REVIEWS

In this issue

Arrow, Michelle, *Friday on Our Minds: Popular Culture in Australia Since 1945*, **UNSW Press, Sydney, 2009, ISBN 0 8684 0662 7, 288 pp, $39.95.**

In *Friday on Our Minds*, Michelle Arrow traces the evolution of popular culture in post-war Australia and examines subsequent and ongoing changes within the realm of popular culture. Borrowing Lawrence Levine's definition of popular culture from *The Unpredictable Past* (Oxford University Press, 1993: 296) as 'widely accessible, widely accessed and widely disseminated', Arrow examines Australian culture in order to understand the enormous cultural and social changes that have occurred in this country. She views her material through three distinct lenses: the development of a mass consumer society, the impact of technological changes, and the interrelation between individual/collective identities and popular culture.

Arrow presents her research in chronological sequence, introducing existent scholarship on popular culture before briefly describing life in interwar Australia. Early chapters succinctly trace the advent of a domestic culture in Australia, and how domesticity developed in tandem with new technologies and consumerism. In this discussion, Arrow focuses on themes of the family, suburbia and the invention of the teenager.

Australian popular culture — with its emphasis upon heavy drinking, sport and mateship — historically has been portrayed as a male-dominated, heterosexual, Anglo-Saxon domain. Arrow employs a wider perspective, examining the evolution and transformation of gender, racial and cultural identities. As well as exploring the role and representation of Indigenous Australians and immigrants, Arrow explores, in detail, the overlooked relationship between Australian women and the developing popular culture. In one of the strongest chapters, she presents the variety of reactions housewives and working mothers had towards the birth of television in Australia, shedding light on the commodification of everyday suburban life.

At the beginning of each chapter, Arrow relates a story told by an individual, thereby consolidating personal experience with mass cultural events and technological advances. From the 1970s onwards, she prefaces each chapter with a short personal anecdote based upon on her own memories. She also critically analyses how aspects of counter-cultures are continually being integrated into popular consumer culture, with notable examples being the co-option of rock'n'roll (the book's title taken from the Easybeats' 1967 hit) and the Vietnam War moratoriums by commercial interests.

The final chapter focuses on the intersections between popular culture, memory and nostalgia. Here, Arrow acknowledges the problems associated with writing about a period within living memory; while highly applicable to her methodology, a discussion of the convergence of memory and history appears only in coda. The final pages on recent trends in nostalgic cultural production (including cover and tribute bands) are fascinating, but rather condensed.

At times, Arrow can become repetitive, making her writing less assured. The key strength of this book, however, is Arrow's convincing through-argument that an examination of popular culture is essential to a thorough understanding of modern Australian history. Arrow's study covers much ground, but she processes her material smoothly and

confidently, making this a highly accessible and enjoyable introductory text for researchers and students examining Australian popular culture.

— *Alina Hoyne,*
University of Melbourne

Atton, Chris and Hamilton, James F., *Alternative Journalism***, Sage, London, 2008, ISBN 9 7814 1294 7039, 179 pp., A\$52.95.** *Distributor:* **Footprint.**

From two of the foremost scholars of alternative media, Chris Atton and James F. Hamilton, comes a first-rate examination of a wide range of journalistic forms and practices that challenge the power, legitimacy and authority of the mainstream press. In what is billed as 'the first academic book-length study of alternative journalism' (p. 1), Atton and Hamilton develop a robust, yet flexible conceptual framework that encompasses all manner of 'alternative journalism', from oppositional political newspapers on the one hand to music fanzines on the other. Making exceptional use of historical examples, as well as contemporary case studies, Atton and Hamilton reveal the pivotal role alternative journalism plays in challenging media power and articulating new forms of public communication.

In their introduction, Atton and Hamilton acknowledge the lack of definitional precision surrounding the term 'alternative journalism'. Nevertheless, they reject narrow definitions of either 'alternative' or 'journalism'. Rather, they make a compelling case — based on their previous work and that of some of the leading figures in alternative, citizens' and movement media studies — for an expansive and inclusive definition of alternative journalism, one that recognises the significance of radical, reform-minded or otherwise innovative ways of thinking about (and practising) journalism.

The book is organised into three parts. Part I serves to contextualise alternative journalism. Drawing on examples from the United Kingdom and the United States, the first chapter historicises alternative journalism. This chapter makes good use of cultural history — especially Raymond Williams' influential work on the rise of the bourgeois press — to make sense of the dynamic relationship between alternative journalism and dominant forms and practices. The following chapter explores the political economy of alternative journalism. Specifically, this discussion identifies the forces and conditions that enable, as well as constrain, alternative journalism in a variety of settings. Chapter 3 provides a revealing demographic survey of alternative journalists from around the world.

Part 2 begins with a provocative discussion of the relationship between policy and alternative journalism. This chapter maps out the disparate policy positions of a number of stakeholders — commercial interests, the alternative press industry, philanthropic organisations and media reform groups among others. The following chapter reviews contemporary alternative journalistic practices, from zines and other forms of 'alternative cultural journalism' to participatory journalism, blogs and other modes of alternative journalism that provoke fundamental questions about the ethics, norms, values and routines (i.e. expertise, objectivity, sourcing) associated with professionalised journalism. This discussion provides a useful backdrop to the following chapter, a comparative survey of alternative journalism from around the world. Here, concise case studies of the Indymedia Network, South Korea's *OhmyNews* and lesser

known initiatives across the globe reveal alternative journalism's potential for democratising public communication.

The third section opens with a chapter devoted exclusively to theorising alternative journalism. Atton and Hamilton draw on theoretical positions associated with alternative, radical and citizens' media to explain the broad appeal and political significance, if not the heterogeneity, of alternative journalism. They then conclude this chapter by applying Pierre Bourdieu's 'field theory' to alternative journalism, a move that enhances our understanding of alternative journalism across social, political, economic and cultural dimensions. The penultimate chapter considers the possibilities (and pitfalls) of the internet and related technologies for the future(s) of alternative journalism. The final chapter is a 'critical bibliography' of studies that directly address the theory and practice of alternative journalism. In itself, this chapter is an invaluable resource — especially for readers new to the subject of alternative journalism.

