credibility versus commercial venture. Most telling are the director's own voices with Jia claiming 'I'm not willing to use that sort of commercial method' (129), while Feng maintains he'd 'rather 'make fun movies for one billion people than serious ones for a small group of cultural critics' (166). It is perhaps surprising to note that of the two directors, it is Feng not Jia that is most closely aligned with the state system.

Well presented, with extensive endnotes, many of which could have been more effectively utilized in the main text, the book also includes a useful list of Chinese characters to support the Romanized Pinyin names and terms. Not only does McGrath exhibit a strong understanding of his topic but he also writes well, for instance describing the 'Rupture' phenomenon as a 'dramatic break' from China's 'hoary literary institution' (78). In his concluding remarks, McGrath reminds us of the inherent normative approach of Western scholars taking it 'upon themselves to diagnose China's current conditions and prescribe the proper way forward' (225). Together with Zhang Zhen's collection, this book provides a much needed look at Chinese cinema beyond the *Crouching Tiger* phenomenon by examining alternative cultural texts as the products of artists struggling with their nation's new, and decidedly complex, postsocialist identity.

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YouTube: Online video and participatory culture, by Jean Burgess and Joshua Green with contributions by Henry Jenkins and John Hartley, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2009, 140 pp., £14.99 (paperback), ISBN 0745644790

It is no easy task to characterize Web 2.0 media. The open parameters of user-generated sites and the constant churn in content driven by shifting consumer interests and intent make them huge, complex and elusive targets. This is certainly the case with YouTube where the scale and scope of the site's content is constantly expanding. The company's internal data from February 2009 indicate that 15 hours of video are uploaded every minute, having doubled in the past year (YouTube 2009). As a site, it also defies easy categorization. As Burgess and Green note in this book, YouTube is simultaneously 'a high-volume website, a broadcast platform, a media archive, and a social network' (5).

Given this ontological uncertainty, to effectively capture the nature of YouTube is no easy task.

Nevertheless, it is important to do so. The astonishing amount of content produced for and distributed through the site, the hundreds of millions of videos viewed each day, and its visible uses in distributing political messages means that YouTube is an important hub of media production and consumption. As is made clear in chapter 1 of this book, it also has a complex relationship with mainstream media both economically and in terms of cultural content, and is a significant site for the participatory practices that are reshaping the contemporary media landscape. Thus, despite the difficulties of such a task, it is important that the character of YouTube as a media system be mapped. It is this goal that animates this book.

Burgess and Green seek to define the 'youtubeness' of YouTube, drawing a sample from the four 'most popular' categories across a two-week period. These videos are characterized using content analysis, including both quantitative and qualitative methods. The necessary partiality of this method aside, they draw some intriguing and important insights from this data set and combine it with complex critical discussion to provide a useful and insightful overview of the site and its various cultural meanings. Their analysis demonstrates that YouTube is more than merely a dumping ground for base, narcissistic or illegally reproduced material. In doing so this book stands as an important corrective to the moral panics that circulate around the site, and indeed other participatory media platforms.

A key insight provided by Burgess and Green's analysis, and which is thematically central to the book, is that YouTube is not only about production of texts but is about participation in a common space. Its significance lies in the uses of these videos within the culture(s) of a community more than in traditional media concepts of quality and/or popularity. This is made clear in the data provided in chapter 3 that indicates that even though user-generated content is not statistically the most viewed it more often generates reaction from other users. The conversational genre of vlogging is emblematic of the user-produced content identified in this study, confirming the existence of community engagement at the site's core. Community practices are typified within chapter 4 and discussed within the context of the site's architecture that, notably, does not actively foreground community relations. Here Burgess and Green synthesize shifting ideas about consumer labour within digital media contexts and explore the social activities of YouTubers as part of the messy negotiations between users and providers that constitute the Web 2.0 environment.

This underscoring of the role played by community usefully complicates the conceptual picture of the site. In an important point for educators and marketers alike, the text argues that producing successful content on YouTube requires a literacy based not only in technical skill but also within the cultural norms and values that animate the site. The importance of community then serves as the basis for a later focus on the cultural politics of the site. This begins by displacing a market/non-market dichotomy as the central political issue of participatory media. Instead, the authors explore the tensions that emerge as this dichotomy blurs. This leads into a discussion of YouTube's potential civic role as a cultural public sphere but which is privately owned and seeking to generate revenue. This approach through *cultural* politics provides some unique perspectives, yet it does marginalize more strictly economic questions about the nature of the site's advertising-supported revenue model as it, and its consumer data, are incorporated within the broader Google complex of properties. Any map of YouTube as a media system needs to explore the relationship between the site's structures and one of the biggest global media companies more systematically than is achieved here. Nonetheless, within the

declared parameters, Burgess and Green indicate with some complexity how YouTube impacts on broader cultural politics and vice versa, covering its role within marginalized political expression, the globalization of and globalizing role of the site, the internal controversies generated by the economic dictates of the site, and, importantly, its overlooked role as a cultural archive.

