

## Reviews

### *THE POPULAR CULTURE STUDIES JOURNAL* REVIEWS

#### Introduction

The reviews for this volume took an unexpected turn when Open Court Press's Popular Culture and Philosophy books started to arrive in my mailbox. What should I do with five books from the same publisher all about particular popular culture artifacts and philosophy? Rather than pick and choose which ones to have reviewed and which not to include so as to have room for other books on other topics from other publishers, I was lucky enough to find authors willing to review multiple books from the series in relation to one another. And then, I realized that so many of the books reviewed for this volume engaged with philosophical issues in popular culture, from the search for meaning in the new millennium to pragmatism and music, and from punishment in popular culture to the role of terror in American popular culture. The prevalence of philosophical issues should give all of us food for thought about the connections between popular culture and philosophy and also urge us to consider where we should go from here.

Two additional themes emerged in the books reviewed for this volume: non-media popular culture – from the Jewish deli to nudism and from bicycles to the folkloresque – and analyses of disability, medicine, appearance, and fashion. While the topics of the former group may be unrelated (other than as popular culture), they are not so surprising, even as the books and reviews are compelling and useful. The fact that issues of disability, medicine, appearance, and fashion were addressed in popular culture books was also not too unexpected. But, the fact that many of these

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topics were dealt with together did take me by surprise. The reviews of these books forced me to think about embodiment in different ways and consider the relationships between representation and audience, self and others, and even the philosophical issues of perception and reality.

The final reviews deal with more “traditional” (yet just as important) areas in popular culture, such as race and gender. Even so, these reviews focus on books about topics as diverse as politics, music, geography, aesthetics, marriage equality, privilege, housework, religion, and superheroes. I am so pleased that I had the time and opportunity to work with so many reviewers and include reviews of so many books to help me decide which books I will need on my office shelves in the future.

Time (and the lack thereof) is a reminder of our (my) limitations and opportunities. I definitely do not have the time to read all of these books and after three years as the Reviews Editor, I, unfortunately, do not have the time to serve in this role any more. So, I have decided it is time to pass the job on to someone else. I still believe in the project that is *The Popular Culture Studies Journal*, have thoroughly enjoyed working with Bob, Kathleen, Norma, and especially my invaluable assistant editor, Samantha Latham. I have learned so much about Popular Culture Studies from the plethora of books that have crossed my desk and even more from the reviews I have had the pleasure to read, review, and publish. Even so, I have chosen to take what I have learned in this job and stretch and expand my education by taking a position as Associate Editor at another journal. Since cloning myself is currently impossible and a morally ambiguous (at best) undertaking, I just do not have time to do both. So, it is the moment to give this job and experience to another deserving editor, Malynnda Johnson (University of Mount Union). I wish her the best of luck and hope to serve on the editorial board so that I may continue my education in another capacity. Here’s to the best of times for Malynnda in the coming years! Thank you all for your support and encouragement!

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Barkman, Adam and Robert Arp (Eds.). *Downton Abbey and Philosophy: Thinking in That Manor*. Chicago, IL: Open Court, 2016.

Greene, Richard and Rachel Robison-Greene (Eds.). *The Princess Bride and Philosophy: Inconceivable!* Chicago, IL: Open Court, 2016.

Michaud, Nicholas and Janelle Löttsch (Eds.). *Dracula and Philosophy: Dying to Know*. Chicago, IL: Open Court, 2016.

Book series on popular culture and philosophy are, in the scheme of things, a relatively new phenomenon, having emerged just at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, when Open Court Publishing followed up on the success of its one-off *Seinfeld and Philosophy* with the 2001 publication of *The Simpsons and Philosophy* (subtitled *The D'oh of Homer*). The Simpsons book sold “around a quarter of a million copies” within the first six years of its release (Reisch and Slowik), and one philosophy professor reports receiving six or seven copies for Christmas in 2001, with many colleagues experiencing similar levels of generosity (Asma). Open Court’s pop culture and philosophy series really started to take off, though, in 2004, when it published five books in that line. Since then, the series has added no fewer than five books per year, with a median of 8 books per year since 2004. In 2015 it added 11 more, the most since the series started. There are 98 books in Open Court’s series as of this writing, with more in progress. Other publishers have elbowed into this territory, with similar series having been initiated by Blackwell,

Wiley, and the University of Kentucky Press, and there are others seemingly eager to get in on the action as well (Malloy). But the place of this kind of scholarship within a larger “ecology” of academic publishing seems to be an open question, and having personally committed an act of pop culture and philosophy (White), I have a stake in the answer.

Certainly, the popularity and commercial success of philosophy and popular culture book series is at least somewhat surprising, given the uneasiness of the relationship between philosophy and popular culture. “The two domains seem like different planets,” philosopher Steven T. Asma asserts, “each with an atmosphere hostile to the other.” Philosophers, focused on their deep thoughts, are supposed to find the mundane world a distraction at best and a hazard at worst. How, then, are philosophers supposed to engage with popular culture? “Philosophy broods, analyzes, and tends toward the anti-social; popular culture celebrates, wallows, and tends toward the communal,” says Asma, perhaps slightly overstating the case. However, the dichotomy he sets up resembles semiotician Umberto Eco’s (1994) formula castigating both “apocalyptic and integrated intellectuals” for their failure to seriously engage with the products of mass culture as *messages* embedded within a larger system of “mass communication” (32). According to Eco, the apocalyptic intellectual adopts an elitist position toward culture, maintaining the distinction between high and low cultures. “If culture is an aristocratic phenomenon,” he observes, “then even to conceive of a culture that is shared by everyone and tailored accordingly is a monstrous contradiction” (17). The rise of mass culture, from such a perspective, is an “irretrievable loss,” in the face of which the only response is to “give an extreme, apocalyptic testimony” that if nothing else consoles the reader, permitting a glimpse, “against a background of catastrophe, [of] a community of ‘supermen’ capable, if only by rejection, of rising above banal mediocrity” (18).

But the authors who write chapters for book series on philosophy and popular culture are not aghast; quite the reverse, they regard the texts of popular culture as meriting their attention, like Eco's "integrated" intellectuals. To be sure, the authors of these chapters more often employ a *didactic* than an *analytic* approach to the material. That is, they tend to use some aspect of the pop culture text in question to illustrate or elucidate philosophical concepts, rather than employing philosophical concepts to explain or unpack the text. For example, A.P. Mills' chapter ("Keeping It Under Control") in Barkman and Arp's *Downton Abbey and Philosophy: Thinking in That Manor* uses the misfortunes of the unlucky character Bates in *Downton Abbey* as an opportunity to explicate Epictetus's philosophy of Stoicism; similarly, J.V. Karavitis's piece in the same volume ("Finding One's Place and Being Useful") connects a typology of attitudes toward work shown by the different characters in the series to different positions in the philosophy of labor—though we certainly learn something about *Downton Abbey* in the process. Conversely, J.E. Mahon's chapter on vampiric immortality ("The Curse of Living Forever") in Michaud and Löttsch's book delves into the implications of Count Dracula's Heideggerian "being-toward-undeath" to make sense of van Helsing's statement in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* that immortality is a "curse" for vampires. In like vein, Elsbey and Luzecky's chapter ("The End of Inigo Montoya") in Greene and Robison-Greene's volume on *The Princess Bride* draws upon the Aristotelian notion of "final cause" to explore the identity-related consequences of the Spanish swordsman's attainment of his revenge against Count Rugen. Too much can perhaps be made of this distinction, but as Asma points out, it is their commitment to the cerebral abstractions of philosophy that drives these authors. "If their argument about God, for example, starts from a TV show but then moves well beyond that show into conceptual stratosphere and back into the history of philosophy, that's just fine" (B15).

Nonetheless, each of these volumes explores questions related to the thematic focus of the work in question. Barkman and Arp's book on *Downton Abbey* includes chapters that examine the workings of class and the functions of etiquette, manners, and politeness as well as questions of free will and social obligation; Greene and Robison-Greene's volume on *The Princess Bride* spends time on deception, justice, war, friendship, love, femininity, and the miraculous. Michaud and Löttsch's consideration of *Dracula* includes discussions of the nature of evil, sexuality, and identity. Interestingly, Michaud and Löttsch include a number of chapters in a section called "From the Dracula Files," that play with the epistolary character of Bram Stoker's novel, for example by inserting historical figures (Maimonides), fictional characters (Camus's Stranger), or even the authors themselves into some sort of correspondence with the Count. These are creatively interesting but perhaps somewhat less straightforward argumentatively than are the other chapters—T. Sexton's "Hoover and McCarthy Meet Dracula," for instance, is presented as a set of (fictional but historically grounded) FBI files recounting the red-baiting inquiry surrounding the making of an Abbott and Costello movie featuring the Universal movie monsters.

Of the three, the books about *Dracula* and *Downton Abbey* seem to reward philosophical interrogation more fruitfully, perhaps because the fictional worlds they examine are more grown-up, for lack of a better word. Some of the chapters about *The Princess Bride* verge on the twee, as with W. Yuen's exploration of annoyance ("Should I Really Stop the Rhyming?"), executed via a superabundance of footnotes.

But as philosophy teacher Daniel P. Malloy (himself a contributor to the *Princess Bride* volume) argues, one should expect the value of these sorts of books to be primarily pedagogical, given that "professional philosophers are not interested in them, and most lay audiences would have a hard time caring less about them" (Malloy 293). The didactic quality of many of the chapters as written suggests that at least some

contributors do indeed see themselves as serving this function, as does the fact that in their contributor biographies, over half (about 53%) describe themselves as teachers. However, the overlap among authors (about one-third of these contributors have written chapters for or served as editors of other books in the series) raises questions about the value that this sort of work has for its authors. It may be that writing about it from an academic perspective may be simply a part of how these scholars engage with and appreciate popular culture—aca/fen (Jenkins) in truth!

In short, the project of philosophy and popular culture is an interesting one from a popular culture studies perspective because of how it grapples with the erosion of high culture/low culture boundaries and how it represents itself within the dialogue of the disciplines. There is material here for a truly fascinating popular culture studies inquiry into the production and reception of these epitexts (Genette). More immediately, pop culture scholars may find useful insights about specific texts within the corresponding popular culture and philosophy volumes, although the prevalence of didactic over than analytic chapters means that some digging may be required. In the classroom, they might prompt interesting and useful discussion of how we interpret and make meaning out of popular culture. Michaud and Löttsch's collection of essays on *Dracula*, in particular, seems well-suited as a supplementary text in a course about Stoker's novel in particular or Victorian horror literature in general.

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The long-running FX series *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia* and the widely popular Netflix original *Orange is the New Black* inspired two recent volumes from Open Court's *Popular Culture and Philosophy* series. Both books unpack the Western philosophical value of two popular cultural artifacts. In *It's Always Sunny and Philosophy: The Gang Gets*



*Analyzed*, editors Roger Hunt and Robert Arp gathered fifteen essays from scholars arranged in four sections. The text connects philosophical insights to show content, ranging from recognizing Aristotle's Nichomachean virtue in the inability of the central characters to find ethical middle ground, to the prescriptivist approaches of David Hume's Empiricism in Frank's gritty experiences, and René Descartes's rationalist approach in Mac's tendency to expand endlessly on almost any principle. In *Orange Is the New Black and Philosophy: Last Exit from Litchfield*, editors Richard Greene and Rachel Robison-Greene collected fifteen essays from scholars arranged in seven sections. This text makes similar philosophical connections, from Jean Paul Sartre's existentialist notions of dread in the main character's search for authenticity while incarcerated, to Nietzsche's exemplification of the superhuman in Laverne Cox's portrayal of Sophia Burst. Each television series and corresponding philosophical texts provide the foundation for dialog and exploration of historical concepts and societal themes.

The authors of the essays contained in *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia: The Gang Gets Analyzed* provide analysis of the television series that is entertaining, accessible, and indicative of the analyzed content. The show is decidedly crass in subject matter and tone, often celebrating commonly vilified attributes such as greed and selfishness. "The gang," consisting of Dee, Charlie, Dennis, Mac, and Frank, all turn to any practice of villainy to obtain personal gain, recognition, and wealth. Throughout the volume they are considered not so much as people, but as conceptual opposites of our shared values. As a result we never come to understand who the gang is or why they do what they do, but we do come to understand who they are not, according to the text, this is helpful in understanding what we would like to be.

For example, Jason Iuliano, in Chapter Two, correlates hedonist Greek philosopher Aristippus and his followers the Cyrenaics to the actions of the gang as they pursue narcissistic goals. Evoking egotistical egoism and

the pursuit of pure pleasure as ancient hedonist rationale, the dilemma arises when real pleasure eludes each character and we are allowed to see the pitfalls of such thought (30), that pleasure does not necessarily result in happiness. Similarly, Charlotte Knowles in Chapter Six examines how the gang continually defies normality. In their quest to counter societal expectations they are marked as authentic, functioning ontologically in negation, they also are partially structured by the norms they attempt to defy.

The authors of Chapter Seven inquire whether happiness can be universally defined. For the gang it is individually based in short term schemes that ultimately fail to produce anything remotely similar to happiness. In this regard, they are content to fail becoming “reverse role-models” (89). This theme continues in Chapter Eight, “Frank Reynolds, Role Model.” Adam Henchke makes the argument that while the rest of the gang suffer from self-delusions that manifest themselves in fantastical self-creations such as Mac’s futile pursuit of hyper-masculinity or Dee’s unrealistic dreams of success, Frank functions as a virtuous role model. Aristotle notes, a person with practical wisdom has experience and Frank has experience in both the world of restraint and the world of excess he acts out with the gang. Thus, in an effort to locate this ethical middle ground the group continually ask themselves “what would Frank do?” (93).

In Chapter Eleven Ethan Chambers concludes that the five central characters are in fact awful people, as each is a “narcissistic, greedy, unstable asshole with few, if any, redeeming qualities” (123). This theme of the conceptual antithesis persists throughout the text while concurrently discussing why the actions of these characters are meaningful. In this instance, through the lens of Hume who suggests we view behavior with a loose ethical code. This book tries to make sense of four individuals that continually elude responsibility and seemingly exists outside of any moral or ethical paradigm. Written in a deliberately accessible prose complete

with language indicative of the series, this text attempts to familiarize the audience with western philosophical concepts through an examination of the characters and situations contained in the series.

The focus of the next volume from Open Court's *Popular Culture and Philosophy* series receives a similar, yet slightly more nuanced examination. The successful television series *Orange is the New Black* captured 13 Emmy nominations in 2014 and contains many important social issues in America surrounding gender, sexuality, privilege, and the highest rate of incarceration in the world. The series plot revolves around the fictional character Piper Chapman, modeled after Piper Kerman, the author of the adapted bestselling nonfiction book based on her experiences. Kerman graduated from one of the most expensive universities in the nation, Smith College. Shortly after, she flies into Belgium with a suitcase containing roughly ten thousand dollars intended for use in the sale of illegal drugs. Years later she is convicted of a felony and sentenced to thirteen months at the Federal Correctional Institute, Danbury. The facts construct the backdrop of a tragic contemporary comedy indicative of the systemic relationship between The War on Drugs, the Prison-Industrial Complex, and white privilege. Once inside the fictitious prison of Litchfield the audience experiences a scripted slice of these intersecting conditions along with the philosophical implications that come with an examination of prison life. Through the lens of Piper the nuanced lives of historically marginalized and severely under-represented communities in popular television and the social sphere in general are depicted, both embodying and transcending stereotypical roles.

In a rare critical moment, author Christina A. DiEdoardo in Chapter Three directly confronts this conundrum of identity representation within the series. Cox, a transgender woman of color, plays the strong role of Burst. In order to survive, the character is forced to endure, suffer and ultimately overcome, becoming an embodied exemplar of Friedrich Nietzsche's "Übermensch." Cox's character reflects real challenges in

relation to Piper's apparent privilege, marked largely as naiveté. This requires her to defy various social and physical norms pushing not only herself, but also others to behave in courageous and inventive ways.

The author of Chapter Five examines Jeremy Bentham's panopticon, an ideal prison design that instills in inmates a sense of continual observation. According to Michel Foucault this 18<sup>th</sup> century conception marks a turn in Western discipline from punishing the body to that of the mind. Prisoners are divided from others and themselves in a context of intense scrutiny and observation, which primarily disciplines psychologically. Various forms of surveillance have become a norm of contemporary discipline, as inmates, like the characters of the show, seldom remain unwatched.

In Chapter Twelve, author Stephen Felder takes us to the opening scene of the first episode as we are introduced to prison life and the main character through a cliché shower scene. The voyeuristic theme of the series is established early as the plot revolves around the suitability of Piper's breasts for television. Ashamed as an object of gaze, Piper looks in the mirror and comes to see herself differently, through the intersubjective lens of the self in relation to others. Maurice Merleau-Ponty in *Phenomenology of Perception* suggests that consciousness takes shape in a world of others (165) and we are introduced to Piper through the eyes of Clara, a fellow inmate, altering her own self-conception. It is in this "relationship between the self, the body, and the other" (157) that the series and this text function, as an intersubjective experience indicative of and available for observers.

Both of these texts offer essays that examine and further discussions concerning two rich cultural artifacts. Using television series to explicate ancient and contemporary Western philosophy, each extends both theoretical thought and introspection of series content, but falls short of providing a socially critical reading. The short and matter-of-course format of the sections and essays are illuminating and exceedingly

readable. Potentially useful for introductory college students in fields ranging from philosophy to communication as well as general reader with interests in *Popular Culture and Philosophy*, these two volumes of the literary series once again offer inviting ways to learn more about and apply philosophy to our shared textual landscape.

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Maloney, Marcus. *The Search for Meaning in Film and Television: Disenchantment at the Turn of the Millennium*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Print.

Reading philosophy in the context of popular culture is a precarious balancing act. It poses a need to sustain a critical philosophical outlook without reducing the texts to a narrow, mechanical reading based on an external set of ideas. Marcus Maloney takes on this daunting challenge in *The Search for Meaning in Film and Television* and succeeds in maneuvering the thin line between philosophical criticism and the heterogeneity of popular texts. While the succession of “Philosophy and Popular Culture” books on a wide range of topics from Wiley-Blackwell and Open Court Publishing have opened up interesting conversations across the field, they tend to focus on a specific pop-culture phenomenon as the point of study. In contrast, Maloney’s book is an interesting attempt that studies the overall direction of popular culture and society by addressing four diverse texts from the turn of the millennium. It provokes phenomenological and epistemological questions about selfhood in the context of a changing landscape of arts and culture.

The book consists of four chapters, each dealing with a specific popular text— *Toy Story* (Pixar, 1995), *The Dark Knight* trilogy (Christopher Nolan, Warner Bros., 2005-2012), *Sex and the City* (HBO, 1998-2004) and *The Sopranos* (HBO, 1999-2007). The choice of these texts is particularly commendable as it seeks to discuss a variety of genres, audiences and cultural contexts. The author cleverly exploits these genre-defying ‘crossover hits’ that have captured popular imagination to explore themes of duty, sacrifice, loyalty and identity. Besides these chapters, an introduction and conclusion set up and evaluate the premises of the project. The introduction demonstrates well-reasoned logic as well as reflexive pragmatism, as it outlines the limits of the project from various perspectives of discipline, philosophical and critical approaches, and milestones in the evolution of modern philosophy. The enormous magnitude of the project is coherently streamlined in the introduction as it blends philosophical concepts with narrative and technological histories of cinema and television. Through a careful navigation of key 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century thinkers including Nietzsche, Weber, and Camus, the introduction stages the problem of ontology of meaning in a secular world.

Chapters two and three focus on cinematic encounters with philosophy where the search for meaning is reflected in the questing narrative of the hero’s journey. The discussion of *Toy Story* deftly captures the meta-textual questioning of selfhood in a literally animated world, while teasing out the philosophical implications about one’s purpose in life through Woody and Buzz Lightyear’s acceptance of their roles in a Nietzschean, godless world. The chapter on Christopher Nolan’s *The Dark Knight* trilogy takes a different psycho-social approach by exploring responsibility as a response to trauma and grief. It engages with the mythic tropes of justice and transformation in Batman without apotheosizing him. In one of the most compelling sections in the book, Batman’s villains are examined as an inevitable consequence of his vigilantism, further complicating the politics and ethics of identity formation.