A concise yet incisive addition to the Sage textbook series, *Journalism Studies: Key Texts*, edited by Martin Conboy, David Finkelstein and Bob Franklin, *Alternative Journalism* should be required reading for journalism students and teachers. In keeping with the series' concern with connecting journalism theory and practice, Atton and Hamilton's work uncovers the historical dimensions of alternative journalism — and the implications of this history on current trends and future developments in the field. *Alternative Journalism* is yet another indication of just how productive critical analysis of alternative media can be to the study of popular culture, public communication and media historiography.

— Kevin Howley, Media Studies, DePauw University, USA

The aims of this book are ambitious: to map the claims made over time of the value, function and impact of the arts. The scope is broad: to provide an historical survey of ideas spanning 2,500 years of European history from classical Greece to the first decade of the twenty-first century — that is, the duration of Western civilisation. By taking a broad interdisciplinary perspective to intellectual writing (from philosophy and political economy to psychology and cultural theory) and presenting a representative account of what the authors regard as the most significant ideas to have been developed in these fields, from Plato to postmodernism and beyond, Belfiore and Bennett have produced an insightful and timely study that illuminates not only what lies behind the cultural policy rhetoric, but also what connects twenty-first century cultural policy debates to two millennia of intellectual ideas.

The book starts with the premise that the arts policy debate has been disconnected (detached) from the complex intellectual history of the arts, particularly in the United Kingdom (where Belfiore and Bennett are both cultural policy scholars). The authors argue that the terms of the present debate 'constitute a reductive version of a much more complex intellectual dispute over the functions of art in society, and also the underlying, unquestioned assumptions on which cultural policy making is based' (p. 31). The reader is taken through a taxonomy of claims about the arts and their effects, drawing predominantly upon the art forms of poetry, the novel and theatrical

performances. Both the negative and positive views of the effects of the arts on individuals and society are canvassed, beginning in fifth century BC Athens with Plato arguing that there is a tendency of the arts (poetry and theatre in particular) to corrupt. Plato's harsh indictment spawned many counter-theories attaching morally uplifting powers to the arts, beginning with the theories of his pupil, Aristotle. Chapter 2, 'Corruption and Distraction', is particularly insightful, with its examination of the claims that the arts have a corrupting and distracting influence on society. It provides an historical overview of state censorship of the arts, the use of poetry and theatre for the creation of political propaganda, the Puritan arguments against theatre, Rousseau's indictment of the theatre and the more recent theories of 1980s sociologist David P. Phillips, who coined the expression the 'Werther effect' and argued that 'publicised violence … can beget more violence unless it is conspicuously punished' (p. 65). The following chapter sets out Aristotle's concept of catharsis and explains how it inspired the literary criticism of the Italian Renaissance. The authors then go on to present detailed discussions of significant recurring themes and claims relating to 'the social function of the arts and the effects of the artistic experiences on people' (p. 38), namely personal well-being, education and self-development, moral improvement and civilisation, political instrument, social stratification and identity construction, and autonomy of the arts and rejection of instrumentality.

Belfiore and Bennett have produced a book that is relevant not only for those interested in arts and cultural policy from a Western perspective, but also for anyone with an interest in the big ideas that have shaped the arts and Western culture over the past two millennia. The conclusion one reaches at the end of this perceptive book is that cultural policy is still deeply embedded in notions of what the arts are, what effects they have on individuals, and what their role in society is.

*— Nicola Goc, English, Journalism
and European Languages,
University of Tasmania*

**Bruns, Axel and Bahnisch, Mark,
*Social Media: Tools for User-Generated
Content Social Drivers, Volume 1:
State of the Art*, Smart Services CRC,
Eveleigh, NSW, 2009, 60 pp. Available
from www.smartservicescrc.com.
au/PDF/Social_Media_State_of_
the%20Art_March2009.pdf.**

While many of us are familiar with sites like MySpace and Wikipedia, this report brings attention to the much broader proliferation of social media websites over the last decade or so. The aim of the report, by consultants at Smart Services CRC, is to suggest how such technologies might strategically be harnessed by corporate bodies in the 'services sector'. Despite the report's commercial focus, it offers an eye-opening insight into the workings of social media for non-commercial readers. The authors of this report define social media as 'websites which build on Web 2.0 technologies to provide space for in-depth social interaction, community formation, and the tackling of collaborative projects' (p. 5). Significantly, social media involve some sort of online community with an ethos of collaboration between users and administrators of the site. While the professed aim of the report is to advise organisations about how best to use social media technology, the report's emphasis is on the autonomy of the sites' users; it highlights the problems with imposing corporate,

or other, agendas on these online communities. The authors' position is clearly on the side of the users, and they demonstrate a detailed understanding of the complex workings of these communities.

The authors argue that the success of social media sites depends on the success with which online communities are allowed to emerge, collaborate, contribute and self-regulate on their own terms. More well-known 'successes' — such as *Wikipedia* and *Facebook* — respect the autonomy of their communities and, over time, allow users to determine how the site will be used, adapting to these possibilities as they emerge. The effectiveness of social media also depends on its egalitarianism — that is, by making sites accessible to users of varying skill levels, and allowing for a range of levels of contribution.

Significantly, social media should foster a sense of ownership amongst its users, with minimal intervention from site administrators. The report details, via an array of examples, the dynamic nature of these online communities, and the need to respect the authenticity of the relationships that are formed both between users and between the users and the site itself.

All of this is somewhat counter-intuitive to the conventional operational structure of organisations that might be hoping to profit from social media. Instead, the report suggests that traditional, top-down governance approaches need to be replaced by a more community- or user-oriented framework. The authors argue that adversarial relationships between organisational interests and online communities need to shift to a more collaborative approach — one that involves working together for 'mutual benefit' (p. 55). These arguments are substantiated with many insightful case

studies, perhaps the most interesting of which are the lesser-known social media experiments, such as the failed precursors to Wikipedia — Nupedia and Citizendium.

While the report is significant for being the first Australian study of its kind, very few of the examples discussed are Australian. Moreover, the report's discussion of the Australian context is not based on actual data on social media usage, but an extrapolation of US and UK trends. Despite this limitation, the report is an interesting and timely primer on the burgeoning social media trend.

