

inhabitants daily doings). In the contradictory movement of embracing and 'suffocating' otherness, the city somehow renders itself domesticated by, and responds viscerally to the exposure to proximity, the vernacular and the allure of difference.

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third wave feminism and television: Jane puts it in a box

Merri Lisa Johnson, editor; I.B. Tauris, London, 2007, 224pp., ISBN 9781845112462, £15.99 (paperback)

The edited collection *Third Wave Feminism and Television* sets out to explore the 'contradictions and reciprocities between feminism and television' (back cover) in the realm of the pleasure/danger debate. This debate is nothing new; Johnson equates it to the 'sex wars' from earlier generations of feminists. However, what the collection claims – through Johnson's introduction – is to look at this debate through the lens of third-wave feminism. Unfortunately, the essays never sufficiently develop a working definition of third-wave feminism. As such, the collection, although referencing third-wave texts, does not critically engage with these texts to address how the third wave brings something different to the analysis of television. The essays are, in general, concerned with highly polished dramas such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *The L Word* and *Six Feet Under* and their feminist (sometimes highly personal) reading. These readings have less to do with the rigour of utilizing a third-wave feminist lens than seeking out the pleasure of the pleasure/danger debate. As Johnson states in her introduction, '*Third Wave Feminism and Television* belongs almost solely to this side' of the debate.

Indeed, by setting the collection on the side of the '*sex radical media critics or visual pleasure libertarians*' (p. 16) Johnson stifles the pretext to which the collection's title alludes. The oxymoronic notion of a one-sided debate rejects any dissenters to ensure that the view of media as an 'insidious form of indoctrination' is brushed firmly under the carpet of the play and pleasure that can be extracted from the viewing. Although Johnson agrees that there is still work to be done in raising consciousness, she asks 'for those who get it, we want to know, *what else is there to say?*' (p. 14), and it is here that the collection misses its opportunity to fulfil the ambitions of the title in opting to have its say through an overwhelmingly personal and individualistic approach.

This missed opportunity is clear from the almost confessional tone of the introduction and to a lesser extent in some of the essays, which concentrate on the individual writer's response to a show, rather than interrogating rigorously the link between these texts and wider contemporary feminist discourse. Johnson, in her introduction, alludes to her own 'guilty pleasure' in apologetically explaining her avid viewing of television and gives a choice of stance when viewing between being 'corseted' by the feminist theory (including theorists Laura Mulvey and Andrea Dworkin) and 'I'll watch what I want to watch' (p. 8). The tension that Johnson speaks of in relation to feminist television critique is at the heart of the issue, and unfortunately this collection fails to map out the ways in which this tension is rigorously examined by focussing only on the personal/individual desires and pleasures in the 'Pleasure Wars'.

This collection fails to place theory at its centre, and although boundaries between theories can blur, there is no definitive meaning of this collection's understanding of third-wave feminism and how it differs from feminist film theory, feminist media studies theory and feminist television studies is left unresolved. In the introduction, there are suggestions that the collection will go beyond merely pointing out which of the shows on television are feminist, and although this is the case, the collection moves to another cul-de-sac in being concerned with individual pleasure and desire, rather than widening the analysis to place any critique within contemporary culture and feminist discourse. This cul-de-sac and lack of engagement with the contemporary debate is set up by the collection limiting itself to a one-sided debate, that of the 'sex radical media critics or visual pleasure libertarians' (p. 16). This collection is fundamentally concerned with the intersection of contemporary television and sexuality and would be of interest to those who work in this area. The tone and highly accessible nature of the writing would also lend itself to a fan-based readership of the television programmes included in the collection that require a more in-depth analysis of their favourite programme(s).

Helen Fenwick

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dames in the driver's seat: rereading film noir

Jans B. Wager; University of Texas Press, Austin, Texas, 2005, 190pp., ISBN 0-292-70966-8, \$21.95 (paperback), \$50.00 (hardback)

Long has film noir fascinated feminist scholars and critics. The allure is simple: in a 1940s and 1950s Hollywood that repeated a variety of representational