Devlin, William J., and Shai Biderman, eds. *The Philosophy of David Lynch*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2011. 248 pages; index.

The latest in a long line of texts reading popular culture through seminal philosophical concepts, *The Philosophy of David Lynch*, in fourteen brief essays, uses clear explanation and examples from the Lynch canon to introduce readers to the fields of philosophy and media studies. The book largely avoids the reductive, aggressive critiques common to Lynch scholarship, like that of Jeff Johnson, who famously called Lynch "a puritanical, hyper-patriotic, idealistic conservative" in his 2004 book *Pervert in the Pulpit*. The book reads much more like Martha P. Nochimson's book *The Passion of David Lynch* (1997), in which she offers an interpretation of the director as encouraging critical thinking by "playfully losing control" of his own creative process. As such, the book is a collection of pleasantly optimistic, layman interpretations of Lynch's most famous works.

The opening essay in the volume—Robert Arp and Patricia Brace's "The Owls Are Not What They Seem," on *Twin Peaks* (1990-91) —is representative of the best of this type of scholarly writing. Using Lynch's love of mystery narratives that embrace dreams and fantastical imagery as a form of 'evidence' (such as Dale Cooper's dream of the 'red room'), the authors construct an informative introduction to argumentative methods and fallacies. Effectively an 'introduction to argumentation,' the essay educates readers on concepts like the *ad hominem* fallacy, in which criticism is aimed at the maker of an argument rather than its validity (21). This essay would work well in a writing intensive, introductory film course, as it perfectly bridges the gap between fan obsession with minutia and the scholarly argumentative process. It clearly and concisely shows how proper rational argumentation is conducted, while simultaneously analyzing the importance of its absence in *Twin Peaks* and other Lynch works.

The first essay's pragmatic goal of improving argumentation is an anomaly, as the remaining essays use Lynch as a means to critique cultural preconceptions. Ronie Parciack's "The World as Illusion" is a particularly strong example of this approach. Critiquing the Western tendency to seek a coherent explanation for incoherent films like *Lost Highway* (1997) and

Mulholland Dr. (2001), Parciack turns to the Eastern religious philosophies of Buddhism and Hinduism. She argues, in part, that the instability of characters in these films (in which a character's name or personality shifts inexplicably halfway through) fits with the Buddhist rejection of 'stable selves' (77), and that Lynch's works, therefore, display a belief that "characters, like salt, can dissolve away into water" (87).

Richard Gaughran's "David Lynch's Road Films" is equally compelling. Unexpectedly starting with a genre analysis—identifying *Wild at Heart* (1990) and *The Straight Story* (1999) as 'road movies'—Gaughran reads Alvin Straight and Sailor Ripley as mirrored images of rebellion. Sailor moves east to west, with speed but without success, and on roads marked with solid yellow lines ('no passing zones' as a metaphor for restriction), while Alvin moves northeast, slowly but successfully, and with the freedom of broken yellow lines (150-151). Ultimately Gaughran argues that, for Lynch, true rebelliousness—as Sartre argues—requires Straight's sense of responsibility towards others, rather than Ripley's destructive disregard (152).

Tal Correm's introduction to phenomenology via *The Elephant Man* (1980) and *The Straight Story*, and William J. Devlin's analysis of empiricist vs. subjective religious faith in *Dune* (1984) also deserve mention. Correm argues that the bodies of Alvin Straight and John Merrick, rather than being what the characters transcend, are what limit and structure their journeys. Devlin, in the only essay in the volume to tackle *Dune*, shows how Paul, despite the existence of empirical evidence (that convinces the other characters of his divinity), must have a religious awakening in order to believe that he is Kwisatz Haderach (232).