The next two chapters on television present an interesting juxtaposition between two disparate worlds which are equally obsessed with relationships and perception. While the female identities in *Sex and the City* break away from established conventions of romantic-comedies, *The Sopranos* presents a tongue-in-cheek view of masculinity as an elaborate construction. This parallel between the modern day anxieties of the two texts suddenly reorders the apparently irreconcilable worlds by erasing the boundaries between a socialite and a mobster. In addition to the question of meaning, these chapters also address the issue of mass culture and art. The chapter on *The Sopranos* convincingly argues for the case of television as high art while continuing the trope of a protagonist who struggles to find his place in the world. The chapter on *Sex and the City* examines the subversion of romantic comedy genre conventions that the show enacts in search of identity.

Each chapter provides brief overviews that contextualize and position the critical redefinition initiated by the texts in their respective genres. The textual analysis in these chapters is not restricted to just the content, as it discusses aspects of casting, intertextuality and soundtrack at various points to comment on the overall impression of the text. In this regard, the book stays true to its aim of an interdisciplinary enquiry of meaning in various texts. Considering the widespread popularity of these texts, the aim of adding to the critical conversation without giving in to examinations of various fan-theories and responses is a bold and admirable one. Overall, this book has a clear conception of what it intends to achieve— to raise concerns of contemporary culture through a close analysis of representative texts. Such an endeavor has its inherent limitations that are made apparent in moments where the author spreads himself too thin in trying to tie together the different threads of technology, narrative content, philosophy and criticism. This is most acutely felt in chapter 2, where he tries to position the Christopher Nolan version of Batman in the tradition of comics, superhero cinema as well as

other existing Batman films; threads that do not always contribute to the larger question of 'search for meaning' in the book. However, any resultant unevenness is overcome by his passionate and critical engagement with the texts.

Professor John Shelton Lawrence writes in *Philosophy Now* about the significance of reading philosophy in popular culture as a pedagogical strategy that introduces abstract philosophical concepts to students by encouraging them to critically reflect on contemporary culture. However, he also warns against uncritical identification with the texts that overlooks the corporate politics behind their production. Maloney's book, at times, seems to overlook these political entanglements of production in favor of drawing out discussions about our existence and social relationships through the texts. Instead of reading them as embedded in the social and historical contexts, Maloney regards them as myths that stand outside time and continuity, and thus momentarily loses touch with the ethical grounding of philosophical criticism. And while such a reading stands testament to the significance of these texts as cultural events in popular Western consciousness, it also points to the gap that continues to exist between epistemological and ethical branches of philosophy. However, the lofty ambitions of the book go beyond just critically reading popular culture, as it extends to using them as philosophical modes of reflecting on reality. In that sense, the book positions itself in an intersection that appeals to students, especially undergraduates who find it difficult to see the deployment of critical theory and philosophy in something as broad as popular culture.

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Rose, Phil. *Radiohead and the Global Movement for Change: "Pragmatism not Idealism."* Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson, 2016. Print.

Radiohead's critically acclaimed third album *OK Computer* is, in former Media Ecology Association President Phil Rose's estimation, quite a lot more than a collection of experimental and muscular alternative rock. In this substantial work of criticism, Rose argues that *OK Computer* is best understood as both harbinger and codicil. To be precise, Rose contends that the album, which debuted in 1997, both presages and illuminates the conditions of our present media era, which Neil Postman described in terms of "technopoly"—the emergence of a cultural climate marked by the surrender of human thought and judgment to technique.

A prefatory disclaimer is in order: Rose is *not* arguing that singer Thom Yorke and his bandmates are ersatz media theorists (i.e., that the band understands the great swaths of media theory that Rose marshals or intended all along to teach listeners something important about technopoly). The intentional fallacy is not a part of this project. Instead, Rose's work relies upon a conception of artistic activity derived from the works of Jacques Ellul, Marshall McLuhan, and Neil Postman. Artists, McLuhan suggested, are best understood as "navigational guides" whose uncommon sensitivity to the limits of a given media environment (perhaps because they find themselves so poorly fitted for it) positions them to construct "counterenvironments"—texts that work to render visible and draw the public's attention to the taken-for-granted dimensions of the

hegemonic media environment that envelopes it. Imagining the artist as antenna and seismograph, Rose argues that in its lyrics and musical content, *OK Computer* points to the shock, dazzle, and alienation that comes hand in hand with our ever-accelerating convergence media age.

In pursuit of his thesis, Rose introduces concepts drawn from McLuhan's writings on media as extensions of human perception and art as counterenvironment; Susanne Langer's work on the presentational symbolic form of music; and Silvan Tomkins's affect-script theory. For many readers of this journal, it is likely that affect-script theory will be the most novel element: the theory, which emerged in the field of psychology, posits that stimuli, conceived in terms of scenes or sets of scenes, elicit a range of affective responses (excitement-enjoyment; shame-humiliation; distress-anguish; disgust; and fear-terror, anger-rage, and dissmell) which are made intelligible through scripts, which link affect to cognition. The result of Rose's bricolage is a complicated theoretical assemblage suited for multimedia music criticism and capable of speaking to the power of music to generate insights and solicit emotional responses in listeners.

Though the title of the volume suggests that Rose undertakes a comprehensive interrogation of the band's corpus, this is really a close exploration of *OK Computer* alone. As he walks readers through each song, Rose argues that the album's contents sensitize listeners to the various attendant symptoms of technopoly. In his hands, Cosmic Man, the subject who emerges from the songs—sometimes heroically, but often less so—appears as a figure overwhelmed by information; detached from the natural world, humanity, and even his self; distrustful of truth and knowledge; and separated from tradition. Often, Rose argues, the songs dramatize the deleterious social consequences of technopoly—the erosion of faith in metanarratives, the shocking reach of the military-industrial complex and the surveillance state, the isolation of individuals from their communities, and rising inequality. All is not dire though; in the album's last song entitled "The Tourist," Rose finds Cosmic Man engaged in a

form of self-criticism, suggesting the potential for reflection and the positive modification of technopoly.

For loyal fans of the band, Rose's thesis will likely generate approval; and its exposition will deepen their appreciation of an already well-celebrated album. For the unconverted, however, the central argument may seem less plausible. Rose is quite generous in his unpacking of music and lyrics that the band members themselves have described as being comprised of inside jokes, slapdash production ideas, and the results of drunken partying (Doheny 62; Randall 214-215). And he sometimes loses the plot in digressions about the overfishing of the oceans, US hegemony in space exploration, and other complications of global capitalism and technopoly. They aren't entirely unrelated to the thrust of the work; but the project would probably be better served if Rose followed Kenneth Burke's practice of escorting such "radiations" to the footnotes in order to keep the reader moving swiftly through the analysis. Those caveats aside, the book offers a trained explication of some of the most significant outgrowths of media ecology and the novel introduction of affect-script theory. It should be a welcome addition to the libraries of scholars of popular music, those interested in media ecology, and all who hope to see affect—a concept in vogue across the humanities as of late—put to use in a sustained critical effort.

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Frith, Jordan. *Smartphones as Locative Media*. Cambridge: Wiley, 2015. Print.

Nearly 60% of all U.S. adults carry smartphones; their use is growing rapidly in developing countries (Smith). The ever-changing media landscape is no longer limited to the accessibility of wires or a fixed screen, but has expanded to include any place a cell phone may be carried. It is not surprising, then, that 74% of smartphone users say they use location-based applications (Zickuhr). As Jordan Frith notes in *Smartphones as Locative Media*, mobile telephony, while conceived as utilitarian, has evolved past the compression of space and time that began with the steam locomotive and telegraph. Today's smartphones have enabled new possibilities for relationships and commerce and have become integral to the ways we make sense of where we are, where we have been, and where we might be going.

As part of Polity's Digital Media and Society series, this book explores the ways in which smartphones do more than extend people's Internet use; they prompt us to interact with locations, and in doing so stimulate us to redefine spatial experiences in new ways. Frith begins with a discussion of how conceptions of the Internet and life online have changed over time, and of the "internet disconnect" that characterized many early perspectives concerning online life. He notes that rather than retreating to a "separate" online space, today's mobile internet user experiences a hybrid of physical and online interactions; online activity blends with "real life" to enhance what would be an ordinary experience of space with location-based applications and services.

Next, Frith moves to a conceptual discussion he calls "the spatial turn," and this interdisciplinary look at various social theories of place is a

major strength of the book. Notions from McLuhan, Marx, and de Certeau give way to further groundwork laid by Meyrowitz and others; Frith surveys related ideas from media scholars, critical theorists, anthropologists and even geographers (Doreen Massey) to show the roots of “the mobilities turn” of the late 1990s and early 2000s that led to the locative media studies of today.

Chapter Three takes a new direction: it examines the infrastructure of the technology itself. While including an accurate and detailed description of said infrastructure, this section might well belong later in the book, or perhaps as an appendix. Following such a well-written conceptual chapter, most of it appears as somewhat of a detour. The final section of this chapter is more relevant in its focus on smartphones, app stores, and the politics of technology, but could well have been combined with Chapter Seven, which provides a detailed history of the mobile application Foursquare.

Frith returns to his strong conceptual framework in the next chapter, “Wayfinding Through Mobile Interfaces,” with a discussion of the political and social aspect of geography and how GPS-based mapping via smartphones can reflect the differing perspectives of governments, programmers, and/or users. Mobile mapping brings an ancient practice into the present and impacts how people move through, and indeed, conceive of, their surrounding space. Some of the most interesting studies reviewed here examine the “wayfinding behaviors” of city walkers led by human guides, paper maps, and mobile mapping applications. Those in the latter group interacted less with, and recalled less about, their surroundings than those traveling with paper maps or human guides. They also developed less-accurate cognitive maps of the spaces in which they traveled. Rather than declare such technological effects “good or bad” Frith encourages a postcognitive perspective – “offloading” cognitive activities to technology is not a problem for those (such as phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty and others) who see cognition

as distributed across the environment and not contained within the individual anyway. Such a view considers individuals and their surroundings as part of the same cognitive network, which leads to an interesting discussion of transactive memory to close what may be the book's most fascinating chapter.

Next, Frith examines the practice of social location sharing, and offers a history of early applications such as Lovegety, Dodgeball, and others. A good deal of space is devoted to now-defunct applications before getting to the discussion of identity. This will please fans of early online history if no one else; this chapter could easily have been combined with the next though, which takes an interesting look at how people "write" space through applications such as Facebook or Yelp, and through geo-tagging on Instagram. They archive it in ways future users may access – through restaurant reviews, safety warnings, photos or just interesting trivia and tips about a place. It is a way of making private user experiences public.

In Chapter Seven, Frith surveys various issues related to privacy and locative media, and highlights the overall lack of legal precedents for many of the issues raised. The reader is challenged to consider the difficulty of dividing information shared with others into the categories "public" or "private" and to consider urban dwellers as both "private" and "public" at the same time. This discussion might well have been bolstered by combining it with Frith's earlier discussions of the impacts of media technologies.

The book concludes with a discussion of the worldwide impact of mobile media, particularly the "leapfrogging" of technologies that has occurred in the Global South as individuals who never had traditional landlines are, in record number, obtaining smartphones that become their first telephones as well as their first Internet-access devices. Issues of global digital inequality and digital customization are also discussed. Finally, Frith examines the future of locative media with a discussion of

how various locative apps may splinter potentially shared experiences of mobile technology users.

In this volume, Frith examines a complex topic well by approaching it from a variety of (mostly) relevant angles. While the deliberately clear thesis sentences and conclusions in each chapter can seem pedantic at times, Frith's writing style is generally relatable and engaging, and he uses examples from his own experiences to help readers see the relevance of his topic. Scholars and graduate students in media and technology fields as well as anthropology should find the book a worthwhile read.

*Smartphones as Locative Media* is a worthwhile contribution to the study of smartphones in society. Their locative capabilities contribute to how we view ourselves and the spaces we choose to occupy. Frith's interdisciplinary approach to articulating the experience of mobile smartphone use with relevant theory makes this a must-read for locative media researchers and others interested in the impact of mobile media and related digital technologies on society.

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Foster, Michael Dylan and Jeffrey A. Tolbert. *The Folkloresque: Reframing Folklore in a Popular Culture World*. Boulder: Utah State University Press, 2016. Print.

To call Michael Dylan Foster and Jeffrey A. Tolbert's *The Folkloresque: Reframing Folklore in a Popular Culture World* thought provoking is a bit of an understatement. It is one of those rare academic tomes that strikes a responsive chord deep within the reader challenging her or his conceptualizations of the study of folklore, as well as the study of popular culture, through the discussion of how they "mutually influence each other," as well as "how they productively problematize distinctions between them" (4).

What Foster and Tolbert have done in *The Folkloresque* is to create a groundbreaking theoretical perspective with which to analyze the intersection of folklore and popular culture. The most noteworthy aspect of this is the creation and development of their analytical concept of the folkloresque which is that it is at once thoroughly modern yet intrinsically rooted in the past.

In his introduction, "The Challenge of the Folkloresque," Michael Dylan Foster explains what is meant by the term "folkloresque," taking great pains to delineate the position occupied by folkloric elements that serve as integral aspects of various popular culture artifacts. According to Foster, the folkloresque entails the "perception and performance of folklore" (5). Additionally, folkloresque pertains to the consumer's perception of whether or not the popular culture artifact has folkloric origins. In sum, three interrelated concepts unite to create the folkloresque. First, the artifact is perceived as possessing an element of folklore. Second, the artifact is thought to be linked to some external folkloric tradition. And third, the artifact is believed to possess value due to the perception that the artifact has a folkloric origin (5-6).



After discussing what the folkloresque entails, Foster then presents three categories of the folkloresque that will be used to organize the remaining chapters in the book. Each section highlights one of the categories of the folkloresque—integration, portrayal, and parody. Foster's co-author, Jeffrey Tolbert, writes a brief introduction to each section in which he offers a brief explanation of the category and what the essays in that section say about that particular concept.

The first folkloresque concept presented is integration. The integration section deals with how particular folkloric themes are melded together through the use of pastiche and allusion in order to create a bricolage of folkloric motifs found in such popular culture artifacts as Neil Gaiman's novels and Superman comics. Gaiman's novels are filled with references to Celtic, Native American, Egyptian, and Norse mythology which highlight the significant role played by the mythological tradition in modern day storytelling. Mythological elements are also found in the development of comic heroes like Superman whose creation story is based, in part, on Greek mythology. The incorporation of mythic elements into the Superman story and Gaiman's novels not only serves to inform their respective audiences of the role played by myths in modern day storytelling, but also how the mythic tradition continues to evolve and speak to modern day issues and concerns. Portrayal is the next folkloresque concept under discussion. In the portrayal section, the place and position occupied by the folkloresque, in relation to the entirety of popular culture, is assessed. In short, the concept of portrayal is concerned with ascertaining what folklore is, what purpose it serves in society, and why members of society should be mindful of folklore.

In the portrayal section there are essays discussing video games, Eamon Kelly's storytelling, and the Harry Potter novels. The portrayal section focuses on how and why folklore is used in various contexts. For example, in the chapter on video games, players encounter legendary and occult figures that must be dealt in order to win *Fatal Frame*, while in

Eamon Kelly's stories and the Harry Potter novels, the storylines would be nonexistent without the incorporation of the various legendary and mythological figures that drive the storylines. Thus, the use of legendary, occult, and mythological figures in the Harry Potter novels, Eamon Kelly's stories, and *Fatal Frame* allows the aforementioned popular culture artifacts to possess more prestige than other popular culture artifacts that lack such folkloric elements.

A fitting conclusion to *The Folkloresque* is the section on parody as it builds upon the theoretical underpinnings from the sections on integration and portrayal. In order to understand parody in regards to the folkloresque, one must be cognizant of folkloric motifs, know what folklore is, and understand the role and power of folklore in society. In an effort to assess the place parody occupies in regards to discussions of the folkloresque, Foster and Tolbert analyze critiques of jokes and popular science writing to see how the folkloresque influences meta-humor and meta-commentary. Parody does not exist in a vacuum. It requires the folkloresque to achieve its purpose. Whether it is jokes about the Penn State sexual abuse scandal, jokes about other jokes, or the mythological elements found through popular science writing, parody draws upon common folkloric tropes in order to comment on society.

Foster and Tolbert's *The Folkloresque* has managed to do what no other popular culture text has done in the twenty first century. What is meant by this is that despite the concept of the folkloresque coming to fruition in the new millennium, it possesses a refreshingly simple theoretical elegance that imbues it with a retro vibe that makes it seem like the folkloresque has been around for many decades. Another noteworthy aspect of *The Folkloresque: Reframing Folklore in a Popular Culture World* is that it begs for a sequel. In addition to serving as a pithy introduction to the concept of the folkloresque, the book's eleven chapters entice the reader to delve a little deeper into the intersection of folklore and popular culture and to perpetuate the folkloresque dialogue generated

by Foster and Tolbert. For example, branching off from the research on anime, what folkloresque concepts can be found in other feature films and television programs? Also, how does the folkloresque influence musical genres and eras? In addition to folk and neo-folk, what other genres and musical movements incorporate folkloresque elements in an effort to create a connection with their audience? What about popular culture ephemera and accoutrements? For instance, what debt of gratitude does Japan's kawaii culture have to the folkloresque? Is there a global aspect of the folkloresque that can serve as an explanation of the worldwide appeal of Hello Kitty?

In conclusion, Foster and Tolbert's *The Folkloresque: Reframing Folklore in a Popular Culture World* gives the field of cultural studies an invaluable present, namely a new theoretical concept with which to thoroughly enrich the scholarship of the study of both folklore and popular culture.

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McParland, Robert. *Beyond Gatsby: How Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Writers of the 1920s Shaped American Culture*. Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield, 2015. Print.

The latest entry in Rowan & Littlefield's always thought-provoking Contemporary American Literature series, Robert McParland's *Beyond Gatsby: How Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Writers of the 1920s Shaped American Culture* is a provocative, much-needed reminder of just how central a role art has played in shaping the modern American psyche.

“Novels,” McParland suggests, “are like windows into national consciousness” (xiii), and “by taking classic 1920s novels off the shelves, we are not merely dusting off old relics. Many stories of the 1920s address the human condition, and with them we may also look at our own time, as if in a historical mirror” (xi). While his central focus and chief concern is on long-form narrative, McParland brilliantly contextualizes the novels of Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Faulkner (among *many* others) by offering fresh readings against the cultural, social, and artistic backdrops of poetry (Eliot), European Modernism (Woolf and Joyce), industrialization (architecture and the assembly line), music (Porter, Gershwin, Rodgers, and Hammerstein), popular culture (Jack Dempsey, Babe Ruth), and history (‘29’s market crash, the Lindbergh flights).

Organized into succinct chapters, the first section of *Beyond Gatsby* is devoted to placing the literacy scene of the 1920s into a broader global context. Following an illuminating introduction and initial chapter in which McParland contextualizes the musical, artistic, and cultural landscapes of post WWI America, he explores the role Hemingway and Fitzgerald played in shaping the “new American novel” (16). “Artists,” he writes, “led the way in their search for a new language, a new sense of meaning and purpose to live by” (41), and McParland offers a contrast between Hemingway’s rigid moral code and Fitzgerald’s neo-Romanticism. While Hemingway’s influence on American literature would, no doubt, prove to be the more transformative, McParland reminds readers of Fitzgerald’s unique role in (re)defining the modern.

Next, McParland offers a thoughtful assessment of Faulkner’s many contributions to shaping the modern novel. Faulkner, he argues, is a “haunted writer” (45), and “to read [him] is to think with him about the racial problems that troubled him and have troubled the United States” (62). By tracing the influence of European masters (Joyce and Flaubert), contemporary prose stylists (Sherwood Anderson specifically), and cinema on Faulkner’s evolving craft through the 1920’s (and beyond),

McParland argues that Faulkner's Southern preoccupations have broader American (and, just as importantly, global) applications. His mythic Yoknapatawpha County not only can but *must* be read as a "microcosm of the larger society" (48). In this sense, Faulkner's South *is* America. Interestingly, McParland offers an analysis of Faulkner's work against the cultural backdrop of "the resurgence of Jim Crow laws and the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s" (46). Whether he is exploring matters of race, culture, or the passage of time, Faulkner's wildly-experimental prose and boundary-pushing narrative techniques proved to be (and remain) both groundbreaking and influential.

Far too often, the antecedents of the modern American novel are traced back to Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Faulkner. In the second half of *Beyond Gatsby*, McParland focuses on the undeniable contributions of "other voices." Taking a largely geographical approach, he thoughtfully reassesses the work of Midwestern authors such as Sherwood Anderson and Sinclair Lewis. The "golden age of 1920's American literature," he suggests, begins with Anderson's *Winesberg, Ohio* (95), and from there he offers a careful reading of the tragically-overlooked Willa Cather, whom he regards as "one of the important writers of the Roaring Twenties" (116). An innovative aspect of McParland's study is the way in which he includes critical assessments of lesser-known (yet influential) writers such as Glenway Wescott, Zona Gale, and Edna Ferber into his narrative.

