, male priest—to perform exorcisms in efforts to restore the “natural” order.

Possessed Women, Haunted States begins with Chapter 1, an overview of the gendered and cultural politics of possession and the main themes that exemplify the exorcism genre, such as the oppression of marginalized groups and the need for a religious male savior to intervene and return her to a pure state. The book then transitions to Chapter 2, which provides a thorough analysis of the groundbreaking film *The Exorcist*. The authors attribute *The Exorcist*’s success to the period within which it was created, namely the late 1960s and early 1970s, and the era’s embracing of free love and sexual freedom and the cultural distancing from the Roman Catholic Church. *The Exorcist* was a cultural goldmine because it provided a cinematic response and moment of closure to terrors of the time, including cultural anxieties about sexual promiscuity, women’s rights, and women’s empowerment. Olson and Renhard demonstrate that *The Exorcist* laid the groundwork for the traditional exorcism narrative because it represented possessed women as active, vocal, and empowered beings who could be saved only by Catholic religious figures who need to restore religious order and thus return women to their oppressed state.

These characteristic tropes and stereotypes that together create the traditional exorcism narrative are then analyzed through multiple exorcism sub-genres and historical periods, such as the 1980s Nixon/Reagan era and the post-9/11 exorcism film boom. The authors analyze sequels for *The Exorcist*, as well as rip-offs and homages to 1970s exorcism cinema in Chapter 3; films that extend the exorcism narrative in Chapter 4; exorcism film parodies, satires, and slasher films in Chapter 5; non-fiction exorcism films and the resurgence of the exorcism genre in Chapters 6 and 7; and the culmination of these films resulting in *The Last Exorcism* and *The Last Exorcism Part II* in Chapter 8. The authors conclude in Chapter 9 by discussing the resiliency of the exorcism genre and its success throughout the past five decades. Through their analysis of these films and sub-genres, Olson and Renhard illustrate how exorcism films continue to follow the traditional exorcism narrative set forth by *The Exorcist* by portraying white women, black women, and possessed men who embody feminine voices and qualities—what they refer to as queer Others—as problematic threats to their families, themselves, and society. For example, in their chapter on how the terror attacks of September 11, 2001 resulted in a resurgence of exorcism cinema three decades after the release of *The Exorcist*, the authors illustrate how this resurgence was a response to post 9/11 widespread anxieties about terror, fear, and the threat of being attacked at any time. Exorcism films that were popular during this period included *Emily Rose* and *Deliver Us*, which had the potential to disrupt the traditional narrative; however, they ultimately aligned with the woman-as-threat trope that has long characterized the traditional exorcism narrative. Although some of these films have the potential to disrupt the traditional exorcism narrative trajectory, almost all of them continue to fall in line with stereotypical representations of minorities, leading Olson and Renhard to conclude that “exorcism films reflect the struggle for power between dominant and marginalized groups in a given society or culture” (167). In other words, even though there is a potential for subversion, the

traditional exorcism narrative thrives because of its Othering of minorities, subjugation of female empowerment, and restoration of white patriarchal authority

While the authors provide a thorough analysis of gendered and cultural tensions in exorcism films, their analysis would have been strengthened by a stronger postcolonial lens, particularly when interrogating the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity, and queerness. Olson and Renhard note at the outset of their analysis that they plan to utilize feminist and postcolonial theoretical lenses; however, the postcolonial lens is used to analyze only a small handful of films. This theoretical lens would have been a fruitful avenue through which to more strongly analyze representations of minorities in exorcism films. Overall, *Possessed Women, Haunted States* is a valuable book for scholars and students interested in media studies, critical/cultural studies, gender studies, and film studies. Its multi-decade historical linkages and situating of the genre, along with its close critical deconstruction of multiple exorcism films, highlights how exorcism cinema continues to negatively construct women and minorities as threats to the existing social order that must be cured.

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Jackson, Neil, Shaun Kimber, Johnny Walker, and Thomas Joseph Watson, editors. *Snuff: Real Death and Screen Media*. New York/London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. Print.

In 1976, Michael and Roberta Findlay's *Snuff* screened in theaters across the U.S. As part of a publicity stunt, promotional materials claimed that the movie contained footage of real death, that the actors' on-screen

expiration in the final scene transgressed the boundaries of fiction. This claim to authenticity sparked a month-long FBI investigation into its veracity, and despite subsequent failures to find proof of the film's existence, the public were convinced otherwise. The staging of murder in front of a camera, for commercial profit, had become an ontological fact, and reports of nefarious underground rings catering to the debased tastes of rich clienteles surfaced in the U.S. and abroad. Four decades later, the myth continues to live on, this time fueled by the Internet's penetration into all arenas of life, including death.

