The Mediated Youth Reader

Sharon R. Mazzarella EDITOR

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Edited by Sharon R. Mazzarella

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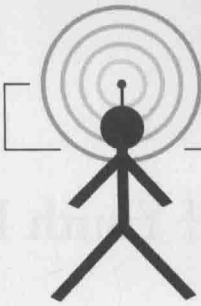

mediated youth

Sharon R. Mazzarella
General Editor

Vol. 27

The Mediated Youth series is part of the
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the highest quality standards for content and production.

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For Jeff with Love

Acknowledgments

Over the past 10 years, innumerable people have played a role in making this Mediated Youth series a success. As is evidenced by the works collected in this volume, the authors of the chapters and books published in the series deserve the lion's share of the credit. Their intellectual expertise, passion, dedication, and hard work are what have made this series as notable as it is. It has been a genuine honor to work with them, and I only wish there had been space in this reader to include chapters by more of them.

Mary Savigar, preceded by Damon Zucca, have been amazing editors and representatives of Peter Lang Publishing. Damon believed in me and in this series when I first proposed the idea to him ten years ago, and Mary has continued that support and enthusiasm over the years and when she suggested the idea of this reader.

In addition to editing this series, this is now the fifth book I have published with Peter Lang, and I have had the pleasure of working with Director of Production, Bernadette Shade, and her phenomenal production staff who take great pride in their work particularly when it comes to the fine details. A special thanks this time to Phyllis Korper who was assigned the unenviable task of constructing individual chapter reference sections from what had originally been lengthy book bibliographies for many of the chapters in this volume. Thanks also to the cover design folks at Peter Lang who have worked over the years with Mediated Youth authors to fashion some of the most eye-catching, creative, and relevant designs for the covers of series books. Thanks to photographer Corey LeChat for allowing us to reprint his photographs in Chapter 7.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge Dean David Jeffrey (College of Arts & Letters, James Madison University) for his continued support of my scholarly endeavors over the past several years. It is a pleasure to work in such a supportive intellectual environment.

Finally, thanks to Jeff Johnston for making me laugh. Life can't always be about work!

Contents

[1]Chapter and book were originally published under the name Christine Jacqueline Feldman.
[2]Chapter was originally published under the name Michelle S. Bae.

Introduction

I Remember the Risotto

Sharon R. Mazzarella

Background

I don't remember the date (somewhere around 2005 or 2006), the city, or the conference, but I do remember the risotto. I was having lunch with Peter Lang's then Senior Acquisitions Editor (for media and communication) Damon Zucca with whom I had worked on my first three books published by Peter Lang. We were discussing book series, and I casually (calculatedly?) suggested Lang needed a Mediated Youth series, and that they needed me to edit it. Damon loved the idea, and invited me to submit a proposal. Now, a decade or so later, the series has published nearly two dozen volumes with more in process or production. Damon left Peter Lang in 2006 and Mary Savigar took over as Senior Acquisitions Editor (for media and communication). Mary and I share a similar vision for the series, and it was she who initially suggested this reader.

I will be honest and admit that I was flattered by this proposition and the rationale behind it—that the series has been tremendously successful in contributing to an ongoing and evolving dialogue about youth media studies. Because I have so greatly enjoyed working on this series, I hadn't even realized how much time had passed until Mary reminded me. (Has it really been 10 years since I initially proposed the idea?) This milestone provides the perfect opportunity to reflect on how the series has evolved, how it has contributed to the field, and in which direction(s) it is moving.

Evolution of the Series

At the time when I advocated for the series, it was at a point when mediated youth studies was booming, and had been for years, yet Lang didn't have a series dedicated to this topic. My second book, *Girl Wide Web: Girls, the Internet, and the Negotiation of Identity* (2005) for example, was published in the highly acclaimed series "Intersections of Communications and Culture: Global Approaches and Transdisciplinary Perspectives" edited by Cameron McCarthy & Angharad N. Valdivia. If Lang wanted to grow its catalog of cultural studies focused, youth-oriented books, it needed a home for them.

