

Reviews

THE POPULAR CULTURE STUDIES JOURNAL REVIEWS

Introduction

At the start of the first review in this section, Samuel Boerboom writes that Jennifer Cognard-Black and Melissa A. Goldthwaite's *Books That Cook: The Making of a Literary Meal* is a "multi-genre collection that illustrates, often beautifully, how we understand ourselves...through food." In the second review, William Kist notes that he learned about the author, Scott Calhoun's, relationship with the band, U2, from reading *U2 Above, Across, and Beyond: Interdisciplinary Assessments*. While neither book explicitly approached their studies of popular culture via autoethnography, their insights reflect a tension in autoethnography of popular culture. That is, by embracing one's own vulnerability as a researcher for the purpose of understanding how popular culture affects oneself, how can the researcher also engage with the popular culture artifacts and/or experiences in ways that offer insights and connections with others (Holman Jones, Adams, and Ellis)? In the case of *Books That Cook*, what each author shares about their relationships with food speak to societal values and themes of family with which readers will readily connect. These lessons also contribute to better understandings of how popular culture impacts our daily lives. On the other hand, Calhoun's lessons in *U2 Above, Across, and Beyond* seem more focused on what the band has meant to him. While reading this volume will reveal some insights about the band as well, as Kist noted in his review, Calhoun's experiences may or may not speak to a broader audience about interactions with popular culture. As we increasingly examine our selves

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in relation to popular culture then, we must also engage this tension to ensure we are speaking not just about ourselves but our cultural practices (Holman Jones, Adams, & Ellis).

The remaining reviews in this section are loosely organized around the various areas of popular culture they address beginning with analyses of material culture (from the politics of hair removal to a catalogue of ethnic dress), then focusing on theoretical developments in popular culture studies (specifically, adaptation studies), followed by various studies of media (including research about literature, advertising, music, movies, television, and media industries). This final section includes, for the first time, a review of the film, *The Interview*, by Christopher J. Olson. Including this review demonstrates my commitment as the Reviews Editor, and of this journal, to pushing the boundaries of traditional journal publishing. As such, I hope we receive more submissions in the future that review a variety of types of popular culture phenomena, not just of books. The only limitation is reflected in this movie review as it does not just review the movie, but engages its contested status as popular culture phenomenon.

I chose to include reviews of the works included in this section as they reflect traditional and progressive perspectives about a variety of areas of popular culture studies. I hope these reviews help popular culture scholars engage with where popular culture studies is now and where it is going in the future.

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Holman Jones, Stacy, Adams, Tony, & Ellis, Carolyn, eds. *Handbook of Autoethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2013. Print.

Cognard-Black, Jennifer, and Melissa A. Goldthwaite, eds.
Books That Cook: The Making of a Literary Meal. New York:
New York University Press, 2014. Print.

Jennifer Cognard-Black and Melissa Goldthwaite's *Books that Cook: The Making of a Literary Meal* marks a novel approach to writing about (and thinking about) the interrelationship between artful writing and making meals. More than just an edited collection of notable writings about foodcraft and the symbolism inherent within it, *Books that Cook* is multi-genre collection that illustrates, often beautifully, how we understand ourselves (or even *that* we can understand ourselves) through food. An actual recipe accompanies each essay, poem, or short story in the collection or is incorporated within the piece itself. This editorial choice compels the reader to negotiate how each recipe contextualizes its corresponding literary piece. Cognard-Black and Goldthwaite note that a recipe symbolizes the "work of cooking" and that "recipes are culture keepers as well as culture makers. They both organize and express human memory" (2). The editors aim this book toward a literary, though not exclusively academic, audience. Scholars can employ this collection to demonstrate the autoethnographic act of considering how one practices foodcraft for oneself and others. Too, this collection provides illustrative examples of authorial voice and how it commands differing and divergent audience responses toward the personal and social dimensions of preparing and consuming food. Not every selection in *Books That Cook* is formally autoethnographic. Nonetheless, scholars of autoethnography will encounter several texts within the collection that both offer helpful examples of autoethnography as well as provide novel ways of theorizing the self's encounter with food.

Cognard-Black and Goldthwaite's collection addresses with aplomb such themes as the natural environment, cultural critiques, identity, family, and mortality, among others. Most notable are those selections whose

authors incorporate human memory within the autoethnographic endeavor of preparing food for oneself. April Linder's poem "Full Moon Soup with Snow," features a narrator lamenting the lack of fresh ingredients in the midst of freezing winter. Linder writes, "when all the garden's dainty greens/have long wilted into memory" to match the narrator's state of mind with the cold and unforgiving season (43). Later the narrator instructs the reader to "pour yourself a glass of ruby wine" and relish the opportunity to devour that which "lurks in the cellar and refuses to perish" (44). Like the "full moon [hanging] on/pearly as an onion," the reader is inspired to delight in winter food and take from it the lesson to avoid despair for bygone seasons (44).

Nora Ephron's "Potatoes and Love: Some Reflections" serves as another example of the autoethnographic perspective on memory. Ephron's first-person piece explains how the preparation method of potatoes predicts the falling in (and out of) love with another person. She observes that crisp potatoes are superb, but are laborious to prepare. Ephron adds:

All this takes time, and time, as any fool can tell you, is what true romance is about. In fact, one of the main reasons why you must make crisp potatoes in the beginning [of a romance] is that if you don't make them in the beginning, you never will. I'm sorry to be so cynical about this, but that's the truth (244).

Ephron includes two recipes for crisp-style potatoes which are meant to serve two. The inevitable middle of a relationship, Ephron observes, can often be marked by a partner no longer willing to indulge in decadently-prepared potatoes. It is at this point of a partner's self-consciousness that one can observe of the relationship that "the middle is ending and the end is beginning" (246). Ephron wistfully notes later that, at the inevitable end of a romantic relationship, one should prepare mashed potatoes because they can be prepared as self-indulgently as is necessary, with as "much

melted butter and salt and pepper as you feel like” (247). Quite pointedly, Ephron’s recipe for mashed potatoes provides subjective space for interpretation of ingredients based solely on the whims of the preparer. It is meant to serve only one, as the preferences of another eater are immaterial to the preparation. Ephron’s piece fits the collection superbly due to its suggestion that our subjective experiences with others informs the meaning of food; that food itself serves an index of the state of our interpersonal relationships.

Intriguingly, some selections in *Books that Cook* suggest that recipes can also restrict culture. In a compelling essay Vertamae Smart-Grosvenor writes about the need to demystify food as if it were art. She notes:

White folks act like they invented food and like there is some weird mystique surrounding it...There is no mystique. Food is food. Everybody eats! And when I cook, I never measure or weigh anything. I cook by vibration. I can tell by the look and smell of it (253).

Smart-Grosvenor’s essay takes pride in the autoethnographic act of acting against a recipe, of turning against the common sense that reflects the ordering and preparation of ingredients within it. The marvelous image of cooking by vibration emphasizes the deeply subjective and local experience of cooking over the standardized version of foodcraft ordered in recipes whose rigid array of ingredients reflects cultural attitudes of superiority, especially on foods considered ethnic or otherwise exotic.

In the book’s final selection former Poet Laureate Ted Kooser builds on Smart-Grosvenor’s notion of “vibration cooking” in his poem “How to Make Rhubarb Wine.” Kooser’s poem emphasizes the beauty of imprecision when preparing food and highlights the importance of the subjective, time-bound experience of interacting with a recipe. Kooser instructs, “Spread out the rhubarb in the grass/and wash it with cold water/ from the garden hose, washing/ your feet as well. Then take a nap” (333).

Later he suggests that reader let the fermenting mix stand “five days or so/[taking] time each day to think of it” (333). Still later in the poem he writes that the reader/amateur winemaker then taste some of the new wine as she or he bottles it. Regardless of how it turns out, the reader has “done it awfully well” (334). Imprecision, in Kooser’s poem, creates a signature experience embedded within the sweet wine itself.

Cognard-Black and Goldthwaite illustrate in this collection the literary essence of documenting food preparation through the recipe format. In the hands of this book, the recipe is an autoethnographic document, a living history of how the self (or the other) recorded the construction of food in time. Food reflects culture and preparers of food renew that culture or remake it in their own image each time food is made. *Books that Cook* offers a new and compelling cultural perspective on the literary value of all books—literary or “mere” cookbooks—that link food to the subjective experience of knowing ourselves, others, and our world.

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Calhoun, Scott, ed. *U2 Above, Across, and Beyond: Interdisciplinary Assessments*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015. Print

The new edited book, *U2 Above, Across, and Beyond: Interdisciplinary Assessment* does, indeed, cross disciplines as it contains scholarship that focuses on the rock band U2 from such disciplines as psychology, musicology, English, and theology. Edited by Scott Calhoun, this volume is made up of papers that were delivered at the 2013 “U2 Conference” which was held in collaboration with the Rock and Roll Hall

of Fame and Museum in Cleveland. Calhoun, a professor of literature and writing at Cedarville University, is the Director of the U2 Conference and is a staff writer for @U2. In his Introduction, Calhoun writes, almost apologetically, that “Fans who reflect on their fandom come to realize the object of their affection mirrors themselves in some way, and as we enjoy and study U2—as we might a great work of art—we do so in order to learn more of ourselves and live a more rewarding life” (xi). Indeed, the chapters in this edited volume are as diverse as the writers themselves, and, if anything, we learn more about them (and us) than we do about U2. While I believe this volume will be of most interest to those who have more than a passing interest in and knowledge of U2, I think it will also be of interest to anyone interested in seeing a model of interdisciplinary pop culture scholarship.

Each chapter uses a distinct lens to look at some artifact from U2’s decades of work. In the chapter “Collaborative Transactions,” Christopher Wales employs the work of social psychologist Karl Weick to analyze the “sensemaking” that occurred over 20 years ago when the band reinvented itself for the album *Achtung Baby*. Brian Wright, in his chapter on bassist Adam Clayton, takes a musicologist approach, complete with musical notes from the bass lines of “With or Without You,” “New Year’s Day,” and “Beautiful Day” to bolster the image of the band’s apparently least appreciated member. “The problem, then,” Wright writes, “is not necessarily with Clayton, but rather with the standards being used to evaluate him” (18). Ed Montano’s chapter provides a music critic’s convincing portrait of how the band’s perhaps neglected “excursions into electronica” in the 90s actually presaged the dominance of EDM and DJ culture today. And Fred Johnson uses Henry Jenkins’s ideas of transmediation (and then partially problematizes it) to describe the “massive, multilayered” texts that are a part of U2 culture, memorably describing the “expanding ecosystem of U2 artifacts,” including “glossy posters and studio recordings, fan snapshots and bootlegged cassettes,

documentaries, cellphone videos, interviews, album reviews, live performances, news reports and song lyrics inked onto shoe soles by distracted students” (71). In fact, both Fred Johnson’s and Christopher Wales’s chapters pointed me to view the Davis Guggenheim documentary *From the Sky Down* (2011) which provided a fascinating glimpse of the jazz-like improvisation that the band used to create the song “One.” What’s interesting about Johnson’s chapter is that he provides some illuminating criticism of the puzzle-making nature of Jenkins’s transmediation model. Instead of making the consumption of pop culture storyworlds like putting together some kind of complex challenge, Johnson suggests that the messiness of U2’s random storylines is more in tune with what true transmediation is all about.

I appreciated seeing *From the Sky Down*, because it helped me see the reality of the improvisatory quality of the band that I think Johnson is suggesting. Seeing the documentary (as calculated as Guggenheim’s work might be) helped me to feel in touch with the band itself as I was reading the chapters in the Calhoun book. Weirdly, it began to feel as if some of these chapters could have been written about any fan favorite, from the cult-fave television series *Supernatural* to the fabled Disney princesses. This kind of fan/scholarship devotion makes me think of the girl down the street from me who is named “Presley”—it says more about the parents than about Elvis. Indeed, in Theodore Louis Trost’s chapter on the transgressive theology of U2, Bono is quoted as comparing the Biblical David to Elvis. It seems that everything old is new again! Focusing on the band’s *Pop* album from 1997 and, in particular, the song, “Wake Up Dead Man,” Trost describes the song’s and the album’s theme that “it is in the common, the profane, the mundane that the uncommon breaks through, becomes recognizable” (99). The theme of the 2013 U2 Conference that gave birth to this book was, indeed, “U2: TRANS—“. Calhoun reports that the focus of the conference was “on ways U2 has been an agent of transformation, translation, transgression, and transcendence” (xi). As

Calhoun says, “we are looking at U2 now as we might a great text where the plot, players, and theme of the work point toward affirming and improving the human condition” (ix). Looking at works of art such as the music of U2 can often teach us more about ourselves than about the work or the artist.

I do believe that this volume is an admirable example of the kinds of interdisciplinary scholarship that can be inspired by pop culture. The scholars represented in this book have used lenses from their own fields, and, so, any academic or aspiring academic could learn something from reading these essays about the application of critical perspectives in academic writing. But in the end, I also found myself wanting to go back to the original source material which I did by reading the *U2: The Definitive Biography* (2014). There I learned so much about the lads who got together in high school thanks to an ad placed by drummer Larry Mullen. I learned that Bono was originally named Paul Hewson, and that he was influenced by the television series *Batman* and the Welsh singer Tom Jones. This further deepened my connection to U2 as did the admirable scholarship provided in Calhoun’s book. But that’s just me.

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From the Sky Down. Dir. Davis Guggenheim. Perf. Bono, The Edge, Larry Mullen, Adam Clayton, Brian Eno. Universal Music, 2011. DVD.

Herzig, Rebecca, M. *Plucked: A History of Hair Removal*. New York: New York University Press, 2015. Print.

Over the centuries, people have attributed various cultural meanings to human body hair or the lack thereof. In *Plucked: A History of Hair Removal*, Rebecca Herzig methodically explores mostly western constructions of human body hair from the late eighteenth century to the current time. In so doing, Herzig creates a fascinating historical narrative that implicates issues of gender, race, and ethnicity by tracing the constructed meanings that various peoples have attributed to hair placement, growth patterns, texture, length, and thickness. More specifically, Herzig provides a window into the historic and ongoing desire of people (mostly women and girls) to remove hair from places where its appearance has been culturally reified as ugly, unusual, or even unnatural. *Plucked* is more than a simple history, and Herzig borrows the lens of critical anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies to interpret and critique these practices.

Herzig picks up the story of human body hair and its removal during American colonization, when white European colonists encountered various tribes of native Indians, all of whom appeared to possess smooth, hairless bodies and faces. Herzig describes debates among learned colonists about the nature of Indian's smooth skin: some felt that the native Indians were naturally hairless, while others believed they privately plucked all their body hair. Both positions worked to "other" native Indians by highlighting differences, and as a reader of these arguments quoted directly from their sources, I found myself growing increasingly uncomfortable about the judgments made of these bodies. Undoubtedly, that was Herzig's intention, and she makes quite clear that these deliberations were less about academic curiosity than concerns of power, dominance, and assimilation.

Herzig argues that as the American Indian's conquest became abundantly clear, debates about the meanings behind their body hair or lack-there-of became inconsequential. Upon the publication of Charles Darwin's *Descent of Man* in 1871, debates shifted from differences between people to differences between animals, and most importantly, between man and ape. Then, as now, most Christian devotees rejected a link between humans and animals in favor of Biblical creation, but Herzig describes a fascination in North American popular culture with evolution and the possible connection between man and beast that often centered on body hair. Exceptionally hairy people of color often were written about or displayed in circus-like events as possible "missing links," and Herzig is careful to note that scientists were no less drawn to the spectacles related to evolution as it relates to hair than the side-show grifters.

After completing these thorough histories, which are appropriately peppered with compelling quotes from diverse primary sources, Herzig turns to the growing distaste for body hair and the increasing desire to remove it by twentieth century western women. By 1900, hairlessness was associated with female beauty, and Herzig dedicates a chapter to chemical depilatories made of harmful chemicals sold prior to any regulatory oversight. However, not until the twentieth century did the technological and industrial production of products for beauty and wellness intersect with the increasing cultural desire for feminine hairlessness, with the result being an ever-more hairless ideal for women to maintain. Importantly, the association of hairlessness with female beauty was not propelled merely by fashion, but also by patriarchy and dominance. For example, Herzig notes that political cartoons mocking suffrage activists often depicted them as hairier-than-normal women.

In the last five chapters of *Plucked*, Herzig describes the popular methods of twentieth century hair removal, intersected between discussions of the political and cultural implications for the women (and sometimes men) who engage such practices. More often than not, these

trends accompanied some capitalist interest in establishing cultural norms to sell grooming products. For example, Herzig notes that the Gillette Company was contracted by the United States military to provide razors for daily shaving during World War I, when hairlessness would serve to reduce instances of lice and infestation in soldiers living in the elements. After the war, Gillette created advertising for civilians to promote daily shaving, and soon women were shaving their legs to remove hair that was considered normal only a decade earlier. Herzig provides numerous other examples of hair removal trends and the means used to obtain the desired results. In addition to chemical depilatories and razors, she also explores the use of tweezing and plucking, x-rays and radiation, electrolysis, waxing, laser treatments, and medical treatments focused upon genetic factors or hormones.

Throughout her history of hair removal, Herzig is careful to always consider the political implications of these trends in wellness and beauty. In a powerful chapter called “Unshaven,” Herzig traces the ways that second-wave feminists used hair as a sign of resistance to patriarchy, proudly displaying hairy legs or arms as a sign of resistance. Conversely, of course, Herzig is careful to note that those opposed to 1970s feminism also focused upon these women’s hair, describing it as an aberration rather than a sign of strength.

Today, Herzig cites statistics that suggest 99% of American women choose to remove hair somewhere on their bodies. While legs, armpits, and upper lips may still dominate the business, Herzig does not avoid discussing the contemporary trend for women to remove some or all pubic hair from the perineum, vulva and anus (and increasingly for men to remove hair from their testicles and anus). She is careful to note that there will likely be a next frontier for hair removal, because the root cause is never removed from culture but is always constructed. Furthermore, these constructions are always accompanied with political implications.

