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INTRODUCTION

Intersections and/in Space

In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau suggests that the city can be seen from different perspectives: from above, as looking at a map or panorama, or from the ground, through the experience of walking. While the view from above produces a legible picture for a voyeur—what de Certeau calls theoretical space—the view from below is social and immersive, lived and experienced, rather than viewed from a distance. The possible paths taken by a walker are myriad and dependent on factors such as race, ethnicity, class, ability, age, and gender. Walkers, for de Certeau, "create networks of . . . moving, intersecting writings [that] compose a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces."[1] Indeed, a city can provide "a way of conceiving and constructing space on the basis of a finite number of stable, isolatable, and interconnected properties" that intersect and connect and yet differ depending on the space, the representation, the group, or the individual.[2] Along these same lines, critics such as Henri Lefebvre have further noted that "any space implies, contains, and dissimulates social relationships—and this despite the fact that a space is not a thing but rather a set of relations between things (objects and products)."[3] Spaces not only shape the connections and relationships that manifest in their confines, but the spaces themselves are simultaneously inflected by the very social interactions and intersections staged within them.

Consider three seminal and differing cinematic views of urban space, each mapping a distinct experience of New York City. First, Woody Allen's *Manhattan* (1979) consciously glorifies the city.[4] In an opening voice-over,

Allen's character, Isaac, dictates, "Chapter One. He adored New York City. He idolized it all out of proportion. No. Make that, He romanticized it all out of proportion. To him, no matter what the season was, this was still a town that existed in black and white and pulsated to the great tunes of George Gershwin." Isaac continues, revising this to consider New York "a metaphor of the decay of contemporary culture." However, viewers are already immersed in the idealized/romanticized view offered by the opening audiovisual montage. We see a series of black-and-white images of the skyline, a neon sign reading Manhattan, the Empire Diner, various quaint street corners, snow-covered streets, lovers on a rooftop, and a crescendo of fireworks, all scored to the soaring notes of Ira Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue." This self-referential opening does not so much ironize Allen's relationship to the city as provide a précis or guide to what follows, as the remainder of the film is black and white, uses instrumental Gershwin songs at key romantic moments, and presents an idealized view of New York.

Rather than the decay of modern culture, Allen's New York revolves around the preservation, circulation, and production of culture as central to the city. The characters in Manhattan are all artists. Isaac writes for television and is working on a novel; his best friend Yale (Michael Murphy) publishes a magazine; his girlfriend Mary (Diane Keaton) is a journalist who writes about Brecht and other cultural topics; his ex-wife Jill (Meryl Streep) writes a tell-all book; her girlfriend Connie (Karen Ludwig) is a visual artist. Even Tracy, the high school girl Isaac dates (Mariel Hemingway), wins a theater scholarship that will take her to another iconic city, London. Apartments in the film overflow with books and works of fine art. Moreover, Allen situates his characters amid numerous cultural institutions: the Hayden Planetarium, the American Museum of Natural History, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Lincoln Center, galleries, and movie theaters specializing in auteurist film and art cinema. The characters do not just pass by these institutions. They engage with them, comment on the art, and argue about Sol Lewitt, Ingmar Bergman, and more. This is a very specific city, in which intersections and connections are highly determined by class, ethnicity, and gender.

In contrast to Allen's *Manhattan*, William Friedkin shows a gritty, economically precarious, and multiracial side of the city in *The French Connection* (1971). The film triangulates New York in an international crime network extending from Marseilles, France, to Washington, DC. Friedkin's city avoids the landmarks and neighborhoods of Allen's film. Instead, *The French Con-*