— Rimi Khan,
Culture and Communication,
University of Melbourne

Churchill, Suzanne W. and McKibble, Adam (eds), *Little Magazines & Modernism: New Approaches***, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2007, ISBN 9 7807 5466 0149, 292 pp., £55.00.**

Scholars of modernism have long considered the thousands of little magazines that came to be published in the first half of the twentieth century as important vehicles for the Anglo-American artistic and literary movement. After all, it was in the pages of such avant garde publications as *The Egoist, The Little Review* and *The Dial* that canonical writers such as James Joyce, Marianne Moore and T.S. Eliot found their first readers, and in tiny-circulation periodicals such as *The Blindman* and *Others* that modernist manifestos and highbrow pranks were let loose on the world.

This collection of essays edited by Suzanne W. Churchill, an Associate Professor of English at Davidson College, and Adam McKibble, an Associate Professor of English at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, brings together periodical studies scholars

who are forging new approaches to understanding these publications and the culture that produced them, treating the little magazines as primary texts worthy of study rather than as mere distribution vehicles for elite genius.

Forget the 'Great War' theory of modernism, the editors argue, little magazines require a 'Great Party' model, 'one that duly recognizes the era's sense of urgency, mechanization, and conflict but also address's modernism's spirit of creativity, conviviality, and playfulness' (p. 13). The focus for the researchers in this collection is the collaborative and dialogic nature of the print culture of which little magazines were a part, an approach that explores the way artists and intellectuals of the era used media as a space for exchange and engagement and a wedge against (and sometimes in tandem with) mass-market publications. Among the 11 essays are Alan Golding's consideration of the rivalry between *The Dial* and *The Little Review*, Jayne Marek's exploration of the role women editors played in the Harlem Renaissance, Suzanne W. Churchill's meditation on modernist mischief-making and 'the Great Spectra Hoax' in *Others*, and Tom Lutz's thoughtful examination of the often-overlooked role of regional magazines and regionalists in the development of modernism. In addition to students of modernism and periodical studies, this volume enriches current debates about collaboration and reminds us of the power that the media representation of marginal and unconventional voices can have on the culture at large.

— Margie Borschke, Journalism and Media Research Centre, University of New South Wales

Edgerton, Gary R., *The Columbia History of American Television***, Columbia University Press, New York, 2009, ISBN 9 7802 3112 1651, 493 pp., A$43.95.** *Distributor:* **Footprint Books.**

American television history has been studied and written about for decades now by such a stellar cast of scholars that one might be sceptical about the possibility that any more of value was left to be said. Think of the work of, for example, Christopher Anderson, William Boddy, John Caldwell, Michele Hilmes, Lynn Spigel, Derek Kompare and Jeffrey Sconce, to name just a few, and you will see what I mean. Nonetheless, Gary Edgerton has produced a brilliant synthesis of American television history that incorporates the insights and attention of revisionist historians while also developing its own engaging style. Those who have experienced reading Eric Barnouw's *Tube of Plenty* after going through his three-volume *A History of Broadcasting in the United States* will find a familiar sensation here: compression allows history and argument to acquire the force and clarity that otherwise might be lacking. Yet it never feels less than comprehensive, and nor does it feel as if it is tracking old ground (even where it is) — this is Edgerton's central achievement.

One of the ways in which he does this is by using a simple but clever structure that divides the book into three main sections: 'Going Public' — the invention, technological and industrial development and early rise of American television; 'Becoming National' — the settlement of television in national and domestic life during the 1950s; and 'Becoming International', the longest section, which takes us from the classical network with its prime-time genres to the rise of cable

and satellite, deregulation and digital. If this sounds like a slog, don't be fooled. What Edgerton has done in an extraordinary way — reminiscent of other magisterial and ambitious overviews such as Donald Sassoon's *The Culture of the Europeans* or Peter Watson's *A Terrible Beauty* — is to combine engaging details and personal histories within the historically nuanced and contextualised landscapes of television's changing uses and ambitions. These different textures of history are woven together with a fine sense of modulation so that we discover, amidst necessary accounts of obviously central players such as David Sarnoff (NBC) and William S. Paley (CBS), a few paragraphs on the role of playwright and critic Gilbert Seldes, who was appointed briefly as CBS's first Director of Television in 1939 and who worked with drama producer Worthington Miner. This seemingly small detail is cashed out by telling us how their personalities provided a way to calibrate the contrast between networks: 'together they fostered a cultured atmosphere of freedom and experimentation at CBS that contrasted markedly with NBC's approach of recycling vaudeville via radio onto TV' (p. 81). Such moments as these never feel like excursions away from the main argument, but are a means of deepening it, as is the way Edgerton moves from industrial analysis to community and domestic settings of television within chapters, in doing so pointing to their relational qualities.

Make no mistake, the book provides the full history as well: we get it all — the Big Freeze, the dominance of the networks and prime-time genres in the 1960s and 1970s, the rise of cable and satellite (HBO debuts in 1972 to an audience of 'a mere 365 cable subscribers in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania'), the yuppie audience as

the 'make-or-break commodity of the television industry during the late 1980s and early 1990s' (p. 315), mid-1990s deregulation and corporate mergers, and the rise of niche TV within global market contexts to the present.

Somehow, amidst the wealth of detail and example, the book also finds space to develop case studies. This is not an edited book but it does have four chapters not written by Edgerton: on gender and early TV audiences; television and the presidency (Eisenhower and Kennedy); Ted Turner; and *The Cosby Show*. More than simple or illustrative case studies, they are elegantly argued essays in their own right, beautifully judged and brilliantly integrated into the overall chronological flow of the main text.

The book concludes with an account of contemporary television trends, the 'Seven General Tendencies of TV in the Digital Era' — all of which point to television's continued and growing dominance as an industrial and aesthetic force. *The Columbia History of American Television* would serve admirably as an undergraduate text and as an advanced example of how to do Big History with elegance and style. It is a monumental and definitive account of American television.