In the next chapter, "Sounds of the City," McParland examines how the increasing urbanization of the 1920's "is highlighted in the fiction of the period" (123). Here, he turns his critical gaze to such well-known (if frequently overlooked) writers as Dreiser and Dos Passos. A highlight of this chapter is McParland's analysis of Anzia Yezierska, who became "a voice for the voiceless" (135) in her frank exploration of the feminine immigrant experience in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Finally, McParland concludes with a look at William Carlos Williams, John Steinbeck, and Edith Wharton (among others) who helped define the myth of modernity.

In the 1920s, “during a period of rapid change, American writers were concerned with how the present fit in with the past” (156), and ultimately, the modern American novel is the story of this concern. Jay Gatsby’s glorious (if doomed) personal reinvention is the metaphoric story of us all. McParland’s greatest achievement, in the end, is his extended mapping of this particularly American concern.

McParland’s impressive depth of cultural knowledge, sharp analytic eye, and narrative prowess result in a study which offers precisely what the very best novels of the 1920’s remain capable of—a vivid sense of place in a chaotic, ever-changing world. In an age of intense (and at times almost suffocatingly claustrophobic) specialization, McParland’s text serves as a refreshing reminder of how critically transformative a well-written survey can be. His aim, to be sure, is a broad one. “This book,” he explains in the preface, “explores the crucial turning point in American literary history and assesses the literary landscape that the reading audience responded to” (x). Today, as debates about the future of the novel rage on, McParland’s study is particularly poignant and potentially transformative. He skillfully shows how the flappers, jazz hounds, and the “lost generation” provide a unique and important but far from representationally complete depiction of the 1920s literary scene. American modernity has deep roots in the South, in the Midwest, and in the inner-cities alike. An invaluable resource for Modernist specialists and scholars seeking to better understand the plurality of voices which defined the 1920s, in time, *Beyond Gatsby: How Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Writers of the 1920s Shaped American Culture* is sure to become a canonical work on the modern American novel...and rightly so.

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Ogletree, Jr., Charles J. and Austin Sarat, editors. *Punishment in Popular Culture*. New York: New York University Press, 2015. Print.

The popularity of television series and films focusing on crime and law has continued to grow over the past several years. New series, including the podcast, *Serial*, from *This American Life*, and the Netflix series, *Making a Murderer*, focus on specific cases where questions of innocence or guilt remain for the convicted individual. These programs have sparked public debate about our criminal justice system, investigation processes, and punishment. Further, these public debates have seeped into the reality of the criminal justice system in allowing media programs to alter previously made decisions in regards to punishment of convicted prisoners. As Ogletree and Sarat write “. . . we do know that popular culture has ‘invaded’ law and reshaped some of its most fundamental processes” (4).

Charles Ogletree Jr. and Austin Sarat’s edited volume, *Punishment in Popular Culture*, could not have come at a better time for scholars who are interested in how popular culture works to shape our perceptions of punishment through fictional depictions as well as through real-life images. The edited volume is a result of the Amherst College’s Charles Hamilton Houston Forum on Law and Social Justice and Harvard University’s Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice in 2013. While Ogletree and Sarat have collaborated on other edited volumes focused on justice and the death penalty, this is their first venture into the world of popular culture and how it relates to and impacts views of crime and punishment.

Ogletree and Sarat’s edited book sets out to examine the images in popular culture and how these represent our expectations and realities of punishment. Additionally, the volume “seeks to make sense of what happens when mass-mediated images of legal processes like punishment

saturate our culture” (5). The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world. With this in mind, the authors of the chapters set out to explore a variety of mediated images and actions surrounding crime and punishment. “The way a society punishes demonstrates its commitment to standards of judgment and justice, its distinctive views of blame and responsibility, its understandings of mercy and forgiveness, and its particular ways of responding to evil” (Ogletree and Sarat 1).

There are several strengths of the text for scholars of popular culture, crime, and punishment. First, this is the only compilation of essays on punishment in popular culture without a focus on a particular television series or a sole focus on film. There are several books investigating the images of crime and punishment in *The Wire* (Bzdack, Crosby, and Vannatta; Kennedy and Shapiro; Potter and Potter), *Law and Order* (Dwyer and Fiorillo), and *CSI* (Kompare), as well as books that investigate the issues of crime and punishment in film (Rafter; Rafter and Brown). Ogletree and Sarat’s compilation allows researchers an opportunity to view punishment through different forms of media in one text, including films, fictional television series, reality television series, published images, and images shown in courtrooms and on social media. Being able to investigate images of punishment from different media allows the reader an opportunity to gain a breadth of knowledge about how punishment is depicted and how it may influence our society.

Additionally, the variety of analysis offered in the text is helpful to individuals who are well-versed in the scholarship of popular culture as it relates to crime and punishment as well as for those who are new to this area of research. The editors include researchers who are experts in the scholarship of punishment as well as those who are scholars of media studies. Aurora Wallace, a professor of media, culture, and communication from New York University offers the reader an in-depth critical analysis of prison narratives in National Geographic channel’s reality television series, *Locked Up Abroad*. Kristin Henning, a professor



of law at Georgetown Law Center provides a look at the moral justifications for punishment in *The Wire*. In an analysis of backlash films from the 1970s-1990s including Clint Eastwood, Charles Bronson, and Chuck Norris films, Lary May, professor emeritus of history at the University of Minnesota, offers the reader an opportunity to understand how collective representations in these films contributed to the rise of punishment in our culture. The diversity of perspectives adds to the breadth of knowledge one can gain about punishment in popular culture.

The only criticism of the volume is that the majority of the chapters investigating images of punishment in film focus on older films. While it is helpful to provide analysis of historical media representations of punishment, more recent depictions would be useful in gaining a broader perspective on the topic of punishment and popular culture. For instance, the only chapter that deals with films in the twenty-first century is Sarat et al.'s chapter investigating images of execution in American film from the 1895, twenty-one second film, *The Execution of Mary Stuart* through to more recent films such as *Chicago* (2002) and *Law Abiding Citizen* (2009).

The chapters analyzing representations of punishment in television provide a more contemporary perspective for the reader. Additionally, the final two chapters that focus on the use of images and how these impact our views of criminals or of punishment allows for a greater perspective on how current media representations are impacting our world today. For those scholars interested in wrongful conviction cases or potential wrongful conviction cases such as those profiled in *Serial* and *Making a Murderer*, Garrett's chapter, "Images of Injustice," would prove extremely useful. He looks at the role images play in criminal cases including images from line-ups, eyewitness identification, seeing a confession, and social media. His chapter shows that images play a significant role in crime and punishment and show how the area of scholarship investigating punishment in popular culture is only going to grow over the next several

years. As Garrett writes, “Popular culture may continue to be a double-edged sword” (282).

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Kavadlo, Jesse. *American Popular Culture in the Era of Terror: Falling Skies, Dark Knights Rising, and Collapsing Cultures*. Denver, CO: Praeger, 2015. Print.

Jesse Kavadlo's attention to the historical precedence of terror and the way he weaves together American cultural history with a wealth of rich literary, television, and filmic texts in *American Popular Culture in the Era of Terror: Falling Skies, Dark Knights Rising, and Collapsing Cultures*, is something I've been wanting to read since I first launched into 9/11 research myself. No other 9/11 or post-9/11 book so aptly traces the pre-9/11 influences that lead to what Kavadlo aptly names "the era of terror." Kavadlo expertly brings together a multitude of cross-disciplinary studies to examine the role of terror, fear and terrorism in contemporary American society and trace how this has impacted our cultural narratives, using examples like Chuck Palahniuk's novels *Survivor* and *Fight Club*, television's *Lost*, and the film *World War Z*.

Kavadlo traces a trajectory through the era of terror, beginning before 9/11. The first four chapters trace the cultural history of terror from before 9/11 into the years shortly after when narrative dealt directly with 9/11 or played with common images and tropes that resulted from 9/11. The first chapter of the book analyzes 1990's literary works of Chuck Palaniuk to analyze domestic terror and examine the ways that his work prefigures 9/11, demonstrating that Americans were already concerned with terror before 9/11. The second chapter analyzes the novels and films that directly address 9/11 events and its aftermath, and how these tales deal mostly with the often futile search for missing family. Kavadlo aptly describes how these 9/11 narratives experiment in forms, discomfiting and confronting the reader with attempts to make sense of a tragic event that cannot make sense of 9/11. The third chapter turns to how the "war on terror" has led to a shift in monster stories, including zombies in *World War Z*, vampires in *Twilight*, and aliens in *Avatar*. This chapter also aptly

dives into an analysis of how reading earlier novels about monsters has changed given the shifts in post-9/11 culture and the focus on the “war on terror.” Chapter 4 provides an interesting and insightful examination of how *Lost* incorporated and changed the subtexts of 9/11 and the two wars that followed. This chapter provides insight into the show in relation to events in American culture that affected the show’s narrative structure. It also discusses how the characters shifts in time and narrative space allows them the ability to return to the past and rewrite history, changing their own terror-filled life events.

The final three chapters of Kavadlo’s text expand the idea of terror into several more recent cultural narratives and popular culture phenomena. Chapter 5 analyzes the trope of amnesia that is metaphorical in American culture and literal in film. This case of amnesia is explicated through a special focus on the dystopian world in the film adaptation of Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road*. Chapter 6 expands the analysis of dystopia by looking at popular children’s literature and film set in dystopian worlds, focusing on Suzanne Collin’s series *The Hunger Games*. This chapter examines how dystopian worlds are marketed to younger generations, leaving the superheroes to become stories for adults. Chapter 7 looks closely at the preponderance of superhero narratives aimed at adults, especially in Christopher Nolan’s *The Dark Knight* trilogy. Kavadlo explains how themes and imagery of terror and terrorism infiltrate this adaptation of the superhero story.

Kavadlo’s chapters are well-written and thoughtful. I have used some of these chapters in media criticism classes. More recently, I had a television class read his chapter on *Lost*. This is an engaging critical analysis of American culture in the wake of terrorism and 9/11. It not only adds much to the scholarly discussion surrounding terror in our cultural narratives and cultural consciousness, but it is also a book that could add a lot to classroom discussions pertaining to the pervasiveness of American representations of terror, alternative narrative structures in television, or

how culture affects popular culture narratives. His writing is accessible enough for undergraduate students while complex and thorough enough for any graduate student or advanced scholar.

Kavadlo's conclusion brings up interesting questions for all of us. When Americans in the 2010s are safer than ever before, why is terror in popular culture narratives pervasive across our culture? Are we really in danger or just encouraged to believe we are from the narratives that we consume in literature, film, and television? Kavadlo suggests that we think about our current era as an *un-age*, rather than a post-postmodern age, defining this as a time where we can make things vanish, while leaving a trace of it behind, i.e. we can unfriend or unfollow people online. Kavadlo ties in our daily options to undo with the narrative structures in popular media, showing us that narratives unravel and undo themselves within their very structure. While in this final chapter, Kavadlo's analysis of the un-age is an unparalleled and brilliant analysis of the cultural shifts in American culture, I might add to this that we deal best with trauma through stories, and that might be why terror is still so pervasive in American cultural narratives. America is still regaining footing and trying to make sense of a contemporary world where building can crumble in hours and lives that can disappear so quickly without a trace.

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Merwin, Ted. *Pastrami on Rye: An Overstuffed History of the Jewish Deli*. New York: New York University Press, 2015.

Print

Ted Merwin's *Pastrami on Rye: An Overstuffed History of the Jewish Deli* provides exhaustive research on the delicatessen and how it became an American institution; the book also provides a cultural history accompanied by anecdotes for understanding the New York Jewish experience through food. Merwin reported in an interview with Christine Baksi about this book, this is the "first comprehensive history of this subject, with a particular focus on the deli as an essential ethnic gathering place for post-immigrant generations of Jews who were shifting away from scrupulous religious observance and looking for more secular ways of building community" (par. 1). The extensive account Merwin delivers in this book, provides readers with a path to navigate the first delicatessens, through the jazz age, on to the Second World War, and after – including the decline of the deli, and its current place in U.S. culture.

Merwin's research included conducting interviews with retired and current deli owners, archival research, and analysis of English- and Yiddish-language books, trade journals, and newspapers. Additionally, the use of photographs, cartoons, film clips, television episodes, and quotations from memoirs, plays, poetry, novels, and short stories lend strength to the discussion of the delicatessen's role in American Jewish culture. In addition to the use of this research, Merwin collected and masterfully used memorabilia such as still photographs of delis or images of advertising cards which enriched my understanding of the history presented. Merwin also included several still-images of movie scenes and other popular culture references to the deli, such as in the film *When Harry Met Sally*, which helps solidify the case for studying the delicatessen within popular culture.

In the first chapter, Merwin introduces us to the first delicatessens in Eastern Europe, as well as the first delis in the United States. In this chapter we learn that American Jews did not bring this “deli culture” with them from the Old World. Merwin carefully explains how deli meats would have been too expensive for poor Jewish immigrants to buy with regularity and that their budgets would have limited their ability to store said meats. Also importantly discussed, is the pressure first-generation Jewish enclaves were under to abandon their food for more “Americanized fare” (36). Merwin then leads us through the establishment of the first delicatessen stores, Kosher food companies, and how the stores later became restaurants, emphasizing the involvement of government, as well as kosher laws in this development. This careful history richly highlights the development of the deli and how it became an important institution, especially for second-generation Jews.

Chapter two presents us with the development of the delicatessen through the Jazz Age and the period between the end of World War I and the beginning of World War II. Merwin attentively links the rise of Broadway and the theatre district with the rising success of the deli and how the opulent nature of the Jazz Age became associated with deli sandwiches in New York. Notably, “sandwiches were all the rage...the sandwich appealed, in one form or another, to everybody, in every social class and occupation in society” and “at these vibrant, humming eateries, ordinary New Yorkers hobnobbed with the rich and famous” (56). The chapter includes a discussion of how the development of non-Kosher delis allowed “for Jews to eat mostly traditional food but to free themselves from the stringency of the kosher dietary laws...and to provide a secular avenue to Judaism” (90) and how the deli survived the Great Depression.

Chapter three leads us through World War II and how it “changed the relationship that Jews had to their own traditional fare, exposing them to other types of food and opening up new vistas for Jewish life in other parts of the country” (112). While delicatessens remained a way for Jews to

connect with and relate to their heritage, wartime rationing influenced Jews and their food consumption. Merwin states, “wartime rationing taught Jews that they could do without delicatessen food” (112). The relationship between food and identity also changed for Jewish soldiers serving abroad. Even as they were being sent hard salamis by their families at home, the soldiers were often faced with “Eating ham for Uncle Sam,” and, as Merwin states, “Jews learned that they could do without familiar foods and still maintain their Jewish identity” (91).

In the fourth chapter, Merwin presents strong evidence of the shift in gathering places for Jewish New Yorkers from delicatessens to the non-Jewish ethnic restaurant. They had been exposed to a variety of other cultural cuisines, and Jewish cuisine “was perceived, in the main, as unhealthy, low class, and unappetizing” (160). The deli then, in the early twenty-first century, became associated with “an immigrant or second-generation way of life, in which different values had held sway” (160) and Jews no longer sought out the deli experience on a regular basis, but rather on family occasions.

Merwin concludes the book with a discussion of the nostalgic appeal of delis for Jewish identities, while also acknowledging the fading position and importance of delicatessens in Jewish Culture today. There is also an interesting presentation of the ways in which Jewish food is mutating and how existing delis are using a variety of strategies to maintain success. Delis “will probably never occupy the centrality in American Jewish life that they once did, as they helped to bridge the world of the immigrants and their children with the promise and freedom of America” (189).

*Pastrami on Rye* is aimed toward an academic audience, while also addressing the mass market. In this approach Merwin merges ten years of extensive research with inviting anecdotes that encourage the reader to better understand the place of the delicatessen in New York Jewish life – not only a culinary center, but a cultural center as well. Indeed, Merwin



makes a solid argument for how the success of the Jewish delicatessen contributed to Jewish assimilation and the introduction of the delicatessen into broader ethnic circles. As such, this book is appropriate for several university courses in a variety of fields, such as popular culture, American culture, history, sociology (especially given the discussion of the delicatessen as a third place), interpersonal and intercultural communication, religious studies, ethnic studies, gender studies (with attention to Merwin's accounting of the delicatessen's influence on the role of the Jewish wife), and, of course, foodways. However, due to the intricacies of weaving rich anecdotes into wide-ranging, copious research, the book may be best suited to advanced undergraduates and graduate students. Overall, this book offers an appealing perspective on "what happens when food takes on an ethnic coloration and then gradually sheds that ethnic connection when it acculturates into America" (Merwin 1).

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Hoffman, Brian S. *Naked: A Cultural History of American Nudism*. New York: New York University Press. 2015. Print.

Brian Hoffman's *Naked: A Cultural History of American Nudism* disturbed me. Not the topic of his book, but rather how local, state, and federal governmental bodies imposed standards of heteronormativity and used as many cultural, economic, historical, judicial, and political tools at their disposal to thwart the nudist movement throughout its history in America. For what began "as a form of physical and mental healing" quickly became the target of politicians who felt threatened by an unconventional form of familial living and a quest to improve one's mental and physical well-being (6). Hoffman, through rigorous research, compelling stories, and taut writing weaves a compelling historical narrative about a movement that continually faces opposition. For those readers interested in learning how social movements begin, fracture, reconstruct themselves, and struggle to survive, Hoffman has written an exemplar that others can model when studying controversial social movements in America's storied history.

Hoffman begins his story of American nudism in the 1930's, when organized nudism emerged. Both individuals and families sought an outlet for improving their health and for exercising their privacy, and nudism in "a locked gymnasium or an enclosed beach" offered nudists an environment to satisfy their goals (19). Censorship advocates, especially those opposed to the distribution of birth control information, pornography, and vice, quickly characterized nudists as lewd individuals intent on undermining the social fabric of America's cities. Nudism became synonymous with indecent and illicit behavior, and politicians and the courts began combatting nudism in an effort to protect society from abhorrent behaviors. The problem, though, was that nudism as practiced was not lewd, indecent, or illicit; instead, nudism was an emerging lifestyle that was slowly gaining followers, much to the dismay of those

who saw clothes-wearing society as the standard for normality. But by “equating nudism with commercial sex,” the nudist lifestyle as practiced in cities such as Chicago and New York found itself in search of a new, more hospitable home (47).

Driven from larger cities and fractured as groups, nudists regrouped and established enclaves in smaller cities throughout America, and the nudist camps that emerged allowed individuals and families to practice their lifestyle with others who shared in their beliefs. Nudism remained a way to improve one’s mental and physical health, but freed from the confines of larger and less-welcoming cities, nudism also became a way to engage in recreational activities. From 1930 until 1940, nudism also became a way to strengthen one’s religion, a way “to support Christian values by developing the moral character of participants through their naked lifestyle” (73). Unfortunately, nudists still had to battle the “perception that nudism constituted another form of commercial sexuality, encouraged promiscuity, or served as a haven for gay men and women” (81).

Still lacking the respectability that nudists sought, the movement again underwent a transformation to situate itself within mainstream America. To reconstruct the nudist movement as one that did not threaten normative value systems, nudists turned to print media to spread their message and to extol their lifestyle, and they produced and distributed publications that stressed the virtues of nudism. For example, the leading nudist magazine, *Sunshine and Health*, highlighted the benefits to one’s health and to one’s sexual expression, and readership for the magazine grew, as publication allowed the magazine to reach large audiences, who could read about the nudist lifestyle in the privacy of their homes. While educating Americans about nudism with its articles and stories about the nudist “movement’s therapeutic and familial” nature and with the inclusion of more revealing photos of women’s and men’s bodies, the magazine also became a source of comfort for American servicemen during World War II, where

*Sunshine and Health* enjoyed a wide readership from an unlikely audience (88). Any respectability gains made through the print medium were short-lived, though, as critics of the nudist movement attempted to block the publication of books on nudism and publications such as *Sunshine and Health* by taking their cause to the courts, asking them to find the publication of nudist materials obscene and therefore in violation of local obscenity statutes. Even the federal government found itself embroiled in a scandal after President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed Maurice Parmelee, a leading advocate of nudism and author of a book on nudism, as “chief economic adviser to the Board of Economic Warfare” (97). Republican Representative Martin Dies from Texas, the head of the House on Un-American Activities Committee, used Parmelee’s association with nudism to threaten President Roosevelt’s New Deal initiatives, and suddenly nudism became the scapegoat for all that was plaguing America. Dies’ campaign ultimately failed, but with *Sunshine and Health*’s explicit photographs now clearly showing completely naked female and male bodies, the United States Postal Service refused to deliver the March 1947 issue in cities such as Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York City.