nection is situated in the working-class ethnic neighborhoods of Brooklyn and Manhattan's Little Italy. This New York is filled with rubbish-strewn streets, empty lots with burning fires, graffiti, junkies, and dingy bars. Where Allen's film highlighted high art and intellectual pursuits, Friedkin's features a nightclub where the African American female R&B group the Three Degrees perform a raucous version of "Everybody Gets to Go the Moon." In Allen's film, characters have the privilege of taking leisurely walks through beautiful neighborhoods and in parks, and on a few occasions they drive to the country, exercising a freedom of movement that transcends urban, suburban, and rural borders. In Friedkin's film, movement is much more proscribed; characters drive purposefully from one place to the next, or run and chase one another, or take the subway pressed into crowded filthy cars. Allen's city emphasized soaring height through shots of the skyline and bridges. *The French Connection* focuses less on expansive long shots of the cityscape and, instead, frames characters in low-rise areas, beneath overpasses, or in subway stations, showing space as oppressive and enclosed. This is a city of class difference and division: the white American Popeye Doyle (Gene Hackman) eats takeout pizza and drinks coffee standing on a cold sidewalk while white French mobsters idle over a multicourse meal in a posh restaurant and a homeless man sleeps in the doorway.

Whereas *Manhattan* and *The French Connection* appear to traverse broad swaths of the city, Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* (1989) purposely narrows our view to a single block in Brooklyn. In his representation of the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood, Lee presents what Paula J. Massood has described in relation to Lee's *She's Gotta Have It* (1986) as a "heteroglot collection of characters [that] suggests that the urbanscape is home to a highly complex and variegated community," one where a variety of races, ethnicities, classes, genders, and abilities intersect.[5] Depicting twenty-four hours in the life of a single neighborhood block on the hottest day of the year, *Do the Right Thing* shows the tensions and eruptions that occur among and amid its diverse population—what Massood refers to as a "heteroglossia (racial, economic, generational, and gendered)."[6] The film details the interactions among African American, Korean, white, and Latinx characters of different classes, ages, abilities, and genders. The young African American pizza delivery man Mookie (Lee) works for the white Italian American Sal (Danny Aiello) alongside Sal's sons Vito (Richard Edson) and Pino (John Turturro), and much of the film takes place in Sal's pizza parlor. Rather than monumental spaces, Lee focuses on the local—neighborhood spots such as a convenience store, a pizza parlor, a storefront radio station, the

stoops and sidewalks in front of brownstones, all filled with characters who walk, sit, bike, and drive through the streets, intersecting each other's paths for good and bad.

Manhattan, *The French Connection*, and *Do the Right Thing* are all shot on location, but they slice and segment the city in radically opposing ways. While Allen strives to still see the romantic ideal city despite the "decay," Friedkin focuses on what Siegfried Kracauer refers to as "blind spots of the mind," the "things normally unseen" because "habit and prejudice prevent us from noticing them," such as refuse, dirt, waste, and garbage, or objects and scenes so familiar and ordinary that we do not notice them.[7] Lee, as well, shows unromantic aspects of the city in depicting racism, police brutality, and violence, but he photographs Bed-Stuy in a rich color palette that provides it with a self-conscious beauty distinct from Allen's black-and-white glamor. Where Allen's film presents a touristic monumental view of Manhattan and Friedkin offers something like the underbelly with clashes between diverse characters who pass through the city, Lee submits a more intimate and situated view of a specific neighborhood and everyday life.

We begin with these films to suggest the ways in which a consideration of intersectionality and/in space might deepen our understanding of various screen cultures. Each film offers a view of the city that is selective and ideological. Where *Manhattan* delimits its view to focus exclusively on an ideal of a privileged white Manhattan, *The French Connection* focuses on diversity, and *Do the Right Thing* shows the city as an intersectional space. Each film, as well, benefits from an intersectional analysis. Thinking about intersectionality and space together aids us in seeing the whiteness of *Manhattan* as much as it helps analyze the use of race as signifier of the underworld in *The French Connection*—so that the performance of the Three Degrees signifies as more than a musical amuse-bouche in the middle of a crime narrative—or to probe the racial conflicts in *Do the Right Thing*. We can see how each text frames its view of the city according to a particular conception of its inhabitants, its conflicts, and its systems of privilege and oppression. Thinking about intersectionality, moreover, allows us to see not only how *Do the Right Thing* positions conflicts between and among races, but how characters are defined simultaneously through race, gender, class, and age, and how neighborhood shapes their identities and interactions. Intersectionality as a theoretical concept also allows us to see the limitations of the racial imagination in *Manhattan*, which suppresses difference, and in *The French Connection*, which renders difference largely ornamental.