Despite several quality essays, the text as a whole feels both repetitive and under-informed. Broad repetition centers on existentialism, which is fundamental to five of the fourteen essays, and the notion that Lynch is often concerned with things not being what they seem (the starting point of almost every essay). Worse is the fact that very similar arguments are often printed back to back. Parciack's excellent essay on Hinduism and Buddhism in *Mulholland Dr.* and *Lost Highway* is immediately followed by Mark Walling's on Buddhism in *Lost Highway*. Thanks to the structure of the book, Walling's piece feels like a pale shadow of Parciack's. The same sequencing problem haunts Shai Frogel's Zarathustrian reading of *The Straight Story*, which immediately follows Gaughran's similarly existentialist take on the same film. One way to reduce this sense of redundancy would have been to deal with a broader swath of Lynch's work. While such classics as *Eraserhead* (1978), *Blue Velvet* (1986), *Twin Peaks* and *The Straight Story* receive extensive analyses from multiple authors, many of Lynch's films receive little attention. Outside of *Twin Peaks*, Lynch's non-feature-length works (*Six Figures Getting Sick* [1966], *Rabbits* [2002], *Dumbland* [2002], *On the Air* [1992], etc.) receive no consideration. Lynch's broader mediated life (like his online 'daily weather reports,' or his marketing of *Inland Empire* (2006) by sitting on a Hollywood street corner with a cow) is also absent.

External citation is equally problematic, as five essays cite no previous Lynch publications. Only one author professes to have read Nochimson's study of Lynch, though her argument is fundamentally similar to much of the work here. Authors also seem unaware of statements made by Lynch himself. Arp and Brace assert that Lynch's work is "carefully planned and controlled" (7), seemingly without awareness of Lynch's repeated claims to create more instinctively than rationally – seen in two interview texts (Chris Rodley's *Lynch on Lynch* and Richard A. Barney's *David Lynch: Interviews*), and Lynch's own abstract philosophical book (*Catching the Big Fish*), and repeated in many other scholarly analyses.

All in all, several of the best essays more than make up for the book's deficiencies. Due to the repetitious nature of some of the essays it is not a text that reads well cover to cover, but the high points are well-written primers to scholarly thinking while also being valuable additions, in their own right, to the scholarly work on the Lynch canon.

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Smit, Christopher R., *The Exile of Britney Spears: A Tale of 21st Century Consumption*.Bristol: Intellect Ltd, 2011. 127 pages.

Christopher R. Smit's book, *The Exile of Britney Spears: A Tale of 21st Century Consumption*, is an examination of America's fixation with the celebrity aspect of popular culture. Specifically, Smit uses an extended metaphor paralleling the way the body ingests and excretes food with the exile process of celebrity that confirmed Britney Spears then rejected her presence. The text scrutinizes, albeit from a distance, the cyclical pattern of the rise and fall of Britney Spears in American popular culture. The first impression the reader has of the book is very suggestive. The front cover of the book is of a Caucasian woman's mouth. The focus is on her lips, which are painted with a bright pink lip gloss that is dripping down her face. The moistened lips look as if the woman has been eating or bitten into something that was juicy. The artwork cleverly inverts readers' expectations by presenting a figure, very much like Britney, who is consuming rather than being consumed by an audience. This focus on the body is continued throughout the book. The book is divided into five sections: preface, prologue, the body which contains three parts (creation, consumption, and exile), and the epilogue. While a reader might be tempted to bypass the introductory material, the preface and prologue provide the framework and serve as an attempt to justify the type of analysis that takes place in the text. These introductory portions of the book provide the reader with two key ideas: first that the book is not a biography of Britney Spears' life, and second that the book serves as an accusation of audience culpability in the creation and destruction of Britney Spears.

These two key points shape the body of the text. The fact that the book purports not to be a biography allows Smit the opportunity to engage in an examination of Britney Spears' life and career. However, Smit's examination is a bit romantic at times. Without concrete facts his investigation reads as far too distant for a conversation about the culpability of American participants in the creation and continual objectification of Britney's body of work and her physical body. For example, in part one or the "Creation" section of the text, Smit's examination of Spears' religious and regional background is rather general and distant from the subject. Smit comments on Spears' upbringing and background in order to demonstrate how her familial life serves as a foundational aspect to her celebrity persona, but the commentary is not that persuasive because he includes few facts and does not provide a close examination of Spears' persona. Specifically, for instance, in chapter two, "The Baptists," Smit comments on Spears' Southern Baptist heritage but does not distinguish whether she is a Southern Baptist or a Baptist from the South. Furthermore, Smit spends a significant amount of time focusing on a "Christian hymn" that is actually a famous poem: "The Lamb," by William Blake from his *Songs of Innocence and Experience* collection. "Little, lamb, who made thee? Dost thou know who made thee, gave thee life, and bade thee feed by the stream and o'er the mead" (24). Smit misses an opportunity to juxtapose innocence with experience because he analyzes the song/poem and the impact of innocence from a distance. Furthermore, Smit's inability to connect Blake with the text suggests limitations in Smit's research and his findings. Also his conversation in the third chapter, "The South," misses key opportunities for analysis. Smit does not acknowledge traditional tensions within idealized images of femininity. For example, Smit does not reflect on the ever-present conflict White constructions of Southern femininity must navigate, like the Southern Belle, who often finds it difficult to balance between morality and sexuality. The idea that Spears' first music video " …Baby One More Time" acknowledges the tension between seductress and Catholic school girl fits well with more traditional depictions of femininity in the South, but Smit questions Spears' Southern background: "Britney might know where she comes from, but she is too ignorant to understand what that origination actually means" (30). Smit does not connect Spears to this very Southern legacy of inherent tension or other constructions of femininity because he is not specific when he talks about representations of the South, yet he claims that Spears does not fulfill them.