— Jason Jacobs, English, Media Studies and Art History, University of Queensland

Hilderbrand, Lucas, *Inherent Vice: Bootleg Histories of Videotape and Copyright***, Duke University Press, Durham, NC, 2009, ISBN 9 7808 2234 3530, 320 pp., A$24.95.**

Formats seem perfunctory, mere storage devices for far more important content or transient carriers in the cynical corporate project of enforced redundancy. But formats, Lucas Hilderbrand argues, matter; they set

the standards for how audiences can access and distribute content *and* introduce changes in the aesthetics and experience of media. These issues are the central concern of Hilderbrand's cultural history of analogue videotape, notably the first study of such to integrate aesthetic and cultural analysis with intellectual property studies and industrial history. Hilderbrand argues that videotape must be seen at once as a formal and legal innovation, a collocation of aesthetic form and copyright possibilities that he calls its 'aesthetics of access'.

This framing concept refers to the unique and progressive degeneration caused by each tape's singular history of appropriation and the volatility, or 'inherent vice', of the medium itself. Grainy pictures, streaking lines and audible noise from video dubs and bootlegs provide affective cues for viewers as to each video's history, giving the format a central place in cultural memory, personal narratives and both mainstream and illicit viewing pleasures. The point is not only textual, however, for Hilderbrand argues videotape's aesthetic provides a privileged window into the redemptive practices of bootlegging and other forms of 'fair use', as the medium uniquely enables a history of access and distribution to be 'recorded' on its surface, showing how each bootleg is not merely an infringement but a personalisation and redistribution of cultural texts. Video's degeneration is thus intimately bound to the 'regeneration' of rare artistic works, historical documents and personalised media.

This is the point Hilderbrand makes in the book's main section, containing three case studies of the ways videotape enabled alternative means and networks for accessing, distributing and preserving significant media works. He details legal disputes over the establishment of the news bulletin taping project the Vanderbilt Television News Archive, the experiential dimensions of videotape in the underground circulation of cult film *Superstar: The Karen Carpenter Story* and the collective possibilities of the format in the feminist video 'chainletter' network Joanie 4 Jackie. Throughout, we see how more than just aesthetics are at stake in the aesthetics of access, as home recording technologies offer possibilities for maintaining community and preserving film and television history.

Hilderbrand also argues that videotape offers a distinctly 'analogue' lesson in productive media practice and localised distribution, forms of 'fair use' that ambiguously circle about more sanctioned uses of the format. Indeed, his claim is that copyright exemption is a policy of approximation and reasonable guesses that rarely operates in 'binary' ways, unlike the literally black and white restrictions hardwired into digital technologies. Perhaps this book's greatest achievement is to rethink current concerns over copyright and piracy from the vantage point of an 'old' format. Hilderbrand argues that the personal media practices introduced by videotape and sanctioned in the landmark 1984 *Sony v Universal* case offer significant lessons for progressive digital media policy.

The other major point to take from Hilderbrand's archaeological project is that 'analogue interactivity' is not a contradiction: video viewers are often users, and perhaps this 'outmoded' format offers more possibilities for (fair) use, aesthetics and preservation than do certain digital technologies locked down with aggressive extralegal mechanisms of copyright protection. Yet here is where perhaps the major problem with *Inherent Vice* is also apparent, for in emphasising the

benefits and importance of videotape, Hilderbrand almost over-extends the technological argument, as if the fetishisable grain of degraded bootlegs inherently held in them a political and cultural significance, as if video in its very form solved complex legal disputes and distribution problems. While he readily admits that his book is 'unabashedly nostalgic' (p. xiii), one can unhelpfully reify the old in the face of the new by enshrining its utopian potential as much as by proclaiming its obsolescence. Digital media also have their own experiential aesthetics and possibilities for access; perhaps media scholars need only to apply the same sense of excitement Hilderbrand does to videotape to elucidate them, while taking care to avoid the same one-sidedness.

Nevertheless, *Inherent Vice* is an eloquent and provocative account of the unique possibilities of the home video format, and will be of great interest to anyone studying media policy, new media and moving image history and aesthetics.

— Lawson Fletcher, Communications and Media Studies, Monash University

Hillis, Ken, *Online a Lot of the Time: Ritual, Fetish, Sign,* Duke University Press, Durham, NC, 2009, ISBN 9 7808 2234 4483, 316 pp., US$23.95.

In *Online a Lot of the Time*, Ken Hillis deals with the complexities of the increasingly pervasive web-based technologies of modern society, and examines how we perform the sometimes common and mundane social rituals of everyday life in virtual environments or mediated through visual devices such as webcams. Hillis explores issues regarding three distinct terms: ritual, fetish and sign. He uses these terms to elucidate the social and spatial complexities of Web 2.0 and its effect on the internet, once thought to be a purely communicative tool, but now expanding to become a modern cosmopolitan worldwide *oikos*. After first investigating the history of theory surrounding his three central terms, and providing convincing arguments for their application in virtual study, Hillis draws the reader's attention to two specific examples of online ritual and fetishism: in the virtual environment of *Second Life* and in relation to the practice of gay/queer men using webcams.

As many other reviewers have remarked already, Hillis provides a rich and extensive span of academic and cultural references to contextualise his claims. I found this invaluable in providing a framework in which to situate Hillis's contribution to the field of theory, including work on ritual, fetish, sign and discourses of virtual presence and online identity. However, at times I found the continual forays into existing theory detracted from more interesting reflections on such phenomena as methods of avatar production in virtual worlds and their effect on the sign/body indexical trace of the person controlling the avatars. Nevertheless, as a researcher studying issues of body and sex in computer-mediated interaction, I found Hillis's use of Charles Sanders Peirce's 'doctrine of signs' (Chapter 3) to demonstrate the relationship between avatars as digital objects and their real-life counterparts insightful and deserving of further consideration by those working in this field.

Another specific delight in reading *Online a Lot of the Time* can be found in Hillis's use of classic and contemporary texts such as *Robinson Crusoe*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Madame Bovary*, *To the Lighthouse* and *Snow Crash*, among others, to expound his application of Peirce's 'index' and the literary technique of 'free

indirect discourse'. By situating these theories in a larger framework, prior to applying them to the virtual realm, Hillis provides the reader with a logical argument grounded in material texts before extending it to the complex world of internet theory.