With *Plucked*, Herzig has written a highly readable and well-researched review of western practices of hair removal, including the varied motivations that inspire it. The text does not attempt to be exhaustive, and while Herzig does mention occasional issues of race or ethnicity, she more consistently focuses upon issues of gender and sex. She does not privilege science in understanding hair removal and instead maintains a consistently cultural frame on the topic. As such, this book would be a useful addition to courses dealing with gender and sexuality, sociology, anthropology and interpersonal communication in addition to American history. Students and scholars alike will appreciate the well-documented research that represents the greatest strength of this effort, and both will undoubtedly learn something new about hair and its removal.

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Falls, Susan. *Clarity, Cut, and Culture: the Many Meanings of Diamonds*. New York: New York University Press, 2014. Print.

Clarity, Cut, and Culture is a truly intriguing text that provides an often-overlooked narrative about diamonds—an item of material culture that has become symbolic of everything from love and romance to class and power. Aside from more conventional interpretations that situate diamonds into a contextual model in which they are merely items of spectacle bound to conspicuous consumption and display, Susan Falls explains, “this book explores what diamonds mean, how those meanings come about, and what our interactions with these stones can tell us about ourselves and our relationships with material culture, especially mass-

marketed, mass-produced, and mass-consumed commodities” (1). Framing this discussion about diamonds at the intersection between meaning produced through imputation and meaning realized through discovery, Falls argues that both forms of meaning engender a rich and diverse story of how these precious stones are part of the social fabric of modern life. Within this framework, Falls employs the semiotic theories of Charles Sanders Peirce, weaving a keen interpretation of diamonds as signs through Peirce’s model of the “second trichotomy”—an application and explanation of which Falls should be applauded for, by making often dense and erudite theoretical matter so accessible to general audiences.

At the center of this book’s appeal is the way Falls incorporates a host of methods to showcase twelve months of fieldwork with consumers of diamonds and the commercial producers that transform the character of these natural objects into supernatural items of consumption. Indeed, in addition to archival, historical and marketing analysis, Falls brings the real story of diamonds cleverly to life through her narrative-capturing use of ethnography; of which she notes: “Idiosyncrasy, agency, and creativity shape these narratives, which in turn explain, interpret and ultimately make social worlds happen. Our interactions with things such as commodities, simultaneously reflect and reshape our experience” (3). The vast majority of these ethnographic narratives can be found between chapters three and five; at times charming and entertaining—inclusive of her own experience with her grandmother’s diamond—and at others so telling and revealing of personal attitudes toward these jewels, that readers may be forced to reconsider their own views on the real human significance of diamonds.

From the perceived scarcity that contributes to their value to the incredible number of cuts that even the smallest of these gems can undergo. *Clarity, Cut, and Culture* is filled with fascinating facts that can lure the curiosity of academic and general audiences alike into pages-upon-pages of thought-provoking material. Perhaps the only real

shortcoming of the book is how very little Falls dedicates to the discussion of the “blood diamond” industry. To be fair, Falls does provide a summative explanation of some social, political and economic tragedies this industry generates, yet only in a handful of pages and, for the further inquisitive, a reference to an earlier 2011 article in which she address this topic in some critical detail. Nevertheless, Falls has accomplished a great deal within a relatively short manuscript—with this in mind, a book like this could easily be used in any number of undergraduate courses or graduate seminars as a supplementary text for enhancing a host of diverse topics, including qualitative research methods; social theories of conspicuous consumption; cultural anthropology; as well as detailed explorations of material culture.

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Shome, Raka, *Diana and Beyond: White Femininity, National Identity, and Contemporary Media Culture*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014. Print.

When Princess Diana died in a fatal car crash on August 31, 1997, it became one of those moments when you can recall where you were or what you were doing at the time you learned the news. On that day, I remember watching television with my best friend and her extended family when the newscaster cut into the show we were watching to announce Diana’s fatal injuries. Eighteen years later, major events such as Prince William’s wedding to Kate Middleton and the recent birth of their daughter Princess Charlotte Elizabeth *Diana* of Cambridge help reinscribe the image of Diana in the public consciousness. Still, in *Diana and*

Beyond: White Femininity, National Identity, and Contemporary Media Culture, Raka Shome argues that Diana is more than a prominent figure in popular culture—she is a symbol that permeates discussions of race, gender, class, and nationalism in the construction of the neoliberal state.

Shome divides *Diana and Beyond* into case studies that examine Diana in the contexts of (1) racialized and nationalized motherhood, (2) multicultural fashion, (3) globalized motherhood (4) transnational and Muslim masculinities, and (5) the commodified spiritualization of upper-/middle-class white femininity. She approaches these case studies in a manner that does not look at Diana's biographic representation or the representation of Diana in the public memory as these approaches do not consider how the intersection of race and gender construct a "spectacularization of white femininity" (Shome 2). Instead, the cultural myth of Diana becomes an entryway to the examination of the relationship between the racialized and gendered bodies of white femininity and the production of neoliberal discourses. According to Shome, focusing on the construct of white femininity is crucial to the examination of neoliberal policies within contemporary nationalist narratives and "the Diana case offers an example par excellence through which to comprehend how representations of iconic white women signify shifts in a national common sense" (4). This opens the door for other white female celebrities such as Madonna, Angelina Jolie, and Sandra Bullock to use a flexible subjectivity and a normalized white motherhood to distract from the systematic marginalization of women from the Global South. Therefore, Diana's position as a national symbol for neoliberal politics in Britain and as an exemplar of the contemporary representations of spectacular white femininity in globalized media makes the cultural myth of Diana a significant point of reference.

To begin each chapter, Shome contextualizes the representation of Diana within the framework of the larger case study. In Chapter 1, "White Femininity in the Nation, the Nation in White Femininity," Shome

examines the social currency of white womanhood by situating the cultural symbol of Diana's physical body within the frameworks of celebrity, neoliberalism, and whiteness. Shome's focus on the representation of Diana's body in this first chapter works to contextualize the influence race and gender has on nationalist policies based on neoliberal discourses. In Chapter 2, "Racialized Maternalisms: White Motherhood and National Modernity," Shome argues media create narratives of nationalized motherhood using the representation of Diana as a "can-do" mother performing a "just like us" upper-/middle class white womanhood. Then she expands her discussion of racialized and classed motherhood by focusing on how the experiences of Black Briton mothers differ from the neoliberal narratives of motherhood symbolized by Diana. Through this comparison, Shome solidifies her claim that the representation of upper-/middle-class white femininity reinforces a neoliberal logic that allows the government to restrict the social services needed to support lower class and Black Briton mothers. In Chapter 3, "Fashioning the Nation: The Citizenly Body, Multiculturalism, and Transnational Designs," Shome focuses on the racialized and gendered implications of Diana's fashion choices. In this chapter, Shome argues Diana was particularly conscious to the ways her fashion choices communicated a connection to the people of Britain. Furthermore, Shome uses Diana as an example of how fashion communicates Britain's political focus on multiculturalism, class, and the fetishization of South Asian culture. Then she expands her discussion of white femininity and fashion by discussing the use of South Asian fashion to represent a superficial concern about multiculturalism that is only obtainable by upper-/middle-class white women.

Yet, using Diana as an example of the case study's framework and then expanding the examination beyond the specificity of Diana does not hold up for all of the chapters. In Chapter 5, "White Femininity and Transnational Masculinit(ies): Desire and the "Muslim Man," Shome uses

the relationship between Diana and Dodi Fayed to make an argument about the relationship between white femininity and Muslim masculinity. Shome argues, the relationship between Diana and Dodi is significant to the national branding of Britain as cosmopolitan and accepting of multicultural relationships. Yet, according to Shome, Britain is able to embrace a national narrative of multiculturalism because it does not have to deal with the implications of living characters. In this chapter, Shome successfully complicates the examination of Muslim masculinity in popular culture by examining it through the lens of white femininity. Nevertheless, this chapter becomes more about Muslim masculinity than the representation of white femininity.

At times, it seems as though Shome is vacillating between an expansive overview of white femininity in media and popular culture and a specific examination of the cultural myth of Princess Diana. Still, *Diana and Beyond: White Femininity, National Identity, and Contemporary Media Culture* is useful for scholars with varying research interests. Primarily, *Diana and Beyond* is useful for researchers focusing on racialized and gendered representation in media. Additionally, researchers in the field of celebrity studies can use Shome's examination of the cultural myth of Princess Diana as a model for examining figures in popular culture. Furthermore, Shome's examination of race, gender, and nationalism in fashion highlights how the systematic construction of white femininity structures popular culture's relationship to fashion and contextualizes the representation of the upper-/middle-class white female body. Finally, those working on mediated representations and the political implications of racialized and globalized motherhood will find *Diana and Beyond* particular useful because Shome dedicates two chapters of her book to the topic.

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Field, Corrine T., and Nicholas L. Syrett, eds. *Age in America: The Colonial Era to the Present*. New York: New York University Press, 2015. Print.

Age in America brings together interventions in American history and cultural studies that establish chronological age as a legally constructed category significantly deployed to manage a subject's relationship to a social contract. Through methodologies deeply concerned with recovering how age was animated in colonial and early America, these essays speak to the self-conscious ways in which access to full citizenship was and is maintained through the ideological framework of individual age consciousness and institutional age grading. Organized chronologically, the three sections consider an expansive historical archive and document the shifts in meaning around age, the importance of age as a relevant identity category, and age as a dynamic area of analysis for intersectional studies of American culture. Each essay takes up age-based categories in order to point to the widely different ways in which age has delimited access to citizenship for Native Americans, African Americans, women, immigrants, and Chicanas.

Part I: "Age in Early America" pairs two essays concerned with spatially intimate, but culturally diverse childhoods to draw out the significance of chronological age-based recognition. Ann M. Little's "'Keep Me with You, So That I Might Not Be Damned': Age and Captivity in Colonial Borderlands Warfare" argues that similar conceptions of childhood existed across English, French, and Wabanaki people in New England by drawing on the detailed documentation of age in criminal, civil, and common law. Until subjects reach full citizenship, Little argues, participation in the colonies was determined incrementally through three recognized stages of childhood: one to four, six and seven, and twelve to fourteen-year-olds. Quite differently, Sharon Braslaw Sundue's "'Beyond the Time of White Children': African American

Emancipation, Age, and Ascribed Neoteny in Early National Pennsylvania” uncovers the ways in which the white supremacist ideologies of African American neoteny structured the laws of servitude after emancipation in the state of Pennsylvania. The legally structured extension of childhood for African Americans effectively worked to circumvent the law, and maintain systems of dependency and control.

In Part II: “Age in the Long Nineteenth Century,” citizenship is considered through the lens of voting rights, marriage, documentation, labor, and immigration. The essays, taken together, trouble the saliency of political narratives that argue for the neutrality of age-based categories of exclusion. By drawing out the ways in which age is applied differently depending on gender, race, class, and country of origin, these scholars identify the legislative impact on lived experiences. These legal practices, and, as a prerequisite, access to legal knowledge and documentation, defined how subjects negotiated participation in a national culture deeply invested in popular politics. Indeed, these case studies of the long nineteenth century show the development of chronological age itself as a repository for the unease of disenfranchisement set by ambiguous terms that sought to link democracy and maturity. For example suffrage, statutory ages of marriage, military age requirements, and rights to contract all construct different passages from “legal infancy” to adulthood. The gaps recorded in political agency through these intersectional studies challenge the space of childhood itself, drawing the conditions of adolescence into a larger conversation of minority status under the U.S. legal regime.

Part III: “Age in Modern America” offers essays on both adolescence and senescence scripted within the law. William Graebner’s “Age and Retirement: Major Issues in the American Experience” traces back the salience of age sixty-two and sixty-five to include the complex web of political, capitalist, cultural, and ideological shifts that are in constant conversation with the age of retirement. Suffrage and the drinking age are

taken up in this section as case studies that vivify the constant tension of minor subjecthood: protection and control. In an essay that provides a necessary contrast to the legal recognition of concern in a majority of this collection, Norma E. Cantú's "A Chicana Third Space Feminist Reading of Chican@ Life Cycle Markers" brings together Chicana celebrations of age with quinceañeras at fifteen and cincuentañeras at fifty. These age-based rituals are embedded within the intimacies of community, and theorized as a recursive transformation, what Gloria Anzaldúa calls *nepantla*. It is in this space of *nepantla* that age-based recognition is both "resistance and affirmation" (297).

This book mobilizes diverse case studies across an expansive period of time through the lens of legal records, church doctrine, family records, and letters. Collectively, these essays contribute to a rigorous excavation of age as a category of identity intrinsic to an intersectional analysis of American culture. While the sections are organized chronologically, the stakes of *Age in America* are not rendered on a normative progression model. Rather, Anzaldúa's *nepantla* speaks to the work as whole as these essays resist binaries such as minor/full citizenship, free/enslaved labor, and child/adult subject.

By interrogating the narratives of those marginalized by age-based discrimination, this collection provides compelling arguments for the ways in which individuals negotiate their families, communities, state governments, and American national culture. Scholars of critical race studies, democracy studies, American studies, and childhood and age studies, in particular, will find this collection of historiographies to be a dynamic compliment of, and challenge to, these fields of study. Taken together, these authors address age-based privileges through an intersectional framework and diverse archives.

Their methodologies for uncovering marginalized narratives draw out the ways in which age consciousness and age grading have changed over

time, and the political, social, and legal currents that provoke a questioning of age as neutral criteria.

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Clampin, David. *Advertising and Propaganda in World War II: Cultural Identity and the Blitz Spirit*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2014. Print.

Popular accounts of the British home front during World War II typically emphasize the famous blitz spirit. Here emerge the stalwart and cheerful citizens who endured the German onslaught with courage and a stiff upper lip, willingly carrying on even as they kept calm in the name of country and king. Such characterizations are legion in scholarship, suggesting that even if some postwar mythologizing has crept in here and there, the image of the defiant Brits under fire is based more on fact than on fancy.

David Clampin's new book, *Advertising and Propaganda in World War II*, presents an intriguing glimpse into vital aspects of the popular culture that undergirded and perhaps even helped foster that blitz spirit. His close scrutiny of scores of wartime advertisements within their original context offers a useful means of understanding the various ways that the British advertising industry served the war effort, its own clients, and—largely behind the scenes—the industry's own future viability. That the well-illustrated book is able to juggle its discussions of these divergent purposes demonstrates how deeply Clampin's research has delved into the time period.

Unlike many existing treatments of the home front, *Advertising and Propaganda* avoids the temptation to treat the war years as a homogenous

mass with no differentiation or variability from beginning to end. Instead, it takes the reader from the outbreak of war through its climax, showing at each stage how the industry struggled to define itself and its mission. Early on, for example, the war was underway as soon as the Germans invaded Poland, but little seemed to be happening, at least from the British perspective. Advertisements naturally reflected that sense of anticlimax, thereby stressing a sense of continuity between the new wartime life and the patterns of old. One November 1939 Guinness ad, for instance, touted the cheer that drinking a wartime beer could bring, asking: “What’s the use of worrying?” (91). As the war progressed, though, the industry had to adapt its appeals to new dangers and developments (such as when ads during the Battle of Britain began to depict civilians as being on the front lines). Clampin’s book is there at each stage of the conflict, nicely contextualizing these sorts of changes and explaining how they were fitting responses to the war’s ongoing trajectory. While a later chapter on gender roles disrupts the book’s chronological flow to a degree, the overall sense of progression is welcome, showcasing a home front experience that was not monolithic at all but dynamic at nearly every turn.

A related strength is the book’s willingness to consider the numerous propagandistic purposes which a given advertisement could serve. Aside from the most obvious persuasive function of an ad to pitch a specific product or brand for an advertiser, the wartime industry also demonstrated its propaganda value to the British government by continuously using ads to instruct readers on how one should behave on the home front—like the numerous late 1940 spots that emphasized the ideal of fitness for civilians during the crisis (that function was no doubt easier to manage when advertisers of such goods as spark plugs, radios, and stockings found that they had no products to sell but still wanted to keep their brand names alive for the anticipated postwar boom). Underlying both of these propaganda objectives was a third, more covert aim, which amounted to a clever demonstration of the long term, strategic value of advertising itself.

Advertising has always had its critics, of course, but during the war emergency British advertisers faced particularly pointed criticism from those who saw the wartime continuation of the practice as useless and even wasteful, since it seemed to encourage consumption when products were scarce or hard to find. The industry's professionals answered these critics with an "overriding drive . . . to protect their livelihood" (223), highlighting, for example, to their role in educating civilians about effective ways to adjust their consumer habits for the duration. Taken together, these differing kinds of propaganda aims showcase the book's complex conceptual approach, one that enables Clampin to engage the ads in a particularly sophisticated manner.

The book's relatively complete picture of the British advertising industry's propaganda machinations makes it an especially interesting counterpoint to similar treatments of American advertising during the war. As recent books like Inger L. Stole's *Advertising at War* and John Bush Jones's *All-Out for Victory!* suggest, the advertising industry in the United States also served propagandistic purposes for both clients and the government, even as it worked ceaselessly behind the scenes to demonstrate the long term value of advertising. Even so, the differences between the two nations' experiences are often startling. To take one example, U.S. males tended to be militarized in ads, either as soldiers in their own right or, if they were civilian, appearing in favorable visual comparisons to soldiers. But Clampin shows that the males in British advertisements were rarely in the military or even militarized. Instead, they often appeared in domestic contexts and in the idiom of the "ordinary and mundane" (206). In this respect, the ads presented British men in stark contrast to their aggressively militarized depictions of Germans, preferring to show their own side's males in scenes that reinforced that these stoic men "were fighting to protect . . . a 'normal' way of life" (206). There are more such contrasts between the British and the American advertising

experiences, of course, each one pointing to a fascinating cultural divide between the two allies.

To be sure, Clampin's focus is on the British side of that experience, and justifiably so. For that reason, his book will be of greatest interest to readers (including students, professional scholars, and history buffs) who are interested either in achieving a stronger grasp of Britain's wartime home front or, in contrast, in comparing that home front to other nations' home fronts in that same time period. Either way, the blitz spirit and how it emerged is a worthy scholarly endeavor, and *Advertising and Propaganda in World War II* proves to be effective in offering numerous relevant insights. It is a fine debut, establishing Clampin as a scholarly voice on the World War II era who has much of interest to say.

