neoliberal-forged future. *Nostalgia for Infinity*—an excellent subtitle—clearly signals the problematic outlined by Winter: the market has always been broken, it has never served our interests, and it is high time for new forms of duration and longing.

Transmedia: A Star Wars Story. Sean Guynes and Dan Hassler-Forest, editors. *Star Wars and the History of Transmedia Storytelling*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam UP, 2018. 328 pp. ISBN 978-9-46-298621-3. $49.95 pbk.

Reviewed by Robert Yeates

This wide-ranging collection, an instalment in the Transmedia: Participatory Culture and Media Convergence series, contains several fascinating analyses of the extensive Star Wars franchise. Alongside discussions of the films, novelizations, video games, radio adaptations, and comics are chapters on less well-represented areas in studies of transmedia storytelling, such as fan gatherings, toys, and memorabilia exhibitions. This variety is one of the volume's strengths, keeping the subject matter fresh, and offering the opportunity to rigorously challenge the elasticity of transmedia's theoretical principles. This opportunity, however, is not consistently addressed: some essays speak to Star Wars as an example of transmedia storytelling, but many concentrate on individual texts or single-media series. As a result, the book's title seems out of step with its contents, which present neither a history of transmedia storytelling per se nor a sustained analysis of the role of Star Wars in shaping that history. Instead, *Star Wars and the History of Transmedia Storytelling* covers multiple topics and perspectives on the franchise, which, while often engaging and lively to read, feels unfocussed as a whole.

The essays are grouped into three sections, based not on their subject matter as much as their relevance to eras in the history of Star Wars; the first part concerns the era of the original trilogy (1977–1983), the second covers the expansive period between *Return of the Jedi* (1983) and Disney's purchase of the franchise in 2012, and the third focuses on the Disney era up until the book's publication. The date of publication means analysis stops short of the final two films of the Star Wars saga, *The Last Jedi* (2017) and *The Rise of Skywalker* (scheduled for release in 2019). The rough structuring around these eras means that essays feel thematically jumbled together, with foci jumping between discussions of publication histories, industry and economic issues, authorial control, narrative themes in individual texts, and the actual question of transmedia storytelling itself.

This lack of conceptual cohesion is exacerbated by the fact that the introduction occupies fewer than three full pages, and much of the contextualization of the nineteen essays is left to a pair of interviews that bookend the collection. The first interview with Henry Jenkins establishes the state of the field and defines the parameters of the discussion to come. The second interview with Will Brooker is enjoyable yet disappointingly tangential. As interviewer, Dan Hassler-Forest diverts attention away from the question of transmedia storytelling to ask about fan reception of the films, commercialization, and authorship. The decision to frame the essays in this way seems in spirit with discussion of a transmedia franchise, which itself is so multi-authored and collaborative. Unfortunately, this method muddles the direction of the book. These misgivings aside, there is much value in the essays themselves for sf and media studies scholars in addition to those specifically interested in Star Wars.

One of the difficulties of discussing the transmedia story of Star Wars seems to be in the many conflicting narratives running through the vast franchise. Even in the era of the original trilogy, the question of canonicity is complicated by Alan Dean Foster's *Splinter of the Mind's Eye* (1978), a "novel commissioned by George Lucas as a low-budget, 'Plan B' sequel to 1977's *A New Hope* should that film have struggled commercially" (61). With the success of the first film, the trilogy continued, but this left the events of *Splinter of the Mind's Eye* in the precarious position of being both an official novelization and outside of the canon of the films. In the nearly twenty years between *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) and the release of the first instalment in the prequel trilogy, *The Phantom Menace* (1999), "both fans and media industries converge in the development of the EU [Extended Universe], incorporating every medium *but* film" (12). A vast transmedia storyworld emerged during these years, resulting from both official Star Wars texts and fan production, with storylines and characters that "become semi-canonical in the fans' imagination" and "central forces shaping what fans want Star Wars to become" (20). When the franchise was purchased by Disney, the extensive texts of the EU were rebranded under the banner *Star Wars Legends* "and thereby officially outside canon" (296), effectively dismissing decades of fan investment and creating something of a clean slate for future development of the franchise. As Jenkins puts it, the result is that there is "not just one Star Wars but many 'Star Warses'" (18), with each fan's individual experiences of the franchise informing their interpretation of what is part of *their* story.

Matthew Freeman's "From Sequel to Quasi-Novelization: *Splinter of the Mind's Eye* and the 1970s Culture of Transmedia" tackles this issue directly.