Featuring 15 original essays by 19 contributors, including a Foreword by *Killing for Culture* (1994/2015) author David Kerekes, *Snuff: Real Death and Screen Media* explores the symbolic meanings of "snuff" and its place within contemporary global cultures. Unlike most academic writings on the subject, which are fixated on snuff's evidentiary basis, on whether or not snuff is objectively real, this interdisciplinary collection is concerned with the origins of the myth, the evolution of the myth, and how its mythical possibility is sustained by the discourses surrounding it. Enlisting a range of theoretical approaches to examine a variety of pop-cultural artifacts, the book wrestles with several tensions and articulations at the heart of snuff—between fact and fiction, ethics and aesthetics, violence and sex, pleasure and horror, mainstream and taboo, old media and new media.

The book is divided into two parts. Part One examines the changing and unstable meanings of snuff, beginning with a chapter by Mark Petley that traces legislation and censorship debates around online images of "real-live death." Following this is an essay by Misha Kavka, who argues that snuff is sustained by its affective charge, by the joint anticipation and horror at the prospect of seeing death. In the next chapter, Simon Hobbs offers an operational definition of animal snuff—the live killing of animals in otherwise fictional texts—which is shaped by cultural attitudes toward non-human life. Clarissa Smith then examines the moral panic

surrounding the linkage of sex with horror by situating “extreme pornography” within judicial and legislative contexts in the UK. A chapter by Nicolò Gallio and Xavier Mendik analyzes the use of theatrical ambiguity in Ruggero Deodato’s *Cannibal Holocaust*, a film that lays (bogus) claims to authenticity by splicing vérité techniques with documentary inserts of actual atrocity news reels. In the chapter that follows, Mark McKenna returns to Michael and Roberta Findlay’s *Snuff*, this time tracing the film’s contested distribution history among collector cultures in the UK. Using Dead Alive Productions’ *Traces of Death* series (1993-2000), Johnny Walker then unpacks the relationship between shock fandom and fans of other sub-cultural artifacts, including extreme heavy metal and 1960s mondo films. Part One ends with a chapter by Mark Astley, which looks at the politics of terror in jihadist extermination videos and their aesthetic similarities to realist horror films.

Part Two explores the myriad manifestations of snuff in television and film. It opens with a chapter by Mark Jones and Gerry Carlin, who examine films inspired by the ostensibly lost footage of the Manson Family murders to underscore the paradox of snuff as an absent referent. This is followed by a chapter by Neil Jackson that traces the changing role of the fictional snuff filmmaker and its social and historical contingency. In the next chapter, Xavier Aldana Reyes posits four categories of filmic snuff—films about snuff, faux snuff, snuff mockumentary, and serial killer video diary—and how their narrative and formal conventions differentially shape the viewer’s ethical stance. Shaun Kimber then looks at how Scott Derrickson’s horror film *Sinister* (2012) hybridizes snuff iconography with supernatural elements to achieve palatability and commercial success. A chapter by Linda Badley plays with the notion of cinema *as* snuff by tracing visual media’s longstanding association with death—evident, for example, in German Expressionism’s sublimation of art through “dissonance, hazard, terror, and pain” (245). The penultimate chapter by Tina Kendall explores how the importation of snuff motifs into

extreme art cinema can provoke a reflexive response in viewers, indicting them for their indifference to or appetite for violent spectacle. Finally, in the culminating chapter, Steve Jones uses Shane Ryan's *Amateur Porn Star Killer* trilogy of films (2007-2009) to illustrate how analyses of faux snuff can contribute to our understanding of selfhood—particularly, its narrative, phenomenological, social and embodied dimensions.

The book effectively illustrates how tightly snuff has gripped the human imagination, and how far and deep its tendrils run in global popular culture. Engaging with a diverse assortment of cultural texts, the authors do a commendable job of locating snuff at the intersection of various social, historical, economic, ideological, and sexual formations. The book also strikes a fine balance between a production perspective that is attuned to film form and style, and an audience perspective that takes into account a variety of spectatorial positions. Furthermore, it deftly escapes the trap of fragmentation that has ensnared many edited collections. By citing one another's past and present work, the contributors give the anthology a sense of unity and coherence; rather than talk past one another, they are speaking *with* each other. Lastly, the anthology looks both forward and back, honoring the body of literature that paved the path for its creation, while anticipating the horizons that lie ahead, including the impact of new and emerging technologies on our reception of mediated death.

