

dence of attachment to place on the part of mobile cosmopolitans. Griswold then uses a variety of data sources to examine Italy, a nation that does not produce much in the way of a regional literature, and to compare regions in the United States and Norway that exhibit different degrees of literary regionalism. Her purpose is to identify the various factors that encourage or discourage literary regionalism. Among these factors are overall rates of reading, an orientation to the nation versus an identification with the periphery, the organization of the publishing industry, and the role of the state in financing regional literary activities. Throughout this discussion, Griswold makes the convincing argument that regionalism and regional literatures are not a natural or inevitable outgrowth of people's membership in a region. Instead, they depend on institutional supports as well as historical, demographic, and geographic factors that help produce a collective regional identity.

I found the book at its most interesting in its discussion of a reading class. As Griswold notes, a situation where a majority of the population reads extensively for pleasure was an historical anomaly, existing only for about a century, and even then, only in parts of Europe, North America, and Japan. This era is over, and while literacy will continue to spread, that sector of the population that chooses to make reading an important part of its leisure will shrink, though not disappear altogether. Yet, she argues, this reading class still has disproportionate cultural influence and social capital.

One virtue of the book is that Griswold rarely makes grander claims than she can support with evidence, but this also acts as a limit. We do not hear much about expressions of regionalism beyond the literary, and the only dimension of globalization that is discussed is intranational migration. And while Griswold provides an understanding of the social conditions that encourage regionalism among the reading class, she offers only the briefest of explanations for what regionalism actually means to this group. Regionalism brings "roots to the rootless" (p. 173), and a possibility of local wisdom to steady those adrift in a tumultuous world. One might ask why the reading class, who are perhaps more adept than other

groups at riding the forces of globalization, are the ones who yearn for a sense of place and the cultural expressions that arise therefrom. While leaving questions such as this unanswered, Griswold's book does offer helpful direction for thinking about the cultural and social significance of place in the contemporary world.

The Media and Social Theory, edited by **David Hesmondhalgh** and **Jason Toynbee**. New York, NY: Routledge, 2008. 291pp. \$51.95 paper. ISBN: 9780415448000.

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The premise behind this collection of essays is that social theorists and media studies scholars work in ignorance of one another. The editors, both media scholars based in the United Kingdom, are eager to end this mutual illiteracy, and their book is a good first step. They are certainly right that social theorists like Jurgen Habermas and Anthony Giddens seem oblivious to research in mass communication, substituting decades-old references to Stuart Hall for real engagement. The ignorance is less complete on the media studies side, but perhaps more troubling: theorists are very often invoked in totemic terms, via a faddish and uninformed cherry-picking of big names. One result of the mutual ignorance, the editors rightly complain, is the neglect of a crucial domain of modern social life. The reasons for the dialogue's weakness are complex, but include the mid-1960s migration of media research out of American sociology and into professional schools of journalism and speech. Among other things, the move opened up a prestige gap between sociology and media studies, issuing in a one-way flow of influence into a field without the intellectual resources (or context) to properly digest the theory. The result, to quote one of the collection's contributors, is the "irritating blindness" of social theorists to media research—and botched appeals to social theory by media scholars.

This collection of papers, drawn from a 2006 conference at Oxford, is eclectic and, like most edited volumes, uneven. The

book's scattershot array of chapters stands in some tension with David Hesmondhalgh and Jason Toynbee's smart and vigorously argued introduction, which is really a brief for good theory as they see it: rationalist, universalist and critical. The editors' guide here is Roy Bhaskar, whose "critical realism" supplies their theory of knowledge and also their muscular defense of causality as "emergence" from layered structures. The editors' martial confidence here—"[t]he next step," they propose, "might be to move . . . dialectically towards strong argument and intellectual structure between clearly opposed positions, with a view to synthesizing and winnowing out the *best* media theory"—is undercut by the ecumenical cast of the book's chapters. Some are empirical applications of a specific theory, while others engage more directly with one or more theorists, refracted through media questions. It's a motley collection of theorists who surface from chapter to chapter, some of whom (Habermas, Beck, Giddens, Boltanski) work in a sociological key, with many others (Zizek, Derrida, Deleuze, Negri) more often embraced by literary and cultural studies scholars. The editors' tolerant, almost permissive selection criteria have yielded a rich cross-section of often excellent papers. The main drawback is that the volume as a whole is less than the sum of its parts; there is very little thematic continuity.

The contributors are mainly media scholars based in the United Kingdom, United States, or Canada, which may inadvertently limit the book's circulation to the low-status field itself. That would be regrettable, since a number of chapters deserve to be read widely. The best chapter is Matt Stahl's analysis "rockumentaries," which he sees as supplying implicit lessons for workers in a post-Fordist society. In a brilliant and complex reading of a pair of films, Stahl argues that the representation of musicians' expressive freedom operates as a kind of bait and switch—in which the narratives' promise of authenticity acts as a Trojan horse for the embrace of risk and economic precariousness.