Even a casual glance through the series' title list reveals that the majority of books are not just on youth, but on girls. That was not the original intent of the series, but rather has been a byproduct of 1) the fact that my own research and academic circles are in the area of girls' media studies and 2) the dramatic boom in scholarship in this area that occurred concurrently with the evolution of the series. Readers might be tempted to ask why I have not made a greater effort to recruit more books in the series specifically on boys. While I would have loved to have included more books focusing on boys, the fact is that the field of youth media studies is simply not generating much in the way of research focusing specifically on boys. Certainly there is the important work of Jackson Katz, particularly his *Tough Guise* videos produced for the Media Education Foundation (Jhally, 1999; Earp & Jhally, 2013) in which Katz links such examples of real-life violent masculinity as the Columbine High School shootings to mediated portrayals of violent and hyper-masculinity. Yet he is not part of a larger, *sustained* cohort of scholars interrogating the relationship between boys and mediated cultural artifacts. That cohort does not exist, while its counterpart in girls' media studies is flourishing. Despite the fact that the interdisciplinary field of masculinity studies has a noteworthy presence within media studies, such scholarship typically interrogates mediated portrayals of *adult* men. On the other hand, while studies of boys and boy culture are not prevalent in media studies, they have proven to be quite dynamic in sociology and education.

While I'm thrilled that the series has been able to provide a home for both established and emerging scholars doing work in the previously ignored area of girls' media studies, the series remains focused on all youth, and I've endeavored in this volume to showcase the variety and diversity of topics published in the series. Given that the majority of books in the series have focused on girls, that proportion is also reflected in these chapters.

This Reader

Organization

This reader is organized into four sections—"Identities and Girlhoods," "Global Youth," "Digital Natives," and "Representing Youth's Gender, Race and Ethnicity"—although most chapters could have fit in more than one section. Still, I felt it was important to organize the reader this way since these four topics epitomize the variety and breadth of subject areas covered by the books in the series. This reader also begins with a chapter from the first book contracted for the series (*Queer Girls and Popular Culture: Reading, Resisting, and Creating Media*) and concludes with a chapter that is, as of this writing, the latest book in press (*Snatched: Child Abductions in U.S. News Media*).

It has been both an edifying and sentimental experience putting this reader together, although it turned out to be more time-consuming than I had anticipated initially. When Mary first suggested this project to me, I assumed it would be quick and easy to select the chapters, after all, I had read all of them before, some multiple times. But the reality is that it had been 7–10 years since I had read many of these original manuscripts, and my recollection of the specific content of specific chapters was hazy. Plus, how does one go about picking 15 chapters from two dozen books in a way that best represents the series and the field of youth media studies as a whole? So, I read, and I read, and I read some more, mapping out various scenarios as I went along. I'm pleased with the final results, but disappointed that I couldn't include chapters from more books, and I hope the authors of those equally significant books don't feel slighted.

Chapters

The first section of the reader, "Identities and Girlhoods," includes chapters on girls as audiences and/or creators of cultural artifacts specifically within the context of identity development. While these

chapters interrogate how girls use cultural artifacts in the construction of their own identities, some also challenge the questions we as scholars ask about girls and the girls about whom we ask those questions. This is where the powerful subtleties of language come into play as the section heading is "Identities and *Girlhoods*" (plural) not "Identities and Girlhood" (singular), in recognition of the fact that there is no one singular girl or girlhood lived experience. For example, in her 2007 book *Queer Girls and Popular Culture: Reading, Resisting, and Creating Media*, Susan Driver challenges the tendency of Girls Studies scholars to focus on White, Western, heterosexual, and able-bodied girls. Similarly, she reminds us that Queer Studies often ignores girls. So her task in the first chapter of this reader, "Queering Girl Studies: Dialogical Languages and Performative Desires," is "to enjoin feminist and queer discourses in an uneasy, yet productive, collaboration," a goal that guides her analysis throughout the rest of her book. In fact, I selected this chapter because it provides a theoretical, methodological, and linguistic framework not only for her book, but for other scholars studying queer girls. The fact that this book has more Google Scholar citations (n = 75) than any other book in the series is a testament to its relevance and usefulness to other scholars.

When Ruth Nicole Brown asked me to write a Series Editor Preface to her 2009 book *Black Girlhood Celebration: Toward a Hip-Hop Feminist Pedagogy*, I attempted to capture the vibrancy of this book by describing it as "an intellectual and celebratory journey that is part feminist theory, part social narrative, part performance-based autoethnography, part poetry slam, and part dance cypher" (Mazzarella, 2009, p. x). Like Driver, Brown challenges academics who narrowly define "youth" and "girls" such that girls of color in general and Black girls in particular are typically left out of the conversation. Chapter Two of this reader reprints Brown's "Theorizing Narrative Discrepancies of Black Girlhood" chapter in which Brown, a self-proclaimed hip-hop feminist, works toward theorizing what she refers to as "the in-between space" (2009, p. 16) of the discourses on hip-hop feminism, girls' studies and girl empowerment programs, all of which she argues ignore the lived experience of Black girls.