As one of few book-length treatments of the subject, *Snuff: Real Death and Screen Media* is recommended reading for film and media scholars who are interested in the representational history of death, the ethics and aesthetics of screening death, affective responses to gruesome imagery, and the increasing saturation of our global mediascape with hyperviolent spectacle. As the contributors to this theoretically rigorous volume persuasively argue, the myth of snuff and its continuing existence in fictional narratives implicates us all. Snuff is not merely a debased cultural artifact lacking social relevance and institutional legitimacy. It is a

window through which we can apprehend our role as spectators and our relationship to death and dying, both fictional and ostensibly real.

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Cocca, Carolyn. *Superwomen: Gender, Power, and Representation*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2016. Print.

From the 1940s to the present, comic books have filled our cultural imagination with powerful, though often sexualized or sidelined, superwomen. Carolyn Cocca's book examines the history of superheroines in popular films, television, and comics, arguing that representation of marginalized groups facilitates identification across difference. Cocca's work is divided into six chapters, each of which analyzes a particular female superhero or set of superheroes, selected for their transmedia presence, prominence of comic book publisher, different kinds of heroisms, and diversity of surrounding character identities.

The first chapter of the book focuses on Wonder Woman, particularly examining the ways audiences of the character have engaged around race, class, sexuality, and, of course, gender. Cocca finds that, throughout the character's development, Wonder Woman both challenges heteropatriarchal norms and falls into traditional femininity. Wonder Woman is a site for conflict over the very meaning of feminism. Though the chapter overviews the entire history of the character, Cocca's work is unique in her focus on the representations of Wonder Woman since DC Comics' relaunch of the character in 1987.

In the second chapter, Cocca looks at the character of Barbara Gordon, also known as Batgirl. She compares and contrasts the character with Wonder Woman, noting that Batgirl is known, not for strength, but for

intelligence, use of technology, and martial arts. Cocca looks at the role of disability in the development of the character, particularly focusing on the relaunch of the character as Oracle, a wheelchair-using technology strategist, and the subsequent cure of her disability. The chapter does well to use Batgirl as a vehicle to examine the differences between the portrayal of super “girls” and super “women.”

In chapter three, Cocca looks at the women of *Star Wars*, characters who did not initially come to mind when I thought of superwomen. Yet, I think Cocca is right to categorize Princess Leia, Queen Amidala, and Jaina Solo with the other superheroines, when considering the relationship with the Force as a superpower. Cocca is particularly interested in the whiteness of the *Star Wars* franchise, noting the imbalance in cast between men and women and the eventual marriage of all of the white heroines to white men. I appreciated the nod to *The Force Awakens* at the end of the chapter, especially because Cocca responds to the general acclaim of the film’s focus on a young female protagonist to note that the film still barely passes the Bechdel test. I wonder how Cocca’s analysis would apply to *Rogue One*, which contains arguably more conversations between female characters, but nevertheless still marginalizes women of color.

The fourth chapter of the book explores the women of the *X-Men* comics, particularly Mystique, Jean Grey, Storm, Rogue, and Kitty Pryde, but notes that the series is dominated by portrayals of white men. Though the series has, at times, pushed against gender binaries, as a whole, the *X-Men* comic plays to stereotypes about race, gender, and sexuality. Missing from this chapter is even a brief mention of the role of disability in the franchise. While most people think about disability with regard to Professor X, the lens of ability/disability could have been a valuable lens through which to understand Jean Grey (especially as the Phoenix) and Rogue, if not also the others.

In the fifth chapter of the book, Cocca engages with the character of Buffy the Vampire Slayer. Though Buffy appears to be the stereotypical

cheerleader type, the design of the character pushes back against the association of weakness with femininity. Particularly important to Buffy's characterization are the partnerships she forges with other characters, especially women. Like the other superwomen Cocca's earlier analyzed, Buffy is white and most characters of color die shortly after their introduction. While more recent TV series and comics have been diverse, the stories still tend to be overwhelmingly about white, upper-middle-class characters.