Smit ultimately diminishes Spears' power over her persona and artistic output in order to bolster his claim that the audience is truly authoritative in its ability to manufacture celebrity. Smit confirms this claim by focusing on the access the audience has to media and their ability to interact with one another via technology. Smit argues that the impact of the digital culture (mp3 players, social media sites, and blogs) has influenced the way we see celebrity and the way we construct it within our privileged society. The question of how this process is achieved is touched on in the text but more reflective questions about why the audience functions in this creative yet destructive pattern, and or what ultimately will be the consequence for this process, are not probed with the same vigor as his claim about audience culpability. The overarching metaphor of Spears as an object that is consumed and expelled from the body suggests a repugnant tone that contradicts the often romantic tone of the analysis. "The end result of all consumption is excrement: we seek out our consumables, we consume, we digest and we defecate," Smit says (19). Despite the tone, Smit's constant focus on the body, be it Spears' stomach, vagina, or the audiences' collective digestive tracts, forces the reader to acknowledge how celebrity culture can be viewed as a destructive process. But consuming food is a necessary part of human survival. Is the type of consumption being performed on pop star Britney Spears likewise as foundational to survival in popular culture?

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Polan, Dana. *Julia Child's* The French Chef. Durham: Duke UP, 2011. 310 pages; bibliography; index.

On the pioneering series *The French Chef* (1963-73), Julia Child's televised cookery redefined instructional television through naturally adept deployment of quirky personal charm. Dana Polan's *Julia Child's* The French Chef analyzes how that wealth of personality, backed up by groundbreaking technical decisions and meticulous planning, would position the show as *the* touchstone in culinary television. He allows the viewer to think about the elements of each episode—camera angles, composition, dialogue, gestures, props, sets, preparation, reveals, and the frequent delightfully unexpected outcome—and how Julia mediates them as not only chef, but a veritable *maîtresse des cérémonies*.

We're all familiar with the show's near-disasters. Though Polan doesn't mention it, I particularly favor an attempt at browning cheese on the *croutes* atop French onion soup resulting in ten lumps of charcoal floating on broth. Julia reassures, "That's beautiful! There you are. I think that possibly browned a little bit too much. But I don't know. It gives a very good effect." But Polan lets us see more than the uproariously entertaining spectacle of Julia gamely dealing with yet another real-time kitchen mishap. He provides insight into the thought behind orchestrating the episodes; the strategic decisions on the parts of directors, producers, technical staff, and Julia and Paul Child; and the facts of how small budget, tight schedule, and limited film dictated the pace. Polan takes a thorough look at the history not only of *The French Chef*, but also of the television medium itself at a pivotal time in its development, technologically, socially, and even politically.

Lamenting that not enough has been said on the topic in academic circles, Polan establishes his book as the default authoritative work about *The French Chef* and Julia Child's cultural impact. The study proper begins with two histories. The first provides a relatively comprehensive examination of American culinary television in the years before Julia, discussing the style and techniques of early TV cooks like Dionne Lucas, James Beard, and the multi-talented Ernie Kovacs. The second is Julia Child's own culinary history, also dramatized in the film *Julie & Julia* (2009). The book's middle chapters, however, provide—permit the metaphor—the meat of the study. Drawing on rigorous archival research and providing sharp analysis, Polan moves through *The French Chef*'s birthing pains and the decisions that would define the show's look, feel, and tone; to the day-to-day minutiae once the show was in production; to the reception of the program that changed the way people thought about cooking and about television's navigation of its dual identity as both an entertaining and an instructional medium.