This book can be recommended to researchers and enthusiasts interested in online interaction, virtuality and social study, as well as standing out for its succinct and thoughtful exploration of ritual, fetish and sign theory.

— *Hilary Wheaton, Internet Studies,*
Curtin University of Technology

Holland, Samantha (ed.), *Remote Relationships in a Small World*, Peter Lang, New York, 2008, ISBN 9 7808 2048 6291, 296 pp., US$32.95.

Samantha Holland's *Remote Relationships in a Small World* is an edited collection of studies that investigates the ways in which people create and maintain relationships across differing temporal and spatial boundaries, through the use of remote social technologies and platforms, in lieu of co-presence and physicality. In a time where such social technologies have revolutionised the ways and means by which disparate individuals connect and interact daily across the globe, Holland's compendium — which includes contributors from the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia — is a timely one.

Divided into four general sections, its 14 collected essays (one of which Holland herself co-wrote) encompass numerous forms of remotely embodied relationships, from those concerning sexuality, intimacy and romantic pursuits to those forged between individuals with disabilities, families, travellers and teens. The individuals and groups detailed within the essays utilise a number of technologies to interact, including mobile phones, email, instant messaging, online social networking, webcams and weblogs. The ease with which such mediated relationships are forged, undertaken and terminated is discussed at length, as is the acquisition of social capital through impression management, the enabling qualities of available interactive communicative mediums, and the opportunities for constant connectivity and access to information that they afford.

Unique methodological and ethical issues for researchers studying remote relationships are addressed within the book, particularly the ways in which the field and its various definitions differ from traditional face-to-face research, and the means by which research data are collected. Various general concepts surrounding online interaction are explored, including spatiality, meaning, trust, privacy and disclosure. Referencing theories posited by such notable communications theorists as Jürgen Habermas, Erving Goffman and Howard Rheingold, this collection is an excellent general introduction to the field of contemporary communication, and is a quality contribution towards research concerning mediated intimacy, virtual community, expression, identity-formation and sexuality.

Interweaving personal narrative, social commentary and empirical research, the essays in this collection are written in a simple and engaging style. Also, the book's use of chapter summaries, notes and recommended wider reading is extremely helpful for those who wish to explore particular facets of the book or its theories in greater detail. *Remote Relationships in a Small World* is an excellent addition to a growing body of literature on contemporary mediated communication and social relationships.

— *Candice Jansz, PhD student,*
Monash University

Kraus, Jerelle, *All the Art That's Fit to Print (And Some That Wasn't): Inside the New York Times Op-Ed Page***, Columbia University Press, New York, 2009, ISBN 9 7802 3113 8246, 260 pp., A$55.95.** *Distributor:* **Footprint Books.**

The man is naked except for a pair of black shades. All we can see is his back. He is corpulent, tattooed, uptight and distracted. He clasps his chubby hands together. The fingers on his left hand point towards a Chinese dragon on his right buttock and the fingers on his right point towards a snake, a pistol and the word 'Shah' on his left. Further up the fleshy back and arms, there are stars and stripes, a skull and crossbones, Arabic script made from shoulder hair, a dagger and bombs falling on a map of Cambodia.

The back belongs to American diplomat Henry Kissinger, and it was drawn in 1979 by caricaturist David Levine to illustrate the lead essay on the Op-Ed page of *The New York Times.* Op-Ed editor Charlotte Curtis declared the drawing awful. Thinking that the bare bum was the problem, Op-Ed art director Jerelle Kraus offered to 'negotiate a mid-dragon crop'. This would not do. The problem was the excessive midsection flesh.' (p. 5) Kissinger could be nude but he could not be fat! There are many similarly amusing stories in this well-illustrated, beautifully produced book that uses the work of 142 artists to trace the history of the world's first Op-Ed page (the abbreviation stands for Opposite the Editorials), the one set up by the *New York Times* in 1970.

The book is written in a chatty, smart style by the formidable Kraus, an artist who worked for the *New York Times* for 30 years, including a 13-year stint as Op-Ed art director. The text is based on Kraus's own work experience — say the private audience with Richard Nixon, or the long lunch with gonzo illustrator Ralph Steadman at Un Deux Trois in which the pair used crayons, ketchup, mustard, red wine, pepper and black coffee to create a 'tour de force' on the white paper tablecloths, or the award-winning illustration she did in 1983 of a pregnant Karl Marx — and on interviews with artists, readers, editors, writers and art directors. It is divided into sections that cover the page's origins and then each decade up till 'the noughties'. The sections are divided into smaller segments that either deal with the work of particular artists, such as Ronald Searle, Brad Holland or Frances Jetter (who worked over night to produce explosive linocut illustrations on deadline) or with staff changes at the paper.

The tone of the text is anecdotal rather than analytical. There is a sense that the *New York Times* spins in its own orbit, outside the bigger histories in which its art might have been situated. For instance, Kraus asserts that the Op-Ed page 'prefigured, by decades, the Internet's blogosphere' (p. 1). This absurd statement is never developed by Kraus, but it is disproved by Paula Scher in her brilliant 'Diagram of a Blog' (p. 225). The analysis here is all in the pictures. They are really wonderful. So too are the exquisite page layouts and typographical ingenuity. The pictures require reading and this book will appeal to artists, art historians, newspaper buffs and scholars interested in the rather neglected fields of visual journalism (such as cartooning, photography and illustration).

I am tired of hearing about the future of journalism. I want to think about the passionate past when people like art director Jean-Claude Suares smashed lead engravings so he could replace timid images with art that 'stimulated,

delighted and disturbed'. This book does just that.

— *Rachel Buchanan, Media Studies, La Trobe University*

Ling, Rich and Campbell, Scott (eds), *The Reconstruction of Space and Time: Mobile Communication Practices***, Transaction, New Brunswick, NH, 2009, ISBN 9 7814 1280 8095, 271 pp., US$49.95.**

Rich Ling and Scott Campbell position *The Reconstruction of Space and Time* as somewhere between a journal and a stand-alone volume (p. 1). They intend it as the first in a 'series of compendiums examining different dimensions of mobile communication' (p. 1). As the title suggests, the book sets out to examine how the proliferation in mobile communication technologies 'gives rise to important changes in how people experience space and time' (p. 1).