In the final chapter of her book, Cocca looks to the characters of Captain Marvel/Ms. Marvel. Though Carol Danvers was, like the others, a white, heterosexual female character, her popularity resulted in the introduction of *Ms. Marvel* in 2014, a series featuring a Pakistani-American Muslim teenager. The late 70s incarnation of Carol Danvers wore a heavily sexualized costume and her femininity was strongly emphasized, but nevertheless she had significant powers. In later iterations of the character, Carol would experience dissociative identity disorder and would rarely have strong female friendships. In 2012, the relaunch of *Ms. Marvel* as *Captain Marvel* would move away from some of the misogynistic portrayals toward renewed agency and new friends. Unlike many of the other characters, *Ms. Marvel* lends itself to critical discussion about race and ethnicity. When Monica Rambeau, a black woman, was written out of the *Avengers*, she was also briefly given the title Captain Marvel and appears alongside Carol in two comic book issues. In 2014, Kamala Khan, a Pakistani-American Muslim woman, would be introduced as the new Ms. Marvel and her series has been selling more than expected, especially in digital copies. Cocca notes that the characterization of Kamala departs from stereotypical portrayals of Muslims.

Cocca's book is particularly effective due to the thoroughness of her data collection and the comprehensiveness of her analysis. Though the title of the book suggests a focus on gender and representation, Cocca employs a more intersectional approach, acknowledging disability and

queerness, among other identities. Potential audiences for her book include scholars of popular culture, media studies, audience/reception studies, gender/women's studies, queer theory, and disability theory. The book might also be quite applicable as assigned reading for a television or media studies class; the text, though Cocca's argument is complex, is approachable for undergraduate students.

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Fischer-Hornung, Dorothea, Monica Mueller, editors. *Vampires and Zombies: Transnational Migrations and Transcultural Interpretations*. Jackson, Miss: University of Mississippi. 2016. Print.

Dorothea Fisher-Hornung and Moniker Mueller have assembled an impressive array of texts addressing the current hegemony of the vampire and the zombie in contemporary global popular literature. The collection fulfills their promise to treat an evolving transnational, transcultural and global cultural imaginary in which monsters, the embodied Other(s), emerge at times of crisis as "imaginative foils for thinking about our own responses to menace." Vampires and zombies are undoubtedly the trendiest of the monsters, both the most human(e) embodiments of the undead and most frequently paired in narrative, cinema and video gaming. These essays locate this phenomenon historically and geographically as well as culturally.

In their opening essay, Fischer-Hornung and Mueller provide a framing introduction to these monsters as transnational in their origins: vampires from Transylvania and zombies in Haiti. Indeed, it's worth

noting that zombies come to Haiti through one of the largest transnational migrations in modern history: the Atlantic Slave Trade. In the past vampires came to us as evil, bloodsucking exploiters while zombies were mindless victims. Contemporary representations of both figures complicate and disrupt that traditional binary opposition of victim and perpetrator, instead introducing “kinder, gentler vampires” and “crueler, flesh-eating zombies.” Their collection ably demonstrates how “mass distribution through film and game technologies” has contributed to these modified representations over time and region.

Each of the four subsequent sections is organized around a central issue or question. Section I-“Migratory Transformations” begins with a question: how do artists in film or narrative introduce zombie or vampire tropes into cultures where these figures are unknown? Katarzyna Ancuta’s “The Smiling Dead; or, the Empirical Impossibility of Thai Zombies,” Sabine Metzger’s “‘She Loves the Blood of the Young’: The Bloodthirsty Female as Cultural Mediator in Lafcadio Hearn’s ‘The Story of Chugoro,’” and Timothy M. Robinson’s “Octavia Butler’s Vampiric Vision: *Fledgling* as a Transnational Neo-Slave Narrative,” introduce the reader to Thai zombies, as well as vampires in both Japanese culture and African American fiction each an answer to that question. The three pieces in Section II – “Non/normative Sexualities,” introduce demonstrations of these tropes to reveal the temporal and cultural situatedness of gender. From Rasmus R. Simonsens’s critique of George Romero’s zombies as the queerest of movie monsters, e.g. beings of uncertain ontological status in “Appetite for Disruption: The Cinematic Zombie and Queer Theory,” to Danielle Borgia’s treatment of gender dynamics in recent Mexican vampire novels -- “Vampiros Mexicanos: Nonnormative Sexualities in Contemporary Vampire Novels of Mexico” -- featuring bisexual, promiscuous vampire couples in league with a network of corrupt allies, and, a vampire love triangle exploring bisexuality and polyamory, and, finally Moniker Mueller’s “Hybridity Sucks: European Vampirism

Encounters Haitian Voodoo in *The White Witch of Rosehall*” features the hybrid figure of the white witch in Herbert G. de Lisser’s 1929 novel; de Lisser synthesizes Haitian voodoo and European vampirism in a European Jamaican creole woman: an “emblem of gender transgressions and abuse of power.”