The seizure of *Sunshine and Health* by the Postal Service began the next wave of opposition to nudism and it further drove the nudist movement from the mainstream of America. In the 1950’s charges of obscenity morphed into questions of pornography, and the fate of nudist publications lay before the Supreme Court. Questions of obscenity, sex, and prurient interests became First Amendment battle cries, and for the nudist movement, not only publications but movies as well came under assault at the hands of those looking to censor what remained marginalized in society. *Sunshine and Health* went bankrupt in 1963, and in “the early 1960’s, American’s turned away from an understanding of nakedness as healthy and familial and embraced nudity in the form of commercialized sex” (208). Even the liberalizing years of the 1970’s, 1980’s, and 1990’s still saw the nudist movement struggling to gain

respectability, and fears of homosexuals hiding among nudists and predators preying on children plague the movement today. For the new millennium, the nudist movement faces its familiar challenges of how to once again reconstruct itself and move out of the shadows and into the mainstream of America.

While Hoffman's book will not save the nudist movement, nor recast the movement as one that is nonthreatening to Americans, his book will appeal to those academics looking for a case study on social movements or to an audience interested in learning about how social movements must continually reinvent themselves to overcome societal prejudices. It will enlighten readers about the challenges that social movements experience in their day-to-day, year-to-year, and decade-to-decade battle to gain legitimacy and respectability. Hoffman's book truly unclothes and exposes how social movements struggle to survive, and I highly recommend it for those who study social movements.

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Withers, Jeremy, and Daniel P. Shea, eds. *Culture on Two Wheels: The Bicycle in Literature & Film*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016. Print.

While this collection is certainly not the first to address the bicycle and its significance in literature and screen, it is, as the editors state, "the first sustained examination to date" of such a vast project (9). Jeremy Withers and Daniel Shea undertake the mammoth task of incorporating several countries and over a century of history to declare that the bicycle is indeed

more than just a form of transportation; it hovers in the background of both literature and screen, waiting to morph into the literal or metaphoric symbol required at any given moment. Their loftiest goal is to present this collection in a way that “avoid[s]...the typical white, Anglo-American contexts...[and] to consider...non-Western literature and film” (11), a facet they believe is lacking in other studies of this type.

The book contains sixteen chapters: the first eight focus on the bicycle in literature, while the ninth provides a smooth transition between literature and film, given that Stephen King’s works may function as either. The last seven chapters concentrate on the bicycle in film. The book also contains ten illustrations, spoke etchings between the sections, and cover art by bicycling enthusiast Taliah Lempert. In short, every aspect of this book, from the editors’ and contributors’ passion for bicycling to the Foreword by well-established bicycle advocate Zach Furness, speaks not only to an audience of avid bicyclists, but also to those interested in literature and film as well.

Chapter one opens in the late 1890s with Dave Buchanan discussing the “literary tourism” (20) of F.W. Bockett and bicycling couple Elizabeth and Joseph Pennell. Peter Kratzke’s chapter combines Mark Twain and bicycle manufacturing, proposing that the bicycle follows the “logical sequence for any machine that moves from market introduction to physical implementation to technological obsolescence” (43). In the third chapter, Alyssa Straight examines the health and physiologic misconceptions created by putting a woman on a bicycle during the *fin-de-siècle*. Jeremy Withers’s chapter on H.G. Wells’s *The War in the Air* discusses the bicycle in terms of the “dizzying pace” (81) at which new technologies are being introduced during Wells’s epoch and argues that Wells stalwartly maintains the bicycle’s constancy as a reliable form of transportation. Corry Cropper uses French novelist Alfred Jarry’s *The Supermale* to explore the relationship between man and his machine, positing that “riders themselves are one more piece of cycling equipment and should be

refined through injections or transfusions and improved just like wheels, helmets, or tires” (110). Utilizing Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time*, Una Brogan adds queer feminism to the conversation when she determines that Albertine’s bicycle helps establish a “radical new social order...that would embrace not only new gender identities but also subversive sexual orientations” (116). Nanci J. Alder focuses on Beauvoir’s *The Blood of Others* and asserts that the bicycle’s importance to Hélène “loses its symbolic function” (148) as she matures, eventually being replaced by an automobile. Amanda Duncan’s trial-by-fire chapter discusses the bicycle as a “movement of writing” that “rigorously challenge[s] a concept of authorship that subordinates literary language to human knowledge with its illusion of stable ground” (167). In the final chapter of Part One, Don Tresca ruminates on the power of the bicycle to carry adults through childhood trauma showcased in several of Stephen King’s novels.

Matthew Pangborn introduces the film section by analyzing the bicycle’s representation in *The Wizard of Oz*, employing Julia Kristeva’s *Powers of Horror*. Charles L.P. Silet returns us to France, François Truffaut, and the New Woman’s representation in French bicycling posters found in *Jules and Jim*. In chapter twelve, Benjamin van Loon analyzes Tarkovsky’s *The Sacrifice* and, reminiscent of Withers’s chapter, examines the role of the bicycle in technological growth (or stagnation). Anne Ciecko journeys the reader to Iran, Italy, and Saudi Arabia, arguing that “the bicycle serves as a global cinematic emblem of human perseverance” (245). Ryan Hediger’s work with *Breaking Away* highlights the bicycle as it relates to social mobility and vital materialism. Jinhua Li, in her treatise on *Beijing Bicycle*, explores yet another interesting aspect to this collection: teenage protagonists. She posits that the bicycle is “simply a means of transportation to the adults, [but] symbolizes something that is dangerously alluring yet mundanely comforting” (282) to the younger members of that society. Lastly, Melody Lynn Hoffman addresses “youth-produced Hip-Hop” (300) and its role in providing young African

Americans an avenue to address the bicycle as “the survival mechanism...[that] is unprecedented in the current context of bicycle activism” (313-14).

By including texts ranging from the 1890s to 2013, along with choosing texts far away from traditional Western locations, the editors successfully meet their stated goals. Combining literature, film, and critical theory, this book does, as the editors hope, “raise awareness of what an amazing and often underappreciated technological and cultural artifact the bicycle is” (xiii-xiv). There is little within these pages to find wanting, with the possible exception of bicycle representation in relation to disability. That being said, if what Shea suggests regarding the bond between the human body and the bicycle is valid, that the bicycle’s form is “determined by the nuance of the human corporeal body” (322), then one runs the risk of becoming too emotionally attached to their bicycle. Withers and Shea inspire readers such as this reviewer, recently disillusioned by the loss of her bicycle, to get back on and ride. That, in itself, makes this book invaluable to not only the singular bicyclist but to bicycle advocacy in general. *Culture on Two Wheels* does not limit itself to only those interested bicycling, however; it also reaches scholars interested in literature, film, and cultural studies, as well as those less academically-inclined who simply enjoy music, history, and film.

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Hadfield, Andrew, Matthew Dimmock, and Abigail Shinn, eds. *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Culture in Early Modern England*. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014. Print.

Andrew Hadfield, Matthew Dimmock and Abigail Shinn's *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Culture in Early Modern England* provides a broad overview of early English culture through the lens of historiography. The introduction to the anthology begins with the editors' reading of Joris Hoefnagel's *Fete at Bermondsey*, serving as a strong sample of how popular culture will be examined throughout the remainder of the book. Each subsequent chapter focuses on a specific element of popular culture, allowing for a large scale review of English lifestyles and customs of the early modern period. The editors' set up of the collection encourages the reader to view English popular culture from multiple dimensions thus creating a platform for exploring alternative modes of research.

From the get-go Hadfield, Dimmock and Shinn are clear about the aim of their anthology: looking past the surface value of popular culture to discover the most legitimate uses and values of the practices and cultural objects that infiltrated daily life in England circa 1500- 1700. They argue that the term 'popular' was established during this period as a means of classification for separating the tastes of the upper class from those of the middle and lower classes; the voice of the 'elite' has a constant presence in historical records, one that often dictates how accounts of events are told and influences what details get included (5). This level of influence by the 'elite' establishes a need for uncovering the more authentic voices of the lower working class; a task that the editors take on and succeed in doing through the work presented in this research companion.

The anthology is broken down into three sections, each utilizing a different technique to reach the goal of the overall book. The first section, “Key Issues,” aims to excavate the ‘popular’ from early modern culture while challenging fundamental approaches to how we understand popular culture and establishing a historiography of the field. Chapters in the first section include Edel Lamb’s “Youth Culture,” Femke Molekamp’s “Popular Reading and Writing,” and Angus Vine’s “Myth and Legend.” Section Two, “Everyday Life,” focuses on the “routines and practices of quotidian experience” by highlighting creative methods for use by future researchers (7). The chapters within this section include Ian Fredrick Moulton’s “Courtship, Sex and Marriage,” Helen Smith’s “Gendered Labour,” and Joachim Frenk’s “Games.” The final section is titled “Experience of the World.” The final essays revolve around larger cultural structures and how people engaged with, challenged or rejected the established norms and hierarchies; focusing on subjects such as “Time” by Neil Rhodes, “Popular Medicine” by Margaret Healy and “London and Urban Popular Culture” by Lawrence Manley.

What is perhaps the most important chapter comes early in the first section of the collection, Arnold Hunt’s “Recovering Speech Acts,” (Chapter 1). Early in the chapter, Hunt draws a connection between oral and literary cultures and immediately establishes the importance of using literary history to draw out the oral history of early modern England. Since there was no possibility of voice recording during this period, Hunt suggests we turn to written records to reveal themes, attitudes, and behaviors of the everyday person during this time (16). The records he refers to – court records and sermons – were often crafted by the elite, and therefore not always fool proof, but careful readings of these texts can reveal the important details that are left between the lines. Hunt’s argument is present throughout the book, with many of the essays referring to legal documents to provide evidence for their claims. For example, in “Food and Drink” (Chapter 9), Phil Withington refers to court

testimony about an incident involving broiled herring to analyze social norms, political economy, and space and place politics surrounding the period's food culture. Additionally, in "Superstition and Witchcraft" (Chapter 21), Simon Davies utilizes interrogation transcripts to supplement details about witchcraft accusations. Turning to historical text for details to build a repertoire for early English popular culture is a theme spread throughout the essays and proves to be a rich area for researchers to explore.

Overall, *The Ashgate Research Companion* provides a strong overview of early popular culture in England; the wide range of topics allows the essays to paint a broad picture of life for the working class. Authors throughout the book use historiographical research methods to draw into question how the history of popular culture has been studied thus far and most substantially provide evidence of areas that are often excluded from more traditionally told histories. It is necessary to point out that there are some authors that do not make claims but rather just provide historical overviews of a particular cultural artifact. While the chapters containing reviews of a particular topic are intriguing, they fail to reach the same depth of exploration found within the other pieces of this collection. In addition, the only other obvious weakness comes in the form of density; some of the chapters employ language that may cause challenges for an undergraduate student early in his or her academic career. However, the strengths of the companion far outweigh the weaknesses and the anthology would make for an interesting read in an advanced undergraduate course as an introduction to early modern English culture. The advantage to having a diverse range of topics within one collection is that it provides potential for expanded research pertaining to these areas; multiple authors within *The Ashgate Research Companion* make clear that the research they have presented has need for further exploration, creating an opportunity for other scholars within the field to expand upon these areas

or to incorporate these methods and findings into larger conversations revolving around popular culture and early modern England.

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Glenister Roberts, Kathleen, ed. *Communication Theory and Millennial Popular Culture: Essays and Applications*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2016. Print.

Within the popular press and popular literature, millennials are often described alongside their communication orientations and skills. Thus, it becomes important to acknowledge the relevance of communication theories when studying this generation. The contributors to the edited book, *Communication Theory and Millennial Popular Culture: Essays and Applications*, capture the essence of rhetorical, cultural, mass, and interpersonal communication theories in ways that successfully explain abstract theories through popular culture. The authors have intentionally chosen “texts and artifacts they know appeal to members of the millennial generation” (3). By examining several forms of popular culture such as books, movies, musical artists, and television shows, this edited collection of essays provides a critical lens to better understand communication and its theoretical richness in popular culture.

The roots of the communication discipline are grounded in rhetoric. Thus, Part One, appropriately titled “Rhetoric,” has five chapters that introduce readers to theoretical concepts related to speeches. In Chapter 1, “Improving Your Speech Delivery with Modern Family and Friends,” Nancy Bressler focuses on the four main factors of credibility and the

seven nonverbal behavioral categories of speech delivery. In Chapter 2, authors Jake Dionne & Joe Hatfield use three musical selections of Lady Gaga—“Born This Way,” “Applause,” and “Paparazzi”—to explore Burke’s theory of dramatism with a central focus on the concepts of identification, guilt-redemption, and the pentad. In Chapter 3, Gerald J. Hickly III relies on the work of Kenneth Burke and Cluster Analysis to illuminate the concept of god-terms in the television drama *Friday Night Lights*. In Chapter 4, Kathleen Glenister Roberts focuses on epideictic speech by exploring fantasy literature—*The Lord of the Rings*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and *Harry Potter*. Finally, in Chapter 5, with the premise that “understanding the importance of ethos is central to an education in communication,” Elena C. Strauman uses Aristotle’s three dimensions of ethos to examine two interrelated subplots involving Ned Stark of HBO’s series *Game of Thrones* (61).

Authors, in Part Two, “Culture,” focus on cultural studies. “Cultural studies, as a field of theories, assumes that culture is not fixed; culture is created by people in interaction” (4). In Chapter 6, “‘Let it go, let it go’—Hegemony and Counter-Hegemony in Disney’s *Frozen*,” Janelle Applequist examines the elements of traditional hegemony such as the (a) way females struggle for a sense of autonomy; (b) ideal standards of feminine beauty; and (c) ethnicity of Disney princesses. At the same time, Applequist explores counter-hegemony in the film’s conclusion including the presentation of women serving as royalty and the portrayal of gender roles. In Chapter 7, “Mockingjays and Silent Salutes—Introducing Semiotics through the *Hunger Games*,” author Claudia Bucciferro provides a clear analysis using both the film series and the original books to examine the main principles of semiotics—the symbolic construction of meaning. Specifically, she conducts a basic semiotic analysis on two main symbols—the three-fingers-up and the mockingjay (88). In Chapter 8, Garret Castleberry turns to Stuart Hall’s Encoding/Decoding Model by applying it to the television series *Breaking Bad*. In Chapter 9,

“Postmodern Theory and Hip-Hop Cultural Discourse,” Hunter H. Fine explores the concepts of postmodern narratives, identities, and concepts of geography through the use of works by music artists like Lil Wayne, Pusha T., Talib Kweli, Eve, Jean Grae, Lauryn’s Hill, Kanye West, and others. In Chapter 10, “Seen but Not Heard—Exploring Muted Group Theory in Pixar’s *The Incredibles*, *WALL-E*, and *Brave*,” Bruce W. Finklea & Sally Bennett Hardig use the three Pixar films to demonstrate how Muted Group Theory works and how it is prevalent in modern-day media (119). In Chapter 11, “Knope vs. Pope: A Fantasy Theme Analysis of *Scandal* vs. *Parks & Recreation*,” Krystal Fogle focuses on fantasy themes of setting, action, and character to examine “two very popular government-centered shows that deal with similar themes, but come to very different conclusions about how America’s government should be viewed” (131).

Part Three, “Media and Technology,” has five chapters that bring media to the forefront. Media ecology treats media as an environment (5). As an interpretive approach in communication, media is affected by language and culture; and in today’s age digital technology is a focal point. In Chapter 12, “The Smartphone as Permanent Substitute Teacher,” Brian Gilchrist, uses Marshall McLuhan’s approach to media ecology to examine how (a) students have less incentive to engage in information-based lesson plans from teachers; and (b) smartphones enable students to replace teachers as guardians of information. In Chapter 13, “Media and Technology—Metal and Mutation in the *X-Men* Films,” Paul A. Lucas examines how mass media concepts and ideas, seen in the characters Wolverine and Lady Deathstrike, can help us understand “how technology has become inseparably linked to us and the way we live our lives” (158). In Chapter 14, “Hashtag Television Advertising—The Multistep Flow of Millennial TV Usage, Commercial Viewing, and Social Media Interaction,” Andrew Sharma & Chrys Egan examine the new wave of advertising that now must create embedded, hashtag advertisements for

the shows and advertised products in order to generate chatter on social media (169). In Chapter 15, “Zombie Apocalypse, Haitian Vodou, and Media Ecology—A Cautionary Tale for Our Technological Future,” Brent Sleasman tackles the question “How can the zombie film genre assist in our understanding of human communication?” (177). Through the use of the work of Walter Ong, the author illustrates that “human communication is based on the physical presence of others, and cannot be reduced to the simple exchange of information” (184). In Chapter 16, “Uses and Gratifications Theory in *How I Met Your Mother*—True Story,” Linnea Sudduth Ward illustrates the historical development, key assumptions, and common criticisms of the theory through the television program. The application of the theory capitalizes on the premise that people meet real needs in their lives through their communication and media usage (195).

The book concludes with a focus on interpersonal communication theories. Specifically, Part Four, “Interpersonal Communication,” has four chapters designed to highlight the interactions between people. In Chapter 17, “‘Don’t Open, Dead Inside’—External and Internal Noise in *The Walking Dead*,” the authors use examples from the first season of the series *The Walking Dead* to (a) illustrate the concepts of internal and external noise and (b) provide suggestions as to why we should all think about noise in our daily communication with others. In Chapter 18, the MTV series, *Catfish: The TV Show*, which focuses on digital dating, is used to examine deception in relationships. Specifically, the theories of Interpersonal Manipulation Theory (IMT) and Interpersonal Deception Theory (IDT) are used by the authors to provide examples for understanding the principles and strategies of the two theories. The authors maintain that the theories offer ways to think about the role of deception in the relational communication process (220). Chapter 19 uses the series, *Pretty Little Liars*, as the artifact to examine friendships using Communication Privacy Management theory—a theory that focuses on the process of both concealing and revealing private information. Finally,

*Harry Potter* is used as the artifact in Chapter 20, titled “Social Penetration Theory and Relationship Formation in Harry Potter.” Specifically, the relationships between Harry, Ron, and Hermione are examined to help understand Social Penetration Theory, a theory that explains how relationships develop through communication and self-disclosure (241).

Overall the contributors were successful in examining popular culture artifacts in order to introduce a variety of communication theories in a very accessible way. A major strength of *Communication Theory and Millennial Popular Culture: Essays and Applications* is the added voices of millennial students at the end of each chapter. Specifically, each chapter offers a dialogue box “written by millennial students, responding to chapter authors’ ideas” (6). As a part of the Peter Lang Media and Communication list, the four-part book of essays is a step in the direction of what Laurence Raw describes as “the kind of productive theoretical reflection that will lead to new constructions of popular culture” (Raw 437). The writers in this book are “interpretive and critical scholars, looking at the qualities of a text or artifact, rather than the numerical outcomes of a survey” (6). Therefore, the book is well suited for undergraduate and graduate students, as well as popular culture and communication scholars. Also, the book would serve as an excellent primary textbook in communication theory courses, and a supplemental book in popular culture courses to help readers engage with the texts and artifacts to identify the theoretical concepts and add their voices to the dialogue.

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In *Deafening Modernism: Embodied Language and Visual Poetics in American Literature*, Rebecca Sanchez presents Deaf theory as a pioneering method for revisiting Modernist art. She highlights the obvious, yet overlooked, power of Deaf theory in its ability to analyze Modernism's experimental obsession with "the intersection of words, bodies, and images," for these are the very elements essential to American Sign Language (ASL) (3). Sanchez invites us to (re)consider Modernist work and its attempted abandonment of the communicative norm in order to express the authentic human experience separate from, and yet beholden to, a rigid set of linguistic expectations. She argues for multiple pathways to communication outside of verbal expression and highlights the struggles of minorities, including the disabled and especially the deaf, in validating their own forms of communication.