The decision to begin *Media Crossroads: Intersections of Space and Identity in Screen Cultures* with a focus on a selection of films set in what is arguably American cinema's most iconic urban space and directed by a trio of male auteurs is purposeful; it illustrates that much of the work on space and media can be more aptly described as cinema and the city. And yet there is an ever-growing body of work that looks to how different media screen different spaces. How does a television series such as HBO's *Big Little Lies* (2017–19) or Showtime's *Weeds* (2005–12), for example, offer reassessments of the myth of an American suburban utopia through attention to a cross-section of female narratives. Each show focuses on privileged suburban women as a means of reimagining the aesthetics of the melodrama or, more precisely, the woman's film. *Big Little Lies* is particularly resonant here as part domestic thriller and part film noir that, through its exploration of the hermeneutics of suspicion surrounding a murder, provides intersecting storylines of complicated characters. Each woman brings her own history of trauma to the narrative—a history that is informed by the intersecting forces of class, race, and gender and enabled by the show's suburban setting.

These cinematic and televisual explorations of space have been enriched by contemporary digital media, including web streaming and gaming, which have provided a productive field for exploring the intersections of space and media. Take, for example, Issa Rae's *Insecure* (2016–present), a comedy series on HBO that features Rae as a young African American woman in Los Angeles maneuvering through career, relationships, and life. The show is based on Rae's web series, *Awkward Black Girl* (2011–13), which streamed on YouTube for two years. The show, identified as a "precarious girl" comedy by Rebecca Wanzo, focuses on a "young African American woman struggling with two aspects of her identity that may seem incongruous—being both black and awkward." Such attention to these areas provides a nuanced approach to intersectionality that considers "the nexus of identification and alienated shame."[8] Moreover, *Insecure* complicates understandings of space and intersectionality more fully than some of our earlier cinematic examples: it not only details the experiences of an educated, middle-class Black woman in the city, but its distribution history suggests the possibility of media spaces to further intersect and adapt in the twenty-first century.

Other media, such as video games, invite different questions about identity and space, especially since they typically demand a higher degree of interaction and involvement between player and the digital space represented on the screen. As Laurie Taylor has argued, video game spaces are composed of more than just programming code. They are "experiential

spaces generated through code and the player's interaction with the execution of that code through the medium of the screen."[9] Players thus develop an intimate relationship with both the spaces and the characters represented on-screen through their inputs and interactions, and the player has a varying degree of control over the structure and navigation of game space. Game designers, through their coding and programming, ultimately enjoy a high modicum of control not only in terms of how players perceive the space of a gameworld, but, even more so, regarding how varying representations and intersections of identity affect how players navigate these spaces.

Consider, for instance, *The Elder Scrolls*, an immensely popular series of fantasy role-playing video games developed by Bethesda Game Studios that has been around since the mid-1990s. In earlier iterations of the series, players were mostly limited to customizing their characters by selecting a "class" or "vocation," which had a direct effect on how the game was played. In the original game in the series, *The Elder Scrolls: Arena* (1994), players could modify their character by selecting their avatar's name, gender, race, a predetermined selection of character faces, and a variation of three overarching professions or classes: warriors, mages, and thieves.[10] While the various character subclasses in *The Elder Scrolls: Arena* provided different options for digital embodiment, navigating its gameworld, and interacting with other characters and enemies, selecting a class ultimately limited what players could or could not do with their selected character. A later game in the series, *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* (2011), not only increased character-customization options—thus allowing players to customize the race, gender, skin tone, weight, facial complexion and structure, hair, and overall appearance of their character—but also eliminated the use of a rigid class system, granting players more flexibility to develop a character's strengths, weaknesses, and abilities through gameplay.[11] Thus, the avatar's skills, abilities, and identities are consistently shaped and altered according to how the player interacts with the spaces and characters in *Skyrim*'s gameworld. Unlike film and television texts, which often become static after they are produced and distributed, the interactivity and customization granted by a video game ultimately presents different affordances and hindrances when it comes to the interdependent relationship between player, avatar, and spatiality.