Section III - “Cultural Anxieties,” as the title suggests, presents readers with vampires and zombies a sources of alien intrusion, embodying anxieties of national invasion and/or the transgression of personal boundaries. Carmen Serrano’s “Revamping Dracula on the Mexican Silver Screen: Fernando Mendez’s *El vampiro*,” tells the story of Spanish vampire films produced in 1930’s Hollywood as part of a transnational recirculatory phenomena in which Spanish crews and Spanish speaking actors would film each night, working with the same scripts and sets as their American “originals.” Then Timothy R. Fox’s critique of Max Brooks’s groundbreaking novel *World War Z*, the first zombie novel to make the *New York Times* best seller list, as expression of current anti-Asian anxiety(ies) in the West. The collection’s final section, “Circulating Technologies,” brings the reader full circle to the editors’ initial discussion of the impact of mass distribution through film and game technologies. These essays demonstrate those ways in which contemporary media circulation of vampires and zombies enables culturally specific conceptions of the “everymonster”: from the translation of LeFanu’s 1872 lesbian vampire “Camilla” into Carl Theodor Dreyer’s 1931 film *Vampyr*, to the influence of 1950’s horror comics -- themselves both a kind of proscribed pornography exploring death and sexuality -- preoccupied with both the Red Peril and the dangers of the atomic age on George Romero and Stephen King, ending with a discussion of horror zombie gaming.

Johannes Weber discusses film technology and film theory, specifically the notion that watching a film is initially a physical experience before becoming a mental process, connects the read back to earlier film discussions in each of the other three sections. Richard J.

Hand's "Disruptive Corpses: Tales of Living Dead in Horror Comics of the 1950s and Beyond," connects the comic strip visuals to zombies as Hollywood rather than Haitian artifacts, "undead every[men] or every monster[s] setting right the injustices of mortal power structures." (15) In the final essay, "Undead Avatars: the Zombie in Horror Video Games," Ewan Kirkland introduces the idea of the gaming avatar as a type of zombie cast in the original Haitian/West African mode, "a human possessed or controlled by an outside intelligence." Collectively these three essays bring a kind of closure to and integration of the broad notions articulated by the editors in their introductory essay.

Vampires and Zombies: Transcultural Migrations and Transnational Interpretations amply illustrates the editors claim that vampires, products of the cultural imaginary(ies) are diverse as their human creators, "limitless in their expressions of human experience." Both collectively and individually these essays provide detailed histories of every monster's cultural antecedents framing careful analyses of their contemporary manifestations. It is also potentially useful text for the teaching contemporary literary, cinematic, and cultural theory(ies), applying the familiar – pop cultural manifestations of vampires and zombies – to introduce key concepts of post-colonial, transcultural and transnational intersectionality.

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Beck, Peter J. *The War of the Worlds: From H.G. Wells to Orson Welles, Jeff Wayne, Steven Spielberg & Beyond*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. Print.

The sheer heft of Beck's *The War of the Worlds: From H.G. Wells to Orson Welles, Jeff Wayne, Stephen Spielberg & Beyond*, promises a thorough examination of Beck's claim that the impact of H.G. Wells's classic resounds in not only science fiction but also in various multimedia venues yet today. The front matter certainly encourages this expectation: tables, lists, maps, seventeen chapters, bibliography, and index promise an exhaustive look into the novel, as well as the audio-visual materials that flourish as a result of the adaptability of Wells's timeless story. What began in the late 1980's, Beck explains in his preface, culminates into a fastidiously researched and well-written book designed to attract a wide variety of readers.

The text itself is divided into five major parts: an introduction, the writing and publishing of *The War of the Worlds*, the multimedia adaptations of the text, the resulting literary heritage, and a conclusion. However, before the reader gets to these parts, Beck provides an abundance of information in the form of two tables of Wells's chronology (both professional and personal), a map displaying Wells's residence in conjunction with the landing of the Martian cylinders, along with a preface, acknowledgments, and a complete listing of the illustrations, tables, and abbreviations. With all of this data, Beck ensures that his reader is up-to-speed on his project.