One of the particular strengths of Polan's study, as it moves through its various stages, is its articulation of what the viewer understands but has not put into words, namely, the show's philosophy of culinary democratization. He shows, furthermore, how that philosophy governed even the most fundamental aspects of *The French Chef*. One particular moment in which his analysis is particularly adept comes in an explication of the show's title, the cause of much initial uncertainty. Providing the grounds on which Julia fought for her original and ultimate title—one that apparently almost fell in favor of a milquetoast "Looking at Cooking" or some variation—Polan shows that this choice played into the program's ability to empower. Julia was an inadvertent feminist and/or iconoclast, and the study highlights her disdain for "ladylike" and "little-womanish" implications. She challenged the ideas that cooking as drudgery is feminine and cooking as art or profession is masculine. Julia was not *the* French chef, but she made accessible the art of the chef to a wider audience, male and female. Most importantly, she enjoyed the process and translated it into one easily reproduced in a middle-American kitchen, even if every method or technique was not precisely French in execution.

Scattered through *Julia Child's* The French Chef, one finds that Polan frequently places his subject (either show or star) in one or another continuum. Some of these are entirely unexpected but intriguing. How does the execution of *The French Chef* mirror the structuralist theories of Barthes, Derrida, Lacan, and Foucault? Why might one place the program on a timeline that also includes Andy Warhol, Alfred E. Neuman, and Mother (of *Psycho* fame)?

It is in the presentation of the expected continuum, however, that I register a small complaint about the study. Polan does a fine job showing Julia's place in the history of *American* food television. My problem lies in one somewhat glaring transatlantic omission, another grande dame who endeavored to introduce French food to a foreign audience, Fanny Cradock. Cradock, immortalized as the Cockney rhyming slang for *haddock*, matters because *Julia watched her on television*. Citing the famous "Elegance with Eggs" episode, Polan discusses in detail how Julia presented variations on the omelet-making process to her audience. Yet he neglects what seems to me a tremendously significant statement Julia makes after sharing that one doesn't need an omelet pan for a successful outcome: "I didn't know this until we went over to England and saw a woman called Fanny Cradock do an egg show on the TV over there. She invited people just to come in with any old pan." For various reasons, but primarily because Cradock fell sharply out of favor with the general public in the 1970s, one is hard pressed to find any scholarly appraisal of her influence, with only a light biography being released four years ago. Still, because the above quotation ascribes credit to Cradock for a quality that would become quintessentially Julia, I lament that Polan's otherwise astute scholarship did not turn up more connective tissue.

In Polan's latest book, Julia Child's infectiousness does at times seem to pervade his writing, and to good effect. Even a work as rigorous as this would seem stilted if there weren't the odd exclamation point, conversational aside, and rambling sentence. But both in analysis and in execution, the study pays homage to the subject.

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Hateley, Erica. *Shakespeare in Children's Literature: Gender and Cultural Capital.* New York: Routledge, 2009. 218 pp; bibliography; index.

As a voracious consumer of all things pertaining to the intersections of Shakespeare and childhood, I was delighted to learn of a book-length study on the relationship(s) between Shakespeare and modern children's literature. Erica Hateley does not disappoint as she brilliantly investigates "what happens in contemporary children's novels when that which is marked as 'valuable' or 'centrally important' is Shakespeare, and what Shakespeare is in turn made to mean" for child readers (2). She carefully examines both adaptations and appropriations of Shakespeare's plays as well as novels where the playwright appears as a character and concludes that authors and publishers explicitly use Shakespeare as a vehicle to "legitimate gendered difference" (12).