While video games open up possibilities for intersectionality that are unique to their interactive components and, thus, potentially level the playing field, intersectional analyses of space must also be mindful of the fact that there are various other elements, especially in terms of production

and audience, that complicate the more utopic potentialities of interactive cultural works. For instance, it has been widely acknowledged that sexism and misogyny have been rampant in both the video game community and industry, a reality that gained widespread attention through the activism of Anita Sarkeesian, whose critiques of sexism in video games made her the recipient of harassment, ridicule, and violent threats. Furthermore, considerations of the relationship between identity and screen cultures must address how this intersectionality manifests in cultural production itself, and how it is complicated by the identities of the people who craft the texts. In video games, for instance, there is not only a lack of gender, racial, and sexual diversity within the titles but a dire absence of diversity among the people who create them, especially high-budget "Triple-A" games. Similarly, the film industry has been critiqued for its lack of diversity among directors and the limited roles accorded nonwhite and female actors, as seen in movements such as #OscarsSoWhite, which drew attention to the lack of racial diversity in Hollywood, and the documentary *This Changes Everything* (Tom Donahue, dir., 2018), which examines gender disparity in American cinema. While most of the essays in *Media Crossroads* examine intersectional spaces by focusing on the content, structure, and form of various texts, the collection also includes essays that attend to matters of production, distribution, and reception.

Underlying this collection is the editors' belief that all spaces are intersectional. Insofar as people inhabit and use spaces, those spaces are available to be inhabited by intersectional identities; to show intersections among and between people; and to address issues of privilege, oppressions, and resistance. *Media Crossroads: Intersections of Space and Identity in Screen Cultures* takes this approach to space and extends it across a variety of media. It is intended as a course reader and major research tool for undergraduate and graduate students and faculty in cinema and media studies, gender studies, and other interdisciplinary fields. The volume aims to consider space and place in cinema and other media via critical intersectional lenses and multiple interpretive strategies. Work on gender and space has been productive and rich across numerous disciplines, and we seek to place such studies in conversation with research on sexuality, race, ethnicity, age, class, ability, and other domains of identity as they relate to space. Individual essays take up one or more of these categories in relation to examinations of various spaces in cinematic and media representations. The spaces considered range from the small and intimate, such as dressings rooms or bathrooms, to the large and social, such as cities, suburbs, regions, nations. They include spaces

such as the cinema and amusement park; representations of real spaces, such as Portland or New York; and animated and digital fantasy spaces. Across these various spaces, authors consider intersectionality not only in terms of the intersecting identities that define individuals (old and Jewish; young, transgender, and Latinx; and so on) but also in the way identities intersect in spaces (in conflicts or connections between young and old, Black and white, rich and poor, and so on) and in the way screens produce intersections between and among various identities through spectatorship, play, and social media. Given the volume's focus on intersectional approaches, many of its chapters also emphasize how representations of space in film and media address matters of oppression, discrimination, privilege, and inequity.

Certainly, the notion of intersectionality is under some pressure. As Jennifer Nash detailed in a recent review essay, feminists and scholars in American Studies, especially, have been contentiously debating the concept—its origins, methodologies, efficacy, relationship to identity politics, relationship to Black feminism, and more. At base is a fear that the institutionalization of intersectionality has "allowed [it] to become 'ornamental' or, worse, a synonym for diversity."[12] In addition, part of this backlash is due to the concept's depoliticization and association with neoliberal frameworks, thus leading to the rise of revisions of intersectional thought that "aim to erase the ideas and actions of Black women, Latinas, the working poor and underemployed, LGBTQ people and similarly subordinated groups from intersectionality's legitimate narrative."[13] With these challenges in mind, we consider intersectionality, along with Vivian May in *Pursuing Intersectionality, Unsettling Dominant Imaginaries*, a useful rubric to understand "privilege and oppression as concurrent and relational."[14] As Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge also suggest, intersectionality is a form of critical inquiry marked by an investment in social inequality, power, and social justice. Thus, we seek to use the concept as an interpretive lens and method to consider various spaces in various screen cultures, and how these spaces reflect, reinforce, or dismantle intersecting forms of resistance and domination.