Freeman writes that "transmedia storytelling is often a messy system of contingencies, alternatives, and reboots," with Star Wars an example of "a model of transmediality that is based on multiplicity" (63). This multiplicity is also seen in Jeremy W. Webster's chapter, which demonstrates that, in depicting the same characters, or indeed even the same scenes, different texts can create subtly yet significantly divergent storylines that must either be reconciled, discarded, or held simultaneously in the minds of the audience. Jonathan Rey Lee's chapter shows how certain texts make efforts to allow divergences to coexist, using the example of the *Star Wars Customizable Card Game*. This digital game attempts to tie together four conflicting notions of the workings of the Force found in various Star Wars texts. The result is "imperfect" but "offers a unique angle on the Star Wars universe, one particularly suited to providing fans with the resources for constructing their own version of Star Wars from its deconstructed elements." Instead of a fixed canonical series, Star Wars thus becomes "an imaginative storyworld that invites fan engagement" (142). These three chapters demonstrate a point raised in the book's introduction, "that 'Star Wars' and 'transmedia storytelling' must be understood as complex and contradictory terms that are undergoing constant redefinition" (12).

The shifting definition of transmedia storytelling can be seen prominently in three chapters that make substantive interventions in the field. Drew Morton's "'You Must Feel the Force Around You!': Transmedia Play and the Death Star Trench Run in Star Wars Video Games" builds upon recent forays into the idea of "transmedia play" to "begin to formulate a theoretical and methodological approach to transmedia *as play*" (102). Morton's chapter looks towards Star Wars video games as an example of fans' desires to perform the roles of characters, to visit locations from the films, and to make choices that give some feeling of participating in the transmedia storyworld. While somewhat distinct from transmedia storytelling in that narrative coherence is not as central to the experience as aesthetics or player freedom, such transmedia play can become, as Jenkins says in relation to Star Wars action figures, "part of the personal mythology of the fan" (18), thereby contributing to the idea of Star Wars as "a world, in which many different parts can be explored, and in which background details can be as rich and meaningful as anything that goes on in the lives of the protagonists" (19).

Also contributing to the breadth of studies of transmedia storytelling, Beatriz Bartolomé Herrera and Philipp Dominik Keidl's "How Star Wars Became Museological: Transmedia Storytelling in the Exhibition Space" notes that, "despite the franchise's growing museum presence, the study of exhibitions has

only played a minor role in Star Wars scholarship" (155). Citing the threefold process of content management enacted by Lucasfilm, exhibition curators, and copyright laws, the chapter shows how "Star Wars-themed exhibitions function as a space for managing and refocusing transmedia expansion and narrative coherence" (156). At times, this control goes so far as to "rewrite Star Wars's official history" (163), claiming, for instance, that Boba Fett originated in *The Empire Strikes Back* rather than in the infamous, embarrassing 1978 *Holiday Special*. Hence the exhibition space is an opportunity to examine "the production of culture as well as the cultures of production, including the interaction among filmmakers, media industries, curators, and visitors" (168).

This focus on "transmedia's locatedness in space and place" (213) is also applied by Matt Hills in "From Transmedia Storytelling to Transmedia Experience: Star Wars Celebration as a Crossover/Hierarchical Space." The official, corporatized convention "Star Wars Celebration," Hills argues, is a place where "all the differently merchandised versions of transmedia Star Wars collide" (217) under a unified "brand identity" (221). As with the exhibition space in Bartolomé Herrera and Dominik Keidl's chapter, Hills shows how the convention space deals with transmedia narrative threads being in competition or conflict with one another, working to prioritize certain texts and interpretations while allowing transmedia storytelling itself to act "as a kind of experience; not just as a 'flow' across platforms and screens, but as potentially and spatially located" (224). These three chapters in particular signal that there are still vast new frontiers for studies of transmedia storytelling to explore.

Overall, a number of chapters make worthwhile theoretical contributions to the ongoing redefinitions of transmedia storytelling and media franchises. There is also plenty here for a wider audience with a general interest in Star Wars. Some chapters go little further than historical or narrative summaries, outlining little-studied iterations of the franchise and fandom that would merit further scholarly investigation. This is worthwhile enough, but these chapters sit uneasily beside those that posit more far-reaching theses. I recommend dipping into the chapters individually. There is some terrific scholarship in *Star Wars and the History of Transmedia Storytelling*. Little will be lost, however, by not reading the collection cover-to-cover.