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Best, Joel, and Kathleen A. Bogle. *Kids Gone Wild: From Rainbow Parties to Sexting, Understanding the Hype over Teen Sex*. New York: New York University Press, 2014. Print.

I have to admit—I was a virgin for a *long time*. Partially from the Southern Baptist guilt handed down by my parents, and partially because I truly wanted to wait for “the one.” So as my testosterone reared, my desperate virginity became exacerbated by media reports that confirmed my biggest fear—I was the only one not having sex. In *Kids Gone Wild: From Rainbow Parties to Sexting, Understanding the Hype over Teen Sex* (2014, NYU Press), Joel Best and Kathleen Bogle offer a sociological perspective—albeit in an incredibly accessible way—on the widespread panic surrounding teen sexuality and, more specifically, on the cultural fixation we have with the tropes and signifiers (like those mentioned in the book’s title) of adolescent sexuality. After reading this book, I can breathe a sigh of relief knowing I wasn’t the only teen not getting laid.

Kids Gone Wild explores contemporary legends about adolescent sexuality and the ways in which they contribute to the perceived downward moral trajectory of American youth. From Miley Cyrus and the morning-after pill, to Romeo and Juliet and child pornography, Best and Bogle investigate some of the most salient examples of and turning points in Western sexuality. Their claim is simple—teen sex is overhyped. The authors focus most heavily on sensationalized media accounts of rampant teen sexuality, which would have us believe that teenagers are engaged in “rainbow parties” (group events where girls put on different shades of lip stick and boys line up for blow jobs in an effort to see who can boast the most colorful rainbow), sexting (sending sexually explicit messages or semi/nude photos via text message), and collecting “shag bands” (different colored, gel-like bracelets which signify willingness to engage in a specific sexual act). Do some of these behaviors likely exist among adolescents? Of course. Can they be proven? Anecdotally, at best. What

then, is our fear/fascination with teenage sexuality? Best and Bogle explore this question throughout *Kids Gone Wild*.

By tracking the trajectory from panics about heavy petting in the 1950s to a new focus on how kids—*girls*, especially—are using their sexual agency, Best and Bogle unpack what they frame as a “contemporary legend”—that is, a sensationalized social conversation about rampant teen sex with virtually no data to back it up (5). They frame the conversation by differentiating between *skeptics* and *believers*—those who use first- or second-hand accounts to verify or invalidate the existence of sex bracelets, rainbow parties, and other sensationalized outlets of teen sexuality. These social commentaries were mined from a host of sources that constitute Best and Bogle’s data—from magazines to Facebook and everywhere in between. Upon this data, Best and Bogle rest their argument that teen sexuality today is not all that different from teen sexuality of yesteryear.

Kids Gone Wild tackles teenage sexuality in a frank and honest way. One of the many strengths of the text is its highly accessible writing. While Best and Bogle are no strangers to scholarly research, they do not fall prey to technical jargon in this book. Throughout *Kids Gone Wild*, we are presented with large clusters of data, including interview transcripts and online discourse, among others. Thus, scholar or not, we are able to see the process of deduction Best and Bogle used as they flesh out their overarching argument. *Kids Gone Wild* is a text for everyone—parents, teens, educators, practitioners, and anyone else seeking a well-informed and balanced view of teen sexuality.

Best and Bogle lay an excellent foundation for a much larger social conversation on sexuality—teen sexuality included. There are several themes introduced in *Kids Gone Wild* that are not explored in depth. For instance, Best and Bogle explore the political foundations of sexuality and sex education—a topic with obvious applicability to the argument at hand—but do not engage deeply with the politics of teen sexuality. While

this topic might not have fit within the scope of the project, it presents an opportunity to take critical sexualities scholarship into the mainstream. Additionally, while its breadth is a great asset, *Kids Gone Wild* left me wanting a more critical conversation about intersectional sexuality. The text highlights “white, middle-class” adolescents, but does not discuss the intersections of class, race, sexuality, or other elements which are so relevant to conversations on sexuality. Best and Bogle lay a great foundation for these conversations, as many of the examples they use confirm the white-washed, heterosexual, patriarchal structures of Western sexuality. Perhaps this is not a weakness of *Kids Gone Wild*; rather, it is a testament to the necessity for more mainstream sexualities scholarship like it.

In sum, *Kids Gone Wild* is a wonderfully fun, sometimes maddening read. Best and Bogle are to be applauded for taking sexualities scholarship outside of the lofty halls of the academy and translating it into an accessible, entertaining, and informative work for the mainstream. *Kids Gone Wild* contributes to a much-needed social conversation on adolescence, sexuality, and the forces which drive our understanding of how they intersect.

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Lynch, Annette, and Mitchell D. Strauss. *Ethnic Dress in the United States: A Cultural Encyclopedia*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015. Print.

If asked to name a stimulating read, classic literature, drama, and poetry, in addition to some contemporary novels are what typically come to mind for most people. Except for the most hardcore bibliophile, few, if any, would ever contemplate considering an encyclopedia as an interesting read. What an encyclopedia lacks in regards to entertainment, it more than makes up for in terms of knowledge enhancement. Standing in sharp contrast to the vast majority of encyclopedias, *Ethnic Dress in the United States: A Cultural Encyclopedia* offers a little something for everyone, from members of the general public to students and scholars of fashion and cultural studies.

For members of the general public seeking to learn more about various fashionable accoutrements, *Ethnic Dress in the United States: A Cultural Encyclopedia* offers concise descriptions and historical backgrounds of over one hundred items spanning the globe as well as numerous historic epochs. Scholars and students of fashion and cultural studies will appreciate the fairly broad and extensive assortment of sartorial items covered in the encyclopedia ranging from textiles such as batik cloth, buckskin, chambray, calico, chintz, Harris Tweed, and madras cloth to such fashion stalwarts as bohemian dress, Capri pants, espadrilles, flip flops, oxford shirts, and polo shirts.

While the vast majority of the apparel items detailed in *Ethnic Dress in the United States: A Cultural Encyclopedia* gained prominence during the latter half of the twentieth century, there are discussions of accoutrements that predate the era such as coonskin caps, kilts, kimonos, corsets, and waistcoats, as well as more recent items like Ugg boots. Even so, the editors of *Ethnic Dress in the United States: A Cultural Encyclopedia* have taken great pains to make sure that the encyclopedia does not favor

the clothing contributions of one ethnic group at the expense of all others. Additionally, all facets of clothing are covered including head gear (conical Asian Hat, porcupine roach, sombrero, turban, touque), ties, belts, and scarves (bolo tie, bootlace tie, concho belt, obi, pashmina), foot gear (Birkenstocks, Dr. Martens, jellies, Mexican pointy boots, moccasins), shirts (aloha shirt, barong tagalong, dashiki, dejellaba, kosovorotka), suits and pants (harem pants, Jodhpurs, lederhosen, Mao suit, Mariachi suit) dresses and skirts (cheongsam, rumba dress, sarafan, sari, sarong), sweaters and jackets (alpaca, Mexican tourist jacket, Norwegian, Scottish, Nehru jacket), and religious and ceremonial clothing (hanbok, hanfu Chinese robes, hijab, kimono, yarmulke).

Each entry in *Ethnic Dress in the United States: A Cultural Encyclopedia* features a description of the item as well as a brief history of the item in addition to a separate section discussing the item's use in the United States. Additionally, there are sections detailing the influence and impact of the item under discussion along with information on other items that similar in nature to the item in question. The entries conclude with a short section offering resources for further reading.

Despite the rather comprehensive focus of *Ethnic Dress in the United States: A Cultural Encyclopedia*, there are a few problems with the scope of the book. As mentioned earlier, there is a heavy bias toward featuring items that gained prominence during the twentieth century. While this is understandable given the interests of the vast majority of members of the general public, it does a disservice to scholars and students of material culture and fashion studies because *Ethnic Dress in the United States: A Cultural Encyclopedia* unfairly emphasizes the importance of what is considered modern and/or relatively contemporary dress in the sartorial history of the United States.

Another seemingly problematic issue is the choice of illustrations for *Ethnic Dress in the United States: A Cultural Encyclopedia*. The use of illustrations in an encyclopedia such as *Ethnic Dress in the United States:*

A Cultural Encyclopedia is not only warranted but is more often than not essential because it is often necessary to visually depict the items being discussed in order for the readers to more fully comprehend that which is being analyzed. However, the use of illustrations becomes problematic when certain items are fortunate enough to receive pictorial illustrations in addition to their written descriptions while other seemingly just as worthy items are forced to rely solely upon the mental depictions that one conjures up while reading the textural portrayals. Prime examples of this are illustrations of a Mao suit, a Norwegian sweater, and a poncho and no corresponding visual depiction of a Nehru jacket, an Aran or a Scottish sweater, and a sarape. For those unfamiliar with Nehru jackets, Aran, and Scottish sweaters, and sarapes, it might be somewhat easy to conflate or confuse Mao suits with Nehru jackets as well as conflating and/or confusing Norwegian sweaters with those from Scotland and the Aran Islands, as well as assuming that ponchos and sarapes are one and the same. Additionally, given the fairly recent, relatively speaking, popularity of Ugg boots, one has to wonder why they are illustrated as opposed to a jeogori or a sari.

Regardless of the aforementioned problematic issues, *Ethnic Dress in the United States: A Cultural Encyclopedia* is a welcome addition to the bookshelves of students of both fashion studies and material culture studies as well as members of the general public who are interested in learning the history and meaning behind some of the more familiar everyday accoutrements worn by Americans.

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Bruhn, Jørgen, Ann Gjelsvik, and Eirik Frisvold Hanssen, eds. *Adaptation Studies: New Challenges, New Directions*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013. Print.

Kamilla Elliott's essay "Theorizing Adaptations/Adapting Theories" appears immediately after the introduction to *Adaptation Studies: New Challenges, New Directions*. For good reason: everyone who studies the adaptation of print texts for the screen—big or small—needs to read Elliott's critique of the sloppy and amnesiac scholarship that we have too often produced. Bruhn, Gjelsvik, and Hanssen modestly remark about Elliott's piece, "readers should consider the polemical, thoroughly researched article as a guide to the wide field of adaptation research" (4). I would put it more bluntly: "Drop what you are doing and go read Elliott's essay. Acquaint yourself with the reading list she has given you. Then thank her."

The editors of have compiled a book sure to interest not just scholars of adaptation, but also scholars of the phenomena called intermediality, remediation, and transmedia franchising. The book's self-reflexivity about adaptation studies also makes it a lively discussion of both enduring and new debates within the field, thereby offering a point of entry for newcomers even as it contributes to discourses on more abstruse theoretical and methodological questions. As the editors put it, their contributors "seek to uncover the core features of adaptation as a creative process and the core activity of adaptation studies as an academic endeavor" (3). In this they generally succeed, both performing and critiquing adaptation studies, advancing the theory and methods of adaptation studies as well as providing some detailed analyses of individual texts (mostly films). But Elliott's essay burns brightly enough to outshine its fellows, so it warrants some discussion before we survey the rest of the book.

Elliott criticizes adaptation scholars for their short historical memory and for a habit that this short memory begets — treating their ignorance of previous work as evidence of their own innovation. Scholars of adaptation “often fail to cite prior work upon which they build, exacerbating the sense of scatter and fruitless repetition” (24), writes Elliott. Nowhere is this more salient than in the discussion of the relationship between adaptation and source, which has long constituted the interpretative kernel of the field. “Surveying work published in 2010-11,” Elliott writes,

the most common claim to innovation is that a new publication challenges prevalent fidelity mandates. And yet scholars who have read prior work know that fidelity has always been robustly challenged in adaptation studies.... Indeed, the critique of fidelity has become so commonplace that the critique of this critique is also widely reiterated. (24-25)

In case we have not read the prior work that she means, Elliott supplies a table, “Repeated Claims in Adaptation Studies,” which spans three pages. The left column presents the first instance of a claim, while the right presents subsequent occurrences of that claim that do not cite their precursor:

1975: Wagner posits that adaptations function as interpretations of/critical commentaries on what they adapt.	Baum, 1985
	Griffith, 1986
	Sinyard, 1986
	Elliott, 2003

This table represents not merely a tour de force of historical collation within the field; it also gives an overview of the field’s strengths and its shortcomings. And, as Elliott points out, this table includes her own scholarship (27). The physician acknowledges that she has suffered from the disease, even as she prescribes the two-part remedy: first, we must pay closer attention to past scholarship (what in pedagogical terms we might

call “doing the required reading”), and second, we must situate new scholarship in explicit relation to foundational or influential works. Elliott’s essay is such a work.

The editors organize the book into two sections: the first primarily concerned with theory; the second, with case studies. However, this distinction is less prescriptive than descriptive, and many of the theoretical essays make use specific texts to make their points, just as the case studies often present theoretical descriptions applicable beyond the confines of the texts in question. The work of Linda Hutcheon, Thomas Leitch, Christine Geraghty, and Irina Rajewsky informs the essays in both sections; narratology, genetic criticism, and intermediality signal the influence of Continental scholarly currents that American readers would do well to chart. Although Elliott’s essay looms above its fellows in the theory section, others writers make valuable contributions. Eirik Frisvold Hanssen uses André Bazin’s ontology of the motion picture image to reconsider the materiality of both the “original” and the “adaptation,” and he builds upon Bazin’s reading of *Diary of a Country Priest*. Thomas Leitch revisits Pier Paolo Pasolini’s claim that a screenplay “wants” to become another text, and he uses actor-network theory to understand the American movie industry’s turn toward adaptations of comic books, young-adult novels, and computer games that seem to “want” to become transmedia franchises. Among the case studies, Sara Brinch’s essay on *Invictus* (Clint Eastwood, 2009) stands out among the more traditional. Brinch looks at Geraghty’s recent work on the unacknowledged, non-verbal sources for films—in this case, archival photos—and uses that work to engage critically with some of Leitch’s claims about “true story” films in his earlier *Film Adaptation and its Discontents*. Among the less traditional case studies, Jonas Ingvarsson’s essay on the 1938 Mercury Theatre On the Air radio adaptation of *War of the Worlds* wins for studiously ignoring the filmed versions of the novel, instead focusing on

the ways that both the Wells and Welles versions foreground the breakdown of media technologies as the Martians attack.

The book's strengths make it vital reading for anyone who studies adaptation across media, though it has its weaknesses. Like too many collections of original essays, this one suffers from uneven editing: a missing endnote here, a typo there, and some regrettable prose. And like too many books on adaptation, this one includes a couple of taxonomies—as if we needed more. Most of the book's contributors focus on those persons traditionally regarded as the principal agents in the transformation of written texts into movies—writers, directors, and screenwriters—without paying much attention to the marketers, executives, and other corporate agents who, especially in the case of Hollywood, exercise power over which texts get adapted and how. This sometimes leads to a Romantic preoccupation on artistic intentionality and agency at the expense of other forces at work in the media industries. Nevertheless, the book showcases the methodological diversity and theoretical vitality of new scholarship in adaptation; what gaps the book reveals can serve, as its title suggests, as new challenges for the rest of us.

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Derie, Bobby. *Sex and the Cthulhu Mythos*. New York: Hippocampus Press, 2014. Print.

One could be forgiven for not taking this book seriously based on the cover, which is a humorous comic of a Lovecraftian horror flashing a matronly woman and her small dog. This would be a grave error. Despite its cover, this work is a serious examination of the sexual elements of the Cthulhu Mythos—the universe and pantheon of gods created mainly by Howard Phillips Lovecraft. In doing so, Bobby Derie takes on an ambitious project, spanning the work of many different authors across multiple media. His aim is genealogical; he traces contemporary echoes of Lovecraftian literary elements to their source, both in Lovecraft himself and the stories that he wrote, then explores the myriad ways that later authors have appropriated, changed, and challenged Lovecraft’s fictional universe. Many have written about Lovecraft, but few have tied his work to the extensive secondary mythos literature and none have taken such a serious look at the sexual aspects of these works.

Derie opens his work by considering how Lovecraft’s life and attitudes may have influenced his fiction. Although one can generally separate the author from the literature, Lovecraft’s life has spawned considerable

speculation. He was married for only two years, and some speculated that he may have been a closeted homosexual or that he had syphilis. Derie refutes these allegations in great detail and explains that one inspiration for this book was the errors of previous biographies (187). Drawing on an impressive array of letters, essays, and interviews, Derie lays the foundation for the book by examining Lovecraft's attitudes on such issues as love, sex, pornography, homosexuality, and miscegenation. In doing so, he argues against the prevailing attitude that Lovecraft was a prude, suggesting that he was simply conforming to the constraints of publishing in the 1920s and 1930s. Still, he was a product of his time and viewed homosexuality as a perversion, although Derie notes that this seemed to have little influence on his friendships with homosexual writers. He also suggests that some of Lovecraft's more troubling personal views, such as his racism and xenophobia, are more than simply personal beliefs; they play a central role in his fiction and help to explain his use of cosmic miscegenation as a plot device.

The next section examines the sexual aspects of Lovecraft's fiction which, with some exceptions, is often limited to miscegenation between supernatural entities and humans. After all, most of the sex in Lovecraft's work is largely implied. Derie provides close readings of the stories and then breaks down specific themes, such as sexual symbolism, the role of women in Lovecraft's fiction, and the gender and sexual orientation of the alien beings. This section also provides important literary context for Lovecraft's work by examining vital influences such as Arthur Machen and Edgar Allen Poe. Derie suggests that Poe's tales "are likely to have influenced Lovecraft's use of sex and gender" and provided him with the twin narrative structure and the "metaphor of the ancestral manse, often in neglect or ruined" (59). Machen, he argues, was a stronger influence, with the figure of Pan in "The Great God Pan" directly or indirectly inspiring Lovecraft's *Yog-Sothoth*, *Shub-Niggurath*, and *Yig* (63) and "The White

People” laying the foundation for Lovecraft’s stories of monstrous hybrids “of daemonic paternity” and inspiring the character of Nyarlathotep (65).