Deaf theory, Sanchez states, "involves both cultural and historical recovery—situating literary Modernism in the context of the history of a frequently ignored minority—and a critical lens which I will variously term Deaf insight or Deaf epistemology" (3). She asserts that all people will at one time or another experience disability, thus discovering themselves within the minority. Because of this constant possibility of disability, Sanchez argues that Deaf theory offers readings that genuinely speak to the context in which they were created. She assembles a list of authors (Eliot, Stein, HD) performers (Charlie Chaplin and Josephine Baker), and artists (Demuth) who exemplify the Modernist movement for their utilization and embodiment of textbook modernist qualities. It is this embodiment that Deaf theory has the ability to tease out with its focus on what the layered, mimetic properties of a Modernist work were rather than a definitive verbal-linguistic interpretation of words and phrases. For ASL,

she argues, is, at its core, layered and mimetic, capable of issuing a myriad of signals across time.

The rise of the celebrity poet in mainstream media is a point Sanchez discusses in her first chapter, "Impersonality." Sanchez invokes Gertrude Stein's readings, claiming that "audiences who lined up in their hundreds and even thousands to watch Stein speak, to interact with her as an embodied subject, often had very little interest in her work" (41). She also references Amy Lowell's first public reading in 1915 where "listeners were unable to separate the poem's poetic voice from the woman they saw reading, to identify it as anything other than a confessional account of a sensual experience in which they apparently had no desire to fit the nonconformant body of Lowell, who was derided throughout her life for being overweight" (42). Sanchez argues that there was an impossibility of separating the poet-body from the language much like the impossibility of separating a deaf poet from his or her reading of a work through sign language.

In her second chapter, "Primitivism," Sanchez delineates the connections between the primitivism of the Modernist period with the notion of embodiment in Deaf epistemology. She uses Josephine Baker's performance as Fatou in *La Folie de Jour* as an example of how "Primitivist spectacle created spaces where people could appear to be rebelling against contemporary mores without actually challenging the systems of power embedded in them. The semantic content of language Baker used in performance was superseded by the other forms of communication of her body" (64). Sanchez continues discussing the importance of the primitive in Modernism as it was able to focus on the moment while overlapping with a past of "other-ed" peoples in essence creating a spectacle, something to be viewed (the body) rather than heard (the words).

Sanchez takes on the (con)textual complexity inherent in Modernist works in her third chapter, "Difficulty." The "difficult" Modernists were

manipulating language, attempting to describe authentic human experience in a world where traditional linguistic rules failed. She points out that the First World War had created “newly disabled bodies” that “became the cultural symbol of the alienated, fragmented state many artists associated with modernity itself” (92). Here Sanchez pinpoints one of the most prominent struggles of the Modernist movement—the desire for identity and the power to define the “self.”

In chapter four, “The Image,” Sanchez claims that in the post-Enlightenment world, “‘visible’ has become a near synonym for ‘verifiable’” (123). Here she is able to ground the usefulness of her techniques, for ASL and Deaf communication are nothing if not visual. And so she believes that the concept of the visual for deciphering layers of meaning is a useful mode of understanding Modernist works. Sanchez deconstructs H.D.’s most famous imagist poem, “Hermes of the Ways” in which a single moment focused on inanimate elements is brought to life through the movement of the words. She explains that if we focus on the visual representation of the poem, we see words in violent motion, caught in perpetuity, much like the Modernists, searching for a way to describe the Sisyphean dilemma in which they were trapped in regards to expression and definition, for the old ways were not sufficient, and a new “movement” was taking over.

Sanchez reveals a future for Deaf theory in her Epilogue as she discusses using this theoretical framework in addressing the Human Genome Project, which has in essence turned the entirety of the human body into text. She argues that it is important to take a look at how this methodology could help us (re)frame our past as well as shape our future.

*Deafening Modernisms* offers an alternative lens for Modernist scholarship. It would provide a refreshing dialogue to a Modernist graduate course seeking to recover/discover voices inherent in the art. Revisiting Modernism with a *Deafening Modernisms* spin allows for a 21<sup>st</sup> century approach focused on the human being and its unique method of

expression, something the Modernists themselves sought to articulate, both visually and verbally, and something we still desire today. In a world where verbal communication is diminishing in the face of technology, where the text message is a preferred mode of communicating, Sanchez is hitting a high note with her insistence on deemphasizing the verbal communicative norm. And it seems such an obvious tactic for Modernist studies, which is so in tuned with the marginal, the white space, the thoughts thought but not spoken, to approach the Modernist works from the arena of the (disabled) minority, yet Sanchez underscores an area that is ripe for discovery.

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Merlock Jackson, Kathy, Lisa Lyon Payne, and Kathy Shepherd Stolley. *The Intersection of Star Culture in American and International Medical Tourism: Celebrity Treatment*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016. Print.

Moving from the deserts of California to the deep forests of Germany to the ocean coasts of Namibia, Kathy Merlock Jackson, Lisa Lyon Payne, and Kathy Shepherd Stolley take readers around the globe to explore United States celebrities' search for health and well-being through medical tourism. Medical tourism is traveling for the purpose of seeking and receiving health services (1). Initially reserved for overseas vacations to "take the waters" at specialty spas, contemporary medical tourism now encompasses a variety of health and wellness practices, including gender reassignment surgeries, cancer treatments, and alternative therapies.

The authors use case studies to center their discussion of celebrity medical tourism in three sections: (1) celebrities seeking treatment for life-threatening health issues, (2) celebrities seeking care for non-life threatening health issues, and (3) the impact of popular media coverage of medical tourism. The first section presents a “traditional” understanding of medical tourism, seeking care for life-threatening illnesses, such as AIDS and cancer. In this section, the authors tell the stories of some of the most impactful celebrity medical tourism cases, including Steve McQueen, Karen Black, Farrah Fawcett, Steve Jobs, and Rock Hudson. The diverse time span of celebrity medical tourism shows the variety of medical tourism opportunities, as well as the fact that medical tourism has been part of the US celebrity lifestyle for decades. The historical narrative approach used by the authors helps to situate each celebrity’s story in a larger cultural conversation, such as the discussion of HIV/AIDS in the 1980s and its impact on Rock Hudson’s trip to France for AIDS treatment.

The second section of the book examines cases of non-life threatening health issues. The chapters in this section are much more diverse in health issues, and highlight the different reasons celebrities might journey for health care. The chapters examine gender reassignment surgery, stem cell therapies, arthritis care, reconstructive surgery, and giving birth. These chapters, more than those in the previous section, show the mutual influence of celebrity on health. Especially with contemporary celebrities like Angelina Jolie, Kobe Bryant, and Suzanne Somers, the cases show how celebrity medical tourism can be harnessed to help promote new health and wellness treatments, and how celebrities become health spokespeople. For example, the list of wellness activities and vitamin regimens followed by Suzanne Somers is intense, but touted as effective by Somers as a celebrity endorser (Chapter 9). Kobe Bryant was so vocal about a specialty arthritis treatment, it became known as the “Kobe procedure” (120). One of the true highlights of this section is the case analysis of Christine Jorgensen, one of the first US non-celebrity medical

tourists, who traveled to Copenhagen for gender reassignment surgery (Chapter 6).

The final section is a collection of chapters examining popular media coverage of medical tourism. These chapters span a variety of media, including television (*60 Minutes*) and Oscar-winning dramas (*Dallas Buyers Club*) and documentaries (*Sicko*). All of the chapters in the third section discuss the costs of health care in the US and serve as a major rationale for why average Americans might begin to follow in the footsteps of celebrities and seek out health and wellness opportunities away from home. The one shortfall of the text is that the same complexity in individual narratives is not present in this final section. This may be the result of the book's narrative style which lends itself more to telling personal stories than reporting on popular culture presentations. Although not a focus of these chapters, the authors do highlight the organizing structures which foster medical tourism. These structures, ranging from Thailand's famous Bumrungrad International Hospital (Chapter 11) to the problems with pre-Affordable Care Act health care in the US, help to explain why celebrities turn to medical tourism and showcase the diversity of health care offered in other countries.

The cases presented in this text offer a searing commentary on the impact celebrities have on our health practices in the face of socioeconomic and access differences. As the authors argue, celebrities help to define what it means to "be human" (2) and establish health and wellness standards. When celebrities share their health stories, especially those that result in successful health treatments, they imbue those treatments, procedures, or health care organizations with credibility. Average individuals can trust these treatments because celebrities do. What is not mentioned by celebrities, however, is that the average individual cannot afford these costly procedures, the travel and living expenses, or the post-care required to maintain the new standard of wellness. Steven McQueen, one of the first US celebrity medical tourists,

even discussed the problem of cost and access, stating, “Being rich or poor shouldn’t have anything to do with it” (18). The creation of a GoFundMe account to help pay for Karen Black’s cancer treatments (Chapter 5) underscore that even cost can be an issue for celebrities. What is fascinating about several of these cases is that they do not involve celebrities who engage in medical tourism; they feature individuals who became celebrities because of medical tourism, such as the case of Christine Jorgensen (Chapter 6) and Ron Woodruff (Chapter 13).

book is perfect for a number of different disciplines, including communication, popular culture, media, sociology, and history. Its accessible writing makes it ideal for upper-division undergraduate and graduate students interested in the intersections of health, medicine, and popular culture. The celebrity cases are an interesting mix of history and cultural studies, complete with the implications of how medical tourism influences how the general public thinks and talks about cancer treatments, alternative medicine, and reconstructive surgery. Importantly, when celebrities share their stories of medical tourism, they help to raise awareness of specific health issues and new treatment options which may not yet be approved in the US (201). This can be helpful in moving public discourse and legislative agendas to be more open to certain procedures or breaking down health stigmas. Beneath it all, this book challenges our understanding of medical privilege and opportunity, highlighting one constant truth: it does not matter how much money or celebrity one has, it cannot save us from our own mortality.

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Ellcessor, Elizabeth. *Restricted Access: Media, Disability, and the Politics of Participation*. New York: New York University Press, 2016. Print.

For a few decades now the internet has drastically influenced our lives. Information is shared faster than ever, and opportunities for collaboration are increasingly becoming the center of focus. Be it globally, locally, or just be between friends, the drive to connect and share in the collaboration of ideas is intertwined into everyday life. “Participatory culture is being co-created every day by bloggers, marketers, artists, audiences, lawyers, designers, critics, educators, and others” (Burgess and Green 108). According to a study run by the Pew Research Center, 72% of American adults have used at least one of 11 different shared/collaboration and on-demand services (Smith). Lee Rainie, the director of internet, science and technology research at Pew Research Center, predicts that within ten years “the internet will become ‘like electricity’ - less visible, yet more deeply embedded in people’s lives for good and ill” (Smith). While physical walls that once prevented information and sharing have been dismantled, the web of connection has inadvertently shielded out nearly anyone who is living with visual or auditory disabilities.

Serving as an assistant professor of cinema and media studies in the department of Communication and Culture at Indiana University, Elizabeth Ellcessor examines media from the perspective of marginalized populations. Ellcessor’s book *Restricted Access* delves into the myriad of ways technology intersects body and culture, exposing the manners through which society “positions people with disabilities as an oppressed class” (4). As one of the few books tackling the issue of disability and digital media *Restricted Access* provides an extensive and well researched foundation for understanding the importance of this area of study.

Primarily focusing on power and cultural norms Ellcessor provides numerous arguments calling attention to the accepted discourse



surrounding participatory culture. Ellcessor presents what she calls an “interrogatory kit for the study of access” (19). This kit includes the areas of regulation, use, form, content, and expertise. Within each category the author presents ways to analyze digital media accessibility in relation to the ideologies of ability, neoliberal contexts, and cultural and civic participation. The author presents three to four primary questions guiding each area; for example, under regulation one question presented is “what are the structures that limit or expand access?” These well rationalized questions helped provide comprehensive understanding of each of her “kit” areas, and are supported by previous literature and current research in media regulations, access, disability studies, and media design.

This book provides a groundbreaking discussion of the technical as well as political issues surrounding access and ability. Ellcessor presents a deep and thoughtful narrative into the world of visual and auditory disability, illuminating the many walls that inhibit equal participation within a mediated society. She argues that creators of the vast media platforms begin their development of new technology from the preferred user viewpoint, assuming that everyone knows how to use the technology. Doing so overlooks the gaps between intended use and actual use. Therefore she urges media creators, through a detailed discussion of the politics of the central user position, to shift initial foci from those who can participate to those who need to participate. Ellcessor acknowledges that many technologies have been developed to assist people with disabilities including braille screen interfaces, apps that teach sign language or motor skills, as well as touching on the handful of apps created by Apple to increase accessibility. Ellcessor points out that while technology creators, including Apple and Google, recommend accessibility apps, they do not require these apps to be present in the marketplace. As a result it is expected that fewer than 15 percent of users with disabilities will find accessible apps. Thus a central argument within the text is that there is always a great deal more at play than possibility and access. It’s critical

we understand that these “forms of digital media offer affordances and constraints that become opportunities, barriers, or the foundation for further cultural adaptation” (121). From the technology itself, to the content within it, every aspect seems to be accounted for, explained, and well defined. Ellcessor draws from, and explicates on, the marketing of software and technical aspects of how these experiences occur, as well as the legal and political gatekeeping that surrounds the use of media by those with disabilities.

Although, according to the back cover, the book is presented as an ethnographic study of Internet use by people with disabilities, I would argue it would be better framed as a critical cultural text. Interviews with users were included and her emergence within the media is clear; however those experiences only provided a small area of insight into a very complex issue. Often turning to critical/cultural and feminist theories, the vast majority of this book focuses on the technical, legal, and power dynamics encompassing disability and media. As such, the primary focus of the book highlights the number of problems surrounding accessibility. For instance an argument is raised that often the conception accessibility is centered on “content” and “information” prioritizing certain forms of content and ignoring others. Case in point, closed captioning of online videos often simplify, or grossly misinterpret, the content being said, thus the quality is impacted. As a result, those with disabilities, who are seeking informative content are restrained by the abridged information provided.

Overall, *Restricted Access: Media, Disability, and the Politics of Participation* provides an excellent framework and foundation for disability scholars to build from. Ellcessor’s strong focus and goals for the book are clearly stated and supported, illuminating a variety of questions few have discussed. Ellcessor has even found a method of unpacking and explaining the technical and political aspects of media. As a result this text is timely, challenging, and a must read for advanced media scholars and

creators seeking the cross sections of media, culture, and disability. While this text is a vital foundation to the issues of media accessibility, it also provides a complicated and dense web of argument, theory, and technology.

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Rodan, Debbie, Katie Ellis and Pia Lebeck. *Disability, Obesity and Aging: Popular Media Identifications*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2014. Print.

In *Disability, Obesity and Aging*, Debbie Rodan, Katie Ellis and Pia Lebeck undertake an examination of how disability, obesity and aging are negotiated by audiences using televisual and online media. Their objective is to interrogate “the relationship between television, culture and social attitudes towards disability, obesity and aging across a number of television and online texts” (6). The argument made is that media, in its various forms, reflect and construct a normative body and contribute to social disablement – wherein the aging, obese and/or disabled body is seen as non-normative, problematic or undesirable (5). There are, however, a number of areas which require further elaboration and clarification

including a more detailed discussion of Michel Foucault, a more sustained examination of race and gender, and further methodological clarifications around media choice.

The book itself is organized into two parts: the first, "Television as a Social Experience," aims to: one, provide a historical background of popular representations of aging, obesity and disability; two, offer an account of how the symbolic power of television can both reinforce and challenge cultural norms; and three, discuss how identification and disidentification are used by television to construct a relationship of affinity or disaffinity with particular characters. The most salient parts of this section of the book include a discussion of how tacit knowledge around disability, obesity and aging is constructed and the role representation plays in this process. Cultural history, visual and verbal signifiers, socialization and language are fundamental to understanding how disability, aging and obesity "have been subject to symbolic annihilation through the media's promotion of stereotypes and strategies of exclusion" (17). In addition to tacit knowledge, this section of the book also details how television, as a social experience and when coupled with access to official and unofficial Internet forums, productively complicates the viewing experience wherein alternative representations can be debated, stereotypes challenged, and identifications explored. A prime example of this has to do with how the media construction of Susan Boyle (who appeared on *Britain's Got Talent*) as old, fat and disabled and thus outside the norm, was challenged due in large part to online conversations that questioned this kind of essentialism.

In part two, titled *Identifications*, Rodan, Ellis and Lebeck deliver a thoughtful analysis of several case studies of popular representations of disability, obesity and aging. In the chapter, *Obesity Makeover*, the television show *The Biggest Loser* is used to demonstrate how fat bodies have come to be essentialized. Through an investigation of several episodes, the authors show how this program subjects bodies to

disciplining regimes and discursive treatment whereby “thinner people” come to be seen as “happier and freer than obese people” (99). The trope of freedom is socially disabling since “freedom is defined in a very narrow sense,” as “dependent only on one’s body size according to *The Biggest Loser* discourse” (99).

In the chapter on disability, the authors make an interesting case with respect to precisely how the unidirectional flow of televisual communication has been transformed as a result of new media – specifically by blogs and online forums. Rodan, Ellis and Lebeck draw on the notion of ‘narrative prosthesis’ to illustrate how disability has been used as a device, crutch or counterpoint in order to reinforce normative positionalities.

They use the example of Alex, a character who has cerebral palsy in the Australian television program *Packed to the Rafters*, to illustrate how disabled characters are oftentimes used as “a narrative prosthesis to convey information about the other characters...” (77). As a result, disability is used by the show as a secondary, non-pivotal symbolic vehicle rather than a central plot point. This chapter points out that through online forums, viewers troubled by this framing of disability, are able to voice their concerns while simultaneously lauding the show for discussing themes not covered by other television shows.

The connections made between meaning-making, television, and online communication is one of its most significant contributions of this book. The author’s successfully set a foundation for trying to understand the ways in which online discussions about televisual texts have the capacity to disrupt hegemonic readings through interactive discussion. In the case of *Packed to the Rafters*, the authors illustrate how social media can provide a space in which “people with more experience with disability began to question and critique the construction of disability in the show” (77).

Finally, in their chapter on aging, Rodan, Ellis and Lebeck explore how aging is constructed as a bleak prospect to be feared. They draw on the makeover genre to illustrate the process by which the responsibility for remaining visibly youthful has been personalized. The show *10 Years Younger in 10 Days* is presented as a prime example of how positive aging is constructed through the lens of personal transformation and supported by the lifestyle consumer industry. Yet, online audiences are shown to be quite sophisticated in how they make sense of these programs, “mov[ing] between a process of identifying and disidentifying” (117). In many cases, audience members actively challenge the superficial and normative nature of these shows.

There are however, some areas of this book that could benefit from further elaboration. For example, the authors’ use of Foucault’s theory of disciplined bodies, as it relates to personal training, could have benefited from a more considered engagement with his primary texts and a more detailed discussion of his approach – particularly with respect to precisely how power and discourse create conditions of normalization through subjectification. Interesting work has been done in this area by Julie Henderson who draws on Foucault’s notion of governmentality to discuss the neoliberal conditions that give rise to the personalization of health and the subsequent pathologization of childhood obesity. As well, there are methodological clarifications that should be made. This is particularly the case with respect to the question of which TV shows and websites/social media were chosen, why they were chosen, and under what conditions.

Despite these gaps, the authors do offer a persuasive explanation of the precise *process* by which televisual and online media messages interact with cultural norms to form hegemonic values and ideas about beauty, acceptability and normality through the creation of ‘tacit knowledge.’ As such, and overall, this book makes an important contribution to the study of how media texts, both online and offline, are engaged with and by audiences in unexpected ways. The fact that Rodan, Ellis and Lebeck are

able ground these engagements in the marginalized experiences of disability, aging and obesity makes it all the more imperative.

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Talley, Heather Laine. *SAVING FACE: Disfigurement & the Politics of Appearance*. New York: New York University Press, 2014. Print.

*Saving Face* is an insightful addition to a growing body of literature that takes seriously a subject that many scholars have historically ignored as superficial or trivial. Heather Laine Talley's exploration of appearance and the concept of beauty, specifically in relation to the face, is complex and revealing of the central role that one part of the body—or the collection, as she puts it, of eyes, nose, lips, etc.—holds within our daily social interactions. Talley, a sociologist by training, takes on the concept of face and its meaning in public contexts. Building on Erving Goffman's work on symbolic interactionism, she introduces the concept of "facial work" to discuss "a technique of social interaction and a material practice deployed to cope with bodily stigma" (29). The book's central theoretical framework directs attention toward three main areas primarily related to medical discourses of the face: repairing, normalizing, and lifesaving. The latter concept of saving lives through plastic surgery, she admits, may seem somewhat surprising, but is indicative of the way facial work is now "often experienced as requisite for navigating life" (31).