The first two parts (Chapters 1-9) examine the overarching theme of Wells's personal and professional background leading up to, and including, the publication of *The War of the Worlds*. In chapter one, the author addresses the impact of Wells's novel not only on his contemporaries, but also on modern entertainment buffs and NASA. Beck considers, in chapter two, Wells's "powerful sense of location" (23),

establishes his “geographical mobility” (24) and his “love for the fast-disappearing countryside” (29), while, at the same time, highlights how these real locations, such as Woking, allow for *The War of the Worlds* highly adaptable state. This discussion continues in chapter three with one minor difference: Beck changes his focus to Wells’s sense of time and ponders the significance of the time period in which Wells is writing. Beck covers topics such as evolution, imperialism, socialism, the “Great Mars Boom,” (48), and “scaremongering literature” (42) and determines how these events manifest in Wells’s novel. In chapter four, Beck zeroes in on Wells’s personal history, addressing his fragile health, his calamitous love life, his avid appreciation for bicycling, both for his health and “wellbeing as a writer” (73), and his earlier writings, most notably *The Wheels of Chance* and *The Time Machine*. Throughout chapter five, Beck examines how Wells’s own health and consequential fear of dying, along with financial worries, pushes him to write at a frantic pace (Beck calculates over 140 published texts in 1894 alone) and helps establish him as an up-and-coming writer with editors and publishers; whereas, chapter six looks at Woking in particular as Wells’s “literary factory” (103).

In chapter seven, Beck turns from Wells’s biographical material to the actual text by tracing the novel from conception to serialization to book and, finally, to reception. In chapter eight, Beck includes a thorough examination of the story’s plot and Wells’s methodology while, in chapter nine, Beck concludes his biographical consideration of Wells by moving him physically and authorially into the next phase of his vast career. It is in chapter ten that Beck begins the actual analysis of the “multimedia afterlife” (183) of *The War of the Worlds*, including considerations found in other literature, comics, and graphic novels, as well as discussing how the story’s time and place heightens its plasticity to these areas. Beck continues this theme through chapters eleven, twelve, and thirteen but focuses more on the serialization of the story in *American* newspapers. Within this section, Beck also includes Orson Welles’s infamous radio

adaptation and the resulting attempts to recreate the same “tidal wave of panic” (221) by other countries. Beck then undertakes the cinematic afterlife of Wells’s novel in chapter fourteen by carefully scrutinizing two film versions (Pal’s 1953 version and Spielberg’s 2005 adaptation), before moving on to chapter sixteen and Jeff Wayne’s musical rendering of the Martian invasion. The last two chapters serve to blend the history of the novel with present-day popularity, as Beck contemplates the recent trend of fans seeking out the literary heritage of their favorite authors and how Wells, *The War of the Worlds*, and Woking continue to fit into this niche.

As evidenced by the whirlwind summation of the chapters, Beck’s book is jam-packed with both intriguing facts and basic information most already know about Wells and the novel. Beck also deftly presents obscure, random tidbits that only the most-devoted Wellsians and *The War of the Worlds* fans are privy, such as how Wells’s speculations about Mars and the Martians were launched with the Mars rover Press Kit (3). The extensive bibliography provides a veritable wealth of further sources for the wide-ranging audience of Wellsian scholars and fans, geography and history scholars, those interested in transportation (especially bicycling) and pilgrimage, film scholars and buffs, and so forth.

While Beck does indeed provide substantial background and history, at times, this material becomes repetitive and longer than necessary. Particularly, the chapters concerning Orson Welles and the film adaptations are undeniably crucial to understanding the impact of Wells’s novel in current culture; however, the surrounding chapters seem redundant because Beck’s point is the same throughout: Wells’s text is highly adaptable to all places and eras. Nonetheless, Beck’s outstanding prep work and easy writing style make this text an invaluable addition to any Wellsian, *The War of the Worlds*, or multimedia devotee’s bookshelf.

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Fägersten, Kristy Beers. *Watching TV with a Linguist*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2016. Print.

Critical analysis has a transformative effect on engagement with media texts: it becomes difficult to suspend that critical lens and merely enjoy an engaging sitcom or prime time drama. Reading *Watching TV with a Linguist* is likely to have similar effects, creating an unyielding awareness of what characters say and how they say it.

In the book's introduction, Kristy Beers Fägersten reminds us that television talk is scripted, artificial, and typically rehearsed (3), and she outlines the camps that support and object to the idea of television's language as being authentic. Fägersten notes that the debate about authenticity is not taken up in the essays, but the "volume reminds the reader that that television language is encountered on a regular basis, and thus it is very real feature of our everyday linguistic lives" (5). Discourse on television also strives to be realistic for the sake of narrative coherence: if language does not feel authentic, the whole series will feel inauthentic as well.