Derie then moves beyond Lovecraft into the secondary mythos fiction by Lovecraft’s contemporaries and collaborators, as well as those who have simply adopted elements of the mythos. Shifts in the publishing environment, as well as society in general, allowed for more sexually adventurous works as niche presses began publishing mythos literature without the restrictions of outlets like *Weird Tales* or Arkham House. As such, these works were often much more explicit while still drawing on themes established by Lovecraft, such as miscegenation, the pitfalls of seeking for forbidden knowledge, and his pantheon of gods and occult tomes. Many of the names covered—Ramsey Campbell, Robert E. Howard, Robert Bloch, August Derleth—would be familiar to those with an interest in what many have referred to as “weird fiction,” along with lesser known figures. There are also nods to works that specifically explore the potential connection of sex and the mythos, such as *Eldritch Blue*, *Cthulhurotica*, and the *Cthulhu Sex* magazine. In this section, Derie weaves together various strands of the mythos that can sometimes be disjointed and even contradictory. He demonstrates how various authors have paid homage to Lovecraft through pastiches of his work while others challenged Lovecraft’s attitudes and style and pushed sexual themes well beyond where Lovecraft would have been able or willing to go. Some of these challenges include Caitlín R. Kiernan’s use of strong female protagonists, including lesbian characters, in contrast to Lovecraft’s androcentric storytelling, authors in *Cthulhu Sex* who emphasized the sensuality of sexual union with otherworldly beings rather than the horror, and those who explore themes of rape, incest, necrophilia, pedophilia, and other paraphilias that would have certainly been censored by Lovecraft and his editors. Derie leaves no stone unturned as he draws on an exhaustive range of sources, including stories of limited circulation and works created with different pen names. Rather than making a specific

argument about these stories, most of which he mentions only in passing, Derie seems content to create the definitive bibliography of sexual themes in the Cthulhu mythos.

Finally, Derie examines how the mythos has infiltrated art, comics, film, anime, and even occult practices. The discussion of how Lovecraft borrowed from the occult and how several occultists, such as Kenneth Grant, Donald Tyson, and others, have borrowed from Lovecraft was particularly interesting and unexpected. Other elements, such as Lovecraft-inspired webcomics and films, get much less discussion, but Derie still manages to cover a wide range of works ranging from the well known to the obscure.

For the serious Lovecraft scholar, the overall value is to be found in his close reading of Lovecraft's stories and the biographical sketch found in the first half of the book. The second half of the book seems geared more toward those interested in Lovecraftian literature generally, functioning more as a starting point for the interested reader in contrast to the detailed criticism of the first half. The extensive breadth of works covered in the second half is, paradoxically, one limitation of this book. Derie moves through the material at such a breakneck pace that it would likely be difficult for those less familiar with the literature to follow his arguments. As someone who has read all of Lovecraft's fiction and a considerable amount of the secondary mythos literature, I still found myself wishing for at least a short synopsis of some of the stories under consideration. Moreover, because he covers such a vast array of literature, he sometimes glosses over important authors, although this is something that Derie readily acknowledges (289). Authors must sometimes sacrifice depth for breadth, and Derie chose to focus deeply on Lovecraft while covering the secondary literature as broadly as possible, trying to give each author's work at least a mention. As such, this is a work best suited for scholars already familiar with the broader Cthulhu Mythos beyond Lovecraft's work.

Even with these limitations, this is an excellent exploration of sexuality in the Cthulhu Mythos that demonstrates just how far Lovecraft's tentacles have reached into literature, film, and popular culture in general. I can see this becoming the definitive work on sex in Lovecraft's literature and a starting point for all future explorations of sex in the mythos overall as the literature continues to expand and evolve. This book is essential reading for those studying Lovecraft's works and, because of the broad influence of Lovecraft's work, researchers in horror studies will likewise find this work useful.

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Stevens, J. Richard. *Captain America, Masculinity, and Violence: The Evolution of a National Icon*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2015. Print.

With *Captain America, Masculinity, and Violence: The Evolution of a National Icon*, author J. Richard Stevens offers a comprehensive and altogether definitive look at the history of Marvel Comics, though one that often overshadows his analysis of his primary subject. Stevens sets out to discuss the transformations the character of Captain America has undergone since his first appearance in March 1941, and how these changes subsequently reflect America's shifting ideals and values. Stevens begins his examination by correctly observing that the struggle over popular culture often reflects an attempt to renegotiate prevailing ideologies, which mass culture frequently simplifies for easier consumption by members of the working class. Perhaps more than any other mass culture text, superheroes exemplify this idea; they reflect

historical events and contribute to a culture of conformity that maintains prevailing ideologies even as creators redefine their characterizations in relation to an ever-shifting status quo. Stevens argues that Captain America represents the perfect subject through which to explore this idea, primarily because creators Joe Simon and Jack Kirby intended the character to function as a living embodiment of the American identity. Therefore, Captain America's shifting identity offers profound insight into the American monomyth as defined by ideals rooted in masculinity, violence, and an "ability to reconstruct and reinvent origins" (7). Unfortunately, Stevens occasionally appears more interested in discussing Marvel Comics' history or Captain America's colorful supporting cast, but when he does focus his attention on his intended subject, he offers a wealth of insightful and well-researched analysis.

Stevens draws upon the idea that superheroes represent a decidedly American invention to contextualize his overall argument that the character of Captain America underwent a series of reinventions in the nearly 75 years since his debut, all of which reflect the nation's shifting identity. Stevens notes that like all superheroes, Captain America functions as an open text, and as such the character does not possess a fixed identity, but rather one that constantly shifts and changes as different creators in different historical periods revamp the character to ensure his continued relevance. The superhero genre first emerged in the late 1930s and early 1940s, as young, recently-arrived Jewish immigrants who could write or draw unleashed a torrent of colorful masked heroes, many of whom embodied distinctly American ideals such as individuality and perseverance. Many of these characters endured into the next decade and beyond, and this lasting interest necessitated the frequent reinvention of their identities and characterizations. Stevens observes that Captain America frequently experienced such reconsideration, in large part because America's social mood tends to change often and rapidly.

The book contains nine chapters, each focusing on a different period in the ongoing development of Captain America's characterization. Chapter One serves as an overall introduction to both the character and the theoretical foundation Stevens uses to build his argument, which draws primarily upon Joseph Campbell's work on mythology, Henry Jenkins' work on fandom and fan cultures, and Kenneth Mackinnon's work on men and masculinities. In Chapter Two, which focuses on Cap's wartime exploits, Stevens analyzes the character's first incarnation, which he dubs "The Anti-Hitler Crusader." This chapter contains some of the book's best and most substantive analysis, as Stevens delves into Cap's willingness to resort to extreme violence, and what this means in terms of the American national identity. From there, Stevens follows the development of the character over the next 60 years, from his phase as an overzealous "Commie Smasher" all the way up to his recent big screen appearances in films such as *The Avengers* (2012) and *Captain American: The Winter Soldier* (2014).

While Stevens does offer some excellent insight into Captain America's identity throughout the book, his analysis often takes a back seat to his discussion of Marvel Comics' history. Furthermore, Stevens frequently spends too much time recapping plot synopses and not enough time on his analysis of what the points of these stories actually mean in terms of Captain America's characterization and how it relates to the prevailing ideologies of the period. Of course, Steven's argument clearly requires such contextualization, and it sometimes provides fascinating insight into the character's history (for instance, Stevens reveals that in the 1940s, Cap had a female sidekick named Golden Girl). Yet, Stevens' propensity for recalling details about the company or the stories frequently takes the place of actual analysis. Additionally, Stevens occasionally appears more interested in examining Captain America's supporting cast and Rogues Gallery, and he often foregrounds his analyses of supplementary characters such as Sharon Carter, the Falcon, and the Red

Skull at the expense of discussing his intended subject. However, it should be noted that Stevens' often exemplary analyses of these secondary characters (he offers an extremely insightful examination of the Falcon, for example) do occasionally serve to situate Captain American within the context of larger sociocultural issues such as race or gender relations, and thus they sometimes help to highlight his shifting characterization.

As discussed in the book's final chapter, Disney recently acquired Marvel Entertainment, facilitating a merger of two of the biggest entertainment companies in the world. Following the collapse of the comic book speculator's market in the 1990s, Marvel declared bankruptcy around the turn of the century. The company survived and would go on to become a leading force in the arena of transmedia entertainment, releasing a steady stream of comic books, movies, video games, and more, all featuring some of their most recognizable characters. Stevens uses Captain America's shifting identity to relate the story of the company's tumultuous journey over the course of six decades, and he presents his examination in a clear and concise fashion that will appeal to communication and pop culture scholars, historians, and even comic book fans longing for an in-depth analysis of Marvel Comics. Thus, *Captain America, Masculinity, and Violence: The Evolution of a National Icon* may not represent the definitive examination of the titular character, but it does provide an enjoyable, well-researched, and timely look at one of the most dominant forces in popular culture today.

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Duncan, Randy, Matthew Smith, and Paul Levitz. *The Power of Comics: History, Form, and Culture*, 2nd ed. New York: Bloomsbury, 2015. Print.

In this second edition of *The Power of Comics: History, Form, and Culture*, authors Randy Duncan, Matthew Smith, and Paul Levitz offer a update to their introduction to the comic form. Similar to the first edition, the authors address the history (development, maturation, and diversification), form (creating and experiencing stories, as well as comic book genres), and culture (business, readers, meanings, and international culture) of comic books. They also include a useful glossary of comic terminology. At the end of each chapter, Duncan et al., also provide discussion questions, activities, and recommended readings.

In this second edition, the authors add to all three of the book's sections: history, form, and culture. In the first section, they expand the historical review of comic books to include the rise of the graphic novel and the introduction of the digital comic format. The authors suggest that both the popularity and the rise of the graphic novel format make it possible for readers to access the comic works by a story arc or by volume. Additionally, the graphic novel format allows the characters and stories to reach broader audiences in more mainstream book retailers (such as Barnes & Noble). Lastly, they address how emergent and current technologies are changing the delivery of comic books. This is important to consider as the rise in digital formats signals another shift in how comic books are created, produced, and consumed.

In the second section, regarding the form of comics, the authors add a chapter on memoirs as a comic book genre. The memoir genre documents, in sequential art form, the memories of the significant experiences that shape the narrator's life. This genre helps individuals to share subjective understandings of their own, which extends and influences how (and why) that individual may perceive/identify him/herself in the present. This is

especially relevant in considering autoethnography and popular culture. Lastly, in the culture section, the authors provide theoretical tools to help students critically explore the meaning of comics. Methods include description research (explaining), interpretive analysis (understanding), and critical readings (exposing power imbalances). The relevance of women's images in comics are also discussed, such as the Bechdel Test and problems of representation.

The Power of Comics differs from many others because it includes expertise from comic book creators. Instead of merely offering ways of reading, understanding, and analyzing comic books from purely academic perspectives, the inclusion of Paul Levitz and Mark Waid add a layer of important industry expertise to this book. So, we also gain insight into how comic books are written, created, produced, and marketed. Waid, whose credits include writing for *Kingdom Come* and *Superman: Birthright*, as well as contributing to existing Fantastic Four and Spiderman storylines, pens the introduction. Levitz was a former president of DC Comics and is, perhaps, most well-known for his work on *The Legion of Super-Heroes*.

Our criticism of the power of comics is also broadly applicable towards many academic works regarding popular culture; in general: scholars are ignoring the importance of international markets. Many media and popular culture critics tend to focus on American cultural imperialism, without considering the ramifications of how foreign markets are becoming more influential in the re/production of American media. For example, in *Iron Man 3* (2013), producers significantly toned down the ethnicity of the Mandarin (English accented East Asian, instead of Mandarin Chinese). However, they also added four minutes of exclusive footage for Chinese audiences, where Chinese surgeons successfully remove shrapnel from Tony Stark's chest, while Pepper Potts and James Rhodes observe. This short segment suggests that only Chinese surgeons have the courage, ability, and expertise to successfully operate on Stark. These kinds of adaptations and changes of American comic materials for other national audiences is

not addressed in the book, and that is the one place where it could use more updating. American scholars should seek to carefully examine and consider world influences in global marketplaces on American media products.

Overall, the broad overview that the authors provide is extremely helpful for individuals wanting to examine comic books. The insight provided by Levitz and Waid differentiates this volume from other works that introduce comic books. With regard to specific classes, the updated *The Power of Comics* is useful in introduction and advanced courses regarding sequential art such as comic books. Also, as ever more video media content providers are translating comic books into films and shows, this book will be helpful in media, film, and television studies courses as well.

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Rose, Phil. *Roger Waters and Pink Floyd: The Concept Albums*. Lanham: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2015, Print.

In *Roger Waters and Pink Floyd: The Concept Albums*, Phil Rose uses a unique approach to investigate six concept albums spanning nearly 20 years of music. Combining musical hermeneutics with elements from communication studies, textual analysis, sociology, political economy, and historiography, Rose provides an in-depth, scholarly examination of these

albums to uncover the meaning generated by these musical works and ties those meanings to the historical and cultural contexts within which they were created. While seemingly an unwieldy combination of analytical methods, Rose organizes each chapter in such a way that the reader can smoothly follow his train of thought. Six albums total are analyzed including *Dark Side of the Moon*, *Wish You Were Here*, *Animals*, *The Wall*, and *Final Cut*, all by Pink Floyd, as well as *Amused to Death* by Roger Waters in a solo endeavor. As Rose reveals, everything from the lyrics to the instruments and tonal intervals used are carefully considered so that the intended meanings are created through words as well as through the way the music was orchestrated. In various chapters, Rose also analyzes how visuals for the album artwork and live performances were given the same attention to detail. In the end, Rose relates how the band used synthesizers and recorded sounds to provide additional layers of representation.

In the first chapter, *Dark Side of the Moon*, Rose examines Waters' use of the sun and moon as symbols of light and dark and discusses how the music and lyrics work together to show how the pressures of day-to-day living can lead one to madness as "You race toward an early grave" (Pink Floyd). Everything from socio-economic ideologies to psychiatry and the use of brain surgery is critiqued in these songs. In contrast, Rose explains how *Wish You Were Here* is both ode and elegy to Syd Barrett as well as a critique of the music industry's commercially-oriented practices that privilege regular output over the creation of musical artwork. Rose goes on to show how Barrett's demise into drugs created a schism within the group – a schism reflected in the band as well as their work.

The third chapter examines *Animals*. Here, Pink Floyd's music and lyrics serve as a Marxist critique of capitalism and consumer society. References to Orwell's *Animal Farm* are made clear with allusions to social class rooted in the ideology and hegemony of the capitalist system. Pigs, dogs, and sheep (all in the song titles) respectively represent the

bourgeoisie, middle class, and proletariat who all play their roles within the capitalist system where a hypercompetitive existence only allows for limited mobility, or at least the artifice of mobility, between social classes.

Fourth is *The Wall* – easily the longest chapter and the longest of the six albums. Not only does Rose complete his normal analysis, but he also includes more information focused on the film and stage show given Pink Floyd's emphasis on visuals with this release. This approach is needed for a more complete understanding of the work, but Rose does choose to follow the film as opposed to the album, which contrasts with the other chapters. This is a minor difference though that does not detract from the quality of the chapter. More importantly, Rose grounds his analysis in psychodynamic object relations theory, which stresses the importance of formative relationships. Given the subject matter addressed in *The Wall*, this theory works well as a lens for examining the main protagonist, Pink Floyd. In the music and film, Pink is a rock star who lives in a depressed state due to the loss of his father at an early age and an overbearing mother. Alienation is once again a theme as Rose shows Pink's retreat into himself, eventually leading to madness.

Rose's fifth chapter investigates *The Final Cut*. Here, alienation comes from government, specifically in the form of betrayal. Rose reports that Waters was unhappy with the war that broke out between Great Britain and Argentina over the Falkland Islands in 1982. Waters' fears relate to the loss of the dream of a more compassionate world following World War II. Rose also connects the album to the historical events surrounding the war, and demonstrates how Waters' critique of the government's decisions are made clear.

Finally, Rose moves away from Pink Floyd and looks at Waters' third solo album entitled *Amused to Death*. In this chapter, Rose draws on Neil Postman's work, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*, from which the album's title is borrowed, and media ecology theory. Rose shows how Waters is concerned with how

technology impacts “the matrix of feelings, value, and behavior” (195). Furthermore, the power of the artist to influence society is likewise investigated. As a result, this final album-centered chapter serves as a fitting bookend. Waters’ work in each of these concept albums has often served to raise societal consciousness whether or not he intended it to do so.

In addition to the six chapters of analysis, Rose includes the transcript from a Roger Waters’ interview which reveals from where some of Rose’s insights were gathered. Additional insight into Waters’ thoughts and work process are accessible in this intriguing interview. Finally, Rose concludes with full album details including production information, track titles, and basic copyright material for anyone interested.

Scholars will find Rose’s work an excellent example of how mixed methods can provide a deep textual reading. Rose’s combination of musical hermeneutics and components of communication studies, textual analysis, sociology, political economy, and historiography blend well for a thorough analysis. A fascinating read, *Roger Waters and Pink Floyd: The Concept Albums* is well worth the time of any person interested in Pink Floyd and Waters’ work or even the more casual fan interested in Waters’ artistic process, the music industry, and the link between art and life.

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The Interview. Dir. Evan Goldberg and Seth Rogen. Screenplay by Dan Sterling. Perf. James Franco, Seth Rogen, and Randall Park. Columbia Pictures, 2014. Netflix Instant.

In November 2014, *The Interview* ignited a geo-political firestorm and quickly established itself as a pop culture phenomenon rather than simply another sophomoric “bromance” movie. In fact, the buzz surrounding *The Interview*’s apparently controversial content became the primary focus of the film’s coverage, which is a shame since the film’s narrative and themes definitely merit discussion. While never quite living up to its reputation as “the film North Korea really doesn’t want you to see” (as a *Rolling Stone* headline proclaimed), with satire more akin to late-period *South Park* than *Dr. Strangelove*, *The Interview* still offers a funny and surprisingly sweet perspective on current global politics (Eells). At the same time, the film lampoons contemporary notions of masculinity, subverting the idea of “alpha males” and “bro” culture by laying bare the homoerotic undertones of each. Thus, what emerges from the din of cybercrime, controversy, and subsequent media storm is a slight film that does not quite deserve the label of “pop culture phenomenon,” but nevertheless contains enough substance for those prepared to judge it on its own merits.