I begin with these two chapters because, rather than analyzing the relationship between cultural artifacts and youth, each asks difficult questions about how we theorize, study, and speak about the identities of young people, especially in cases when those young people have historically been left out of the academic dialogue. Moreover, both deal with the intersections and interdisciplinarity that often characterize youth (particularly girls') media studies. It is significant that these are two of the earliest books published in the series, and they set the stage for the books/chapters to follow.

Chapter three, Meghan Chandler and Diana Anselmo-Sequeira's "The 'Dollification' of Riot Grrrls: Self-Fashioning Alternative Identities" addresses a key (and, as they show, enduring) moment in lived feminism, the Riot Grrrl movement. Appearing in Miriam Forman-Brunell and Jennifer Dawn Whitney's anthology *Doll Studies: The Many Meanings of Girls' Toys and Play* (2015), this chapter interrogates how early and contemporary Riot Grrrls in the US and UK appropriate doll imagery to challenge and trouble cultural representations of young girlhoods. This chapter is important also because it provides evidence that, contrary to popular belief, Riot Grrrl is not dead. Rather it continues to evolve as a form of DIY activist feminism.

Like Riot Grrrls who blatantly defied cultural dictates of hegemonic femininity, Dawn H. Currie, Deirdre M. Kelly, & Shauna Pomerantz's chapter "Breaking the Rules: Skater Girls" (Chapter Four) documents how a multicultural group of girls in Vancouver, Canada, stake a claim in the boy-dominated world of skateboarding by actively engaging in the "unfeminine," physically challenging, and perilous act of skating rather than simply watching boys do so. Appearing in their 2009 book *Girl Power: Girls Reinventing Girlhood*, this chapter argues that skater girls are engaging in behavior that amounts to nothing short of an "embodied resignification of girlhood."

While chapters Three and Four begin to move our focus away from US youth onto a more global stage, they are still focused primarily on White and Western youth. In the next section, "Global Youth,"

this anthology highlights the role the series has played in shifting the dialogue to a broader global context.

Elham Golpush-Nezhad's 2015 chapter, "Queering Tehran: Discovering Gay Rap in Iran" (*Lost Histories of Youth Culture*, Christine Feldman-Barrett, Ed.), introduces us to the life of "secrecy and isolation" experienced by Iran's underground gay Hip Hop subculture. Based on her conversations with self-identified members of this group, and grounded in an in-depth historical analysis of the history of homosexuality across the centuries in what is now Iran, Golpush-Nezhad documents how these young people have a created a community where they can express themselves in a somewhat safe, yet still secret space.

In her 2009 book *Mediated Identities: Youth, Agency & Globalization* Divya C. McMillin works toward investigating the relationship between globalization and youth agency—both concepts that she employs in a much more complex and interrelated manner than do many youth scholars. For example, grounded in postcolonial theory and field research on teens in Johannesburg (South Africa), Munich (Germany), Bangalore (India) and New York (United States), McMillin's chapter "Television and Transnational Relevance" (Chapter Six) analyzes the role of television in teens' lives and homes through the lens of their religious, gender, class and caste identities. The result is a deep, nuanced portrait of a generation of young people growing up in a range of different countries/cultures.

Christine Feldman-Barrett's[1] book *"We Are the Mods": A Transnational History of a Subculture* (2009) takes us beyond most people's limited understanding of Mod as a 1960s' UK subculture/style, and shows how Mod has manifested globally and across decades. Chapter Seven reprints Feldman-Barrett's chapter "Japan's 'Cult of Mod'" in which the author draws from her study of Japanese history, fieldwork with young Mods living in various Japanese cities, as well as the themes of modernity, gender, and hybridity to analyze the role of Mod as a manifestation of Japanese youth identity. Feldman-Barrett links the popularity of Mod style to the Japanese aesthetic of "*kawaii*" ("cute"), particularly for young adult females, but also argues that the adoption of Mod as a style aesthetic in Japan parallels that country's modernization trajectory in the decades following World War II.