Talley argues that “every face-to-face human interaction is premised on the ‘social fact’ that our faces tell us something about each other” (13). In some cases, this can literally be a life or death issue, as she points out when discussing the tragic story of Lucy Grealy, author of 1994’s *Autobiography of a Face*. Grealy suffered from a cancer that left her severely disfigured and ultimately died of a heroin overdose in 2002, having struggled with her condition and its social consequences for decades. Such tales, which Talley poignantly incorporates into her explorations of facial work, help to illustrate how the face and its associations with normalcy and acceptance can potentially have life or death outcomes within contemporary beauty cultures.

*Saving Face* deploys a wide breadth of theories, which range from the sociology of Goffman to the feminist psychoanalysis of Julia Kristeva, and concrete examples plucked from television and newspapers to illustrate Talley’s understanding of facial work today. She follows the historical trajectory of ideas such as facial normalcy, which emerged in the mid-nineteenth century, and the more contemporary “biomedicalizing” of the face that has now become commonplace. In doing so, she examines procedures as unobtrusive as Botox to the complete facial reconstructions that have propelled certain medical careers in recent years.

Talley begins with an interrogation of ABC’s *Extreme Makeover* and its evocations of social death, a concept she builds on from David Sudnow to describe a “point at which a patient is treated essentially as a corpse,” when diagnosing and treating the patients on the show (39). Her next chapter moves to the series of procedures known under the umbrella phrase facial feminization surgery (FFS), which surgeons developed in the 1980s and 1990s to “fix” women whose faces did not conform to the gendered understandings of normal female features. She takes the reader through changes in practices and, perhaps more importantly, their discursive treatments, which moved from being understood as elective to necessary in many cases. Her fifth chapter focuses on *Operation Smile*, a



charitable organization working within impoverished communities around the world to repair conditions such as cleft lips and palates. The organization's rhetoric of the smile as an essential and universal feature of humanity demonstrates yet another way the face plays a significant role in conceptions of normalcy and social life/death, which becomes a particularly troubling question in the third world, where large populations cannot afford the relatively basic procedures that many Westerners would have available to them shortly after birth. Talley's final chapter examines the most severe conditions that often lead to new, invasive, and potentially dangerous interventions. These cases, some of which include complete facial transplants, demonstrate the way biomedical understandings of the face, and what doctors can do to it, continue to change. This issue highlights one of the most significant ethical questions to arise in recent decades as surgeons compete to be the first to reach new peaks within these complex and transformative procedures. The stakes of such cases, Talley points out, include "identity crisis, public distrust, chronic illness, and even death" (150).

Ultimately, the strength of *Saving Face* rests in its methodical investigation of facial work in contemporary society, probing psychological, social, ethical, and technological dimensions to address an important issue. Consequently, I recommend this book to anyone who seeks a better understanding of such seemingly surface issues from disciplines including sociology, philosophy, psychology, or cultural studies. As Talley points out, "without face-work, social interaction falls apart" (25). But Goffman's metaphor for the exchanges individuals share on a regular basis becomes significantly more complex when we address the literal face's role in contemporary society. As we ask questions collectively about the troubling discourses presented in popular television shows like *Extreme Makeover*, the necessity of looking like a "normal" woman, the essentiality of the smile around the globe, and finally the fact that complete facial transplants are no longer merely science fiction, it

becomes startlingly apparent that the role of the face is not an ephemeral or superficial consideration, but a crucial one that Talley's book sheds a much needed light on.

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Wissinger, Elizabeth. *This Year's Model: Fashion, Media, and the Making of Glamour*. New York: New York University Press, 2015. Print.

Unlike the early days of modeling, when shop girls doubled as models in the stores where they worked, today's models join an industry that demands intense work practices with only a slim possibility of success. Entering as teenagers, models begin managing their bodies immediately to meet the demands of the "in" look and work around the clock to craft a refined image that appeals to brand managers and photographers. Elizabeth Wissinger's book *This Year's Model: Fashion, Media, and the Making of Glamour* studies the culture of the modeling industry as a highly technical and manipulated space influencing how models understand their bodies and how audiences interpret them. Tracing technology's impact on modeling back to its earliest days, when corsets and cameras molded models into the desired shape, Wissinger bridges these simpler "technologies" with the multifaceted technologies of today's environment, such as photoshop and plastic surgery. Her end result is a text that provides an insightful look at the complexities and challenges facing models today as part of a "blink" culture whose short attention span makes capturing the moment ever more critical (19).

Wissinger approaches this topic from the perspectives of sociology and fashion studies, bringing these fields together to examine how fashion models influence culture and everyday social practices. She argues the model's body has become as an integral part of what she labels "glamour labor" (1). This term references the highly regulated, intensive nature of today's modeling industry, as well as the elite and glamorous nature of something that feels effortless, but is in fact a demanding career. Reading like a history of modeling and, simultaneously, a treatise on the everchanging nature of technology pushing us forward, her book uses chronological organization to frame her argument on the challenges entailed in glamour labor. The end result is a text that is useful beyond her specific research focus. Audiences interested in celebrity, media, fashion, and technology will benefit from Wissinger's in-depth work that closely examines modeling as one arena irrevocably changed by technology dating to the 1800s.

Wissinger writes: "The notion of the biomediated body, which dictates that biology is increasingly framed by technology to make it productive, is a central tenet in my conception of how glamour labor works" (262). She argues that technologies harness the body and its energy to serve material purposes. Beginning with a discussion of the supermodels of the 1980s as a critical turning point in the glamourization of modeling as a career, Wissinger works to demonstrate the "transition to fashion as entertainment" (38). The 1980s changed not only how fashion houses treated models but also how audiences reacted to and understood brands, and models as their ambassadors. Wissinger argues that beauty became power in the age of the supermodels. She then documents key shifts in the cultural understanding of what it means to be a model and how glamour labor became normalized, "making what once seemed optional into something everyone should want to do" (261).

Wissinger contends that modeling transitioned from a haphazard, easy to come by job to one that requires superior professionalism. She works

through the time before and after television, and later digital media, and examines how these shifts subtly changed how models experienced work and what was expected of them. She ends with the claim that technology ultimately shapes how models understand their work and body, and these same technologies push audiences to try to shape their own bodies in similar ways. Yet, as she points out, the invisible nature of technology makes attaining the model's figure virtually impossible for those not genetically gifted. Included in her discussion are analyses of the changes in the model's size and physique over time, the way models engage during the photo shoot, and the increasing value placed in accessing one's own "je ne sais quoi" (235). However, underpinning each shift is the role technology plays, continually pushing industry changes.

Her definition of technology remains loose – including everything from developments in clothing, skin care, and other products to electronic technologies such as television, digitization, and social media. Although this may seem like a stretch at times, she continually summarizes her key points, identifying her interpretations of technology within each topic. The strength of Wissinger's work comes from her deeply rooted ties to the industry, as a New Yorker, a fashion insider, and a professor of fashion studies. Her research draws on interviews with a broad array of fashion industry workers including models, designers, make-up artists, and scouts.

At times, Wissinger dables into topics that could most likely stand on their own, such as the concepts of privacy and photographic rights, as well as the impact of the women's movements on fashion and modeling. However, she is smart to only briefly explore these topics, maintaining her focus on the model's body itself. In the end, the book provides an interesting read on an industry that so deeply shapes our culture. The perspective offers an intriguing argument that technology continues to influence our cultural standards for beauty as dictated by this trendsetting industry. As she concludes, "much of what we deem 'cool' or 'hip' can

traced back to the forces of fashion” (278). By the end of her work, it is hard to disagree.

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Dávila, Arlene, and Yeidy M. Rivero, eds. *Contemporary Latina/o Media: Production Circulation, Politics*. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2014. Print.

In *Contemporary Latina/o Media: Production, Circulation, Politics*, editors Arlene Dávila and Yeidy M. Rivero and contributing authors explore the production, circulation, and politics of Latina/o media in the United States. Their volume is an interdisciplinary, diverse, and much-needed addition to Latina/o media studies because it analyzes the transnational nature of Latina/o media production and circulation. As Dávila notes in her introductory chapter, this edited volume goes beyond the “debates over images and representation that, while important, have tended to dominate discussions of Latino media” (1-2). *Contemporary Latina/o Media* fills a void in Latina/o media studies because it utilizes a transnational focus as a lens through which its authors explore the larger political economy dynamics of Latina/o media including Spanish-language radio, Spanish-language television, and also the state of Latinas/os in mainstream prime-time television. It extends previous academic discussions of Latina/o media by focusing on two separate, yet related Latina/o media industries that are shaped and intertwined by transnational circulation, production, and distribution processes: that with roots in Latin America and that with roots in Hollywood. With this

transnational lens that weaves throughout the well-written and insightful chapters, *Contemporary Latina/o Media* explores and exposes the power dynamics, erasures, inequalities, and cultural politics that shape the production, circulation, and distribution of Latina/o media.

Collectively, these essays address the political economy of Latina/o media from a variety of theoretical, methodological, and interdisciplinary perspectives. The first section addresses issues of Latina/o media production by focusing on changes in production processes, the development of new hemispheric initiatives, and the role of language in (re)shaping media organizations and media programming. In the first essay, Juan Piñón situates the edited volume's transnational focus within an exploration of the concept "transnational" as it applies to the relationship between Latin America and U.S. media. His helpful conceptual discussion of "transnational industrial space" provides the backdrop for the remaining chapters in the first section, which explore the politics of production in news, television, and paparazzi contexts. Rodrigo Gómez, Toby Miller, and André Dorcé transition to an analysis of convergence as it applies to the media relationships between and among Mexican media and U.S. media audiences, and they conclude that Mexican media dominates Latina/o media programming in the U.S. and question Latina/o audiences' future preferences for non-Mexican media. Henry Puente further engages with the theme of transnational production by analyzing whether or not NuvoTV, the first cable network to capitalize on the U.S.' English-speaking Latino/a media audience, will be able to compete with other bicultural and bilingual television cable networks. Christopher Joseph Westgate's chapter carries on the discussion of the role of language American Latina/o media by analyzing how NBC Latino, Fusion, and Fox News Latino create the illusion of integration by evidencing how monolingual media both threaten linguistic pluralism and promote assimilationist principles. Frances Negrón-Muntaner exposes the current state of Latinos in contemporary U.S. media and argues that

campaigns and effective political mobilization can help improve the lack of Latina/o representation in the media. Finally, Vanessa Díaz provides a case study analysis of Latino paparazzi image production and concludes that, although a vital component of celebrity media production, Latino paparazzi photographers are excluded from larger production processes and situated within larger discourses of racism and (in)visibility.

The second section of *Contemporary Latina/o Media* focuses on circulation, distribution, and media policies. It explores both national and local policies that shape Latino/a media distribution and circulation and includes case studies that spotlight Colombian, Mexican, and American media. Chapters include Yeidy M. Rivero's analysis of the television series *A Corazón Abierto* and its protests about Afro-Colombian identities and media representation; Omar Rincón and María Paula Martínez's exploration of how Colombian television production is adapting to American/Latina/o audiences and the (re)creation of Bogota as a location for Latina/o television production; Mari Castañeda's analysis of the effect of media policies in shaping the U.S. Latino radio industry; Dolores Inés Casilla's analysis of the politics of language and race in Spanish-language radio ratings; and Hector Amaya's exploration of Gerardo Ortiz's and Jenni Rivera's convergence in relation to standing in for Mexican identity, authenticity, and place. Taken together, these case studies explore the cultural and transnational politics surrounding Latina/o media representations both domestically and abroad and call into question larger issues of race, ethnicity, language, and power.

The third section focuses on the politics of consumption and reception, with an eye to audiences' responses to Latina/o media texts and redefining Latinidad in the process. This section explores how media consumption and media response is a process highly influenced by one's ethnic, racial, and identity politics. For example, chapters by Deborah R. Vargas and María Elena Cepeda analyze the music of Jenni Rivera, Los Tigres del Norte, and Calle 13 and how these performers market, perform, and create

new visions of Latinidad for Latina/o consumers. Jillian Báez's chapter analyzes Latina media audiences and reactions to representations of Latina bodies in Latina/o media. Chapters by Christina Beltrán, Ed Morales, and Juan González conclude the volume by analyzing the role of and agency of Latina/o activist communities within immigrant rights and media contexts.

This volume makes a valuable contribution to Latino/a media studies by offering a fresh set of perspectives about the cultural politics of Latina/o media. It provides a well-constructed set of strong, insightful, and novel chapters that utilize multiple theoretical and methodological approaches, and its success lies not just in its contribution to popular culture studies and Latina/o media studies, but also in the questions it raises for popular culture and Latina/o media studies scholars more specifically and the future of Latina/o media studies more broadly. It calls into question issues of language (what are the politics of Latina/o media in English, not Spanish?), new ideas about digital media and its ability to shape activist efforts and new constructions of Latinidad, and the larger politics associated with defining, identifying, circulating, and consuming Latina/o media.

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Shonekan, Stephanie. *Soul, Country, and the USA: Race and Identity in American Music Culture*. New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2015. Print.

Stephanie Shonekan's *Soul, Country, and the USA: Race and Identity in American Music Culture* comes to readers and scholars at a pivotal period in American race relations. The massacre by white supremacist Dylann Roof of nine church members at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina has reignited the Confederate flag debate. Daily, American news media viewers are saturated with images and videos of police brutality, too often of white officers beating black citizens. With the Ferguson protests and the "Black Lives Matter" campaign born from the tragic death of Travon Martin, a new discourse has emerged on race relations in the United States. A neo-civil rights movement has begun that illuminates the disparaging gap between the dominant white culture and second-class citizen African Americans and other social minorities. Shonekan enters this discussion from a unique perspective. She approaches the difficult racial discourse through the analysis of music. Specifically, she analyzes connections and disconnections between country and soul/hip-hop music.

Shonekan divides her work into nine chapters beginning with the intertwined history of country and soul/hip-hop music. She chooses to use the terms country and soul/hip-hop music broadly to represent white and black cultural music genres. Interestingly, country and soul/hip-hop music genres share their roots in the impoverished former Confederate South among freed slaves and poor white farmers. Shonekan explains how the music evolved in quality and lyrical depth as well as audience expansion while still holding true to its past with themes of poverty and repression. The work continues by approaching subtopics such as media, race and identity, gender, semiotics, politics, religion, and concludes with a brief overview of each. Each chapter develops the history of the subtopic and

then asks thought provoking questions about modern society's treatment of social classes through the interpretation of music. For example, Shonekan asks the reader to think about the low status of women in modern soul/hip-hop and questions the far-right nature of country music as a symbolic anthem of the political right.

One example of the depth of Shonekan's questions is her discourse on modern society and whiteness. Shonekan makes the poignant statement: "...black music distills the message to forms of black identity and pride, country music can forgo the focus on ethnic identity since the whiteness that prevails there precludes them from the racial discrimination that comes from American hegemonic racial history" (140). Whereas, she explains further down the page, "Country music also carries with it an aura of Southern pride, which can often be read (misread?) as white pride." Shonekan forces a reader unfamiliar with social division to contemplate the ugly and often purposefully overlooked stratified system of white privilege in the United States.

Shonekan balances modern music with traditional music and discusses attempts to bridge genres and racial divisions. She gives the example of Brad Paisley's "Welcome to the Future" as a song from the country genre that directly tackles injustices of the past with a hopeful outlook towards the future. She also discusses the crossover of artists from the different genres, including Eminem in soul/hip-hop music or Darius Rucker in country music. Shonekan believes that while small in number, the crossover artists are beginning to bridge cultural divisions.

While the overall work is thoughtful and intriguing, Shonekan could have developed the concept of hip-hop more vividly. The term is dated amongst youth. I had a lively discussion in several of the courses I taught this past spring and summer about the term hip-hop. The urban students almost unanimously agreed that hip-hop was a term of their parents and grandparents. They view modern urban music as rap and believe it is unique to hip-hop. They believe the term rap is more accurate of young

urban culture with themes that focus on urban conflicts (including racial inequality) and strive to improve their status. Shonekan could, in future works, either incorporate the term rap or clearly add the term to the development of the soul/hip-hop genre.

Shonekan's work is a powerful text. It can be academically challenging, but it is well worth the cognitive effort to gain a clear and in-depth analysis of music as a gateway to a larger conversation about our society and how it is represented. I would recommend this work to academically minded audiences such as critical studies, rhetorical studies, Afrocentric studies, sociology, anthropology, and mass media, amongst many others. This work would be helpful for both graduate and undergraduate students to conceptualize modern social structural problems. I would also recommend this work to a lay reader who may be interested in some of today's social issues as reflected in music. After reading the work and listening to Brad Paisley's "Welcome to the Future," a person could connect to the current larger social divides at hand and conceptualize their importance that lie beyond the audio pleasing lyrical beats.

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Brawley, Sean and Chris Dixon. *The South Seas: A Reception History from Daniel Defoe to Dorothy Lamour*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015. Print.

Few geographic areas in the world are subjected to more receptive gaze than what Sean Brawley and Chris Dixon refer to as the South Seas region

in the Pacific Ocean: the swath of the South Pacific stretching from New Guinea to Hawaii. Ironically, distance makes it so that few actually travel or engage in the South Seas, except through representative narratives and images of the region. This volume on the South Seas intertwines several lines of inquiry on the region; history is dominant and presented through deep analysis of artifacts that center the South Seas at the core of various narratives. Equally compelling is a contextual history of the forces outside the South Pacific that center the notion of escape in cultural productions that rely on myth and calculated misrepresentation of the South Seas. The intersection of these lines of inquiry not only make the book captivating, it serves as a model for historians and media scholars to investigate overlap in geographically-driven research. The book touches on gaze and consumption, as suggested by the title, but the authors also contextualize gender and notions of sexual permissibility, colonialism in the narratives of and representations of exploration, and even ways in which miscegenation and racial complexity were perceived in media artifacts. The volume is dense and covers a tremendous amount of history, but is unrivaled in detail, richness of narrative and inclusion of excellent research including unusual sources such as early drafts of film scripts.

Chapter 1, "Beginnings," contextualizes exploration of the South Seas through the first wave of travel literature tied to the region. The mix of travelogues alongside literature imagining the region, Defoe's *Crusoe* for example, set precedent for how the space of the South Seas was to be represented for Western consumption. The popular imagination was stoked with descriptions of exotic geographies and tales constructing a soon to be stereotyped trope of South Seas women's sexuality and libido.

Chapters 2 and 3 introduce the American presence in the South Seas and highlight the beginning of literary representations of the region for American audiences. Compared to European narratives, American versions do not become prevalent until the early 1800s, however much of the observational character of American writing underscored notions of

the exotic and of the “noble savage.” As commerce drove American enterprise into the South Seas, the authors catalog the transition from missionary impulse on the part of Americans in the region followed by exploration. Each of these transitions was reflected in literary output, both fictional and non-fiction. Remarkably, conduits for Americans to “learn” about the South Seas included American literary luminaries such as Edgar Allan Poe and Herman Melville; Melville’s works *Typee* and *Omoo* were considered “instrumental in sustaining fascination with the South Seas” (Brawley and Dixon 36).

Chapter 4 presents insight into the American psyche and its frontier conquering mentality. Brawley and Dixon present a meticulous literary landscape that connects San Francisco as the gateway to American ambition in the Pacific and into the South Seas; the lynchpin figure for this storyline, Scottish writer Robert Louis Stevenson. The connections and intersections between art, networks among artists and writers, and inspiration make this chapter emblematic of how Brawley and Dixon explain the history of the South Seas; dynamic with much interconnection.

Chapters 5 and 6 position externality into the history of the South Seas by focusing on the liminal geography of New Guinea and the Australian experience in the South Seas respectively. Both chapters are important to the narrative of the South Seas, especially in how racialization and jarring literary representations of New Guinea reified the barbarian “other” in contrast to other Pacific cultures.

Chapters 7 through 10 reflect the apex of cultural transmissions from the South Seas to the rest of the world. The spectacle of world’s fairs and expositions start the chapters and lead to research that emphasizes the consumption of South Seas’ culture in a multitude of forms, these chapters connect the importance of channels such as music, literature, educational platforms and tourism.