Prior to the film’s release, parent company Sony Pictures was the victim of a high-profile cyber-attack. This attack released consumers’ private information and secret company emails, and even forced studio head Amy Pascal to step down from her position as co-chair of the studio (Siegel). This wide-ranging cybercrime also drew the attention of President Barack Obama, who condemned Sony’s initial decision to pull the offending film from distribution after terrorists threatened attacks if the film was distributed (Dwyer). The studio eventually granted the film a limited theatrical run before releasing it to various streaming platforms. While the true culprits behind the cyber-attack have not been identified,

evidence suggests North Korean operatives most likely perpetrated the hostilities in a bid to prevent the film's release.

In *The Interview*, tabloid talk show host Dave Skylark (James Franco) and his producer/best friend Aaron Rapoport (Seth Rogen) attempt to establish their credibility by securing an interview with North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un (Randall Park), who happens to be a huge fan of their show, *Skylark Tonight*. Learning of the interview, the CIA recruits Dave and Aaron, and their trip to Pyongyang turns into an assassination mission. Unfortunately, Skylark and Rapoport are completely unqualified to carry out such a dangerous job, and their incompetence threatens to derail the mission before it even begins.

Anyone expecting a biting satire of contemporary global politics will likely experience disappointment. Instead, the film primarily functions as a vehicle for Rogen and Franco's signature low-brow-yet-secretly-smart hijinks. While the setting could easily lead to racist humor, the film wisely directs much of its comedy at Skylark's obliviousness and self-absorption and Rapoport's blustery incompetence and tendency to overcompensate for his shortcomings. As such, *The Interview* feels more like a parody of stereotypical obnoxious Americans who travel abroad rather than a satire on North Korea's people or political situation.

Much of the controversy surrounding the film focused on its representation of Kim Jong-un, and many critics worried that the filmmakers exercised poor taste and judgment. Indeed, it would be easy to mistake Park's emotionally vulnerable yet cartoonish portrayal of Kim Jong-un as an attempt to humanize a man widely considered a petty, vicious tyrant who oppresses his people, but that is not necessarily the case. Nor is it an entirely mocking portrayal. Much like director Oliver Hirschbiegel's masterful drama *Downfall* (2004), which faced similar criticism due to a not entirely unsympathetic depiction of Adolf Hitler during his final days, *The Interview* offers a fully formed character rather than a broad caricature. In fact, Park's characterization of Kim Jong-un is

far more nuanced than a coarse “bro” comedy like this probably deserves, and it is a performance seemingly designed to challenge the assumptions of those who would rather think of the world in more reassuring black and white terms. At the same time, however, the film does not excuse or gloss over Kim’s brutality; it simply acknowledges that even the most high-profile dictator is sometimes a multi-faceted individual rather than a one-dimensional comic book villain, and this is perhaps the most refreshing aspect of *The Interview*.

In addition to complex characters, the film offers a multifaceted approach to masculinity and male relationships, while mining a great deal of humor from both. Skylark’s relationships with both President Kim and Rapoport function simultaneously as a spoof and an affirmation of the homosocial bonds presented in contemporary bromance films like *Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle* (2004) or *The Hangover* (2009). The film comments on the homoerotic undertones of such relationships in Skylark’s burgeoning friendship with President Kim, which is founded on a mutual love of Katy Perry and margaritas, both of which carry feminine connotations in this film. In this way, the film initially appears to mock bromance conventions rather than embrace them. At the same time, *The Interview* celebrates these tropes in the context of Skylark and Rapoport’s relationship, which is presented as a loving and openly affectionate bond between two heterosexual men who care deeply for one another. Thus, the film appears to challenge the sort of hegemonic heteronormativity prevalent in mainstream American cinema, and this is another way it subverts expectations.

Ultimately, it is a shame *The Interview* was almost completely overshadowed by the controversy surrounding its production and release, because its emergence as a pop culture phenomenon caused the film to become a victim of this hype. Indeed, when approached as a pop culture phenomenon *The Interview* invariably falls short. In fact, few films could have lived up to the unreasonable expectations of the designation “the film

North Korea really doesn't want you to see," especially when it's a toothless and coarse confection that never quite tackles its subject matter in any sort of substantive fashion. When viewed as a goofy, smart, even sweet "dudebro" comedy more interested in making fun of its two high-profile stars rather than a dictator and his entire oppressive regime, *The Interview* succeeds.

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Williams Jr., Roland Leander. *Black Male Frames: African Americans in a Century of Hollywood Cinema, 1903-2003*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2015. Print.

In *Black Male Frames: African Americans in a Century of Hollywood Cinema, 1903-2003*, Roland Williams, Jr. traces the generational oscillation between two predominant black male stereotypes in popular

American film, the shaman figure and the scoundrel figure. Williams constructs the shaman figure along the lines of the “contended slave” archetype, a black man who “exudes piety and deference” and “lives to serve others” (24). On the other hand, the scoundrel is premised upon the “wretched freeman” archetype, a black man who “exhibits pomposity and defiance” and is “dying to serve himself” (24). Williams blends historical analysis, biography, film analysis, and study of audience reviews to ground his argument that prominent black actors were rewarded for playing into stereotypes that would address the perceived racial anxieties of their generation. Charting this movement through the exploration of the work and reception of five prominent black actors (Sam Lucas, Paul Robeson, Sidney Poitier, Denzel Washington, and Morgan Freeman) Williams contributes to film and race scholarship by revealing the enduring presence of stereotypes of black men from the development of slavery in America through the first 100 years of Hollywood film production.

Williams begins by charting the historical trajectory of color-coded racialization and stereotype that primed the first century of American film production. Williams outlines various means by which Black men were excluded from the heroic mythos of early colonial American establishment. Even as the first two generations of captive Angolans brought to the colonies were theoretically included into the egalitarian mythos of figures like John Smith, a confluence of “Old World habits” (5) limited this leading role to white men. Restricted by the English language that translated all Africans into the color of their skin, black men were defined “as a twofold species marked by a common complexion” (12). Furthermore, the work of English playwright, William Shakespeare, prepared colonists to understand Africans as coming in two styles: either the obliging and noble Othello or the obstinate and dangerous Caliban. Picked up in early American literature and blackface minstrelsy, these

stereotypes continued to train the public eye to understand black men as either deferential or defiant.

In the central chapters of *Black Male Frames*, Williams moves through five generations that constitute the first 100 years of American film, isolating the ways in which audiences and filmmakers produced images of black men that reduced social anxiety. Each of the core generational chapters are broken into three sections which roughly cover a historical trend in African American social movement, a consideration of the predominant style of Hollywood film, and a close analysis of a series of films and reviews from the predominant black male actor of the generation.

In the first generation of Hollywood cinema (1903-1919), Sam Lucas, following the Niagara Movement, became the first black film star in his role as Uncle Tom in the silent film, the *Tom Show*, in 1914. Along with the Harlem Renaissance, Williams' second generation (1919-1943) brought Paul Robeson to the forefront of film as audiences reveled in his performances of black defiance and Hollywood studios typecast Robeson into roles of black men as primitive figures. Sidney Poitier's "selfless and sexless" (114) oeuvre and Academy Award amid the Civil Rights Movement represents a predominant return to the shaman figure in Hollywood in Williams' third generation (1943-1963). Developing along with the Black Power movement, Williams argues the fourth generation (1963-1989) saw Hollywood expand the roles for black men defiantly resisting white society, epitomized in the work of Denzel Washington. In the final generation of the first century (1989-2003), multiculturalism and a new wave of shamans, led by Morgan Freeman, became the predominant frame of black manhood in Hollywood. Throughout each chapter Williams highlights the ways in which black actors were regulated to peripheral roles, and takes particular care to identify the ways in which racial and sexual politics intertwined in ways that restricted the imaginative potential of black masculinity in American film. Even as black actors faced severely

restrictive casting over the first century of American film, Williams labors to identify the ways in which black actors managed to exceed those limitations and challenge overdetermined readings of black actors performances.

In his short conclusion, Williams argues the legacy of restricting black male actors to performing either the shaman or scoundrel has been to the detriment to the American public and continues apace today. As with other professions, the restrictions on African American equal participation in acting “were applied at a cost to society” (168) and “produced public losses” (168). Williams warns of a second century of color coded casting that restricts black male actors to simplified stereotypes and pessimistically notes that at this point there is not a “hint of reason to wait for a regular serving of films led by a black star that saves the day” (172). In order to make space for Hollywood to break from the bracketing of black maleness to performances of deference or defiance the American movie going audience would need to consider such characters on their own terms, “without regard to his color” (174).

Extending classical work on Hollywood stereotypes of blackness, such as Donald Bogle’s *Toms, Coons, Mulattos, Mammies, and Bucks*, Williams deftly adds depth to the study of the central place of the Tom and Buck figures in American film by linking their production and performance with generational social change. While Williams’ work focuses on black male images in melodramatic roles, further efforts could extend his generational analysis by taking into consideration the role of comedic cordoning of black actors and the confinement of black women in the first century of Hollywood filmmaking to develop an even more robust picture. As Hollywood continues apace into its second century of filmmaking, Williams’ generational oscillation provides a valuable analytical framework to continue to understand the ways in which the proliferation of black actors on film are confined by the stereotypical legacy of the industry. In all, *Black Male Frames* would be of use for

those with interest in American film, African American popular culture, and United States racial politics.

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Frayling, Christopher. *The Yellow Peril: Dr. Fu Manchu & The Rise of Chinaphobia*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2014. Print.

It's virtually impossible, as an adult in modern times, to read the popular fiction of late Victorian and Edwardian writers such as Sax Rohmer, 'Sapper,' Edgar Wallace, and H. Rider Haggard without an acute sense of discomfort about their representations of race. While they all spin a rollicking good yarn, I now look on their books as 'guilty pleasures,' the existence of which can only be legitimized (if indeed it can be legitimized) by the historical and national context from which their characters and narratives arose.

Yet these authors' most popular creations have endured long after the collapse of the British Empire – perhaps none more so than Sax Rohmer's influential Chinese super-villain. "Dr. Fu Manchu, progenitor of Ming [the Merciless] and Dr. No, lingers in the popular consciousness more than any

other twentieth-century villain,” Frayling argues, “whether or not the generation of 2000 can actually put a name to him” (15). Nevertheless, the ‘Devil Doctor’s recent centenary (he made his first appearance in 1912) passed with relatively little fanfare. The evolving racial politics of recent decades have all but erased him, in name at least, from library shelves and movie screens. Despite occasional recent cameo appearances, he hasn’t been a leading character in a film spin-off since Peter Sellers’ ill-conceived and poorly received 1980 ‘comedy,’ *The Fiendish Plot of Dr. Fu Manchu*.

Frayling’s approach evinces a sensibility not unlike my own concurrent enjoyment of, and discomfort with, the outpourings of Rohmer and his ilk. His interrogation of the cultural context that engendered and sustained them can be seen as an attempt to exorcise the casual racism absorbed from their ‘yellow peril’ adventures and naively perpetuated in the schoolyard. His analytical perspective is self-consciously that of a white Englishman of a particular generation trying to unpack the racial stereotypes that permeated his upbringing.

Although taking in many topics, Frayling’s book centers on the cultural context from which Sax Rohmer’s work emerged, and the ways in which it contributed in turn to popular representations and understandings of Chinese culture and character. These have, as he makes clear from the outset, little to do with genuine ‘Chineseness,’ being instead an issue of Western fantasies. “The stories were about ‘us’ – they were not really about China at all” (10). The Yellow Peril is, as Frayling characterizes it, primarily an English fantasy, closely connected with the rise and fall of the Empire. It combines fear of the possible outcome should the countless ‘yellow hordes’ be roused to war and (then, as now) more immediate anxieties associated with immigration.

While Frayling’s discursive style often freewheels between topics, his book’s overall arc is roughly as follows. Early chapters outline Rohmer’s biography, traditions of the British music hall in which he first made his

name, and popular English representations of London's Limehouse district (in which the first three *Fu Manchu* novels are set). Frayling's account of the contributions made by other Western nations to the cultural imagination of Chineseness is relatively scant, although he pays occasional lip service to influential international texts.

These include the 1919 American silent film, *Broken Blossoms* (286-87, 310-11), and French novelist Octave Mirbeau's *Torture Garden* (1899, which inspired, we learn, some of the fiendish torments depicted in the 1932 Hollywood film, *The Mask of Fu Manchu*) (306). That these foreign influences remain underdeveloped is, perhaps, a product of Frayling's somewhat autobiographical approach. As surely as England was the center of the Empire, so Frayling's self-identity as a 'cultural product' lies at the center of his meditation on *Fu Manchu* and the Yellow Peril. The 'us' of which he writes is a very English 'us.'

In later chapters, Frayling turns to close analysis of Rohmer's prose, and thence to the ways in which representations of *Fu Manchu* changed through the course of his stories and books (produced intermittently between 1912 and 1959) and the movies they inspired. He notes, in particular, the transformative influence of shifts in British political alignments during two world wars, and the growth of Rohmer's American readership in the 1930s. In a somewhat bizarre illustration of this trajectory, by the final novel, *Emperor Fu Manchu*, this towering embodiment of the 'Yellow Peril' and his fanatical arch nemesis, Nayland Smith of Scotland Yard, become comrades-in-arms against Russian Communism (76)!

Though wide-ranging and erudite, *The Yellow Peril* is not framed as a primarily academic study (in contrast to Michael Diamond's *Lesser Breeds* (2006) or Ruth Mayer's *Serial Fu Manchu* (2013), for instance). Indeed, Frayling's courtship of a broad audience outside the academy is signaled from the outset by his eschewal of the term 'Sinophobia' in favor of the fictive but easily grasped 'Chinaphobia.' In accordance with this

populist approach, Frayling's citations of prior scholarship are usually framed in vague and superficial ways (e.g. "it has been argued that"), and the text flows uninterrupted by call-outs to his nonetheless admirably detailed endnotes. Moreover, lacking a bibliography, *The Yellow Peril* is neither a self-contained handbook nor the ideal facilitator of further research.

What Frayling provides is a consistently engaging overview of representations of 'Chineseness' located within, or deriving from, a specific period of British culture, interspersed with a pleasurable and often illuminating cornucopia of tidbits, relayed in a lively, conversational style, and attractively illustrated in black-and-white and color. While he only partially succeeds in answering the questions laid out in his preface, namely "What were the origins of Yellow Peril thinking? How did they come to be distilled into one fictional character, Fu Manchu? Why has the Yellow Peril proved to be so resilient over the last 150 years?" (16), and a further question posed on the dust jacket, "What do the Chinese themselves make of all this?", is barely addressed at all, the material he presents is seldom less than fascinating.

Despite my various quibbles, *The Yellow Peril* will almost certainly prove both informative and enjoyable for serious cultural historians and pleasure seekers alike. Although unlikely to secure a reputation as the definitive text about either Sax Rohmer, Fu Manchu, or twentieth-century Sinophobia, its value is without question in an era when Rohmer's fiction is no longer widely read but the racial stereotypes it perpetuated and helped to shape retain an insidious grip on popular consciousness.

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Govil, Nitin. *Orienting Hollywood: A Century of Film Culture Between Bombay and Los Angeles*. New York: New York University Press, 2015. Print.

Even books focused on independent and indigenous film acknowledge the impact of Hollywood films as a globalizing force that overshadows most of its international/independent counterparts yet Hollywood films are a small fraction of India's massive annual box office (e.g., 3-8% until recently) (Govil 6). Nitin Govil's work argues that Hollywood and Bollywood (colloquially) are constituted in actuality and in the imaginary in part through a history of exchanges. Although both industries have place-specific names they surpass simplistic constructs of place and space. Govil contends, "At the heart of this study is what happens when one industry takes from another and how this exchange is both transactional and constitutive" (191). Govil posits a multilevel and multidirectional interrelationship between the two through an ongoing history of narrative, ideological, interpersonal, social, cultural, and economic exchanges.

Govil uses archival, interview, political economy, discourse, and textual analysis to consciously disarticulate "the classic text-industry-audience triad that has structured much media studies inquiry" (35). This "text-industry-audience triad" perhaps references popular culture theorists like John Fiske who have promoted tri-level analysis methods. While I appreciate the value of triad/tri-level approaches, I applaud Govil's extending of the circuit of inquiry into political economy (e.g., how (post)colonial business relations, post-independence India's legal context and global forces are influenced by the film industries as they also shape them).

The book frames the relationship of exchange between Bollywood and Hollywood in four interconnected chapters with different topics bookended by an introduction and conclusion. The introduction provides historical and cultural context and lays out the structure of the book.

Govil's introduction juxtaposes the origins of each country's film industry, reflecting how Bollywood, thanks to protectionist post-independence laws, escaped Hollywood's expectation of it as a secondary, exotic, Orientalized other instead growing into a dominant cultural force. Chapter 1, Framing the Copy Hollywood, questions whether the US's work to police film piracy in India is not as much to support Bollywood as it is to make India dependent on the West. Govil also challenges the view of Bollywood as a recycler of Hollywood film. Govil argues, "Hollywood is one of the many ingredients in the spicy mixture of the 'masala' film" (70). For instance, Govil notes how the Indian film *Kaante* uses the basic narrative of the US film *Reservoir Dogs* to develop its own culturally specific content relating to Indian identity and familial obligations. Govil argues that underlying charges of unauthorized recycling is Hollywood's faulty assertion of their own originality that then positions Bollywood as a faded copy. This echoes US media critics like Brent Lang who challenge Hollywood's assertions of originality in light of its self-destructive love affair with film sequels and formulaic filmmaking.