The stated goal of this book is to go beyond the particularities of niche cultural forms accessed via ethnographic methods, and to instead explore YouTube as a system. However this does leave the reader with no real feeling for the culture that is identified as central to the site. Rather than explore particular case studies in depth, the authors rely on outlining illustrative instances to draw a picture of user practices. The reliance on critical analysis over empirical data does not provide the richness of a fully developed ethnography such as those being produced by Lange in her studies of YouTube (2007a; 2007b), nor the detail of a thorough semiotic analysis. This sense of disconnection is also an effect of the remediation of audio/visual Web-based interactive media into the static form of a print text. The limitations of the medium are naturally not the fault of Burgess and Green, but they do mean that the text doesn't quite encapsulate the energy, dynamism and affective pleasure of YouTube culture(s), consequently reducing the force of arguments about the vitality of the culture that underpins their discussion in the later chapters. A related website or adjunct publication online with live hyperlinks and/or embedded videos may have ameliorated this concern.

This substantive analysis of the site complete, the text is supplemented by two extra chapters by Henry Jenkins and John Hartley. Jenkins usefully locates the emergence of YouTube within the longer history and broader context of fan and amateur media production and, by extension, fan/audience studies. He explores current controversies emerging from the mass distribution of user-generated content, focusing on the politics of this distribution rather than the representational politics of particular productions. This emphasis on contemporary debates in areas such as culture jamming, activist video or fan music videos does drift from the chapter's stated goal of describing 'what happened before YouTube'. Nevertheless, Jenkins does provide a valuable counterpoint to the tendency to exceptionalize participatory digital media practices, and should be essential reading for any Web 2.0 researcher.

Hartley's chapter covers territory he has been mapping for some time: the question of digital literacy and its differing evolution within the disciplined spaces of pedagogy and the organic networks of media. He teases out the enunciations common to YouTube and how they may reflect a devolution of the bardic function of mass media. He goes on to consider what this may mean for the narrative structures of storytelling, as well as the power that inheres there. This chapter would have benefited from linking the more abstract theoretical discussions about the nature of narrative change to particular instances of practice on YouTube. This would not only have aided in clarifying the central arguments but also added to the book's overall representation of YouTube's culture. Nevertheless, this chapter does raise some interesting questions about the power of stories in an environment where key narrators are creative individuals working in commericalized, entrepreneurial media environments.

While remaining highly accessible, *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture* is replete with dense analysis. This concentration of arguments, bound up with the text's brevity, is arguably a weakness as it has marginalized rich data about the site and the tight compression of complex ideas may reduce their explanatory or critical power. But YouTube has only been publicly available since 2005. Over time, longitudinal, detailed studies of particular aspects of the site are sure to emerge that will develop these ideas

in greater depth. Until then, this book will serve as an excellent resource for anyone seeking to understand the broad range of issues that characterize the participatory media moment.

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Art/porn: A history of seeing and touching, by Kelly Dennis, Oxford and New York, Berg, 2009, 256 pp., US$49.95/ NZ$52.95 (paperback), ISBN 9781847880673

If one phrase could sum up *Art/Porn*'s trajectory, it may well be 'the power of the image to move our own flesh' (1). Dennis takes the reader on a journey from the ancient world to modernity along a line of thinking that extends beyond what does or does not constitute pornography. Instead, what is of concern is 'the role of touch in the reception of and discourse surrounding the nude in painting, sculpture, photography, and digital visual culture' (3). The result is an informative and investigative analysis of the history of seeing and touching from the three dimensionality of sculpture to the two dimensionality of painting and photography and the gender-political dimensions that stretch across that vast spectrum of representation.

Dennis retells Pliny's account of the lascivious preoccupations of the young Greek men of Knidos in the fifth century BCE; their admiration for the *Knidian Aphrodite*, the first public and life-size representation of the female nude. The story of young and enamoured Greek men molesting Aphrodite's derriere gives the book its hook and generates momentum for a discussion on 'female sexuality as a *condition* of representation' (18). The observation that women are not considered to be exploited in gay or lesbian pornography material is one of the reasons why the research is concerned with 'the heterosexual visual culture of Western art, [; also] because it is that tradition that invents "pornography" and that makes pornography such a consistent subject of controversy' (10). The *Knidia*'s significance is clear. Dennis's introduction includes a preliminary Greek etymology of 'pornography' which, deriving 'from *pornos*, meaning "harlot," and *graphein*, meaning "writing," *porno-graphos*, or *writing of harlots*, is understood variously as having referred either to writing *by* harlots or writing *about* harlots' (6). It offers a rationale for Dennis's interest in the distinctions between image and viewer, and between the object and subject of representation.

Here, the etymologies of two other key terms are included. *Paragone* denotes the Italian Renaissance dispute in aesthetic judgement. Dennis explains the role of Leonardo's treatise in this battle between sight and touch amid 'the argument for art's autonomy' (31).