The final four chapters of the book focus on Hollywood’s role in crafting films about the South Seas. Significant, as the authors suggest, not

only was film experiencing its heyday, the films centered around the South Seas were seminal for “Westerners’ understanding” of the region (171). Chapter 11 focuses on the rise of South Seas pictures retelling of infrastructure issues and the meeting of many of Hollywood’s pivotal players in those formative years. The films of this early era anchor what becomes a consistent pattern of misrepresentation rooted in Western manipulation of the imagined South Seas. Chapter 12 places South Seas films squarely in the adventure genre; from early scientific efforts to what the authors’ detail as films used to evaluate and appraise civilization. The story of the mutiny of the HMAV *Bounty*, is the core of Chapter 13. The authors present a detailed interrogation of the retelling of the mutiny across many literary works. As film versions of the *Bounty* story emerged, so did the impulse to escape to the South Seas as a remedy to the maladies of the Depression. Finally in Chapter 14 the authors shed light on the films of Dorothy Lamour, categorizing them as part of the South Seas adventure genre that represented a level of “pedagogical power that was probably unrivaled in the history of the South Seas tradition (251). Gaze and authenticity come to head as Lamour’s films influence a generation of people soon to experience the South Seas in combat.

The *South Seas* offers one of the most comprehensive examinations of cultural reproduction and consumption of the South Pacific. One challenge is the broadness of the volume, speaking to the region as a whole, sometimes tantalizing specific island and cultural examples without offering more immersion. The middle and concluding chapters, especially the last four chapters on Hollywood and the South Seas are the gems in this volume and offer tremendous details likely to be of importance to historians of the region and for historians of media studies, whom have not seen such a detailed examination of gender and physical representations focused exclusively on the South Seas.

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Davé, Shilpa, Leilani Nishime, and Tasha Oren. *Global Asian American Popular Cultures*. New York University Press, 2016. Print.

The book *Global Asian American Popular Culture* edited by Shilpa Davé, Leilani Nishime, and Tasha Oren (2016) is an ambitious and rich compilation of research regarding the process of integration, participation, and challenges associated with identity and citizenship of Asian Americans in the United States. This edited volume calls for a critical multidisciplinary study of Asian American popular media culture. It considers how digital technologies and the rise of new media platforms assist with producing and circulating diverse representations of Asian American identities. Moreover, the authors argue that this book provides “[...] a multidisciplinary study of Asian American cultural productions as part of a complex conversation with American history, contemporary mainstream media, and burgeoning digital technologies” (1). Specifically, the book is divided into four parts and twenty-two chapters, progressing from individual celebrities to constructions of Asian American communities to depictions of Asian-ness in mainstream U.S. media to transnational popular culture.

Entitled “Stars and Celebrities,” Part One explores different Asian American celebrities within various historical and cultural contexts and how these public figures navigate the politics of identity and representation. Chapter One looks at the role Bruce Lee’s movies had on Asian American migrants, discussing the way martial arts represent a positive example of globalization, cultural commodity, and migration. Chapter Two reports the way media portrayed former world-boxing champion, Manny Pacquiao from the Philippines, and how this image helped to build a sense of nationalism, heroism, manhood, and identity in the Filipino community within the United States. Chapter Three discusses the impact that the late James Shigeta, a Japanese American film star and

romance icon, had in breaking stereotypes associated with Asian male sexuality. Chapter Four explores how parenting literature such as Amy Chua's *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* have contributed to public debates related to Asian parenting and its impact on Asian American children. Chapter Five describes the trajectory that Asian American comedian Kevin Wu took from YouTube to CBS's *Amazing Race* and discusses the tensions between alternative media and mainstream media in the self-presentation of Asian identities. Finally, Chapter Six explores Korean American "outsider" artist David Choe's life experiences and dramatic story about immigration and discrimination that inspired the documentary film *Dirty Hands: The Art and Crimes of David Choe*.

Part Two, "Making Community," examines how Asian Americans are influencing U.S. popular culture by using alternative media and other cultural vehicles, such as museums, to consolidate its collective identity and legacy in the United States. Chapter Seven explores the narratives inserted in Asian American rap and hip-hop music, specifically through the songs that Cambodian American singer Sambath Hy uses to find visibility outside U.S. mainstream media and to express his experiences related to racial discrimination. Chapter Eight explores how a Pakistan radio station in Houston is creating a space for the Pakistan community to have access to information directly from Pakistan. Chapter Nine critically approaches the Smithsonian Institution's Asian Pacific American Center, focusing on how U.S. institutions are promoting spaces of affirmation of Asian American cultures. Chapter Ten navigates the blogging world that Asian Americans have been widely taking advantage of, to share food recipes as a mechanism of identification with their motherlands. Chapter Eleven plunges into the efforts that American Vietnamese are making to preserve the historic legacy that in most cases resulted in their migration to the United States.

Part Three, "Wading in the Mainstream," drives the reader into themes related to media representation of Asian symbols and culture. Chapter



Twelve discusses the “tourist gaze” (185), a perspective that Hollywood and U.S. media have developed about Hawaii and supported by “aloha culture” narratives. Chapter Thirteen looks at the U.S. film industry that tends to promote science fiction movies that emphasize the sense of “racialization of technology” (197) through the use of Asian American characters. Chapter Fourteen debates the performance of Asian Americans in rock music. Chapter Fifteen discusses the excellent achievements of Indian American students in the National Spelling Bee Competition. Chapter Sixteen explores the success that Asian American candidates have in culinary competitions promoted by the U.S. mainstream media.

Part Four, “Migration and Transnational Popular Culture,” emphasizes issues related to racial codes created to characterize Asian American culture within a transnational space. Chapter Seventeen explores the concept of the “Stinky Indian” (263) built by Urban Dictionary and Google and how this term has impacted Indian Americans. Chapter Eighteen analyzes how Bollywood productions that include references to 9/11 were able to create an alternative and fairer portrayal in comparison to the Hollywood overrepresentation of Caucasian victims. Chapter Nineteen discusses the challenges that some Korean pop (K-pop) singers face with issues of cultural “authenticity” as they promote the hip-hop genre drawn from African American roots. Chapter Twenty discusses Western ideals of beauty that are imposed and culturally assimilated by Asian American women. Deeply analyzed in this chapter is the media facilitation of these dominant narratives of beauty. Chapter Twenty-One explores the impact that virtual fashion has on devaluing the Asian clothing manufacturing industry that for years has been respected and profitable. Chapter Twenty-Two discusses the challenges that the U.S. Filipino/a transgender individuals face when they return to the motherland, focusing on the films *Miguel/Michele* (1998) and R. Zamora Linmark’s novel *Leche* (2011a).

To sum up, *Global Asian American Popular Cultures* speaks to the complex and contradictory ways texts, audiences, and media make meanings of Asian American popular culture. Pushing the boundaries of Asian American studies, the collection of essays provides different methods and theories to investigate national, international, and transnational processes of assimilation, integration, and resistance by Asian Americans within the context of media and popular culture. Graduate students and scholars alike interested in Asian American studies, popular culture studies, and media studies will find this edited collection a valuable resource as it addresses a number of issues regarding race, identity, (in)visibility, authenticity, commodification, alternative media, and global contexts that affirm Asian and Asian American presences and contributions to media and popular culture within and beyond the United States.

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Glick, Jeremy Matthew. *The Black Radical Tragic: Performance, Aesthetics, and the Unfinished Haitian Revolution*. New York: NTU Press, 2016. Print.

Jeremy Matthew Glick's *The Black Radical Tragic: Performance, Aesthetics, and the Unfinished Haitian Revolution* is a complex book that draws on history, political science, memory studies, literature, philosophy, and cultural studies. At times jarring, as when reading Deleuze and Guattari for the first time, Glick also evokes the very best of scholars like Ian Baucom whose work similarly weaves a complex tapestry of high

theory and concern for the political present. This is a work that will be important for years to come as an example of the most theoretically rich combinations of history, race, and critical approaches to capitalism ever presented. Glick's text is divided into eight sections: Introduction, Overture, four chapters, Conclusion, and Coda. The Notes and Index follow and provide a treasure trove of sources and ideas for further exploration. Each section is roughly the same length, and the text is just over 200 pages. In each section, Glick introduces a constellation of thinkers and texts, allowing him to discuss *The Black Jacobins* early in the text and *Hamlet* and Malcolm X in the Conclusion. His wide ranging interests, from Hegel to Hansberry, help make this text more than literary theory or philosophy or history. Glick has produced an interdisciplinary work that will frustrate some readers, but embolden and enlighten many more.

Glick's central argument, or at least the one most important for radicals today, is that there is hope in the present despite, or perhaps because of, history's precariousness. Because, for Glick, pessimism does not mean giving up or retreating toward inactivity. Instead, the danger of revolution, in light of the troubling racial past in Haiti and the United States, and arguably throughout many regions of the world, offer the conditions of possibility for new combinations of historical understanding and political action. This is pessimism as optimism. Glick is sanguine, but not in the sophomoric hopefulness of uncritical optimism. He is sanguine in the face of dire situations precisely because they are so dire.

Glick is also, in some sense, a realist. He understands that revolutions are crushed, dreams dashed, and hope insufficient to carry the day. Glick's ready embrace of failure and of the constant antagonisms inherent in racialized and capitalist structures, mark his critical process as a rewarding avenue in troubling times. Rather than accept that white supremacy has won the day, or offer platitudes about the Hegelian dialectic's eventual resolution of antagonisms, Glick centers the mediation of black singularity

and group identity as the enabling force of resistance. This approach differs from some recent theorizing about revolution that either views the individual or the group as the agent of change. Rather than accept one or the other, as if the individual and group occupied separate revolutionary spheres, Glick seeks progress in the interplay between the two.

A telling tension illustrates Glick's genius. Most scholars of history or black radicalism are well aware of Toussaint L'Ouverture's role in the Haitian Revolution, but fewer know of the tension in thought between he and his nephew Moïse. Moïse was faithful to the masses, more loyal to the people and more anti-capitalist than his uncle who feared the ways in which the black masses might disrupt his power. Toussaint orders Moïse executed, evidence of the breakdown in revolutionary zeal. Moïse stands for fidelity to the revolution, yet it is Toussaint that we revere and remember. In this way the complexity of the black past haunts the black radical present. We remember the least revolutionary of the two in this dyad, the one who did not wish to break up the estates and who did not fully align with the black masses.

This is where Hegel comes up again. For scholars hoping for some fresh, interesting, pithy prose about Hegel and the dialectic, Glick does not disappoint. L'Ouverture is a node in a larger dialectic of black radicalism that is both informative of and eclipsed by modern black radical moments. Glick does not simply trace black radicalism to Haiti, he explains how Haiti exemplifies the complex dialectic of revolution and also that further analysis and investigation can explode the dialectic. This is to indicate, the dialectic need not be finished and is indeed, with the help of scholars and activists of all sorts, always able to be reinvigorated, re-approached, and renewed.

The repetition of the Haitian Revolution in media and culture exemplifies the important role memory has for black radicalism. In the same way that *The Birth of a Nation* repeats Nat Turner's Rebellion (which has been repeated many times) and the poetry of M. NourbeSe

Phillip recreates the Zong Massacre, repetition has long been an important trope of discovery and empowerment. Remembering, recreating, and retelling have always been powerful strategies to embolden the individual and fortify the collective. Glick helps expand the relevance of the Haitian Revolution to our present day, reshaping and remembering it so that today's revolutionaries can arm themselves and carry forward the banner of history's power.

This book is highly recommended for scholars and advanced graduate students. Because of its density, the book will demand more than one read. Paired with Ian Baucom's *Specters of the Atlantic*, *The Black Radical Tragic* would present a complex story of black memories and capitalist control with more than enough material to fill a graduate seminar. Scholars and students will be rewarded by generous notes and a strong index, making the text helpful to graduate students compiling an exam list or scholar's searching for bibliographical details. Glick is to be commended for producing such a well thought out, richly textured, and rewarding book.

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Franke, Katherine. *Wedlocked: The Perils of Marriage Equality (How African Americans and Gays Mistakenly Thought the Right to Marry Would Set Them Free)*. New York: NYU Press, 2015. Print.

Using a historical and intersectional lens, *Wedlocked: The Perils of Marriage Equality* presents a timely warning concerning marriage and its

discontents. With *Wedlocked*, Katherine Franke joins a series of other LGBT scholars and activists reflecting on the unintended consequences of marriage equality and its uneven distribution of “freedom.” What makes the book unique is her historical approach (full of examples from the eras of emancipation and reconstruction) and her careful consideration of intersections of class, gender and race. Franke simultaneously inhabits the roles of archivist and activist with skill and her argument for contemporary relevance is stark. Franke is concerned with the role of marriage in the liberation movements for formerly enslaved people as well as same sex-couples and the important lessons they have to teach us about the possibilities and limits of rights. Franke argues that on the one hand we often fail to understand what marriage really is and what it does while on the other hand we have also expected it to be a magic elixir to remedy a host of inequities connected to race and sexual orientation. She asserts that “a desire for rights should come with an awareness of the costs, constraints, and hidden agendas they bring with them” (12). So, what does it really mean to be free and equal and what role has marriage played in these pursuits? Are we asking too much of marriage? Is it asking too much of us? *Wedlocked* would have us believe it is a bit of both.

The first four chapters of *Wedlocked* are organized around specific aspects of marriage framed in the eras of Civil War and Reconstruction. Chapter one, “Freedom by Marriage,” explains how marriage became a “freedom ticket” for thousands of enslaved women and children near the end of the Civil War. Marriage, and the emancipation that came with it, was used as a tool to incentivize the enlistment and retention of black soldiers, but in doing so women became merely spouses rather than full citizens. Chapter two, “Fluid Families,” examines the kinds of relationships, connections and kinship enslaved and gay people created during times when marriage was not an option and asks what sorts of lessons we can learn from these periods. The chapter also explores the ways in which marriage precludes certain forms of kinship. Franke

effectively uses the example of previously enslaved persons having more than one spouse and the confusion this created when multiple wives applied for war widow pensions. The point here is that the diversity of romantic and sexual relationships in the heterosexual black community before Reconstruction and the rigid strictures imposed on marriages during Reconstruction share important correlations with non-traditional families found in queer communities today. *Wedlocked* argues that marriage equality puts non-normative types of couplings in peril when they fail to adhere to heterosexual norms.

In Franke's view, not only is marriage not the measure of all things, as it is often implied to be by marriage equality advocates, but it also tends to snuff out the sexual liberties many couples might have been accustomed to. Chapters three and four, "Boots Next to the Bed" and "Am I My Brother's Keeper?" use the historical record to illustrate some of the legal entanglements associated with marriage and how they were used to police the public and private behavior of African Americans during the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. During Reconstruction many southern states passed laws that automatically married ex-slaves and as a result, many African Americans found themselves subject to a host of new legal issues. Gay couples might be wise consider these lessons of history. As Franke points out, "getting married means that your relationship is no longer a private affair since a marriage license converts it into a contract with three parties: two spouses and the state" (121). Not only did previously enslaved African Americans face an inability to organize their intimate lives as they saw fit, but marriage and fidelity were often preconditions to getting particular types of aid. Marriage became a means through which African American communities could be policed from both within and without.

The final two chapters, “The Afterlife of Racism and Homophobia” and “What Marriage Equality Teaches Us about Sex and Gender,” unpack the contemporary lessons we can learn and critical questions we want to ask about marriage. Franke is certainly not the first scholar to pose these questions. Feminist scholars and activists have been critiquing the institution of marriage for decades. Over 15 years ago Michael Warner’s *The Trouble with Normal* (1999) questioned the wisdom of placing marriage equality at the forefront of gay activism, warning us about the intrusion of state power into queer life. He wrote then that “marriage has become the central legitimating institution by which the state regulates and permeates people’s most intimate lives; it is the zone of privacy outside of which sex is unprotected” (96). Franke’s *Wedlocked* is a pointed reminder of Warner’s concerns about privacy and governmental intrusion in a time when marriage equality is swiftly becoming the new normal.

In the final chapters of *Wedlocked*, we begin to truly appreciate its unique contribution as Franke builds on Warner’s work and breaks down the successful arguments made for marriage equality. The rhetoric was essentially conservative in nature, the face of the movement was overwhelmingly white, and the victory comes at a cost to those who decide not to partake in it. Franke asks us to consider whether there is something essentially heterosexual about marriage and whether the rules and norms of the institution are well suited to govern the lives and interests of same-sex couples (209). She presents some compelling answers to these questions and solid legal examples to illustrate them. *Wedlocked* is a stark reminder that inasmuch as marriage can facilitate commitment and kinship, it can also be used as a means to regulate and discipline. It can carry with it unintended consequences for those within it and can also stigmatize those outside of it. *Wedlocked* gives academics, activists and the general reading public a fresh take on some of the problematic strands woven into the ties that bind. It would be a welcome



addition to any course seeking an intersectional approach to issues of sexuality and gender.

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Warner, Michael. *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life*. New York: Free Press, 1999. Print.

Watson, Elwood, Jennifer Mitchell, and Marc Edward Shaw, eds. *HBO's Girls and the Awkward Politics of Gender, Race and Privilege*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015. Print.

*Girls* premiered on HBO in April 2012, a year after I stopped teaching and started deaning. Having long taught courses about the politics of popular culture as well as gender, sexuality, and media, and specializing in studies of embodiment, I pined for the opportunity to discuss this show with bright students who were tuned in to conversations about ideology and representation. Several years later, I still haven't had the chance, but *HBO's Girls and the Awkward Politics of Gender, Race, and Privilege*, edited by Elwood Watson, Jennifer Mitchell, and Marc Edward Shaw, helps to fill some of that void by presenting an engaging chorus of perspectives on the cultural work done by the series and its surrounding public discourse. The collection explores the series over its first four seasons, riffing on many of the themes explored in a dedicated 2013

“Commentary and Criticism” section of *Feminist Media Studies* that evaluated on the show just one year in.

The collection’s ten chapters are framed by an editorial introduction with a chatty, clubby voice; the book seems to be aimed at educated fans of the series. The editors counter critics who highlight the unlikability of *Girls*’ four heroines, arguing that Lena Dunham, the show’s creator, often forces viewers into a state of confusion about how we should feel about her characters (Watson, Mitchell & Shaw 3), creating a more complicated relationship between audience and series than can be said of many other shows.

A number of solid chapters explore the series’ meaning. Jennifer Mitchell’s “She’s Just Not That Into You: Dating, Damage, and Gender” compares *Friends*, *Sex and the City*, and *Girls* as it focuses on the role of damage in dating. In contrast to what she sees as the conservatism of both older series, Mitchell notes that Dunham’s decision to regularly depict bad sex and interpersonal failings is groundbreaking in its rejection of the “fairy tale trajectory” to which its predecessors succumbed (22). Likewise, Marc Edward Shaw, in “Falling from Pedestals: Dunham’s Cracked *Girls* and Boys,” appreciates the cracks and fractures in the constructions of gender that the show reveals (84); he looks, turn by turn, at such fissures in the portrayals of several of the show’s characters across storylines.

Some of the most groundbreaking work done by the series surrounds women’s embodiment, and the collection offers two chapters that specifically explore these issues. Jocelyn Bailey’s “‘The Body Police’: Lena Dunham, Susan Bordo, and HBO’s *Girls*” analyzes the controversy over Lena Dunham’s body and frequent nudity through the lens of Susan Bordo’s feminist work on the relationship between women’s embodiment and subjectivity. In a similar vein, Maria San Filippo’s “Owning Her Abjection: Lena Dunham’s Feminist Politics of Embodiment” examines how *Girls* repositions women’s embodied subjectivity in a maneuver that deploys negative images of women as part of a feminist critique.

Particularly successful chapters move the conversation in innovative directions. Yael Levy's "Girls' Issues: The Feminist Politics of *Girls*'s Celebration of the 'Trivial'" explores triviality as a gendered construct and a form of feminist resistance, noting the series' harnessing of "important" themes (like death) to deliver "trivial" ones (like women and their feelings) (67). (If only this chapter were a bit longer!) Hank Willenbrink's chapter, "Capitalizing on Post-Hipster Cool: The Music That Makes *Girls*," makes an excellent theoretical contribution in its exploration of musical taste as currency and subcultural capital within the post-hipster movement. Willenbrink astutely points out that within the series, "irony not only functions as a way to buffer individuals from being branded (and socially marked) with having bad taste, it also contributes to the consumerism of hipsters by making all cultural materials available to be used if branded as an ironic choice" (94). Finally, in "Lena Dunham: The Awkward/Ambiguous Politics of White Millennial Feminism," Elwood Watson offers a striking critique of the arguments made by some of Dunham's defenders against charges of race-based exclusionary behavior (149). Although Watson does offer Dunham some props for the characterization of Sandy (160), the white main character's Black boyfriend featured during a short arc in Season Two, his chapter stands apart from the others in the collection in the trenchancy of his critiques surrounding the show's racial politics.