In Chapter 2, Managing Exchange, Govil discusses India's current investments in US film and media companies. Govil discusses how historically, after India achieved independence in 1947, it enacted laws blocking Hollywood from repatriating most of their profits. As a result Hollywood initiated some its first partnerships (e.g., foreign co-productions, theatre renovation loans, location shooting) as a way to put their profits to work in India. Today the economic exchange includes Hollywood outsourcing its technical and special effects work to India of which Govil argues there is a "execution/creativity divide" (112) whereby Indian digital film artists execute routine and repetitive tasks while American digital film artists execute creative tasks. Postcolonial scholar Radhika Mohanram conceives the colonial relationship as a mind/body divide where colonial Whites represent the mind (i.e., work involving

thought, organization, and administration) while Natives represent the body (i.e., work requiring physical but little or no mental effort).

In Chapter 3, *The Theatre of Influence*, Govil describes the modern cinema multiplex as, “Part sanctuary and part spaceship ... [prioritizing the] design, utility, cleanliness, order, and rationality ... that are supposed to be absent in the chaotic world of everyday life in the Global South” (116). The multiplex reifies class and caste divisions in modern India at the same time that it shields patrons from harsh social realities. The multiplex has been allowed to thrive due to tax and similar relief schemes offered to multiplex developers by the government just as earlier government policies that blocked the repatriation of Hollywood profits helped with loans to renovate theatres. Govil begs the question of what will happen to the multiplex when these relief schemes run out.

In Chapter 4, *Economies of Devotion*, Govil begins by noting that early Indian filmmakers sought Hollywood experience while today Hollywood pursues Bollywood. Govil counters the argument of early US critics who deemed Bollywood *the Hindu Hollywood* noting, “Bombay cinema opened up a fluid linguistic space that only partially reproduced the contentious Hindu-Muslim politics of [the 1940’s]” (171). This argument is intriguing and could use more support. Interestingly, India’s caste system was created by and for Hindu elites and film critic Rachel Dwyer notes that Bollywood film frequently depicts caste differences negatively but does not use caste language (given various explanations) leading many in the urban middle class to say that caste differences are unimportant. However, almost all of the new middle class comes from the three upper caste groups despite being a small portion of the population. This section does effectively address Hollywood’s (and the US’s) racism towards Indians and Indo-Americans while Govil notes how in post-WWII US film writers who criticized Hollywood’s social hierarchy would do so by comparing it to India’s caste system (i.e., India’s small elite group of Brahmins ruled Indian society as Hollywood revolved around its small

elite group of stars). This allowed US film writers to criticize the social inequalities of Hollywood while also avoiding using Marxist vocabulary (e.g., bourgeois, wage labor, trade-union) as using such vocabulary could get a writer branded a Communist and thus end their career in the era of Senator Joseph McCarthy.

Ultimately, Nitin Govil's book succeeds by contextualizing individual case studies within an overarching discussion of the social, cultural, global, legal, and economic forces surrounding both Hollywood and Bollywood. This book will appeal to senior undergraduates and graduate students as well as current scholars in critical, cultural, communication, and film studies. Additionally this book contains content relevant to those studying the history of cultural representation and exchange as well as political science, and international business as this book speaks to how nation building and global business partnerships take an active role in shaping and strengthening the global film industry.

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Samuels, Ellen. *Fantasies of Identification: Disability, Gender, Race*. New York: New York University Press. 2014. Print.

In her highly thought-provoking book, *Fantasies of Identification*, Ellen Samuels establishes that a crisis of identification emerged in the mid-nineteenth century, and has somehow continued to organize how diversity is interpreted across several disciplines. As the discursive regimes that emerge around such categories of identification as disability, gender and race, develop within a variety of institutional frameworks—not the least of which are turn-of-the-twentieth-century eugenics, racist ideologies, early notions of deviant behavior and an evolving criminal justice system—Samuels’s subject matter is bound to an exploration of the controversial. How one comes to understand the *other* and the *differences* that such an other may present, can be a contentious area of research; yet Samuels treats it with sensitivity, seemingly taking into consideration the controversial subject matter, while still managing to deliver a striking critique of how knowledge of classifications is created, affirmed and maintained.

For Samuels, a discourse emerges that deals directly with this identification crisis, engendering a dependence upon fantasy for arriving at conclusions about difference. This discourse, according to Samuels, launches into circulation during the mid-nineteenth century, eventually organizing a broader, and often misinformed, discussion about bodies and identities within the twenty-first-century. As she explains, “*fantasies of identification* seek to definitively identify bodies, to place them in categories delineated by race, gender, or ability status, and then to validate the placement through a verifiable, biological mark of identity” (2).

Of particular relevance to popular culture is chapter three wherein Samuels explores what she refers to as the “disability con” in both American film and television (67). Samuels notes that “these elaborate filmic portrayals of ‘real’ and ‘fake’ disability, which seem to proliferate

at times of social crises about disability rights and benefits, function to stage or forecast fantasies of disability identification and thus provide a crucial context for understanding modern efforts to define disability and its corresponding legal and economic structures” (67). Exploring this real/fake dynamic through a typology identified by Stephen M. Fjellman (1992), Samuels adopts his “real fake” category to characterize this disability con, or the “masquerade of a non disabled person who deceptively and deliberately performs disability, often for material gain” (70).

Contextualizing her analysis, Samuels addresses this disability con in both the turn to the twentieth century film industry, as well as examples of this phenomenon in contemporary film. In the former, Samuels focuses on the 1898 Thomas Edison short film titled *The Fake Beggar*. In this less than 60-second film, two presumably disabled males, one an adult and the other a child, are soliciting money from passersby on the street. The adult, wearing a sign that reads, “HELP the BLIND,” is meant to be this fake beggar posing as blind for profit, while the child is actually a real above-the-knee amputee. As an individual drops a coin in the area of the disabled adult, the supposed blind man reaches out to gather the money and is spotted by a police officer—the implication being that the blind adult would not be able to locate the money without the sense of sight. The adult then flees on foot, while, in what Samuels views as a peculiar aberration, the amputee is intentionally removed from the scene and vanishes from the remainder of the film. It is both this amputee’s presence and sudden absence that Samuels notes as provocative. Showcasing the complexities of this real/fake dynamic, Samuels describes how the film involves both real and fake disabilities—neither of which are completely independent of each other, but instead complementary in the service of conveying disability to audiences. That is, the real con is depicted as fake only when juxtaposed with the real disabled, and moreover projected as a con only in the sudden disappearance of this child that is in fact disabled.

When addressing the instances of the disability con within contemporary film, Samuels seems to suggest that the use of this trope was associated with a political pushback against sociological gains accrued through President Lyndon B. Johnson's social reforms. Indeed Samuels notes that there was a pronounced moratorium on the use of the disability con in film and television for some seventy years into the early 1980s and up to the present that began with President Ronald Regan's informal repeals of the social benefits legislatively secured for the disabled during the 1960s. Surveying such movies as *Trading Places* (1983), *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* (1988), *The Usual Suspects* (1995), and *Confidence Man* (2001), Samuels outlines how the depictions of the disabled provide informative case studies in the fantasies of identification. Although the organizing of discursive regimes around gender and race—two topics that are addressed in detail throughout the rest of the book—are certainly important and interesting, especially in terms of their intertextuality, this chapter that deals with the intersection between the entertainment industry and how disability is depicted on screen, is particularly germane to the study of popular culture. Indeed, Samuels's exploration of these two topics may be one of the first critical analyses to address the entertainment industry and disability in tandem.

This is a well-researched text; incredibly thorough allowing room for the discussion of some of the most minor of details. Thus, this is a must read for any student of the body politic, regardless of foci in race, class, gender, disability, or even sexuality. As the overall topic of how the reality of both social and natural scientific discourses are cloaked in fantasy, Samuels's work is of the utmost importance in revisiting the discussion of inequality as it relates to diversity.

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Larsen, Darl. *A Book about the Film Monty Python and the Holy Grail: All the References from African Swallows to Zoot*. Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield, 2015. Print

Monty Python and the Holy Grail is an ingenious film that continues to influence audiences. At its core, the film is an experiment in pastiche and sketch comedy from the famed British troupe (*Monty*). Despite the popularity of Python's work, a skeptic might ask about the utility of an annotated, 578-page tome about the movie. What can such a study reveal?

Darl Larsen has mined the breadth of Python's influence with previous work on the intertextual relationships between Shakespeare, the Renaissance, and Python's *Flying Circus*. In many ways, a book about *Holy Grail* is a natural scholarly segue. With this latest work, Larsen sets up the film as a text worthy of study due to the multiple worlds that it primarily converses with: the Middle Ages, Arthurian literature, and contemporary British culture at the time of the film's production. He has created a Python wiki full of referents that traverse these worlds with careful and methodical extrapolations that are deeply anchored in academic scholarship on the medieval literature, Arthur, Arthuriana, film studies, and more. Few components of the film are left unexamined whether it is a line of dialogue, titles, end credits, scenic locations, props, or camera directions. Larsen unpacks these artifacts with such a refined critical edge that the reader is left impressed even by the occasional minutiae that such an effort produces in the book.

The book is organized as an annotated screenplay, so it progresses in a linear mode in conjunction with the movie. The chapters are divided according to the scenes. The layout is one of the most appealing components of the work. It is not imperative that it be read orderly from start to finish. In fact, one of the best ways to experience the content is by jumping to favorite or memorable scenes; however, Larsen has been careful to provide a rich introduction explaining his methodological

choices and even provides a legend for quick reference to abbreviations contained in the chapters. It would be wise, at a minimum, to start at the beginning before skipping throughout the text. Another intriguing idea is to view scenes or the entire movie with the option to pause and turn the book into an on-demand cinematic docent.

Experiencing comedy from Monty Python can be overwhelming. Viewers can get lost in the sheer speed of the dialogue and miss the depth of a joke or gag. Larsen's strongest moments from the book occur when he patiently unpacks the most innocuous details. For example, the opening credits sequence from the movie contains a number of referents with names such as "Kate Hepburn" and "Gary Cooper" as noted crewmembers. A typical audience assumption is that the Python troupe is merely seeking anecdotal laughs from such name associations to famous celebrities. The truth, as Larsen points out, is that these individuals are real people not fictitious attempts to generate laughs. This truth might read as trivial, but it firmly entrenches the work of Python as more problematic than at first glance. In other words, nothing can be taken at face value.

Another example would be from Scene Four ("Bring Out Your Dead"). Set during a Yellow Plague-inflicted village around 664, this famous scene contains numerous quotable lines of dialogue as when the Cart Driver (Eric Idle) calls for anyone to "bring out their dead" as he hauls diseased bodies away. Not all of the bodies are completely dead yet and an argument ensues between the Cart Driver and two townspeople, one trying to get rid of the second who may not be dead yet, but "will be very soon." The Cart Driver responds by exclaiming, "I can't take him like that. It's against regulations." While this is undoubtedly an oft-quoted funny scene, Larsen directs us towards deeper connectives by tracking guild membership regulations and guidelines for trades and professions documented as early as 1196. In addition, the line is also interpreted as a riposte towards the labor union movement strikes in Britain from 1968-1979 where work stoppages and reduced delivery services were rampant.

Scene Six (“The Black Knight”) is arguably the most recognized sketch from the Python canon. King Arthur approaches a bridge protected by The Black Knight. Refusing to join Arthur or let him pass, the Knight engages in combat, resulting in the loss of his arms and legs. Moving amongst the hilarious dialogue (ex: “Just a flesh wound”), Larsen discovers insightful links to Shakespeare, the politics of Vietnam violence, and even Bugs Bunny cartoons.

Holy Grail’s episodic narrative structure makes the film read as experimental in form. The film parodies the cinematic experimentation of the French New Wave as well as the Italian Realists. Larsen meticulously frames an argument by highlighting Python’s filmic narrative and aesthetic conventions and placing them in conversation with the work of Godard, Antonioni, and Polanski, amongst others of the era. This element is central to understanding *Holy Grail’s* role as a text worthy of analysis and under-appreciated in film history.

Studying humor can be a precarious enterprise. Whether explained through back story or not, once humor is decontextualized, it loses some of its purity. For example, once learning that throwing cows and chickens over castle walls was a common occurrence in historical battles, one finds the ending of Scene Two (“Coconuts and Swallows”) less of an experiment in improvisational comedy, a reputation Python has accrued. The annotations from the book demystify a kind of Python comedic innocence. The veil is removed.

That being said, the annotations and connectives in the book question whether *Holy Grail* is a medieval film or a film made mediievally? Larsen has produced a tremendous resource that vigorously pinpoints the reflective nature of the movie. It converses with other Python productions, but more importantly, it provides a rich lens to examine historical, cultural, and political intersections and divergences. The casual or avid Python fan might be turned off by such divergences. Some fans, for example, don’t care for supplemental components that expand a text’s

universe. The reaction from fandom culture to the tenor of a book like this would be undoubtedly mixed. That said, faculty of courses in literature or film studies could easily utilize the resources contained in the book. Because the annotations often link to political situations and figures of the 1970s, instructors in history or political science might also find the book an insightful supplementary tool. As an academic tool, the book could easily appeal to instructors and students across multiple disciplines.

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Jones, Norma and Bob Batchelor, eds. *Aging Heroes: Growing Old in Popular Culture*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015. Print.

Aging Heroes: Growing Old in Popular Culture makes theory accessible while maintaining the complexity of the theories discussed. This book applies a wide variety of theoretical frameworks to aging in popular culture, further contributing to its versatility. Each chapter provides an overview of the theories used, drawing from fields such as philosophy, folklore, and communications studies, before delving into

examples from popular culture. While asking how aging heroes are represented in popular culture, the text simultaneously asks how these popular representations of aging impact the way we view and interact with an increasing aging population. This book challenges our perceptions and assumptions about what it means to grow old by highlighting the complexity of aging and examining multidimensional characters who age with dignity, succeed at heroic quests, and challenge aging stereotypes.

The introduction considers the historical and economic effect that the Boomer population has had on popular culture. The central question of this text, how do we define heroes and the heroic in the context of aging, is introduced through Jones' and Batchelor's description of Jeff Bridges as the complicated "newfangled hero," a hero "intricately tied to the aging population that controls and produces mass media" (xviii). While Jones and Batchelor set Bridges up as the consummate hero, each essay in this collection provides a slightly different answer to what heroism means in the context of aging.

The text is divided into four parts; part one, "On the Silver Screen: Aging Heroes in Film Genres," provides a broad overview of aging heroes in film in genres ranging from westerns to action films before considering the off-screen implications of the films analyzed. In chapter one Cynthia J. Miller examines whether the definition of the heroic changes as the hero ages. She contextualizes the modern aging hero with Erik Erikson's social theories of aging where to be heroic is "to live out their days on their own terms" (8). Chapter two considers the effect of aging stereotypes in media on how we communicate with older adults off-screen. Mei-Chen Lin and Paul Haridakis apply communication theory, research on age stereotypes, and research on the impact of media portrayals on identity to representations of aging in Western films, including the lack of older females in such films. Chapter three by Norma Jones provides an overview of Schwarzenegger and Stallone as action heroes, comparing their early works to their current action films. She argues that because "we

see the aging film stars portraying action heroes who are stronger and smarter, and thus defying some aging conventions” these portrayals have a positive impact for off-screen aging (32). In chapter four A. Bowdoin Van Riper considers the intersection of professional space exploration with representations of astronauts in film where the aging astronaut is placed in juxtaposition with a younger crew; each older astronaut dies in space, “find[ing] personal meaning and individual satisfaction in the deaths they choose for themselves” (59).

Part two, “Diversity Concerns: Sexuality, Race, and Gender,” contains five essays on sexuality, race, and gender in aging heroes, addressing diversity among aging heroes within and beyond film. Gust A. Yep, Ryan Lescure, and Jace Allen use queer theory and current representations of aging as a way to consider HBO’s *Behind the Candelabra*’s portrayal of Liberace as a tragic hero in chapter five. They find that the film “both reinforces the stereotype of gay men as hypersexual and challenges the idea that older adults are asexual” (73). In chapter six Dustin Bradley Goltz argues that gay male characters are typically villainous, explaining that “the aging gay male body has been coded with threat, fear, and as a space of danger” (77). However, these villainous characters created a space for a hero whose journey is “less about defeating sinister villains . . . than deconstructing vilifying legacies in order to live, love, and love living” as seen in the film *Beginners* (78). Carlos D. Morrison, Jacqueline Allen Trimble, and Ayoleke D. Okeowo use Judith Butler’s theory of gender as performance to analyze Tyler Perry’s *Madea* as an aging superhero able to connect to both young and old in chapter seven. In chapter eight, Emily S. Kinsky and Amanda Gallagher consider *Maya & Miguel*’s *Abuela Elena* as a superhero in the context of children’s television as an important means of shaping perceptions of the world. Chapter nine considers women growing old in comics, beginning with an overview of the discourse of aging in Western society, aging male

superheroes in comics, and then the lack of aging superheroines in comics before considering older women in successful graphic novels.

“Being a Man? Masculinity and Aging Heroes,” the third part, addresses masculinity in aging heroes. Chapter ten by Patrice M. Buzzanell and Suzy D’Enbeau considers *Mad Men*’s Roger Sterling as a popular culture hero navigating “the tensions that emerge as discourses of masculinity and aging intersect” (132). Nathan Miczo, in chapter eleven, uses social theories of aging to analyze *Kingdom Come* and *Old Man Logan*, arguing that “the crux of the dilemma for both heroes is an internal struggle over who they are and what their role is in a changed world” after the heroes have retired (144). Chapter twelve examines the construction of masculinity and “how the masculinities of an aging man are re-established” in *The Incredibles* (157). In chapter thirteen Guillaume de Syon presents historical research as a context for understanding the trope of the middle-aged male pilot in advertising.

Part four, “Real to Reel: Individuals Aging on and off the Screen,” examines individuals aging within their roles as well as in real life; echoing the introduction’s assessment of Jeff Bridges. Barbara Cook Overton, Athena du Pré, and Loretta L. Pecchioni consider women’s sexuality on and off screen primarily through their analysis of Helen Mirren in films such as *Red*, *Shadow Boxer*, and *Love Ranch* in chapter fourteen. Chapter fifteen by Anna Thompson Hajdik presents Peter O’Toole as an aging hero on and off screen by considering two films alongside his live talk show appearances. Kathleen Turner considers Betty White’s role as a hero, examining criticism of her performances as indicative of sexism and ageism alongside noncanonical texts that transform Betty White’s shows and characters in chapter sixteen. Chapter seventeen uses the work of Lévi-Straus and Dick Hebdige to consider the use of bricolage in Danny Trejo’s work in film through which Trejo “reinvented the dynamics of aging within performance” (222).