The theories of communication scholar Walter Fisher lend a framework to this collection of essays. Fisher proposed the idea of narrative coherence, asserting that we believe a story when it has fidelity (it rings true) and coherence (it holds together). Part of narrative coherence is that the characters in a story continue to behave in ways that audience members expect they will. What characters say to one another is a significant aspect of narrative coherence, yet language choices, dialect, and accent are seldom noticed by the audience unless they fail to meet audience expectations. For example, the television series *The Golden Girls* provides a core group of characters who have very specific uses of language, and their language is a reflection of their cultural backgrounds and habitus. Jean Ann's essay in this collection, "'Back in St. Olaf...': Regional Variations on *The Golden Girls*," offers an extensive variety of

examples. She touches briefly on Blanche Devereaux's use of "y'all" as the second person plural that marks her as a speaker of a Southern dialect; not only is Blanche's use important, but so is the absence of its use by her housemates. If tough-talking Dorothy Zbornak were to come through the swinging door from the kitchen and say, "I made some pancakes...can I fix a plate for y'all?" it would seem not only perplexing, but even comical. *The Golden Girls* is an example of *Watching TV with a Linguist's* use of familiar, often widely syndicated television series to explain linguistic phenomena.

Among other series featured in the essays are *Seinfeld*, *South Park*, and *Friends*. While the essays focus on character's language in these series, the reader need not be acquainted with the series for the discussion of linguistics to be useful. All of the authors provide sufficient background to create a meaningful context, as they would with examples of speakers who are not individuals known to the reader.

Kay Richardson says that her essay "Watching the Detective: *Sherlock* and Spoken Television Discourse" is "intentionally interdisciplinary" (15), a claim that could be made for the entire collection of essays. The authors admirably explain the jargon of their particular disciplinary leanings, rendering the volume broadly accessible to a lay audience or to students of linguistics and other disciplines within the humanities. Part of the collection's interdisciplinary nature is in drawing on theoretical work in both media studies and cultural studies. Here, linguistics also supports cultural studies work that examines race, class, and gender through identity formation and representation. Kristy Beers Fägersten and Hanna Sveen's essay "SaMANtha: Language and Gender in *Sex and the City*" looks at gendered speech communities and considers how the series both challenged and affirmed theories about gender and language. Joe Trotta does similar work with regard to class in his essay "Dealers and Discourse: Sociolinguistic Variation in *The Wire*."

Other essays show that an examination of language can offer insight into television characters and their interactions. In “Word Formation in *HIMYM*,” Jessie Sams shows that part of the popularity of *How I Met Your Mother* is rooted in the unique creation of words by the series’ characters. Examples include Barney’s creation of the “slap bet” and the use of the compound word “re-return” to describe the instance of going back yet again to clarify an embarrassing misunderstanding. Similarly, Matthias Eitelmann and Ulrike Stange use the linguistic field of pragmatics to explore the difference between what characters say and what they mean in their essay “The Pragmatics Explication: Making Sense of Nerds in *The Big Bang Theory*.” One of many examples is a conversation between Penny and Sheldon when he knocks on her door in the middle of the night. Penny asks Sheldon if he has any idea what time it is, inferring that his behavior is inappropriate. Sheldon, however, interprets her question at face value and assures her that he knows the exact time because his watch is synchronized with the atomic clock. This exchange is not only a source of humor but also a source of understanding Sheldon’s character and how his social awkwardness is sometimes rooted in linguistic misunderstanding.

This collection of essays reminds readers that TV is a site of pedagogy. In what is probably still a majority of U.S. households, children learn who and how they should be, how they should interact with others, and what they should and should not say from observing examples of interpersonal interaction on television. Studying linguistics through television is also an exercise in self-reflection, as audiences see their own language phenomena reflected in characters on screen.

While serving as a great means to teach linguistics through known and accessible texts, *Watching TV with a Linguist* also gives the reader a language with which to discuss these linguistic phenomena that are familiar but often not addressed because viewers lack a common language with which to describe them. We unavoidably learn linguistics in the

process of reading these essays, enabling an informal education for the casual reader or a more formal pedagogical space if the book is assigned as part of a course curriculum.

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Srinivasan, Ramesh. *Whose Global Village?: Rethinking How Technology Shapes Our World*. New York: New York University Press, 2017. Print.