In another strong chapter, Daniel Hallin mounts a challenge to the swift and decisive uptake of the "neoliberalism" term, which, he argues, offers a too-simplistic account of

admittedly momentous shifts in the media landscape (and beyond) over the last 30 years. The particular conditions that nurtured professionalism in post-World War II journalism, for example, were undermined not just by the privatization and deregulation, but also by the anti-elitism of new social movements in the 1970s and after, claims Hallin. David Hesmondhalgh, one of the editors, has a superb chapter that re-frames "imperialism"—an especially fraught term in the media studies tradition—in copyright terms. He adapts David Harvey's analysis of over-accumulation crises in capitalism to understand the aggressive push by the rich West to extend intellectual property rules around the globe, on behalf of their cultural industries. Hesmondhalgh calls it "accumulation by cultural dispossession."

Alison Hearn contributes a summary of her important work on the "branded self," which she sees reflected and reinforced across a range of discourses, including management literature, reality television, and social networking sites. If anything, Hearn's account, like some other chapters', is too dependent on recent shifts in the economy ("neoliberalism" again) for its explanatory heavy-lifting. Nick Couldry's semi-autobiographical account of the theoretical constituents of his "ritual analysis" approach lingers on certain limits of actor-network theory, and extols—like the editors, including Jason Toynbee's stand-alone contribution—the virtues of Bhaskar's "critical realism."

Karl Karppinen makes an intriguing case that Chantal Mouffe's "agonistic pluralism" could be developed into a rationale for media policy reform, as a corrective to the overly rational and consensual framework supplied by Habermas. Chris Anderson's sweeping, taxonomic overview of U.S. journalism research since the mid-1970s makes a convincing case that three main strands—newsroom analyses, studies of journalists' discourse, and Bourdieu-style treatments of journalism as a field—could mutually inform one another.

Each of these chapters—the volume's strongest—are well worth reading, but very little binds them together. They each engage with theory, it's true, but not with each other and not, by and large, with the same thinkers. It is an accident of disciplinary his-

tory that media and social theory have evolved in mutual isolation. Media studies, in this respect, has a Galapagos problem. Consider this book a scouting expedition.

Desi Land: Teen Culture, Class, and Success in Silicon Valley, by **Shalini Shankar**. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008. 275 pp. \$22.95 paper. ISBN: 9780822343158.

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Shalini Shankar's ethnographic study of South Asian American teen culture during the dot-com boom in Silicon Valley is one of a growing number of works focusing on an underresearched population in the social sciences, viz. South Asian immigrant populations in the United States. While these communities have expanded since 1965, there is still only a small body of work on "desi" (South Asian) immigrants and their children. This book is significant for its contribution to this field, and to studies of second-generation youth and the sociology of immigration at large.

The book's central focus is an exploration of the meanings of success among the children of middle- and upper-middle class Indian, Pakistan, and Bangladeshi immigrants at three public high schools in Silicon Valley in the late 1990s. Using a lively, lucid style, Shankar draws on her field work to discuss how desi youth fashion race, class, and gender identities in relation to "everyday arenas of consumption, media, and language use as well as more formal spaces of multicultural performances, orientation toward school, and ideas about dating and marriage" (p.3).

Particularly attuned to linguistic processes and to the use of media and technology, the author investigates how young desis construct identities that rework the notion of "FOBs" (generally a derogatory term for "fresh off the boat" immigrants) and craft "FOBulous" and "tight" (cool) identities during the high-tech boom. One of the strengths of this book is its attention to the "social life of media" (p.58) for diasporic youth, and the ways this is intertwined with the production of racial, class, and gender

identities in an era of multiculturalism. Shankar argues that rather than a stark opposition between "FOBby" (unfashionably South Asian) and "tight" identities that pin cool-ness to American style, there is a more complex dialectic at work for youth who are steeped in the consumption of transnational media, such as Bollywood (Indian) film and pop music, and who recognize an urban, cosmopolitan South Asian culture as also representing aspects of "tight" style.

The ethnographic vignettes provide interesting and often humorous insights into young people's experiences at Silicon Valley malls, family parties, and multicultural festivals at school, illuminating the ways in which cultural capital is constructed in a web of social relationships among teen cliques, families, and communities. For example, middle-class families who cannot afford the luxury commodities to which they aspire sometimes rent high-end sound systems and even cars to assert their social status at weddings or parties. Shankar alludes at times to what she calls "the Amrikan Dream," or the particular version of the American Dream, presumably, to which these desi teens and their families aspire; it would have been helpful to define this intriguing notion more explicitly and how it differs from the general mythology of material achievement and capitalist enterprise.

What is striking about the book is its discussion of a group that is a hyper model minority, particularly at this moment and in this region, and that constructs its identity in relation to notions of the American Dream and mythologies of unlimited growth and expanding possibilities that obscure racial and class inequality. Shankar examines how material consumption is celebrated as a marker of success by teens who draw not just on local cultures but also on South Asian media, especially Bollywood, to create a "desi bling" culture performed through the use of fashion and other commodities and expressed through "metaconsumption" (p.92), or narratives about consumption that shape identities and cultural capital. In making "FOBby" identity into a glamorous "FOBulous" style or participating in "desi bling" commodity culture, there seems to be an element of Orientalism and even self-Orientalization that is not really discussed in the