Because of its interdisciplinary approach as well as the straight forward accessible writing in each essay, this text would be a valuable addition to any undergraduate course in popular culture or film. However, the text is also valuable for a more sophisticated audience interested in aging in popular culture, film studies, popular culture studies, or the study of heroes. Because of its interdisciplinary approach, *Aging Heroes* is able to engage with multiple representations of aging, moving away from outdated stereotypes and considering experiences of aging from a variety of cultural backgrounds in order to highlight the complexity of aging making *Aging Heroes* an invaluable text for examining perceptions of aging in popular culture.

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Nilsen, Sarah, and Sarah E. Turner, eds. *The Colorblind Screen: Television in Post-Racial America*. New York: New York University Press, 2014. Print.

With media coverage of demonstrations across the United States publicizing police brutality, black poverty, and racial biases against African Americans, *The Colorblind Screen* is a timely book. By examining various topics ranging from iconic figures to television shows to audiences' reception of televisual media, this edited collection provides a critical lens to better understand not only how media frame race and reinforce a myth of a post-racial society, but also how we collectively communicate a colorblind rhetoric that obscures racism and white privilege in America.

The first three chapters introduce readers to essential theoretical conceptualizations of colorblindness and post-racialism. In Chapter One, Ashley Doane offers a clear theoretical framework of the “colorblind racial ideology” (17), exploring how society and media downplay racial inequalities and obscure systematic racism while commodifying racial difference. In Chapter Two, Roopali Mukherjee investigates how Obama’s 2008 presidential win became evidence for a colorblind society, a “marker of a new post-racial America” (43). As Mukherjee maintains, while the post-race rhetoric of “no more excuses” appears positive, it does a disservice to racial reform by reinforcing the myth that racism is a thing of the past. In Chapter Three, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva and Austin Ashe examine “colorblind racism” in multiple arenas, identifying key elements of New Racism in America, including “the increasingly *covert* nature of racial discourse and racial practices” (60). They illustrate the seeming invisibility of racial inequality, discussing covert discriminatory housing practices and how colorblind racism is reproduced through everyday talk and in television.

Authors in the next four chapters provide in-depth examples of post-racial rhetorics in pop culture. In Chapter Four, Janice Peck looks at how Oprah Winfrey engaged in “racial breach management strategies” (92), constructing herself as an exemplar of “racial transcendence” to appeal to white, middle-class audiences. Peck maintains that, while Winfrey’s message of individual responsibility appears to be empowering, her self-help rhetoric is problematic as it reproduces an “underclass ideology” that locates black poverty as an individual, moral failure rather than a larger component of systematic racism. In Chapter Five, Leonard and Bruce Lee Hazelwood explore how the denial of racism in sports has helped to maintain “a post-racial fantasy” (116), analyzing racial discourses surrounding the 2011 NBA Lockout as well as LeBron James’ move from the Cavaliers to the Heat. In both cases, the authors focus on how media simultaneously employed colorblind rhetoric, often appealing to white

paternalism that enforced racist language, and evoked the trope of the angry black man.

In Chapter Six, Evelyn Alsultany identifies various “representational strategies” used by writers and producers of television dramas such as *24* and *Sleeper Cell* to construct more complex portrayals of Arabs and Muslims (144). However, Alsultany argues that while these representations seemingly challenge stereotypes, they actually perpetuate the good/bad Muslim binary by continuously locating Arab and Muslim characters within the context of terrorism. In Chapter Seven, Dina Ibrahim draws upon cultivation theory to investigate audience reactions to episodes of *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, *Weeds*, and *The Daily Show* with humorous storylines related to Arabs and Muslims. Using focus groups, Ibrahim finds distinct and contrasting interpretations of the shows’ content by Arab and/or Muslim audiences and by non-Arab, non-Muslim audiences

The next three chapters problematize popular television’s perpetuation of colorblind ideologies. In Chapter Eight, Sarah Nilsen argues that *Mad Men*’s construction of the civil rights movement as “prosthetic memories” (198) preserves a dominant narrative of racial actualization. Nilsen examines how the show centralizes whiteness and white characters by using African American characters as politically correct, one-dimensional narrative devices. In Chapter Nine, C. Richard King explores the ideology of colorblindness by observing an online discussion board of a leading white nationalist website. King’s findings offer insight into how white supremacists watch and interpret television, with discussants often lamenting “Jewish control, the overt antiwhite/pro-black biases of the medium, the fundamental dangers of race mixing, the breakdown of tradition, and the corruption of youth” (233).

In Chapter Ten, Sarah E. Turner points to the new trope of the black female best friend in interracial buddy films and television, specifically analyzing two Disney Channel television shows, *Shake It Up*, *Chicago* and *Good Luck Charlie*. Turner problematizes these racial representations and

their superficial inclusion of racial diversity, arguing that Disney engages in a new colorblind racism by “presenting diversity in such a way as to reify the position and privilege of white culture and the white cast members” (239).

The book concludes with three chapters focusing on representations of interracial relationships. In Chapter Eleven, Shilpa Davé investigates the representation of South Asian American arranged marriages in *The Simpsons*, *The Office*, and *Miss Match*. Davé asserts that while arranged marriages have been portrayed in stark contrast to American ideals of love and marriage, contemporary American match making practices and the concept of compatibility have allowed for a convergence of “two traditionally divergent marriage philosophies” (280). In Chapter Twelve, Philip A. Kretsedemas extends the concept of colorblindness and proposes a theory of “culture-blindness,” (287) one that focuses on discourses that minimize minority cultural identities and erase cultural difference. He interviews fans of the television series *Ugly Betty*, exploring how different ethnic and racial viewers evoke culture blind discourses to make sense of Latino identities and culture in media. In Chapter Thirteen, Jinny Huh analyzes racial passing in *Battlestar Galactica*. While the show does not directly address issues of race, Huh maintains that the *Battlestar Galactica*’s Cylons or humanoid cyborgs function allegorically, representing racially coded characters that communicate anxieties of cross-racial mixing in a post-racial society.

Ultimately, the strength of *The Colorblind Screen* lies in the theoretical groundings, with each chapter as a clear case study that draws from critical whiteness studies to examine television’s role in articulating, reinforcing, and sometimes resisting colorblind ideologies. Well suited for academics and graduate classrooms, the volume is a valuable resource for media studies, popular culture, and critical race scholars alike.

By interrogating the invisibility of post-racial rhetorics and white privilege in television, the collection extends critical conversations of mediated representations of racial diversity, helping readers to reexamine how we talk about and see race in a supposed colorblind world.

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Mittell, Jason. *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling*. New York: NYU Press, 2015. Print.

Popular culture studies have long focused their analysis on the cultural impact of and representation by mediated texts. Jason Mittell's *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling* switches the emphasis and concentrates on how television stories are told. He particularly gives attention to American prime time scripted serial programming with a focus on those produced within the past two decades. In this, the cultural impact is not ignored but rather seen as an indirect influence of television's narrative form. Mittell uses a poetic approach that seeks to ask the question of "how a text means" (i.e., how it works) rather than "what it means" (5, 339).

Mittell references other scholars, including David Bordwell's *Historical Poetics of Cinema* (1989) and Robert Allen's reader-oriented poetics found within *Speaking of Soap Operas* (1985). These approaches help shape Mittell's analytic framework, which considers historical, cognitive, and viewer reception poetics. These poetics emphasize the complexity of television's writing and the demands placed on those who orchestrate individual episodes and series overtime. Actors' lives and schedules must be written around; writers regularly deal with multiple real life scenarios that conflict with television production all while maintaining the continuity of the television narrative. Charisma of certain villains must

be carefully crafted as to not give away future plot developments. Multiple plot lines must also be woven throughout a series in order to create suspense and discussion among fans. Yet, the writing must create intentional emotional responses of its viewers (e.g., the generation of sudden abandonment due to an episode's sudden ending) while ensuring that the audience can manage the information within a specific episode, season, and series overall. Mittell's poetics considers how a media text achieves success (e.g., how it works) in order to explain what it says about the world (225).

For Mittell, how viewers ultimately engage with a television story is perhaps the most telling of a series' success. Viewer practices within today's digital era are considered within *Complex TV*. From a technological perspective, the ability to digitally record and save an episode for future viewing helps to "raise the cultural value of television programming to be similar to playing a book, musical album, or film on a shelf" (37). Additionally, economic engagement is acknowledged in the reward of receiving bonus features only available through product purchase (322). Fandom is also seen in community via various online social media platforms as viewers discuss scenarios and questions left unresolved (65). This active and relational participation in media consumption is touted to be a sign of quality television (211) influencing how television stories are told overtime, which indirectly influences culture, as well (127).

This book offers a commanding understanding of the process of television writing and development. Mittell writes in an instructive yet informal manner so that the seasoned critic and the novice media scholar can appreciate the text. Perhaps this is best seen in his juxtaposition of in-depth analysis with basic and short synopses of modern television series to illustrate his points. Mittell is not shy in pointing out that he is a fan of television and has his favorites, yet he is careful to also reference the series he is not as fond. Readers of *Complex TV* will notice regular

references to *Lost*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Seinfeld*, *Battlestar Galactica*, *The West Wing*, *24*, and *Alias* to name a few.

Mittell argues that the approach of *Complex TV* is still quite rare outside of media effects research. He pushes for an expansion of scholarship concerning analysis of how a media text works, which includes contextualizing the development and shifts of technology, the industry, and audience reception during the 1990s and 2000s (6). Mittell posits that such consideration and future analysis will allow the poetics he describes throughout the book to flourish and ultimately encourage the academy to “understand the cultural facets of television more fully” (164). In true serial television fashion, Mittell closes his book with the phrase “to be continued” (353), and perhaps it is also fitting for such a review of television storytelling poetics. While this text deserves a high rating for its clarity, application, and furtherance of television analysis, in addition to its ability to push television scholars to consider new avenues of analysis while capturing the novice attention of those who are less familiar with television criticism, the response to and use of Mittell’s refined poetics approach by the greater academy is hopefully – “to be continued.”

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Bordwell, David. “Historical Poetics of Cinema.” *1946- The Cinematic Text: Methods and Approaches*. Ed. Barton R. Palmer. New York: AMS Press, 1989. 369-398. Print.

Wilcox, Rhonda V., Tanya R. Cochran, Cynthia Masson, and David Lavery, eds. *Reading Joss Whedon*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2014. Print.

Reading Joss Whedon is not simply for those interested in Whedon or those interested in popular culture. It is an exemplar of how scholars can tackle the multi-variant works of one creator in our polymediated age. The editors did a remarkable job collecting essays that interrogate diverse topics. Scholars from disciplines as far afield as ethics, feminism, gender, law, narrative, media ecology, popular culture, television production, and others, will find invaluable content here. The topically organized second table of contents is a great resource for researchers.

David Kociemba begins at the beginning with *Buffy the Vampire Slayer's* (*BtVS*) first season, investigating thematic foreshadowing that comes to mark the mythology that carries the series through its seven seasons, including gender performance, identity, and individual change. Scholars interested in narrative theory and serialized mythology will find a close reading rewarding, particularly the Cordelia Chase and Xander Harris arcs that foreshadow Spike and Angelus' evolutions from spaces of liminality to heroic later in the series.

For scholars intrigued with narrative and discourse, the chapters by Janet Halfyard and Ananya Mukherjea provide thought-provoking analyses. Utilizing the myths of Orpheus and Eurydice, Halfyard examines the paradox of Buffy's identity, suggesting she is simultaneously the hero sent to save the damsel and damsel to be saved. Examining Buffy's duality, Halfyard disrupts Joseph Campbell's hero's journey monomyth. Similarly, Mukherjea employs the Shakti Hindi myth to analyze discourses of duality at play in *BtVS*, examining how Whedon's use of metaphor undermines the dichotomies of good/evil, masculine/feminine, animal/human, rational/emotional, and wild/civilized. This leads

characters to an understanding of “both-and” as they struggle to live authentically on the Hellmouth.

The chapters by Rhonda Wilcox and Richard Albright will be of particular interest to communication scholars. Choice and connection are themes of Wilcox’s analysis of the *BtVS* episode “Conversations with Dead People.” Wilcox interrogates aloneness and solitude in season seven, showing how interpersonal communication in “Conversations” provides a necessary push leading to the promise of power sharing, realized in the series’ penultimate episode. Relatedly, Albright tackles the issue of conversational narration within episodes, comparing Faith’s bold storytelling to Buffy’s sudden incapacity to verbalize – a new dilemma for her. Cordelia’s curtness is linked to Oz’s succinct, meaningful statements; both analyzed as (very) short narratives. Conversely, she shows how the verbose Xander uses silence as power in “The Zeppo.”

Moving from *BtVS* to *Angel*, Stacey Abbott delves into Whedon’s cinematic style, including his penchant for long steadicam shots, and how he works around his disdain for over the shoulder character shots. Her breakdown of his treatment in the *Angel* episode “Waiting in the Wings” illustrates how he creates an emotional aesthetic, particularly for the Wesley-Fred-Gunn love triangle. This chapter is especially revelatory for scholars interested in how production techniques impact storytelling.

Cynthia Masson’s exploration of existential crisis shines light on one of the most despised *Angel* episodes, “The Girl in Question.” She demonstrates how Spike and Angel are stuck remembering the same events and making the same choices about Buffy and their arch-nemesis, The Immortal. As such, they are captives in a self-created hell, an exceptional analysis for scholars grappling with identity and character development, connecting the episode to Sartre’s *No Exit* and Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*.

The chapters by Matthew Pateman, Alyson Buckman, and Elizabeth Rambo move us out of the “Buffyverse” and into space with *Firefly*.

Pateman looks at the problematic relationship between Whedon and Fox over *Firefly*, the sci-fi/western mash-up. In an interwoven story, Pateman explores how Whedon's combination of two genres, financial factors, its "two pilots," and the franchise concept led to the series' rapid demise. This chapter serves as a case study for anyone interested in the external and economic pressures that influence how television gets created.

Using Bakhtinian theory, Buckman interrogates the sci-fi and western motifs of *Firefly* through a chronotopian analysis of space and time: how each genre stresses and expresses movement and immobility within characters, narratives, and settings. His analysis of Mal Reynolds' development from defeated rebel to anti-hero is a particularly useful exemplar of a chronotopic character analysis, valuable for those interested in identity and dialectics. For scholars interested in the darker side of communication and identity, Rambo examines the textual, intertextual, and extratextual theme of alienation in "The Message," *Firefly's* final episode. She especially considers how communication creates and maintains alienation.

The next chapters focus on Whedon's *Dollhouse*, and will be especially interesting for feminist and gender identity scholars. Using a feminist reading of Ovid, Dale Koontz explores how mirrors, in part a metaphor for the male gaze, fragment/reflect/refract the multiple and singular identities of the "dolls," philosophically exploring what makes a person "a person." Sharon Sutherland and Sarah Swan examine the dolls' identit(ies) from a legal perspective. For scholars interested in social justice and gender equity, whether the dolls have rights is an important question, reflecting the machinations and victimization of sex trafficking, prostitution, and slavery.

Victoria Willis' chapter on *Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog* examines humanism and posthumanism in the Web-based series. Media ecology scholars will be intrigued as she unpacks the audience's posthumanism as they technologically extend themselves through their computers. For the

philosophically minded, she disassembles the hero/superhero, human/posthuman characters of Hammer and Horrible, using Penny as the exemplar of humanism that succumbs to inevitable posthumanity.

Those interested leadership will appreciate Marni Stanley's chapter on the Season Eight comic continuation of *BtVS*, where Buffy finds herself in an upside-down world. No longer *the* Slayer, Buffy is the leader of 1,800 slayers, a position for which she is unequipped. Stanley follows Buffy as she learns how to reconnect, to become a leader, and how to make authentic good faith choices that include existential self-regard and regard for others.

Kristopher Woofter and Ensley Guffey provide socio-historical analyses of Whedon's movies *The Cabin in the Woods* and *The Avengers*, respectively, putting the horror and hero genres in perspective. Using *Cabin's* multi-leveled narrative, Woofter challenges viewers to understand our complicities as audience members that help create both the horror of "reality television" and torture porn. Guffey interrogates the narrative of *The Avengers*. Focusing on the relationship between Captain America and Iron Man, Guffey provides a stimulating historical-cultural answer for why *The Avengers* worked as a hero movie in our age, an age supposedly done with heroes.

Chapters by Lorna Jowett, and Douglass Rabb and Micheal Richardson, will be of particular interest to narrative writers, autoethnographers, and storytellers. Jowett weaves a portrait of how Whedon utilizes flashback as narration to fill in character backstories, including the use of memory to explore Rupert Giles' "Ripper" identity, and how flashbacks flesh out the relationships between Angel, Spike, and Darla. Similarly, Rabb and Richardson explore memory in combination with narrative and narrative ethics, examining moral choice imagination, as characters struggle to become who they will be.

Jeffrey Bussolini navigates Whedon's understandings of the mind and its relationship to identity, examining Spike and Riley's narratives to

understand how identity and freedom of choice are affected by the technological manipulations of a secret government agency. Similarly, Gregory Erickson explores the interconnections between body and the soul, traversing ontological, theological, orthodox, experiential, and posthuman paradigms and how each interrogates what it means to be human. Likewise, Schultz explores how we, male or female, attempt to create our gendered identities within the contours of societal power structures and cultural discourses. These chapters are especially useful for those interested in discourse, power, and technology (and Foucault).

Tanya Cochran presents a living history of Whedon studies, narrating the academic timeline of Whedon studies, from the founding of *Slayage: The Journal of Buffy Studies*, to edited collections, to ongoing conferences. It is an exemplar of how well personal narrative and pop culture are weaved together here to tell a good story.