Reconstruction consists of 10 contributions by different authors, on a wide array of topics, including overseas Filipino workers' use of mobiles; practices of coordinated action, accountability and distant mobile co-presence; the impact of time and location stamps on user perceptions of text messages; the shaping influence of mobiles in the everyday lives of young people; the use of mobiles to negotiate issues of trust, friendship and expertise within distributed work groups; and mobile handset-sharing practices in Bangalore, India. Of the 10 chapters, stand-out contributions include the first, by Dana Diminescu, Christian Licoppe and colleagues, which reports on a study where in-depth interviews were combined with the innovative use of a handset-operated 'probe' for the collection of location data to investigate the interactions between location and communication by mobile users across Paris. Another stand-out contribution is Mizuko Ito and her colleagues' study of the suite of personal artefacts we carry with us —including mobile phone, keys, cards, MP3 players, tickets, etc. — and the role these artefacts play in our negotiation of everyday life (Chapter 3). A third notable contribution is Ann Light's phenomenological study of the experience of using one's phone while on the move, and how this routine activity reveals complex interactions between physical location, competing personal demands and the individual's activity at the time a mobile phone call is received (Chapter 8).

Overall, this is a very strong collection of essays on the many different ways in which space and time are 'reconstructed' through mobile phone use. *Reconstruction* is not the first book to examine these issues, but it is nonetheless significant for the additional depth, detail and insight it brings to present understandings of the spatial and temporal dimensions and impacts of mobile phone use.

The greatest strength of the book is as a showcase of the diversity, depth and innovation (the willingness to combine the traditional with the experimental) of international mobile phone research methods. These range from more established approaches, such as conversational discourse analysis, observation, in-depth interviews and diary-keeping, to more experimental approaches, such as the use of a wearable observational recording device (dubbed the GlassCam) for recording interactions between mobile users, their handsets, physically co-present others and their immediate surroundings. The breadth and depth of the research methods on display here are truly impressive, and this collection will form a rich and invaluable toolbox of ideas for future mobiles and ICT researchers and students.

— *Rowan Wilken, Swinburne University of Technology*

Sarikakis, Katharine (ed.), *Media and Cultural Policy in the European Union*, Editions Rodopi, Amsterdam, 2007, ISBN 9 7890 4202 1754, 249 pp., €50.00.

Notions of European identity and citizenship are addressed in this collection of essays, which seeks to examine the development of both media and cultural policy as parts of the same whole across Europe during the decade and a half. These essays reflect the relatively recent interest taken by the emerging European Union (EU) as it has evolved from a primarily economic construct with the European Community into a broader association with competing economic and cultural goals. Accordingly, this collection of essays takes as its starting point the introduction of legislation surrounding media and culture: namely an Article on culture in the Treaty of Maastricht in 1993 and the Protocol on the System of Public Broadcasting in the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1999. This development of a pan-European approach to media and cultural policy has paralleled the institutional maturation of European integration and more distinctly that of the European Parliament.

This collection addresses the challenges of bringing together what is becoming an increasingly diverse group of countries with different traditions of state support and regulation for cultural activities, including broader media and more specific public service broadcasting and competing commercial interests, in both media and broader culture.

A number of the essays address aspects of the Television Without Frontiers Directive (TVWF), described by Sarikakis in her comparison of Canadian and European media frameworks as 'the most significant EU piece of media legislation, that was drafted in as a European Single Market directive'. She sees it as part of a long move to liberalise services and privatise functions of the public sector as the role of the traditional 'citizen-public' moved to that of a 'consumer-public'. New communications markets have been constructed based on a self-regulatory framework. She argues that culture in the form of media has been commercialised and the pressures for a market-led use of technologies led to the conflict about the protection of media as a cultural territory.

Peter Humphreys looks closely at the impact of EU policy on public service broadcasting, arguing that EU audio-visual policy is biased towards market liberalisation and the direct exercise of extensive competition powers. He sees this as a threat to public service broadcasting. A continuing tension has emerged between those arguing for flexible, technology-neutral regulation and those who seek to harvest the new technologies — especially the interest in social and cultural goals. In the digital age, commercial operators seek a narrower definition of public service remit and the confinement of the public service broadcasters to compensate for market failure.

Hedwig De Smaele, in his contribution, examines the impact of the TVWF directive on the Eastern enlargement of the EU through the adoption of new media laws by all Central and Eastern European countries. This has accompanied the move to dual broadcasting systems with both state (now public service) and private television.

Gillian Doyle examines media diversity and ownership, concluding that the European Commission's long-standing record of inactivity on the issue of media concentration and pluralism is unlikely to change in the near future. She argues that safeguarding competition and promoting pluralism

are different objectives, and that media markets that raise no concerns in terms of competition may nonetheless lack the range and diversity of voices needed to safeguard pluralism.

David Hutchison continues the discussion of non-EU intervention in addressing issues of pluralism by looking at the EU's reluctance to develop policies in relation to the press. He argues that the choices available to citizens in relation to newspapers require greater attention by the EU, even if the result is less freedom for press companies. In more specific terms, Sonja Kretzschmar explores the diversity of the EU media landscape in terms of the diversity of journalists in the newsrooms of Europe.

In their essay on the film industry, Caroline Pauwels, Sophie de Vinck and Ben van Rompuy deal with the tension between state funding for specific cultural and media activities and efforts by the EU for market liberalisation. Elisabeth Dumont and Jacques Teller explore the idea of cultural tourism. Highlighting the difficulty of finding a consensus on definitions of culture, cultural tourism or cultural diversity, they argue that each of these terms is a politically charged notion. While the EU maintains that it is more culturally diverse than other continents, Dumont and Teller suggest that the absence of EU guidance and financial support for the small and medium-size towns in Europe that resort to tourism in the hope of economic revitalisation actually endangers the very cultural diversity that the EU seeks to support.

The essays in this collection are connected by their shared contention that, while the European Union may have started as a political and economic enterprise, culture is now playing an increasing role in its activities.