Building on such formulations of the concept, we believe that intersectionality is defined by and through space and that such understandings of relationality, overlap, and potential friction must inform any analysis of mediated identity. In what is largely hailed as the essay that coined the term "intersectionality," "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," Kimberlé Crenshaw adopts two spatial metaphors to

explain intersectionality. The first, "an analogy to traffic in an intersection, coming and going in all four directions," maps intersectionality as a spatially defined experience. She writes, "Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happens at an intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them." Crenshaw suggests that, rather than thinking of one form of discrimination at a time, we consider the "combined effects of practices which discriminate on the basis of race, and on the basis of sex" that may impact the Black female pedestrian in the intersection.[15] Thus, metaphorically, the impact can come from multiple directions, making it impossible to sort out or discern which did more damage; the harm is caused by the combination of forces working in concert.

Of course, even two forms of discrimination can be compounded, and Crenshaw's second spatial metaphor suggests that individual bodies can carry multiple disadvantages and suffer multiple simultaneous intersecting forms of discrimination. In countering the legal analysis that limits discrimination to a "but for," meaning that a person would not be discriminated against "but for" their race *or* "but for" their sex—an analysis that imagines discrimination as singular and as targeting, deliberately or implicitly, a class of people, one class at a time—Crenshaw suggests that the legal standard privileges whiteness and patriarchal power, which are not treated as explicit categories. Such a model denies that Black women, for example, might be disadvantaged or discriminated against because of both race and sex in ways that cannot easily sort out a "but for" of discrimination. "Imagine a basement," she writes, "which contains all people who are disadvantaged on the basis of race, sex, class, sexual preference, age and/or physical disability."[16] In Crenshaw's spatial metaphor—which subtly references the infamous diagrams of slave ships—the bodies in the basement are stacked on top of one another, with those who have only one disadvantage on top and those who have the most at the bottom. The ceiling of the basement is the floor where those who are not disadvantaged reside. A hatch in the ceiling allows those with one disadvantage to climb out to the floor above. But those below, whose identities are impacted by some combination of race and sex and sexual orientation and age and class and physical disability (or, at the bottom, by *all* of those)—and, we could add, by religion, nationality, and other prejudicial identities—cannot get out of the basement because the inequalities they face are not singular.

It is no accident that Crenshaw uses spatial metaphors to characterize intersectionality. Not only do they allow us to imagine intersectionality in

visual terms—as a convergence of forms of discrimination or as the deep
burden and difficult climb of oppression—but they also suggest the ways
in which space is lived and meaningful, equally defined through and de-
limiting human activity. Space is produced through interconnected webs
of power; it is relational and contingent; it is experienced and yet under-
stood differently by different people. Space and place can be contested, lost,
changed (through forces of globalization, immigration, white flight, gen-
trification, and more), and those frictions often occur within and between
intersectional identities.

Despite Crenshaw's use of spatial metaphors to characterize intersec-
tionality, most of the discourse on the subject has tended to focus on the
body—and especially the figure of the Black woman—as emblematic of in-
tersectionality.[17] Certainly, Crenshaw's metaphors suggest ways in which
discrimination impacts the body, whether through the visceral quality of
imagining multiple simultaneous accidents affecting the pedestrian or the
weight of multiple bodies standing on one's shoulders in the basement.
However, her images of intersectionality also conjure the idea that inter-
sectional identities exist in, and experience discrimination in and through,
specific spaces. In this sense, it matters where that body is placed: whether
it is walking in a crowded urban traffic intersection, among other walkers,
or locked away in a basement, in a hierarchical structure. Thus, we argue
that intersectionality—and its various aesthetic, cultural, and political
determinants—must be considered in and through space.