According to Hateley, Shakespeare is no longer generally understood as "the author of a stable body of unified texts, but rather as a complex signifier, not confined to 'high culture' but continuously expanding through integration into popular culture" (1). Hateley probes one aspect of this expansion—how Shakespeare has come to be written for young audiences. Her thesis combines Bourdieu's ideas of cultural capital with her own understanding of gender and dozens of Shakespeare-related children's books:

> It is my overarching contention that Shakespearean capital operates within a patriarchal model in contemporary children's fiction, and does so in order to privilege masculine cultural subjectivity and delimit feminine cultural subjectivity. Thus while Bourdieu is specifically interested in the extent to which the education system is complicit in the circulation and transmission of hierarchical cultural capital, I am interested in the inscription of children as the gendered future-bearers of cultural capital within their literature rather than their classroom. (12)

That is to say, Hateley discusses how nineteenth-century and modern authors use Shakespeare to coincide with and produce supposedly "ideal" gendered readers that ultimately work to promote normative patriarchy.

Hateley begins Chapter 1, "Romantic Roots: Constructing the Child as Reader, and Shakespeare as Author," with a discussion of how nineteenth-century texts first introduced the child to Shakespeare. She considers the "cultural and critical contexts and content" of Charles and Mary Lamb's *Tales From Shakespeare* (1807), Mary Cowden Clarke's *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines* (1850-51), and E. Nesbit's *The Children's Shakespeare* (1897) as foundations for modern appropriations of Shakespeare for children (21).

Readers of *Studies in Popular Culture* will particularly value Chapter 2, "Author(is)ing the Child: Shakespeare as Character." Hateley adds to Douglas Lanier's contention that "Shakespeare is popular culture's favorite symbol for the principle of literary authorship," by suggesting that since "the academy sees the plays as texts where popular culture sees them as works, [...] [i]t makes sense then that contemporary children's literature has often reflected and responded to such tensions by inscribing Shakespeare as a character in concert with appropriations of his plays" (49, 50). Thus, historical fictions for children that feature Shakespeare as a character, according to Hateley, propose that young male characters can mature into boyhood only if they possess some sort of knowledge of Shakespeare as a cultural figure. Young female characters, on the other hand, are often excluded from these appropriations or are encouraged to preserve domesticity.

Hately then devotes each of the remaining chapters to her three focus texts: *Macbeth*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* and *The Tempest*. She continues to balance perfectly the number of children's texts she uses, never once building her argument on merely two or three texts, and the amount of time she devotes to each text, never once relying too much on any one novel at the expense of others. Her discussion of no fewer than 22 appropriations of these three plays time and time again confirms that when it comes to modern appropriations of Shakespeare for children, "[r]ather than offering an imaginative space where categories of subjectivity (as discursive constructs) might be contested, appropriations of Shakespeare naturalise normative values, and even make the implied reader complicit in their production" (187).

Some readers may at first be disappointed by Hateley's failure to include the ways Shakespeare-appropriated films (or other aspects of popular culture) for young audiences may contribute to this kind of Shakespearean capital and patriarchal models of childhood. However, film is beyond the scope of the book, and the means by which Hollywood has disseminated Shakespeare to child and teen audiences has already received critical attention during the last couple of decades. Thankfully, Hateley limits her discussion to a thorough investigation into what has heretofore not been adequately addressed—the ways authors and parents distribute the Bard via children's *literature*. Those looking for analyses of Shakespearean films for child or teen audiences should reach for Richard Burt's *Unspeakable ShaXXXpeares: Queer Theory and American Kiddie Culture* (1998) and Jennifer Hulbert, Kevin J. Wetmore, Jr., and Robert L. York's *Shakespeare and Youth Culture* (2006).

Shakespeare in Children's Literature will certainly enter scholarly conversations in Shakespeare studies, children's literature, appropriation theory, and gender and cultural studies. But those interested in how one particular genre of popular culture—Shakespeare-texts for children—contributes significantly to the production and creation of "ideal" gendered readers will also wish to study this sophisticated and original work.

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Book Reviews

An invitation to reviewers

In forthcoming issues, ***Studies in Popular Culture*** will continue to include reviews of books in the field. Any scholar who wishes to review a book should contact the Book Review Editor, David Janssen, at djanssen@gdn.edu. Those whose work is unfamiliar to the editor may wish to send a CV.

Reviewers may suggest a book to be reviewed or request to be assigned one from among those sent to the editor. Reviews should be approximately 500-700 words long and should (like article submissions) be emailed as an attachment of a Microsoft Word document with the contributor's surname in the file name. In some cases, review essays of 1,000-1200 words may be assigned. Queries are welcome.