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David Gauntlett, *Media, Gender and Identity: An Introduction*. London: Routledge, 2002. 278 pp. ISBN 0-415-18960-8

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David Gauntlett uses the depictions of masculinity, femininity and, to a lesser extent, sexuality in a variety of media – men's and women's magazines, television, film, popular music and self-help books – to explore how these representations impact women's and men's self-identities in both the United Kingdom and the United States.

After presenting some debates on the power of media and audiences, Gauntlett provides an overview of past and contemporary representations of gender and sexuality on television, in film, in magazines, and in advertising, an incredible task given that volumes have been filled on the subject. He primarily uses the theoretical approaches of Anthony Giddens, Michel Foucault, and Judith Butler to understand identity formation. Giddens' view that we are in a period of late modernity, in which tradition is declining and identities are fluid, dovetails nicely with Butler's perspective on queer theory and fluid identities, while Foucault's ideas tie identity formation to media. His use of these three theoretical frameworks show that not only do discourses shape the way we perceive the world and ourselves, but that media exert a form of power through their dissemination of prevailing discourses.

Gauntlett's analysis then moves to men's lifestyle magazines, a relatively new phenomenon in itself. Pointing to the insecurity that hovers just behind the cover photographs of scantily-clad women, he identifies a cloak of irony that is used as a 'defensive shield' because the magazine writers expect readers to reject serious articles offering relationship, sex, and health advice. He suggests that to paint the magazines as inherently sexist is a simplistic interpretation that overlooks the magazines' discourses on masculinity that show men to be lacking confidence and confused about their

place in modern western society. In contrast, women's lifestyle magazines have transformed from their past focus on home and husband to portray a mix of confident, assertive women who are terribly interested in appearance. Through e-mail interviews, the author found that readers favored lightly flipping through the magazines taking what he referred to as a 'pick and mix' approach to the magazines' advice, though Gauntlett is careful to recognize that readers may absorb more of the ideas than they claim. He briefly comments on magazines outside the heterosexual mainstream.

Gauntlett also examines what he calls 'ways of living': media messages in the form of 'role models' and self-help books that direct women and men in constructing identities and lifestyles. He focuses on the recent concept of 'girl power' presented by female bands and the mixed bunch of images presented by male music artists, concluding from his e-mail interviews and online message boards that music fans incorporate positive parts of other people's images and personas. The themes in the self-help books, other than a few manuals such as the wildly popular *Men Are From Mars* series, are consistent with Giddens' ideas of late modernity and Foucault's 'technologies of the self,' suggesting to readers that relationships and identities are fluid and that personal change is both possible and necessary.

The book advances an optimistic, middle-of-the-road view: while things aren't perfect (and what *would* be perfect? Gauntlett asks), contemporary media present more equality between the sexes and more complex, less stereotyped identities than ever. His approach, firmly framed by Giddens' structuration theory, supports a synthesis of individual agents and social structure in the relationship between media images and identities. Unequivocally taking the approach that consumers of culture are not 'cultural dopes' who are victims of media imagery, he concludes from his interviews with music fans and readers of men's and women's magazines that 'ideas about lifestyle and identity that appear in the media are resources which individuals use to think through their sense of self and modes of expression (256).'

The use of numerous examples, including films from the year of publication, will resonate particularly well with undergraduates and lay readers, though the chapters on Giddens, Foucault, and Butler were somewhat abruptly interjected and the theoretical ties to the empirical evaluations of gender and sexuality in media could be made more explicit. Because not all the lifestyle magazines examined circulate in both countries, some may not be familiar to readers, but there are sufficient examples that the book can be appreciated in either the United States or the United Kingdom. In addition, the discussion of contradictions in media messages

does little to address fan incorporation of arguably negative parts of media figures and images. Finally, Gauntlett gives only brief mention of media effects on children, focusing primarily on media sources that teens and adults will encounter. The effect on identities of children's media, such as comic books, would be an interesting addition, given that recent United States discussions on corporate advertising in primary schools suggest that the debate is far from closed. Regardless, Gauntlett's optimism is infectious, the subject matter engaging, and, as a result, the book is difficult to put aside. It is a thoroughly pleasurable introduction to the ties between self-identities and representations of gender in media.

James Sanders, *Celluloid Skyline: New York and the Movies*. London: Bloomsbury, 2001. xi + 497 pp. £30 (hb)

John Zukowsky and Martha Thorne (eds) *Skyscrapers: The New Millennium*. London: Prestel and The Art Institute of Chicago, 2001. 144 pp. £29.95 (hb)

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These two richly illustrated large format books illustrate very graphically the thesis that whatever else they may be, skyscrapers are markers of the particular ways that capitalism, first in the major cities of North America and now all over the world, expresses real and imagined consumer cultures. These books also illustrate (no pun intended) the cross-cutting and absorbing idea that architecture is not only actually built buildings, but also and sometimes more importantly representations of buildings, some built, many never built. While it is not exactly a case of 'all that is solid melts into air', for most of us perceptions of buildings are rarely direct.

Sanders, an architect, film-writer and critic, shows how the unmistakable real skyline of New York became mythologized through the movies. This tension between the real and the mythic is the thread that holds his book together. He skilfully combines a scholarly history of how talented New Yorkers came to and remade Hollywood, a detailed and insightfully illustrated account of the physical representations and quasi-representations of the varied parts of New York (mostly Manhattan) in the movies, and a series of reflections on the nature of life in cities, real and imaginary lives in real and imaginary cities. While the book is by no means exclusively about skyscrapers, the introduction for Part Two, 'On the Town', shows how