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Beyond The Screen. Sarah Atkinson. New York and London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2013. ISBN: 978-1-62356-637-1, h/bk 293 pp. Price: £61.25.

In *Beyond the Screen: Emerging Cinema and Engaging Audiences* Sarah Atkinson sets out to show that film is transforming from a stand-alone media in to something that extends almost organically beyond the screen through digital networks. These are not simply transmedia tools linking potentially independent media, Atkinson argues, but much more integral elements of a networked event where media such as web and mobile applications mobile intertwine within and throughout each other.

Those wanting to keep up with emerging production trends will discover an impressive array of contemporary examples of what Atkinson argues will become the "complete dissolution" (6) of platform boundaries. Her extensive survey is interspersed with a compelling analysis of the emerging grammars, ethics and production modalities of this dynamic genre. She notes the preponderance of dark, mystery themes coupled with a range of reflexive tendencies. For example, the chance to listen in on private on-screen mobile conversations dramatizes surveillance concerns. As she demonstrates, often these fictions play as if real and lend themselves to mimicry through everyday, participatory behaviors such as web searches. These reflective tendencies negotiate the multiple viewpoints (author's, characters', participants', narrative, stories within stories) that layer in and between the diminishing boundaries separating the real and the cinematic world. As Atkinson identifies, these extensions generally incorporate portals that link the fiction to the everyday environment and so she presents a typology of these various bridging pathways. She distinguishes between those that invite, or incite participants to engage with the fiction through computer-mediated communication such as calls to a purpose made phone number, as opposed to handling a physical object, or engaging with contact points that perform as somehow other worldly like a haunted telephone, or even engaging in the fiction through real world economic transactions by collecting and reassembling fictionalized consumer items and the like.

Other conventions she identifies include efforts to engage the continuously distracted attention of contemporary audiences through the use of interruptible media. These include multiple streams of bite-sized and

often promotional content whereby audiences can vary, select and reconstruct that dispersal to suit. By contrast she posits that focused attention is more likely observed in connection with the puzzle challenges that characterize alternate reality games or the cultural engagement of what Atkinson describes as socially layered cinema. These pathways to engagement offer not so much a film, as a shared sense of connection within the participatory fiction.

Atkinson adds that at the same time audiences are growing wise to the literacies of alternate fiction. Playful, cinematic events that present as if they are real for dramatic affect are becoming more commonplace, so that ways to participate in alternate realities proliferate. Ideally, Atkinson's discussion of resultant debates about the perceived transgressions of the tenuous boundaries between fact and fiction would have been accompanied by a much deeper analysis of the implications of these border transgressions; nevertheless her primary aim when surveying the field is to identify the creative potentials of these developments. Her comprehensive survey, coupled with her exacting analysis of emerging trends, remains an invaluable resource for theorists and practitioners alike.

Ironically, Atkinson's cutting-edge research also highlights the need for tools to better capture the participatory experience. It is frustrating that only one of her case studies includes a detailed audience survey, but perhaps this lack is also understandable given the current demands of such research. Her close study of the social pull of *The Inside Experience* (a branded entertainment experience staged across Facebook, YouTube and Twitter which challenged the networked audience to free a fictional character trapped in an unknown location with no link to the outside world bar her Intel computer) required participatory ethnographic methods involving multimodal and textual analysis as well as numerous interviews with producers and audience members. This effort was aided by the fact that the production lasted less than two weeks. Surveying a whole genre in this way requires an extensive research commitment, yet this is exactly the sort of information that is required in order for the full, participatory story of extended cinema to be told. Keeping privacy concerns in mind, perhaps Atkinson's observations that audiences of socially layered cinema nevertheless tend to be comfortable with side agendas (such as promotion) and data-mining in the name of consensual entertainment is potentially as relevant to future research efforts as it is to future production strategies.

Works Cited

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