— Margaret Cassidy, Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Sarwal, Amit and Sarwal, Reema (eds), *Creative Nation: Australian Cinema and Cultural Studies Reader,* **SSS Publications, New Delhi, 2009, ISBN 9 7881 9022 8206, 600pp., A\$55.00.** *Distributor:* **Impression Media.**

Creative Nation offers an extensive collection of readings in Australian cinema and cultural studies aimed at broadening Australian studies for international scholarship, especially in Asia. It is the first Australian cinema and cultural studies reader to be published in India, and is clearly aimed at a non-Australian readership. As such, *Creative Nation* is a valuable contribution to the growing market of international study in this field.

The reader is prefaced with an insightful foreword by John Ramsland, followed by an engaging introduction by the editors that concludes with suggested course models for Australian studies in Indian universities. It is then divided into two sections, Cinema Studies and Cultural Studies, each opening with an introductory chapter providing a useful historical overview of the relevant discipline. This divisive structure has the unfortunate effect of establishing two distinct camps of study: an investigation first of the cinematic (the 'Creative'); and then of the cultural (the 'Nation'). While there is a certain degree of interdisciplinary dialogue established through a parallel structure, this separation neglects the vibrant discourses that arise from more direct, fluid applications of cultural theory to Australian cinema, such as Collins and Davis's *Australian Cinema After Mabo* (2004) or Simpson, Murawska and Lambert's *Diasporas of Australian Cinema* (2009).

Nonetheless, this collection provides coverage of an impressively diverse range of key Australian cultural themes and motifs, including, but not limited

to, multiculturalism, Asian-Australian dialogues, ocker and suburban identities, gender stereotypes, and representations of Indigenous Australia. There are some inconsistencies in the level of critical analysis applied to these topics, however, with simplistic, introductory descriptions of Australian culture placed alongside highly sophisticated and complex discussions. Based on the editors' introductory establishment of Australia as a culture that celebrates 'Waltzing Matilda, Fosters, meat pie, barbecue …' (p. xxxvi) and Robert S. Watson's explanation that in Australia contemporary movies are 'readily available in video hire stores' (p. 27), the intended reader is clearly unfamiliar with Australian culture. However, this superficial discussion is combined disjunctively with advanced, in-depth critiques of Australian cinema and culture, notably D. Bruno Starr's discussion of Australian art film and Rolf de Heer as auteur, Felicity Collins' unpacking of the ocker figure's evolution in national discourse, and Stephen Muecke's thought-provoking afterword questioning the ability of Australia to survive, culturally and intellectually, in a global twenty-first century.

A similar ambiguity arises from the selection of some outmoded articles that are not clearly located in their historical context, particularly in the cinema studies section. Vijay Mishra's investigation of the representation of Aboriginality in Australian texts (previously published in 1988), for example, takes the 1980 *Manganinnie* as its most recent filmic example. Given the social and political shifts that have occurred in the last three decades, and the significance of the 1992 *Mabo* decision and subsequent 1993 *Native Title Act* on Aboriginal representation in Australian cinema (as outlined by Collins and Davis), this chapter

lacks relevance and seems an obtuse selection by the editors. Similarly Peter Hughes' 'A Form of Cultural Expression: Documentary Film in the "Creative Nation"' appears not to have been updated since its original 1995 publication, making present-tense references to Paul Keating's prime ministership and discussing 'the coming Centenary of Federation' (p. 76). It is unclear why the editors would choose this anachronistic article for the title of their collection, especially given their assertion that the reader 'focuses on a wide range of contemporary issues of importance that the Australian cinema and cultural studies offer in the new millennium' (pp. xiii–xiv). A throwback to Paul Keating's 1994 creative arts policy, called 'Creative Nation', hardly seems at the cutting-edge of Australian cultural theory!

Despite these criticisms, this reader is an impressive consolidation of existing research in Australian cinema and cultural studies. As such, it offers a valuable contribution to international scholarship in these disciplines, providing an extensive collection of theory that investigates many key concepts central to Australian national and cultural identities and their manifestation in film.

— Katherine Wright,
Media, Music and Cultural Studies,
Macquarie University

Starkey, Guy and Crisell, Andrew, *Radio Journalism*, Sage, London, 2009, ISBN 9 7814 1293 0154, 173 pp., A\$49.95. *Distributor:* Footprint Books.

On page 1 of *Radio Journalism*, the authors state they are 'going to be making some rather large claims for the importance of radio journalism'. They're not kidding! Within a few pages they make claims about the extraordinary skills of radio journalists,

that radio is inherently a better medium for news than television, and that the BBC comes closest to performing a public service through provision of radio news and current affairs. Starkey and Crisell might wish to counter any sense of 'radio's inferiority', but their provocative stance, clearly suggested in the subheading *How Radio's News Coverage is Better Than Television's*, the scramble to make some rather tenuous arguments about the visual distraction of TV, and snide references to the televisual medium that, yes, has a 'briefer history' than radio, suggests nothing other than a case of 'TV envy'.

The book, centred on the United Kingdom, provides a useful overview of the structure of the broadcasting system and the machinations of powerful public sector broadcaster, the BBC. It deals with regulatory issues and the complications posed by media convergence. The authors initiate a range of interesting discussions on how news works in a medium that allows distracted engagement, yet whose ephemeral nature demands focused attention. They highlight how plurality of station ownership obscures the issue of news plurality, since there are few news services to which stations might subscribe. They ask us to consider whether the BBC should be obliged, as with other elements of television and radio, to commission news output from minority providers.

Particularly engaging is the description of how stations might assemble and utilise limited news-gathering resources — for example, using local reporters or pared-down TV news, and engaging 'stringers' (freelancers) in the process of initiating and following a story. The book is most compelling when the voices and practices of journalists are present. Two short case studies are highlights. The first neatly captures the way in which news of a major UK security alert is broken by a freelance journalist while at the airport on the way to covering Fidel Castro's 80th birthday celebrations. The second, a comparison of BBC's *Today* program and Channel 4 Radio's *Morning Report*, is introduced with some lively banter between staff of the rival programs.