An eternal problem with edited collections is unevenness. A *very* close analysis of the underlying meaning of the books that appear on the show (Witherington 127), an investigation of the character Marnie's problematic appropriation of a Kanye West song (Vayo 167), and an examination of the show's messages about Gen X culture (Pace 107), are animated by interesting ideas but deliver a questionable scholarly payoff in terms of compelling new insights.

In addition, given that the series had broadcast several seasons at the time the book was published, there is perhaps too much examination of the

same scenes across different chapters. Some scenes, like the one in which Hannah's boyfriend Adam calls her a "little street slut," are analyzed in many different chapters from slightly different angles, giving a repetitive feel.

On the whole, the collection has a lot to offer readers who are acquainted with the series and want to get a better handle on its ideological underpinnings. Many of the chapters would be usefully assigned for undergraduate reading in courses examining race, class or gender (especially the latter) in media.

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Newman, Emily L., and Emily Witsell, eds. *The Lifetime Network: Essays on "Television for Women" in the 21st Century*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2016. Print.

Given the advertising tagline, "Television for Women," it should come as little surprise that The Lifetime Network has garnered little critical attention in their 30-plus years of programming. But Lifetime continues to be a network that is leading the way in both niche marketing and in the creation of original programming. As one of the most watched networks, a volume like this is long overdue. Previously, the only long-form analysis on Lifetime was a 1995 special issue of *Camera Obscura*, which analyzed the network just eleven years after its premier. As one of the first networks to engage in gender-casting as an approach to the growing market of narrowcasting and in niche marketing, The Lifetime Network should be analyzed for its successful foray into audience targeting and successful

creation of original programming since 1984. Emily L. Newman and Emily Witsell's collection investigates just some of the vast programming and branding approaches that Lifetime has utilized in thirty years as one of the most watched cable networks.

With an insightful introduction, Newman and Witsell frame the long-lasting success and branding changes that Lifetime has had over its first thirty years. They discuss the creation of a network for women and how Lifetime approached creating and maintaining a woman's space across airwaves and in ever-increasing digital spaces. They frame their edited collection in terms of television as a medium that for decades overlooked and under-tapped the audience of women. And they place this collection in a framework of scholarship that has likewise overlooked the importance of a network that began by purporting to be "television for women." Lifetime has grown with technology and popular culture, creating more original episodic television shows, more reality programming, and creating ways for fans to engage with Lifetime content in digital spaces.

The sections in this book analyze Lifetime's reality and internet programming, original episodic programming as well as original movies. The section on reality and internet programming offers an outstanding analysis of the show *Girlfriend Intervention* and its use of stereotypical representations of black and white women, considers the position of gender and race in the twenty-first century, and raises questions about lingering historical conflicts between black and white women. This section also offers an interesting analysis of a short-lived Lifetime online mash-up tool and its relationship to the culture of "vidders" online. Additionally this section has an intriguing discussion of *Project Runway*'s transition from Bravo to Lifetime and how this worked within the system of rebranding that Lifetime was experiencing at the time.

The section on original episodic programming contains one essay that examines the popular, long-lasting show *Army Wives* and a second essay that examines two short-lived speculative fiction shows, *The Lottery* and

*Witches of East End*. These two essays launch into issues that confront more recent programming on Lifetime, namely examining how shows on the network make strides toward more progressive representations of women and how shows rely on narratives and characters that continue to adhere to the same tropes that have dominated Lifetime's programming. In some ways, these essays touch on what Lifetime is now doing with their original show, *UnReal*, a fictional television show about the production of a reality television. *UnReal* combines elements of progressive representations while adhering to familiar tropes of women competing for a man's attention.

The third section on Lifetime original movies approaches three important topics: eating disorders, kidnapped children, and rape revenge narratives. These essays analyze some of the main themes running through more current Lifetime movies and how they demonstrate shifting perspectives through popular culture narratives. Lifetime has been making original movies since 1990. These original movies have demonstrated a lot of shifting perspectives and cultural changes, they address important issues for women, adapt books geared toward women readers, and present movies based on real events and lives. Given the large variety and many years of movies, including Lifetime's creation of their own Lifetime Movie Network, much more could be addressed on this important topic and the cultural impact of Lifetime as a brand.

The primary value of *The Lifetime Network* is that it sparks future scholarly inquiry, and hopefully this will encourage more studies of this under-examined network. With the ever-expanding realm of cable networks and the growth in narrowcasting, it is increasingly important to look at network presence and branding in cable networks. Even more importantly, scholars need to examine how such networks construct identity when they engage in identity politics, like they do for gender-casting. Examining gender-casting and intersections of gender, race, ability, class, etc., will help us to better understand the changing political

and cultural climates surrounding television programming and also help us better understand the things we are teaching young audiences through this programming.

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Humphreys, Kristi Rowan. *Housework and Gender in American Television: Coming Clean*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016. Print.

When thinking of housework in television shows, one often thinks of June Cleaver meeting Ward at the door in heels, with a martini in her hand, and wearing pearls. Kristi Rowan Humphreys, author of the book *Housework and Gender in American Television: Coming Clean*, challenges this notion by examining the meaning behind the theme of housework. It is more than just a text for media scholars; scholars of gender, family, sociology, and pop culture will find the text useful in analyzing various family types such as the single-father, single-mother, and nuclear families as well as the role of television in portraying housework, and gender roles.

Kristi Rowan Humphreys is an assistant professor of critical studies and artistic practice at the Texas Tech University. Her research encompasses gender media and popular culture. In writing *Housework and Gender in American Television*, Humphreys challenges the critique that televised housework portrays marginalized females. Humphreys sought to move away from that critique and look for the meaning behind the act.

While wanting to examine the connection between television housework and reality, Humphreys' text "challenges the notion that

housework functions primarily as a mechanism through which characters are marginalized, devalued, invisible, or passive...” (4). Humphreys’ analysis spans four decades of television shows and as she progresses through the decades and the shows, she begins to show how housework functions as a way for characters to preserve the family. As early as the 1950s in shows such as *The Donna Reed Show* and *The Goldbergs*, Humphreys determines that housework “functions as normally, lovingly, and generally to preserve the lives of others” (33). It is a way for mothers to interact with their children, communicate with their husband, and demonstrate their love nonverbally. The book begins with a vignette of Humphreys’ grandmother interrupting Humphreys as she works on an important paper for school. Her grandmother asks, “Do you need cookies? Need the temperature adjusted? A glass of milk?” At first, Humphreys is bothered by the interruption but soon comes to realize that her grandmother found joy in serving her. This realization about her grandmother, along with watching reruns of shows from the ‘50s, ‘60s, and ‘70s with her mother, sparked Humphreys’ interest in housework and how the act is depicted on television versus reality. The book summarizes and highlights acts of housekeeping among characters, both males and females, between 1950 and the 1990s. Humphreys concludes with shows from the 1980s as she argues models of household management became much more diffuse after this decade. The book concludes by offering 20 trends that were established in televised housework during her 40-year examination.

Humphreys’ analysis does a superb job of linking her findings throughout different shows throughout the four decades. For example, Humphreys makes note that if a male protagonist of the show is single or widowed, they seek out assistance in the form of a female housekeeper, or in terms of *Family Affair*, a male butler. Humphreys is quick to point out that single females do no such thing, instead getting the family to assist them in the household duties as Shirley Partridge did with her children in



*The Partridge Family*. Humphreys also makes note of the income disparities between lead male and female single characters. Single male leads often have a housekeeper to make them meals, do their laundry, and clean their home; single female leads, such as in *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and *Tabitha*, are left to work during the day and then do their housework at night.

The gender differences Humphreys' points out strengthens her initial goal of showing how housework is viewed in the different shows throughout the decades. Humphreys "views the importance of housework as the signification of a commitment to meet children's and family desires for preservation" (p. 4). The commitment to housework duties are portrayed differently by the genders. While Humphreys argues that females perform the act as a way of demonstrating love and has the "potential to empower and fulfill women" (p. 8); the same was not noted about males. Humphreys concludes that television shows where males are portrayed as widowers, "have women or family members come to their rescue to care for their home, or they hire housekeepers" (p. 22). Humphreys' analysis finds that "housework is not easier to accomplish for a single female than a single male, yet television depicts it that way" (p. 22).

Despite the strengths of Humphreys' text, it should not be assumed it does not have its weaknesses. Because Humphreys' attempts to weave the 20 trends she found throughout the chapters, one weakness of her book is its organization. In the earlier decades, she makes note of later shows from the later decades, which provide examples that support each theme, including male housekeepers such as Bud in *My Three Sons*. Then when she discusses the shows in the later decades, the book provides a less thorough of analysis of these shows, since they were mentioned previously. The weakness of organization left this reader wondering if it impacted how Humphreys conducted her analysis. Humphreys' analysis includes just one or two episodes per show, despite her claim that her

research focuses on the entire series. This could leave consumers wondering if the meanings of housekeeping changes during the course of the show.

Despite my critique, Humphreys' text would be useful in television media courses as well as family communication and pop culture courses. It offers a different perspective on housekeeping, a task that both professor and students are aware of. However, it may be difficult for millennials to keep their focus while reading about shows their grandparents watched.

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Hoover, Stewart M., and Curtis D. Coats. *Does God Make the Man? Media, Religion, and the Crisis of Masculinity*. New York: NYU Press, 2015. Print.

One area of inquiry that students explore in the study of communication and gender is the concept of masculinity in relation to the contexts of religion and popular culture. Although there seem to be challenges in discussing religion alongside popular culture, *Does God Make the Man?* by Stewart Hoover and Curtis Coats evinces the succinct connections among media, masculinity, and religion. The authors argue that religious men do not evade the subjects of gender and media. Instead, the authors explicate how men of faith negotiate their masculine identities in the realms of religion, media, and in their roles as husbands and workers.

The book focuses on interviews with Evangelical and Ecnemical Christian men. The interviews shed light on how men articulate

masculinity in relation to religion and media. For these men, media is a discourse that is at odds with their religious identities. The book proceeds by way of men grappling with “elemental masculinity,” which is comprised by the three themes of provision, protection, and purpose. Provision focuses on how men see themselves as providers for their family in both material and religious senses. Protection addresses how men feel it is their duty to protect their families from harms in the world, be it physical harm or harm that may come from exposure to media. Finally, purpose hones in on how men see the value of their roles as husbands, fathers, and devout members of their faith. Through the narratives and perspectives from men in the book, *Does God Make the Man?* excels at illuminating the tensions and articulations that religious men experience among the nodes of masculinity, media, and religion.

Chapter 1 details how Evangelical and Ecnemical men draw from their faith in defining and making sense of masculinity. The men of faith interviewed by the authors describe their views and experiences of religion as it pertains to the concept of headship (a frequent theme that encompasses matters of decisiveness and boldness in the context of marriage and family), women’s roles in headship, and how gender is used to rethink masculinity in domestic spheres and beyond. A striking aspect of this chapter is how the men interviewed express headstrong commitments to their faith, yet also express a desire to search for resources that help answer the question of what it means to be masculine. Whereas the Evangelical men described their experiences of masculinity and gender as being dependent on “male exceptionalism at the center”, the Ecnemical Protestant men provided nuanced considerations of how masculinity, religion, and media work to produce honest conversations about masculinity (55). The latter group of men focused less on the concept of headship and more on broader cultural influences that broaden their views of gender.

Chapter 2 focuses on how men connect their religious and gender identities to contemporary media, specifically through male characters on television programs. The authors asked their interviewees to identify programs and characters that lend to their conceptualizations of masculinity. Shows such as *Friends* and *Leave it to Beaver* were invoked by interviewees while articulating their perspectives on sexuality, headship, and fatherhood. When faced with media that contained sexual and violent themes, men discuss challenges of evaluating the pervasiveness of media as they worked to preserve their masculinity as taught by their religion. Throughout this chapter, the Evangelical and Ecumenical Protestant men never evade or admonish media completely. Instead, both groups of men come off as religiously steadfast individuals who wisely consume or interrogate media in order to address the challenges of putting religion, masculinity, and gender into conversation with one another. This was the case when Evangelical fathers noted how fathers in shows such as *According to Jim* and *The Simpsons* still portrayed their roles as caring fathers, despite their character tropes as lazy fathers. Ultimately, media is articulated as a communicative nexus of beliefs and values that encourages religious men to meaningfully negotiate their masculine identities in relation to the aforementioned principles of provision, protection, and purpose in religious and domestic spheres.

Chapter 3 hones in on how men tend to their masculine identities in their roles as husbands, fathers, and workers. While the chapter takes a step away from direct discussions of media, the men are encouraged to view themselves in relation to their domestic roles, and how such roles help to shape and refine their understandings of masculinity as they carry out their duties as parents and individuals of faith. Having shared their experiences with masculinities, religion, and media, the men reflected on their roles as spouses and fathers in relation to the aforementioned ideas of provision, protection and purpose. This was a reflective labor that pushed them to confront crises of masculinity. From experiencing a calling to a

profession and being a father and leader in the church, to seeing themselves as “culture warriors” when navigating the landscapes of media and masculinity, the authors evince the most effective realms of practice for men to ask pointed questions about masculinity and religion. By bringing attention to masculinity as it pertains to the home, the authors mark a significant gesture by moving their interviewees to reflect on masculinity as experienced “on the ground,” rather than purely on the sidelines.

By coalescing the areas of religion, gender and media, *Does God Make the Man?* accomplishes a meaningful inquiry of religious identity in relation to gender and the media. The work in this book points to the reflexive ways in which provision, protection, and purpose encourage men of faith to explore the layers of masculinity, religion and popular media, bringing the discourse surrounding masculinity crises into a more refined focus. It is of importance to note that only one of the chapters directly focuses on the connections that media (specifically from television) has with religion and masculinity. Though this may seem concerning at first, there is great worth to be found in this chapter as it demonstrates how religious men frequently consume more traditional types of media in order to make sense of the narratives surrounding discourses of masculinity.

Overall, popular culture scholars who delve into the areas of gender, media and religious studies stand to benefit from this book and the intersections that stem from exploring the subjects of religion, media, masculinities, and gender broadly. Moreover, it is ideal for religious individuals who seek direct and pointed connections between religion and popular culture, two distinct contexts that can greatly inform one another. The book is a meaningful extension of much needed academic and personal conversations about gender, religion and media.

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Fawaz, Ramzi. *The New Mutants: Superheroes and the Radical Imagination of American Comics*. New York: New York University Press, 2016. Print.

Through a close reading of comics, reader and creator conversations, as well as the historical context, Ramzi Fawaz, an Assistant Professor of English at the University of Madison, Wisconsin, displays that in the three decades from 1960-1990, the superhero was "transformed...from a nationalist champion to a figure of radical difference mapping the limits of American liberalism and its promise of universal inclusion in the post-World War II period" (3). Throughout the book, he analyzes popular comics and maps their resonance with the emergent political movements of the time to display how they serve to "validate previously unrecognizable forms of political community" (5).

In his first chapter, he examines *The Justice League of America* between 1960-1965 as contributors who "transformed the superhero from an icon of American nationalism to a champion of internationalism and universal citizenship" (39). These comics cast their heroes as using scientific ingenuity paired with extraordinary willpower and strength of character in their quests for global justice and to defeat villains who would use science in individualistic pursuits.

In chapter two, he uses queer theory of nonnormativity to discuss *The Fantastic Four* (1961-1967), and displays that the content served as a visual critique of "the relationship between sexual and gender identity and Cold War politics," by imagining new kinds of citizens free of "attachment to narratives of heterosexual normalization and bodily regimentation" (67-68). Essentially, while all of the *Four* start out as paragons of heterosexuality, via their accident they become nonnormative figures: Reed Richards/Mr. Fantastic becomes a representative for the liberal; similarly, Ben Grimm/The Thing comes to represent the neurotic and Johnny Storm/The Human Torch becomes the representation of queer.

Meanwhile Sue Storm/The Invisible Girl *disidentifies* with proper femininity as her invisibility makes her worthy of being seen. Further the group as a whole functioned as an unstable molecular model of the "family" - voluntary membership based on shared differences – conception mirrored in contemporary culture.

Chapter three is a bit divided. Fawaz begins with a discussion of the fan letters' pages of *The Fantastic Four* as constituting what Michael Warner calls a counterpublic, specifically a project of world making. This counterpublic, he argues helped reinterpret Marvel's focus on *The Fantastic Four* as "more than just human," so as to introduce a question of the limits of race and species as they apply to affiliation and solidarity of diverse groups. However, the second half the chapter moves away from the fan forum and into the cosmopolitics of *The Fantastic Four's* storylines in relation to the characters of Prince Namor and the Atlantians, the Black Panther and the Wakandans, and Crystal and the Inhumans. When read together, these storylines resonate with a cosmopolitanism Fawaz finds across several contemporary political movements, including Students for a Democratic Society, the Third World Left and the Black Panther Party. While perhaps an extension of the previous argument, this last section seems like an interesting tangent to the discussion of fan/creator interaction.

In chapters four and five, Fawaz introduces two new subgenres: space operas and urban folktales. Space operas are a subgenre of science fiction that "explored how these [characters] dealt with the existential experience of being adrift in a limitless cosmos" (127). Urban folktales (discussed in chapter 5) are a subgenre of folktales more generally, which "used documentary realism to situate superheroes in the everyday circumstances of the most socially and economically oppressed members of American society" (166). In chapter four, Fawaz argues the Silver Surfer may be further sub-classified as a "messianic melodrama," a short-lived formation that "narrated the psychic torture of heroic alien visitors to Earth whose

altruistic intentions are denied by the ‘unreasoning hatred’ of bellicose humans” (129). This, Fawaz argues, mirrors Lauren Berlant’s “female complaint” and is correlated to the rise of environmentalism in the American political imaginary (133). In the second half of the chapter, *X-men* Ororo Monroe/Storm and particularly Jean Grey’s transformation from Marvel Girl to the Phoenix in “The Phoenix Saga” are linked to two feminist projects of the mid-1970’s: “the desire for female autonomy and self-actualization and the development of alternative intimacies and solidarities outside of heteropatriarchy” (155). While the actions of these two characters resonate with the concept of the space opera and messianic melodrama, the links could be more strongly established.

Chapter five examines the second subgenre, the urban folktale, through a close reading of DC’s *Green Lantern/Green Arrow* series (1970-1974), Marvel’s *Captain America and the Falcon* series (1974-1975) and *Luke Cage: Hero for Hire* (1971). Fawaz correlates these stories to the producers’ own concerns with the corporate restructuring of the comic book industry; however he finds that the stories “ultimately devolved into a celebration of a neoliberal politics of personal responsibility” (198).

The focus of chapter six is on the concept of demonic possession as expressed in the comics post 1979, including *The X-men’s* “The Dark Phoenix Saga,” (1979-1980) and *Spider-Man’s* “The Birth of Venom” (1984-1985; 1989-1991). Such stories “ultimately linked the psychic corruption of their central superheroic characters to the machinations of global capitalism” (202). Fawaz compares these narratives to the argument of the feminist sex wars over the extent to which women can exercise agency in a system of sexuality “fundamentally structured by the logic of patriarchy” (203). The blame in both cases is shifted from personal responsibility to social and institutional forces, capitalism and patriarchy. Fawaz’s reading of the gendered depiction of power in these stories is particularly intriguing but perhaps less tenable. For instance, in the description of Peter Parker’s encounter with Venom, the symbiotic



parasite penetrates, feminizes and hypersexualizes Parker; however, when Venom takes over his rival Eddie Brock, he is not penetrated, feminized or hypersexualized.

Fawaz's final chapter describes *The New Mutants* (1984) as questioning "What can a superhero *be*?" (235). This series cast the categories of mutant and superhero into new situations that provoked a radical imagination that correlates with the "postmodern anti-identitarian politics of difference...realized in social movements like ACT UP... and third wave feminism" (236). Both the movements and the comics, he argues, "affirmed difference itself as a wellspring for a radical politics based on affinity and shared political values rather than the assumed sameness" (236).

Eye-opening and frequently inspired, Fawaz's criticism is at the same time accessible and well supported by examples. My critiques are that some of the terms introduced early on don't pan out in the rest of the text, and that the epilogue contains a host of arguments and texts sufficient to fill another book. Despite these problems, this book represents a model for clarifying intersections between popular culture and sociopolitical movements that belongs on the shelves of rhetoricians, cultural critics, feminists and queer theory proponents, as well as those interested in popular culture and especially comics.

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