Expanding upon the author’s scholarly interests in media fandom and its contribution to active consumption and popular culture expertise, Henry Jenkins’ *Convergence Culture* promises us a journey to see how “new and old media intersect, where grassroots and corporate media collide, where the power of media producer and the power of the consumer interact.” (2) Jenkins’ combination of these dynamics defines a sense of “convergence,” that is well beyond a simplistic understanding of this trendy concept as a mere intersection of technologies. The author convincingly shows a shift of paradigm within which *new media, instead of simply replacing* old media, now interact in more complex ways. In addition, his discussion of “convergence” moves from seeking the perfect technological nexus that all media content will follow to the pivotal role that individual consumers and citizens play in forming collective intelligence and boosting a participatory culture that negotiates with media industries, mobilizes media content, and involves in politics.

In the author’s fascinating and nuanced analysis across a wide range of media contexts, the concept of “participation,” enacted mostly through new media, is the leverage in the power struggle between media production and consumption. The spoiling culture of CBS’ *Survivor* – hunting down information that has not yet been aired on television – practices puzzle-solving collectively that defies a hierarchal mastery of knowledge that relies upon accredited experts. After an infamous participant allegedly leaked first-hand insider’s information about the unaired season that disrupted the mode of collective intelligence, this crisis moment altered the mode of pleasure that structures the show and posed a serious threat to the producer as the social process of knowledge acquisition is reconfigured. *American Idol* loyalties, though invoked by production and sponsoring companies’ exploitation of consumer emotional investment, can also turn from love to hate, thus hurting the ratings and slashing brand attachments. For instance, when participants disagree with the competition outcome, they become suspicious of and exasperated with both the voting process and the system, provided and operated by a cell-phone carrier which strategically bonds itself to the show for marketing purposes. Chapter Three on *The Matrix* franchise deals with transmedia storytelling and elucidates a progressive form of participation in both ends of production and consumption: narrative
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disperses in different media and thus requires collaborative authorship for the entire franchise. Since its intelligibility hinges upon garnering information across different media platforms, the Matrix franchise encourages consumers to pursue comprehension through participation and exchange within knowledge communities, while retaining that as an open choice rather than as a necessity to gain pleasure.

Moving forward, the chapter of “Quentin Tarantino’s Star Wars?” engages with amateur cultural production from fans as it expands the franchise and yet empowers consumers, toward whom media industry feels ambivalent. The case of the Harry Potter controversy in Chapter Five invites us to think above the pros and cons of Harry Potter advocated by different social groups. It rather emphasizes how gaining the skills and knowledge of media literacy for children and adults alike, allows them to become full participants in our culture. In the last chapter, the identity of the fan, consumer, and citizen conflate, and fun finally enters the political realm as popular culture meets democracy. As users/consumers decide and define how to tap media convergence in order to access and circulate information, an innovative way of prompting political involvement is underway.

The tone of this book is certainly optimistic but not celebratory. As the author himself proclaims, while he does not disagree with some criticism made by critical pessimists, he believes in the “politics of critical utopianism” that bolster empowerment and promote a participatory media culture. Throughout the book, we cannot miss the emphatic address of (appeals to) the consumer agency, and it is that threshold from which media convergence enters the scene, helping people to make things happen and to acquire bargaining power. The myriad of case studies drawn from numerous online fan communities nicely complements the theoretical framework, as consumption in this era of media convergence is a communal process that generates collective intelligence and community knowledge. These case studies also allow the author to go further to unveil the incompatibility and rivalry between industries, producers, and consumers — something hard to envision against the current large-scaled, widespread media concentration and conglomeration that can often make us feel so powerless and hopeless.

It is not common to hear a critical media scholar declare that being critical is not the goal of the project; his intent is rather to show what’s going on with convergence and the impact of this process. What is implied in his modest disclaimer is an acknowledgment that, as complex as the world of convergence has become, our conventional ways of being critical may no longer be appropriate or sufficient. Before we develop an apposite critical language to take on convergence culture, Jenkins argues that it is necessary to understand clearly how active players outside academia have changed the world, and in what ways. For readers who are members in the analogous communities that the author refers to, this book provides an analytical lens that discerns the meaningfulness of their activities; for those who are better equipped with training in media criticism rather than fan experience, this book is an eye-opener for learning how fans, children, consumers, etc. have done so much with minimal technological equipment to negotiate with media and advertising corporations. Interweaving marketing, production, and theoretical terms and concepts — all compiled into a handy list in the end of the book — to delineate an in-depth scrutiny, Convergence Culture provides a starting point for future scholarship on media convergence, especially those with a critical perspective.

Even if none of the above is significant, this book is at least a pleasant read that discusses cultural affairs in the United States. Resonant with the author’s note that having fun is so pivotal in people’s decision to participate, especially when it comes to politics, this book adroitly manipulates the fun component to attract readers to delve into convergence culture and to (re)discover its social, cultural, and political influences in our everyday lives. I have to agree with the author that in comparison with relatively traditional resistances, such as boycotting media evildoers by turning off our TV sets or by cultural jamming, it may be more productive and effective when we actively tap the contest as well as the collaboration between old and new media from bottom-up to play with, to disconcert, and to turn over top-bottom co-optation. Just as the book cover signifies through an appropriation of the iPod advertising image, although we might not resist the lure of possessing a video iPod, we have the power to decide, an ever-widening variety to choose from, and the ability to create what we want the screen to display.
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