Despite these moments, the book is missing a sense of purpose. It doesn't contain enough technical information to be an instructional text and lacks the depth and argument of an academic resource. It is also missing a narrative hook that would appeal to more general readers, although they seem to be the courted audience. Indeed, the book is hampered by stylistic and structural ploys that attempt to appeal to this readership. The chapter on theoretical approaches may be unthreateningly buried near the end of the book, but it contains perspectives useful for reading earlier chapters. Sub-sections within chapters are supposed to make the material easier to comprehend, but the sheer quantity is distracting at best and at worst misleading — discussion of the Australian and New Zealand broadcasting systems even makes an appearance in the section *Overseas Contexts: North America.*

— *C.K. Wilson,*
Institute for Social Research,
Swinburne University of Technology

Turkle, Sherry (ed.), *The Inner History of Devices,* MIT Press, 2008, ISBN 9 7802 6220 1766, 208 pp., A$38.95.

Since the Industrial Revolution ruptured the feudal lives of workers and propelled them into a new world where the logic of the machine would dominate the majority of their waking hours, being has been mediated by technology. Technological progress is increasingly linked to a profound transformation — we often imagine

the machines we create in turn recreate us, making us faster, smarter and stronger, and helping us to transcend our normative selves.

In this series of essays, Sherry Turkle and commentators explore 'how technologies affect our relationships and sensibilities … how what we have made is woven into our ways of seeing and being in the world' (p. 3). Where Turkle's previous works — *The Second Self* and *Life on the Screen* — explored the interaction between human psychology and technology, *The Inner History of Devices* investigates the curious and sometimes intense emotional attachments with which subjects invest their technologies. In the Introduction, one PC user tells Turkle: 'This computer means everything to me. It's where I put my hope.' (p. 2) What began as a discussion about how people put computers to work had suddenly morphed into an account of how machines could offer such a deep connection. Turkle is therefore led to call for an 'intimate ethnography' of technological use that challenges the conventional wisdom that our machines are merely tools.

Three different modes of 'listening' are used as a framework to examine the complex effects technologies have on those who use them. 'Memoirs' features fascinating personal stories of prosthetic use from artificial eyes to mobile phones that are emotionally charged and memorable. 'Clinical Practice' examines psychoanalytic approaches to, and uses of, technology in clinical practice, including the use of the internet to understand the inner life of troubled boys, the double-edged sword of computer game addiction, and how the division between reality and fantasy becomes more clouded through virtual worlds. 'Fieldwork' describes the effects of various technologies from the computer to online poker,

dialysis machines to the internal cardiac defibrillator (ICD). This last is a particularly effective account — offered to heart attack victims, ICDs are designed to shock the heart back to a normal rhythm should an attack occur. However, users describe the device as like being surprised by lightning or electrocuted painfully and repeatedly from the inside. Alternatively, it brings 'one back from death, a repeated boundary crossing that writes a new narrative of life and death' (p. 99).

Perhaps it is this propensity for boundary crossing — between life and death, organic and inorganic, fantasy and reality — that allows technology to affect us so. In transgressing our self-imposed limits, the machine may occupy a liminal space that we can only describe symbolically. Turkle writes that: 'We approach our technologies through a battery of advertising and media narratives; it is hard to think above the din. In contrast, the inner history of devices is about stories not heard unless one begins with quiet.' (p. 4) In this contemplative space, *The Inner History of Devices* invites us to re-examine how we personally encourage technological transcendence from mere tool to participant in the human condition.

— *Felicity Van Rysbergen, Journalism and Media Research Centre, University of New South Wales*

Verhoeven, Deb, *Jane Campion*, Routledge Film Guidebooks, Routledge, Oxford, 2009, ISBN 9 7804 1526 2750, 273 pp., A$48.00. *Distributor:* Palgrave Macmillan.

Deb Verhoeven's *Jane Campion* wrestles with filmmaker Jane Campion's status as an auteur in order to consider what and who 'Campion' really is, and hence what auteurism might mean. In exploring this idea, Verhoeven

resists the urge to launch straight into direct analysis of Campion's films, although some incisive insights punctuate the text's progress. She also writes against the tendency to offer biographical detail as an explanatory device or embellishment. Rather, the concepts of auteurism and 'post-auteurism' destabilise any coherent sense of Jane Campion the film director. Instead, Campion functions as a unique but productive exemplar with which to unpack comfortable notions of a singularly expressive, inspired, masculine auteur. In this way, *Jane Campion* launches a significant critique of a dominant paradigm, while deftly offering its reader an accessible engagement with the pleasures and complexities of reading 'Campions'.

Verhoeven's is an informed and carefully constructed text that considers the needs of a readership spanning Campion's fans, critics, students, scholars and industry members. Its four chapters successively discuss Campion's representation in the media, industry and academia, followed by a long interview between the filmmaker and author. This structure bears out Verhoeven's argument that there are many irreducible Campions at work. The weight of this argument is borne elegantly and effectively by prose that renders Verhoeven's terms of analysis clear and pithy. At the same time, there are many breathlessly long sentences, which a romantic reader such as myself might be tempted to connect with the breathlessness and sensuality of watching a Campion film. In any case, this is a particularly useful approach because it forms a thread of familiarity amidst the plethora of Campions we

are required to meet, consider and lose in the book's progress. Yet the text's fluid reflexivity also makes the lengthy interview transcribed in the final chapter unexpectedly jarring in tone. Verhoeven's voice is conspicuously excised from the conversation, somewhat undoing the critical emphasis on context that shapes the text. Perhaps this shift is timely, though, because from the point of the interview *Jane Campion* becomes a veritable 'source book', complete with an annotated chronology and filmography, suggested resources and glossary, which many readers will no doubt find useful.

In the proliferation of Campions that preoccupy this text, there must of course be some that slip from its critical reach. In the context of its expansion and deconstruction of the concept of the auteur, it would have been interesting to know more about Verhoeven's approach to Campion's novels. The relative failure of Campion's novel-writing, particularly the little-known *Holy Smoke: A Novel*, co-authored by her sister Anna Campion, could offer some useful insights into the limits, conceits and blind spots of contemporary (post-) auteurism. However, this criticism is an indulgence in the context of Verhoeven's thoughtful and generous contribution. By artfully fusing Campion with the concept of auteurism, and splitting each apart in the process, *Jane Campion* offers a multitude of invaluable fragments that point to the discontinuities and possibilities of living, and writing, large.

— *Sophie M.M. Sunderland, English and Cultural Studies, University of Western Australia*