Thus far, in film and media studies, spaces have not been discussed
much in terms of intersectionality. Indeed, much writing on space in film
and media studies has not been attendant to identity, let alone intersec-
tionality. Many books on the city, for example, focus on archaeological
views of the city, seeking to uncover the material artifacts of a city through
their cinematic representation. Studies of the city might consider theo-
ries of urbanism; modernity and postmodernity; early cinematic render-
ings of the city; postwar cinema's exploration of peripheral, disintegrating
urban space; growth and transformation in cities; cinematic forms and
genres related to the city such as city symphonies, documentary, musicals,
government-sponsored films, or film noir; film production and location
shooting in cities; and other topics that illuminate the city but may not
deal explicitly with the city's inhabitants or consider the mutually imbri-
cating factors of space and identity.[18]

Certainly, many excellent books deal with questions of space and identity.
Sabine Haenni discusses ethnic immigrant cultures as subject and spectator

of early cinema. Jacqueline Majuma Stewart considers the relationship between African American urban culture and early cinema. Paula J. Massood considers African American film and urban life, with an emphasis on African American filmmaking. Merrill Schleier examines ideological and gendered meanings, and especially constructions of masculinity, ascribed to skyscrapers in American films from the 1930s to the 1950s. And Pamela Robertson Wojcik considers children as mobile participants in urban life.[19] Beyond studies focused on the city, Amy Corbin considers such diverse spaces as Indian Country, the white South, and the suburbs in her examination of multicultural spectatorship, and Natalie Fullwood examines representations of gender in the everyday spaces of beaches, nightclubs, offices, cars, and kitchens in *Cinema, Gender, and Everyday Space: Comedy, Italian Style*.[20] While the list is not exhaustive, each example has sought to broaden and make complex normative understandings of space as white, male, and privileged. The examples also remind readers of the rich variety of spaces we inhabit and represent.

While these books draw attention to the ways in which space and identity are mutually configured, they tend to focus on one kind of difference at a time—to consider gender, for example, or race, but not usually concurrently. The editors themselves have been guilty of this in some of their previous work. In both *The Apartment Plot* and *Fantasies of Neglect*, Wojcik devoted a chapter to African American representation, segregating the discussion of Black characters and issues from the other chapters. Thus, when Wojcik discussed bachelors in *The Apartment Plot* or girls in *Fantasies of Neglect*, those categories were assumed to be white, and all African American characters, whether male or female, were considered one. Likewise, in *Black City Cinema: African American Urban Experiences in Film*, Massood's primary focus was on urban spaces defined by and through African American men. Moreover, discussions of spaces, such as the Watts neighborhood, overlooked the area's history as a suburb of the city of Los Angeles. Finally, Matos's previous explorations of the kitchen as a site of gay domesticity in American television focused on representations of middle- to upper-class white gay men, thus foreclosing opportunities to examine how the space of the kitchen inflects the representation of queer women and people of color.[21] As these examples suggest, in considering one difference at a time—one gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, age, and so on—the opportunity to consider the ways in which those identities are shared in individual bodies and the way in which those identities intersect in spaces is lost. The editors have thus envisioned this volume as a way to counteract such compartmentalized and limited approaches to identity that are commonplace in the field.

This volume considers space and bodily identities together to examine the multiple intersections that occur within spaces—between and among identities, within identities, and between and among various imaginings of spaces. We consider spaces in progress through gentrification, revanchism, mobility, and migration and spaces contested among and between various identities—queer and straight, white and Black, local and global, young and old. We consider spaces as sites of turf wars and displacements and reflect on who gets pushed to the side and who comes out on top. These disputations are viewed not as singular battles but as part of a complex web of intersections within and among various groups and individuals. We consider how genre, field, and mode—whether the selfie, the musical, the heritage film, the avant-garde film, the video game, animation, or TV crime show—shape our understanding of space and intersectional identities. We analyze, moreover, different media and how varying screen spaces produce disparate intersections, whether through hailing one or more ideal spectators, resistant or against-the-grain spectatorship, interactive game playing, or social media interactions.

Part I, "Digital Intersections," considers how digital texts and new media can stage alternative ways of thinking through the relationship between space and identity. The media explored in this section are not only interactive but also blur the distinction between the space of the text and the space of the viewer/user/spectator. The essays reveal the fragility of boundaries and binaries such as public and private, child and adult, text and decoder, human and nonhuman, and also demonstrate the political viability of using digital texts and media to disrupt normative understandings of identity, spatial navigation, and activism. Moreover, the essays explore how social media and video games allow users to adopt an experiential approach to space in that they invite people to witness and move through (virtual) worlds from an intersectional perspective, thus expanding and complicating real-world understandings of what it means to exist and dwell in a space and of how spaces reinforce and disrupt hegemonic and oppressive ideological frameworks.