In *Whose Global Village?*, Ramesh Srinivasan, the Director of the UC Center for Global Digital Cultures and an Associate Professor at UCLA, makes a significant interdisciplinary contribution in the intersections of ideologies, discourse, and practices between technology, and marginalized peoples. The text is organized around two processes: challenging what we think we know about technology and its cultures and considering new directions, possibilities, and collaborations that respect Indigenous sovereignty and agency. His effort to “de-Westernize a top-down understanding of contemporary technology by sharing stories from across the world of how digital tools have been reinvented to support grassroots aspirations, values, and cultures” is timely and greatly needed (9). In the past year, the world watched as Standing Rock’s water protectors utilized technology to document their struggles and garner support for their cause. Srinivasan’s examination of Egypt’s Arab Spring uprising suggests that technology does not make a revolution or rebellion. Instead, Indigenous peoples appropriate, utilize, and configure technology to their own ends for their movements. Across his case studies, the author stresses the need to engage with technology on a local level and recognize peoples’ agency in their engagement with technology.

One of the strengths of this text is the author’s use of diverse sources. Srinivasan moves his readers through theory, histories, ethnographies,

TED Talks, and other media based sources. He tackles issues of sovereignty, decolonization, representation, access, and inequality and never loses his reader in the process. His ability to weave these sources and substantial issues together in a navigable web is one of the greatest strengths of this text which makes it appealing for a wide range of scholarship. Through his use of auto-ethnography, Srinivasan brings larger issues into the immediate and personal narrative of the author by sharing his personal and professional experiences and growth. While some might expect a text on such large issues to remain theory based, Srinivasan does an excellent job of moving from philosophical explorations to interactions on the ground between individuals and communities. He makes a convincing argument for understanding technology in relation to places, peoples, tools, and systems (10).

In the introduction and initial chapter, he guides readers through a network of technology myths, their historical roots, and their implications today. He establishes that technologies are never neutral but rather “the product of complex and contested sets of values, beliefs, and ideas about how the world should be ordered and articulated” (39). By identifying the common myths of technology’s stability, permanence, openness, and neutrality, he rejects idealistic narratives that assume passive access to technology results in community empowerment. Instead, he lays out the history and practices by Western forces in creating and maintaining power disparities which deny Indigenous and marginalized communities access to technology and ignores their agency “to strategically employ technologies to support their voices and agendas” (18).

In chapters two through four, the author builds on his critical examination of technological myths with auto-ethnographic accounts of his own experience working with Indigenous communities. He emphasizes these local examples and his own personal evolution during his collaborations with Indigenous peoples. The author moves from considering what types of stories can be told when marginalized

communities direct the storytelling in chapter two to exploring ways that networks and databases can be reimagined in Indigenous communities through collaborative designed processes (14). In chapter three, the role of ontology is explored at length and Srinivasan suggests that technology cannot be developed with an average of people's opinions or that Westerns ontologies should be imposed on other communities. Instead, he argues, "our cultural diversities neither can nor should be translated into one another—They can be respected for their differences" (124). A critical concept for Srinivasan is the idea of engaging "fluid ontologies" centered on community driven consensus that shapes collaborative projects. This approach focuses on relationships, an understanding that knowledge is continuously lived and performed amongst a shared group of people, and that knowledge can never be fully represented in any system.

One of the most powerful case studies presented by Srinivasan is the focus of his fourth chapter where he details his work with the A:shiwi A:waiwan Museum and Heritage Center at Zuni. Scholars in museum studies will find this chapter especially important for its considerations of representation. I applaud Srinivasan's honest and open discussions of growth during the project and his clarity in stating that "the only ethical choice" is to follow Indigenous, or in this case Zuni, leadership (170). Surface level collaborations that simply connect a community with a scholar are dangerous. Instead, "the system must also reject any preexisting classifications or categories" and engage each other with a "rawness" of communication (182). Srinivasan argues that knowledges and collaborations must be understood as practices instead of representations. Through the entire process of a collaboration, from design to execution, the experience must be lived as individuals involved embody knowledge and growth. It is a process without end.

Throughout the text, Srinivasan dissects the myths about Indigenous peoples, technology, and relationships between them. He then deconstructs these myths and suggests other pathways for people to

consider. In his final chapter, Srinivasan's brings his arguments and examples full circle by convincingly arguing for readers to consider technologies as "part of processes and relationships" and to "humanize peoples, places and stories" instead of maintaining a blind ignorance to the ways technologies, power, and frames of articulation are connected (214). Across the text, the author consistently issues a call for respecting Indigenous agency, voices, and prioritizing their leadership. "I believe it is time to tip the scales away from world-making," he argues, "and instead to embrace world-listening" (230). Ultimately, everyone has to ask themselves exactly whose global village are we working to build when we think of technology futures.

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