This review vastly understates the value of *Reading Joss Whedon*. It scratches the surface of the text, and due to space constraints, I left some authors out. The text is invaluable for Whedon scholars. However, *Reading Joss Whedon* is not simply valuable for Whedon “acafans.” It stands as an exemplar for popular culture studies, showing intertextualities and interconnectedness by which scholars from different disciplines can interrogate pop culture artifacts, no matter the medium and no matter the topic.

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Dunn, Jennifer C., Jimmie Manning, and Danielle M. Stern, eds. *Lucky Strikes and a Three Martini Lunch : Thinking About Television's Mad Men*, 2nd ed. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2015. Print.

After seven seasons, AMC's *Mad Men* concluded with a jeans-clad Don Draper, a ding, and an iconic American ditty that series creator Matthew Weiner called "the greatest ad ever made" (Lee). *Mad Men*'s writers consistently chose for Don to create fictitious ad campaigns for real brands, which makes the decision to have him dream up the actual "I'd Like to Buy the World a Coke" campaign a novel one—the show's most deliberate, breaking-the-fourth-wall-esque parallel between the ad world of *Mad Men* and the historic reality it was designed to reflect. Such keen connections—between fiction and material history, past and present—are the enterprise of the second edition of *Lucky Strikes and a Three Martini Lunch: Thinking about Television's Mad Men*.

Lucky Strikes' second edition joins the ranks of several other *Mad Men*-themed edited collections, but stands apart as the most comprehensive examination of the *Mad Men* universe to date, as it integrates material from all seven seasons and accounts for the myriad ways fans and academics are invited to engage with *Mad Men* as more than just a television show (see Edgerton; Carveth; Goodlad, Kaganovsky, and Rushing; and Stoddart). As well, the collection is methodologically diverse: audience research; autoethnography; critical, feminist, and cultural studies approaches to media; historical and rhetorical analyses are among the methods represented. The editors usefully organized the content of the collection thematically, though certain motifs like nostalgia, identity, consumption, the spirit of the white nuclear family, (un)happiness, and (dis)satisfaction course through the whole book.

The first section focuses on the American Dream's transition from an ideal of economic comfort to a life of consumption, with attention to the

concomitant feelings of isolation, indifference and inadequacy exemplified by *Mad Men* in Michael Dennis and Adrienne Kunkel's chapter. This section emphasizes the complex role nostalgia plays both in the lives of the characters and as the show's primary source of audience intrigue as interrogated by both Bob Batchelor's and Ann Ciasullo's chapters, as well as a means for making sense of our own identities as Jimmie Manning discusses. Section two traces the shift in masculine identity and authenticity in the midst of political strife and social upheaval, pointing to the ways in which *Mad Men* serves as a springboard for understanding 50 years' worth of cultural constructions of gender and identity, and the complex intersection of race, gender, and sexuality. Daniel Strasser and Daniel Lair's chapter connects the "masculinity-in-crisis" narratives of contemporary *Mad Men* and the popular 1955 novel *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, while Stephanie Young's chapter elicits the show's "white gaze," and Danielle Stern interrogates *Mad Men*'s role in perpetuating the television industry's "primetime closet."

Building crucial connections between *Mad Men* and vintage media, including Betty Friedan's *The Feminist Mystique*, section three engages the lives of 1960s women and national assumptions about postwar femininity. Adrian Jones' chapter is "All About Betty" and the construction, role, and realities of the white suburban housewife. Others in this section examine the multifaceted characters of Joan and Peggy—such as tensions around their femininity and sexuality and their politically productive narratives, which Katherine Lehman assesses, and what socialization, power, and interpersonal factors at play in their narratives illuminate about bonds between working women as Stephanie Young and Jennifer Dunn analyze. Spotlighting the relationship between consumption and culture, section four is all about art and garbage. In Kathleen Vandenberg's chapter, *Mad Men* the show takes a back seat as she traces the transition in 1960s culture from conformity to rebellion in ways both stimulated by and reflected in advertising, such as in Volkswagen's

“Think Small” campaign. Ryan Gillespie connects the old and the new by charting the intersections of art and advertising in the first half of the twentieth century culminating in a discussion about a contemporary “nostalgia for the New.” This section ends with Heidi Brevik-Zender’s political-economic examination of how the contemporary fashion industry has capitalized on the timeless “*Mad Men*-esque” style of the 1960s.

The fifth section focuses on *Mad Men*, media, and technology: the ways *Mad Men*’s narrative relays the technological media revolution of the 1960s and contemporary transformations in how televisual media is consumed. Specifically, Bob Batchelor’s second chapter in the collection examines the woven intricacies of narrative and aesthetic in the series, and the place of these in defining the significance of television as a meaningful cultural form. Surveying AMC’s network history as well as the story *Mad Men* tells, M. J. Robinson’s incisive chapter highlights the challenges of advertising in the television industry and how they have evolved over the last 50 years into the transmedia, branding, and financial challenges now associated with what is called “Matrix television.” The final co-authored chapter in this section takes up one aspect of the fandom side of the *Mad Men* universe, offering an analysis of fan’s perceptions of characters on the show and how fan communities construct their stardom.

An exceptional, exciting feature of this collection—and what distinguishes the second edition of *Lucky Strikes* from the first—is the editors’ focus on the productive potential of *Mad Men* as a pedagogical resource. Theirs is the most useful text presently available for teaching the histories, artifacts, industries, and politics of US culture—past and present—through *Mad Men*. In addition to all of the aforementioned analysis of content, the editors include an excellent, new introduction by Peggy O’Neal Ridlen and Jamie Wagman (with Jennifer Dunn) that summarizes all of the collection’s chapters, explains and demonstrates how one might incorporate them into stand-alone lessons, larger units, or entire courses, and even provides supplemental primary and secondary

sources (books, film, art, etc.) for enrichment. The collection also includes a final section comprised of Jennifer Dunn's chapter devoted to teaching feminisms through *Mad Men* and Rebecca Johnson and Jimmie Manning's chapter devoted to pedagogical materials, including select sample syllabi, and engaging, evaluated lesson plans. These resources demonstrate the adaptability of *Lucky Strikes* to many areas of study, such as Art, American Studies, History, Communication, Cultural Studies, Media Studies, and Women's and Gender Studies.

While there are things left unexamined (fan fiction, spirituality, and drug culture are a few that come to mind), the breadth of content and depth of analysis in this collection is certainly commendable. The editors leave room for future editions, perhaps one which puts *Mad Men*'s ad world in conversation with the hip hop and porn industries of the 1970s, the respective topics of two highly anticipated dramas—HBO's *The Deuce* and Netflix's *The Get Down*—which come riding the tide of television's nostalgic turn precipitated by *Mad Men*. However, as a resource for college or high school level educators interested in bringing the “*Mad Men* experience” to bear on teaching topics like the American Dream, happiness, nostalgia, advertising, fashion, identity, feminism, race relations, art, media, and other aspects of culture in their contextual specificity, one can do no better than the second edition of *Lucky Strikes*. Additionally, more so than the other available collections, *Lucky Strikes* is accessible in both prose and theory, making it an engaging and enjoyable read for those outside of the academy as well as in.

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Carveth, Rod, and Robert Arp, eds. *Justified and Philosophy: Shoot First, Think Later*. Chicago: Open Court, 2015. Print.

Justified and Philosophy: Shoot First, Think Later edited by Rod Carveth and Robert Arp is a collection of essays that responds to and grapples with the FX television series *Justified*. The series is based on Elmore Leonard's novels *Pronto* (1993) and *Riding the Rap* (1995), and his short story "Fire in the Hole" (2001). *Justified*, an award-winning series, premiered on FX on March 16, 2010. The story is set in Lexington and the Appalachian

mountain area in eastern Kentucky and tells the tales of a U.S. Marshal, Raylan Givens as he enforces his brand of justice in Harlan County, KY. The show aired for six seasons before coming to an end on April 14, 2015, after this edited collection was published.

The book is divided into six sections, which include chapters from professors of History, English, Philosophy, Rehabilitation, Women and Gender Studies, Political and Social Ethics, Spanish, and Film Production, as well as independent writers, researchers, and counselors. The combination of these minds and their ideas make this a strong example of a book that speaks to fictional popular culture and real world circumstances. The six sections and eighteen chapters—plus introduction and conclusion chapters—cover a wide-range of issues surrounding the characters, stories, and themes in *Justified*. Due to the number of articles, each piece is fairly short and, in some cases, the arguments are not fully fleshed out. Despite the length, each chapter contributes a new spark and interest in the conversation. The editors, and contributors, believe that *Justified* is more than just another Western set in our contemporary world. Its story and characters are not simply examined in black and white terms, but instead of shades of gray. The series “resonates with its audience because, at its core, it’s a series about believable human beings” (viii).

Section I, Vittles ‘n’ Such, starts the conversation by an examination of location, race, and behavior found in *Justified*. Pulling from Ludwig Wittgenstein’s model of “family resemblance” Jon Cotton defines and discusses qualities of “coolness” in his essay “Know Your ABCs (Always Be Cool)” (chapter 1). John R. Fitzpatrick’s examines the how proactive policing influences the characters in the *Justified* and in our everyday lives in “Can Proactive Policing Be Justified?” (chapter 2). Clint Jones’s article, “The Crimes of Old King Coal” (chapter 3), goes beyond representations of Harlan Country on the screen to further probe the coal culture in the Appalachia. “*Justified*’s Message of White Superiority” (chapter 4) by Rod Carveth notes that with the exception of one (Rachel), all of the

African-American characters are “linked to criminal behavior” as “whites are seen as keeping [them] in line” (42). Cynthia Jones writes, “*Justified* is about whether it’s justified to shoot someone,” in her article “*Justified* True Belief” (chapter 5), and how justification is often attached to beliefs (51).

The discussion deepens in Section II, Signs from God, as the contributors discuss the influence of religion within the show. Michael D. Jaworski asks his readers and audiences of *Justified* to pass their own judgments on Boyd Crowder’s near-death experience as a sign from God or a natural occurrence, or perhaps, a little bit of both in “Was Boyd Truly Born Again?” (chapter 6). By employing the ideas of Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, Robert Sirvent and Caleb Action, grapple with Billy’s faith and sanity in “Handling Snakes with Fear and Trembling” (chapter 7).

Section III, Right and Wrong in Harlan County, dives deeper into ideas of justifications and ethics. Christian Cotton called on therapist, Anthony Palazzo in their chapter, “I Did What I Had to Do” (chapter 8), to examine abusive relationships, specifically Ava’s murder of her abusive husband, Bowman. Cotton and Palazzo ask, is there justice in an eye for an eye negotiation? The relationship and tension between Raylan and Boyd is, “one of the main reasons why we keep watching *Justified*,” according to Gerald Browning’s “The Ethical Theories of Raylan and Boyd” (chapter 9) (111). The two men juggle right and wrong showing, “what we do results in who we are” (120). Alexander Dick’s “Justified or Just Making Excuses” (chapter 10), investigates what it means to be “justified” and the relationship justification has to personal responsibility.

While female characters are mentioned throughout the book, Section IV, Harlan’s Feminine Side, narrows the focus by reading the relationships between men and women in *Justified*. Joanna Crosby questions the “male-centric” nature of characters as they emerge from a male dominated writing team and group of directors in her article, “We Are Not Your

Savages” (chapter 11) (133). Cynthia Jones, Sandra Hansmann, Anne Stachura, and Linda English shed light on the violence found in *Justified* in, “Boys Will Be Boys” (chapter 12), expressly violence by men towards women.

Section V, Family Values, studies the role family plays in Harlan County. Paul Zinder looks at the way that fathers have failed to “fulfill the duties of the role, suggesting that traditional Western definitions of masculinity and familial structures are open to question the show’s narrative construction in his chapter, “Failed Patriarchs” (chapter 13) (170). Just as Zinder did, Peter S. Fosl’s “Motherhood and Apple Pie” (chapter 14) examines the breakdown of families and the challenge to flourish in spite of the corrupt world of Harlan County. In “Family Matters in Harland County” (chapter 15) by Gerald Browning, he argues that the “most complicated and compelling relationships in *Justified* are those forged by blood and kin” (193). It is these relationships, along with character motives and fears that propel the story forward.

The final section (VI), Quite the Characters, is perhaps the most pointed section in its examination of specific character traits. One of the editors, Rod Carveth, proposes another motivation for self-preservation: pleasure. In “Pleasure Über Alles” (chapter 16), Carveth explains how pleasure is the only item on Ava’s agenda. Julia Mason demonstrates that Mags will also go to any and all lengths to protect her clan. Motherhood is reexamined through the lens of Stuart Hall in Mason’s chapter, “Mags Bennett—Outlaw Mother” (chapter 17). Aristotelian self-restraint is the topic of Nathan Verbaan and Adam Barkman’s “Raylan Learns to Restrain Himself” (chapter 18). Many of the characters confront Raylan about his inability, and later his ability, to practice self-control.

The conclusion, “Justified Killings?” makes the connection between the “shoot first, ask questions later” mentality that is found in *Justified* and the “controversial—and, at times, shocking” real-life stories including the 2012 shooting and killing of Trayvon Martin (235). While there are

several commonalities and themes throughout the truthful cases in the conclusion and throughout the collection of essays, one element jumps to the forefront: relationships. The relationships between friends, families, spouses, employees, children, and neighbors each play a vital role in the examination and discussion of *Justified*. I would recommend this book to professors in fields of popular culture studies, American studies, and film and media studies as a way to spark conversation in the classroom with the short introductory pieces of this collection. The contributors employ the thoughts and theories of psychoanalysts, psychologists, philosophers, therapists, and theorists. They applied those ideas to shades of gray in *Justified*.

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Johnson, Derek, Derek Kompare and Avi Santo. *Making Media Work: Cultures of Management in the Entertainment Industries*. New York: New York University Press, 2014. Print.

Representations of management in films such as *Office Space* or in television shows such as *30 Rock* are usually of “suits” that oppose the creative talent of those working for them by trying to enforce bureaucratic rules onto innovative employees to meet the demands of advertisers and corporate shareholders. However, the authors of *Making Media Work* argue that this representation is not reality in media management where management is not separate from the creative media worker, but instead management takes place at all levels even among those creating the product. The editors propose that Foucault’s concept of discourses explains how and why management is seen as the oppressive force as well as who identifies as “managers” and who identifies as the “managed” (4).

The editors present media management as “a culture of shifting discourses, dispositions, and tactics that create meaning, generate value, organize, or otherwise shape media work throughout each moment of production and consumption” (2). This definition provides the structure for the book to be divided into three sections (Discourses, Dispositions, and Tactics) though the editors acknowledge many entries could be included in more than one section. The essays as a whole attempt to explain, primarily through a wide range of well-developed case studies, how media managers not only address issues of producing creative work from a typical management perspective, but are also required to play a unique role in cultural and societal shifts that shape the audience desire for the work itself.

The first section of essays titled “Discourses” provides stories or “lore” that surround media managers. The initial essay presents an overall picture of the challenges of researching media management due to lack of both access to managers and theoretical basis. The author advocates for a critical approach including interviews, cross-checks, and connecting managerial practices to the creative goods produced rather than relying so heavily on individual case studies of “great” managers. The other essays in this section (as well as those in the rest of the book) do employ the case study approach, but with broader methods that include this connection of management to the creative product across multiple contexts. The remaining essays in the first section include a look at *The Cosby Show* sales abroad, a two-year study of the BBC’s involvement in creating multi-platform content, and a look at US television’s reality shows that redefine individuals as self-managers in the “business of making and remaking enterprising selves” (91). Though each of the essays provides an interesting and detailed perspective on the discourses surrounding media management in widely different contexts, there is no clear linkage between these diverse discourses.

The second section of essays is clustered around the concept of “Dispositions” explained by the editors as how individuals are socialized into managerial identities with certain perceptions set within particular communities of class, race, gender, sexuality or nationhood (6-7). The series of essays begins with the growth of music talent scouts in the US after WWI and the negotiation of social and cultural divides required to expand jazz, blues, and country music. The next essay examines the female-dominated role of present day casting directors as “products of sex segregation and feminization of certain types of low-status, extra-creative work in film history” (143), which is followed by an essay on Brazilian cinema’s partnerships between local producers and international companies like Sony, Fox, Disney, etc. The final essay in this section examines self-management and image manipulation of a particular individual named Felicia Day, a writer-producer of new media who has positioned herself as a new media auteur (190). These essays as a whole hold together better than the previous section by providing a varied look at the issues of class, race, gender, and sexuality as managers interact with cultural and societal norms to create new media products and simultaneously create the demand for those same products.

The third set of essays in the book is titled “Tactics” which the editors define as the resistant responses of creative media workers to top-down strategies of economic and cultural domination (10). The essays in this section begin with an account of the Top 40 radio rise in the 1950s and the conflicting forces evident at a moment of cultural transition where responses are not only made to economic changes, but those changes are “invented, stabilized, refined and reproduced... disseminated and implanted” in a variety of places (215). A second case study of the BBC, right after it abandoned the “360-platform” efforts described in the earlier essay under “Discourses,” looks at the BBC’s use of digital media, specifically Twitter, to humanize the brand and to manage the audience’s role in maintaining that brand identity. The final two essays explore the

relationship between market research suppliers and the client by exploring the hurdles of timeliness and the shelf-life of products and then strongly advocating for an audience-centered approach that goes beyond mere market research to create collaborations between the academic and industry worlds. From the 1950s fight over radio time to the present day squabbles over the purity of academic research, these essays present a cohesive picture of the centrality of fresh perspectives and innovative thought required by media managers to create and sustain audience demand and move the media industry forward.

Though this book is designed to illuminate the actions of media managers across entertainment industries from the perspective of those who research them, the concepts and case studies presented here are relevant to the study of organizational management on a larger scale as well. Certainly creative media is a sub-context for management as a whole, but those who wish to better understand the complexities of responding to workers in any creative industry while balancing the public appetite for a product and simultaneously creating desire for new products would find the cases presented here insightful. Scholars who are striving to expand methods of examining media managers are not likely to discover uniquely fresh methods here, but will gain added insight into the connections of management decisions to the resulting creative products.

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