Section Three appropriates the contested label "Digital Natives" to locate chapters interrogating the relationship between youth and technology, primarily the digital and computer technology that has so dramatically distinguished millennial youth. In Chapter Eight, "'Enjoy Responsibly!': Young People as Brand Co-Creators," Nicholas Carah exposes what he calls the "unpaid social labor through which young people commodify their social experience," in the process of building branded selves that are then appropriated by corporations to link the corporate brand to the cultural capital of youth. In this chapter, reprinted from his 2010 book *Pop Brands: Branding, Popular Music, and Young People*, Carah highlights the example of the 2009 Big Day Out music festival (Australia), and the strategy employed by transnational tech corporation HP to encourage young people to make and upload videos of the event. While some of HP's strategies proved unsuccessful, Carah reveals how young people are willing to participate in this "experiential branding" in order to get something for themselves—in this case, hopefully a foot in the door of the culture industries.

In Chapter Nine, "Go Cyworld! Korean Diasporic Girls Producing New Korean Femininity" (2010), Michelle S. Bae-Dimitriadis[2] examines how diasporic Korean girls in the United States actively make use of their Cy *hompis* (personal homepages) on the Korean social networking site Cyworld to construct a culturally hybrid form of ethnic femininity. Originally published in *Girl Wide Web 2.0: Revisiting Girls, the Internet, and the Negotiation of Identity* (Sharon R. Mazzarella, Ed.), Bae-Dimitriadis grounds her chapter primarily but not exclusively in the deconstruction of girls' posted pictures through which she documents the playful and nostalgic manner in which the girls recreate an imagined Korean girlhood.

Ground-breaking at the time, and the best-selling book in the *Mediated Youth* series, Shayla Thiel Stern's *Instant Identity: Adolescent Girls and the World of Instant Messaging* (2007) investigates how tween

and teen girls in the US use the technology of Instant Messaging (IM) to create a culture, peer group, and personal identity. Based on interviews with teen girls as well as texts of actual IM conversations sent to her by these girls, the chapter "How Many Peeps R on 4 U?: IM As a Space for Identity Articulation" (Chapter Ten) focuses on girls' identity construction, and demonstrates how IM is a much more complex activity for girls than just a hightech version of note-passing as many dismissed it at the time.

Citing Stern's IM research, Stacey J. T. Hust's chapter "The Shrines to What They Love: Exploring Boys' Uses & Gratifications of Media in their Personal Spaces" details how some US boys use media and technology, specifically in the personal space of their bedrooms. Published in Annette Wannamaker's anthology *Mediated Boyhoods: Boys, Teens, and Young Men in Popular Media and Culture* (2010), this chapter employs the methodology of bedroom tours in which the author met with teenage boys in their bedrooms for conversation and a "tour." As a result of her research, Hust found boys use a range of media, mostly available to them in their bedrooms or a family bonus room for "self-socialization; emotional regulation, social interaction; to secure independence; and to enhance their environments."

Representing Youth's Gender, Race and Ethnicity

I met Kathleen Sweeney at a Media Literacy Conference in Toronto somewhere around the late 1990s. I remember being blown away by her presentation on mediated representations of girls, and invited her to give that presentation at Ithaca College, where I was teaching at the time. We also discussed the possibility of turning her extensive work in this area into a book, and *Maiden USA: Girl Icons Come of Age* was published in 2008. Of the many chapters in the book, I selected "The Girl Gaze: Indies, Hollywood, and the Celluloid Ceiling" for a variety of reasons. First, Sweeney is not a traditional academic. She is a media artist and activist whose work has included providing a space for girls to produce their own films. Given that, I felt the best representation of her work was to include a chapter on how female directors fare in the film industry and, in particular, how the representation of girl characters differs when there is a woman behind the camera (i.e., when there is a "girl gaze"). This chapter provides a compelling example of the need for providing education, tools, and spaces for girls to create films and other mediated technology, something Sweeney herself has done in her activist work, and which she goes on to discuss later in her book.

