

While they call for destroying the reigning model rather than calling for “positive change,” they declare their indebtedness to Haraway and outline what a post-human would look like.

In many ways this book performs a *coup d'état* in theorizing an orphan of film genres, whose connections to the world we live in are increasingly difficult to ignore. The arguments in these essays avail themselves of the popular culture zombie trope, pursuing imaginative and intellectually creative byways into their critiques of political economies, making this a rich contribution to multiple academic and discursive fields. Each essay provides a unique perspective on the subject, whether a reprinted classic or a more recent analysis. Readers of this collection will therefore gain a deeper appreciation not only for what the zombie tells us about our present moment, in its historical context, but also how we participate in the zombification of culture. In this sense, it is a crucial intervention in the fields mentioned above.

SAMIRAH ALKASSIM

Guynes, Sean, and Dan Hassler-Forest, eds. *Star Wars and the History of Transmedia Storytelling*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017. 328 pp. Softcover. 978-94-6298-6213. \$49.95.

Star Wars and the History of Transmedia Storytelling is an important addition to an established and growing discourse. Filled with a range of content including interviews and essays, it contains nineteen chapters, each about 5,000 words long, divided across three parts: the first explores the foundations of the Star Wars universe, the second examines its expansion beyond the original films, and the third looks at the franchise and fandom after 2012 when Disney acquired Lucasfilm. Each chapter contains footnotes, the book has a unified bibliography, and it ends with a thorough index.

Opening Part I, which focuses on the foundations of the Star Wars storyworld, Tara Lomax’s “Thank the Maker!: George Lucas, Lucasfilm, and the Legends of Transtextual Authorship across the Star Wars Franchise” makes one of the strongest arguments in the anthology. She aims “to examine the function of Lucas’s singular authorship in the context of the Star Wars franchise’s history of transmedia storytelling” by framing “his presence as transtextual authorship, in which the singular author is both in control of and subject to the multifarious and dynamic textual relations of transmedia storytelling” (35). She develops a critically rigorous and intriguing discussion about the transmedia aspects of Lucas’s films and the director himself.

In the other chapters, Jeremy W. Webster uses close readings to explore how character development, with an emphasis on Princess Leia, across the film, novel, Marvel comic, and NPR’s dramatization of the first film threads the larger storyworld together. Matthew Freeman draws on the notorious Alan Dean Foster novel *Splinter of the Mind’s Eye* (Del Rey, 1978) to discuss how transmedia storytelling in general is a messy enterprise of many works operating in parallel, each of which serve an initial purpose but accrue other value within dynamic transmedia narratives. Thomas Van Parys charts the development of the film novelizations both in relation to their source material and to the connections to the larger storyworld of which the films and novelizations are a part. Stefan Hall reveals the early history of Star Wars video game development and their approaches to interactive storytelling and audience engagement. The emphasis on the effect of video game platform affordances and constraints to the creation of games is spot-on. However, his claim that Star Wars games were released “across all available platforms” (91) is incorrect; a notable exception is NEC’s PC Engine/TurboGraphx 16.

Concluding Part I, Drew Morton’s “You must feel the Force around you!/: Transmedia Play and the Death Star Trench Run in Star Wars Video Games” calls attention to the tension between ludology and narratology in Star Wars video games that feature the Death Star’s trench, and it delves toward a “theoretical and methodological approach to transmedia *as play*” (102).

Part II, focusing on “Expanding the Star Wars Universe,” begins with Lincoln Geraghty’s chapter on character development across texts. He makes the argument that “certain characters throughout the history of the franchise have been used as transmedia signposts, directing audiences to other media texts that surround the original movies” (117). The only chapter in the collection that I found unpersuasive is Jonathan Rey Lee’s “The Digitizing Force of Decipher’s *Star Wars Customizable Card Game*.” While he does an admirable job of analyzing the nuts and bolts of Star Wars collectible card games, his argument unnecessarily stretches the boundaries of what is generally meant by digital, digitizing, and digitalization. Had this chapter jettisoned the retroactive application of these terms to the analog materiality of collectible card games and focused on the transmedia storytelling possibilities through game players’ ludic experience, it would have been far more convincing. Sean Guynes’s chapter attempts to bring the focus largely given to visual media, including comic books and video games, back to novels with an emphasis on the New Jedi Order series. Beatriz Bartolomé Herrera and Philipp Dominik Keidl’s chapter addresses the overlooked role of special exhibitions and museums to shaping the Star Wars transmedia storyworld by reinforcing a view of authorial control and de-emphasizing the contributions of others, especially in licensed works, such as novels and comic books. Mark J. P. Wolf analyzes the LEGO Death Star Set #10188 as a playset that collapses key scenes from *Star Wars* and *Return of the Jedi* into a singular interactive space. Andrew M. Butler explores the influence on and political economy of the Star Wars films on Kevin Smith’s View Askew transmedia universe beginning with the film *Clerks* (1994). Concluding this part, Cody Mejeur discusses the promise and peril of outside spaces to narrative development in popular video games *Knights of the Old Republic* and *The Old Republic*.