When I teach Natalie Wilson's "Civilized Vampires Versus Savage Werewolves: Race and Ethnicity in the Twilight Series" (Chapter Thirteen) in my popular culture and diversity class, my students initially assert that Wilson is "reading too much into it." But very quickly, as we actively interrogate the content of the Twilight films, my students come to see the strength of Wilson's compelling analysis. Specifically, in this chapter, originally published in *Bitten by Twilight: Youth Culture, Media, & the Vampire Franchise* (2010, Melissa A. Click, Jennifer Stevens Aubrey, & Elizabeth Behm-Morawitz, Eds), Wilson focuses on how the Twilight books and films construct a series of racialized binaries such as primitivism/civility and savagery/intellect through the portrayals of the characters of Jacob (Native American "Werewolf") and Edward (White Vampire). In the end, Wilson demonstrates the manner in which these binaries function to both celebrate hegemonic Whiteness and demonize (animalize) people of color.

Building on Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga's anthology *This Bridge Called My Back*, Angharad Valdivia's chapter "Tween Bridge over My Latina Girl Back: The U.S. Mainstream Negotiates Ethnicity" (Chapter Fourteen) investigates how the recent wave of Latina girl characters in television, film and other forms of popular culture—Bratz Dolls, Cheetah Girls, Dora the Explorer, and so on—serve as a bridge between dominant constructions of Whiteness and constructions of racialized others. The chapter, originally published in Mary Celeste Kearney's *Mediated Girlhoods: New Explorations of Girls' Media Culture* (2011), argues that by harnessing "hybrid and ambiguous Latina" girl characters, the culture industries "simultaneously expand the ethnic register" while continuing to marginalize Blackness in mainstream cultural artifacts and the public consciousness.

At the time of this writing Spring-Serenity Duvall and Leigh Moscowitz's book, *Snatched: Child Abductions in U.S. News Media* (2016) is in press, but as soon as I read the unpublished manuscript, I knew I wanted to include a chapter in this reader. Not only would such a chapter provide a way to highlight the evolution of the series, but the book is both compelling and timely. While the book as a whole documents how the myth of stranger danger has been perpetuated by the news media, particularly when an abducted child is a White, middle-class, suburban girl, this chapter, "When Boys Go Missing" (Chapter Fifteen), deconstructs US news media coverage of missing boys in recent years. While missing boys, according to the authors, have been "virtually invisible" in millennial news coverage, when they are covered it is typically framed in the context of "presumed predatory homosexual pedophilia." Such framing, argue the authors, reflects "not only a discriminatory selection of victims based on gender but also a homophobic bias in news framing of boy abduction crimes." More than any other, this chapter serves to support a key finding of their book as a whole, that only some children are considered to be idealized, innocent victims, while others are deemed as not worthy.

Conclusion

With the exception of some minor grammatical revisions, my original description of the series has remained stable over the years. Specifically, as described on the Peter Lang website:

> Mediated Youth publishes cutting-edge new research on the cultures, artifacts, and media of children, tweens, teens, and college-aged youth. Whether studying television, popular music, fashion, sports, toys, the Internet, self-publishing, leisure, clubs, school cultures/activities, film, dance, language, tie-in merchandising, concerts, subcultures, or other forms of popular culture, books in this series go beyond the dominant paradigm of traditional studies of the effects of media/culture on youth. Instead, works published in this series endeavor to understand the complex relationship between youth and popular culture, and, whenever possible, will include the voices of youth themselves.

It's been nearly 10 years since I wrote the above description, and I am delighted that this series has been able to provide an outlet for scholars engaging in critical/cultural scholarship "on the cultures, artifacts, and media" of young people. Looking forward, however, I'd like to see the series evolve in three ways that will be reflected in revisions to the above series description. First, the series should reflect the diversity of youth culture—more appropriately youth *cultures* (plural). Similarly, the series needs to take a more global approach to accurately reflect both the state of current mediated youth scholarship and the changing world. Finally, the series should include more books focusing on the complex, exciting, and evolving relationship between young people and technologies. Certainly there have been chapters and books already published in the series that have addressed one or more of these issues, but it's important that the series description explicitly spell out these important topics/approaches. Moreover, as series editor, I need to more actively work to recruit authors whose scholarship addresses these topics.

Editing this series has been a tremendous growth experience for me. I have had the privilege of working with outstanding scholars, both emerging and established, from whom I have learned a great deal. Coincidently, today I signed an agreement to continue editing the series for at least three more years, and I am excited to see the direction the series takes during that time!

—September 3, 2015

Notes

1. This chapter and book were originally published under the name Christine Jacqueline Feldman.
2. This chapter was originally published under the name Michelle S. Bae.

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PART I

Identities and Girlhoods