Part III’s focus is “Consolidating the Star Wars Franchise” and it starts with Matt Hills’s “From Transmedia Storytelling to Transmedia Experience: Star Wars Celebration as a Crossover/Hierarchical Space.” Continuing the theme of space from the previous chapter but switching from virtual to real space, Hills investigates the role of spaces like Star Wars Celebration as a transmedia experience that does new things under Disney while reinforcing strategies followed earlier by Lucasfilm. He argues that, “Its incessantly commemorative, nostalgic use of spatiality both reflects the integrative ‘transmedia economy’ put in place by Disney, but also implicitly restores an older, hierarchical model of transmedia storytelling set up by Lucasfilm” (215). Megan de Bruin-Molé’s chapter raises important issues about women characters in the Star Wars storyworld and how they are presented (or not) in a variety of media and merchandising. Derek R. Sweet connects *Star Wars Rebels*’ Kanan Jarrus to the Obama Doctrine and explores how “Kanan’s transmedia representation reworks the familiar cowboy myth that is so intricately intertwined with US

national identity and that intersects so strongly with contemporary foreign policy doctrines” (242). Heather Urbanski draws on her aca-fan experiences to explore what different kind of fan-oriented events mean for the larger engagement of Star Wars audiences and the reinforcement of its transmedia narratives. The chapter that I most enjoyed in the collection was Allison Whitney’s “Formatting Nostalgia: IMAX Expansions of the Star Wars Franchise,” which investigates the interconnections between IMAX and nostalgia for the Star Wars storyworld. She combines precise descriptions with elaborate analysis of three IMAX releases: 1996’s *Special Effects: Anything Can Happen*, 2002’s *Attack of the Clones*, and 2015’s *The Force Awakens*. She uses the concept of nostalgia to thread together her argument. Her assertions ring true based on my own experiences, especially thinking back on an hours-long, multiple bus-ride trip to see *Special Effects* on opening night at the Fernbank Museum of Natural History in Atlanta. Part III concludes with Gerry Canavan’s argument that Star Wars had an epistemic break from Lucas’ authorial control following the sale of Lucasfilm and its intellectual property to Disney in 2012, which leaves future stories untethered from the vision of a single author.

Bookending the collection are two interviews. The first is with Henry Jenkins, author of *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (NYU Press, 2006). Hassler-Forest’s conversation with Jenkins provides useful context for fans’ changing relationship with Star Wars’ ongoing transmedia storyworld. The second is with Will Brooker, author of *Using the Force: Creativity, Community and Star Wars Fans* (Continuum, 2002). Hassler-Forest’s questions to Brooker lead to contextualization on what “being a Star Wars fan” means before looking ahead to the collapse of Lucas’s mythopoeic approach under Disney and changes for greater representation of women and people of color (289).

The collection’s short chapters are a blessing and a curse. Most of them get right to the point and maintain a laser-like focus, but others spend too many words on the build-up, leaving too few words to thoroughly analyze their topic. Regardless, all of the chapters begin new conversations or carry on some already established in the field. In addition to these chapters as contributions to the discourse, their brevity make them incredibly useful in a variety of classes, such as digital storytelling, film studies, or a special topics class on fandom. In part or whole, these chapters can be leveraged as class readings or student research material. Also, their concision and rigor might serve as useful models for student writers and researchers. In addition to the print version, an open-access edition is available for free from the Open Access Publishing in European Networks (OAPEN) Foundation), which makes it even easier to add to a class syllabus.

JASON W. ELLIS