Nicole Erin Morse's essay on transgender activism and bathroom selfies, for instance, discusses how activist art pressures transphobic public policy through its interrogation of the space of the public bathroom. The essays by Angel Daniel Matos and Matthew Thomas Payne and John Vanderhoef focus on similar radical and political potentialities through the analysis of video game space. Matos examines Nintendo's *The Legend of Zelda* series to

show how video game spaces can be structured in queer ways, in that they disrupt binary and hierarchical thinking and encourage players to consider multiple and intersectional ways of engaging with real and digital worlds. In a similar vein, Payne and Vanderhoef examine the figure of the intersectional digital flâneuse in a series of "walking simulator" video games and discuss how this figure offers players opportunities to situate themselves within marginalized and politicized subjectivities. The essays invite readers to consider how digital spaces provide new and unprecedented ways to stage interactive considerations of lived and virtual experience and how queer, transgender, racial, and political thinking can inflect our understanding of that experience.

Part II, "Cinematic Urban Intersections," explores similar dynamics of disruption and inflection, focusing on films situated in cities and urban spaces. The essays trace how various media map a series of artistic, urban, and cultural connections and intersections while also disrupting divides such as fiction and nonfiction, mobility and immobility, and integration and separatism. In the spirit of disrupting these divides, the media examined in this part offer representations of urban life and experience that complicate binaries of race, gender, class, and age and consider the relationship that exists between specific locations and people's access to sociocultural, economic, and political power. In addition to examining the intersectional and spatial dimensions of urban space, the essays are invested in exploring matters of urban temporality, in that they consider the ways in which urban spaces provide distinct models for approaching matters such as futurity, presentism, development, growth, and the merger of temporal constructs such as the past and present.

Paula J. Massood's examination of the experimental filmmaker Shirley Clarke's short films and her debut feature, *The Connection*, explores how these texts use hybrid forms to tell marginalized stories and how they implement New York City as a site of intersecting political, aesthetic, and sociocultural forces and collaborations. Jacqueline Sheean's essay analyzes the dynamics of cruising in Madrid's urban peripheries as represented in Eloy de la Iglesia's *La semana del asesino* (1972) and suggests that cruising and mobility offer a means for mapping intersections of various identities in urban space. Amy Corbin explores comparable instances of urban intersectionality in her examination of place making and homesteading practices in Ramin Bahrani's American dream trilogy and considers how the urban spaces in these films are fashioned and molded by the interactions that

they stage among diverse characters. Finally, Pamela Robertson Wojcik examines a cycle of youth films that she categorizes as "slow death cinema" and interrogates how systems of privilege and inequity simultaneously generate and demarcate youthful characters' social and spatial mobility.

Further expanding these ideas, Part III, "Urbanism and Gentrification," focuses on the economic, political, and administrative tensions that arise through the movements and displacements put into practice through gentrification. The essays emphasize the emancipatory potentialities and limits of the texts and media that they examine and highlight the ways in which films and television shows subvert or delegitimize tropes centered on urban life and neoliberal development. The essays also highlight how various media productions refuse to acknowledge the dynamics of oppression, color-blindness, and white supremacy that are upheld through gentrification and how they (perhaps inadvertently) perpetuate the narratives and fantasies of neoliberal thought.

Joshua Glick's essay on Gray Power activism as reflected in Barbara Myerhoff and Lynne Littman's documentary *Number Our Days* (1976), for instance, explores the political viability of documentary practice and its potential to shed light on the issues of gentrification experienced by elderly residents in Venice, California. Noelle Griffis's examination of the television show *Nashville* and its unique production details demonstrates how the show simultaneously redefined the conservative, heteronormative local music industry and led to the urban revitalization in the city of Nashville, Tennessee—while also problematically contributing to a growing sense of inequality and minority displacement in that city. Elizabeth Patton examines analogous issues in her examination of *Portlandia*'s (2011–18) implementation of intersectional erasure in its representation of Portland, Oregon, in that it uses neoliberal practices to replace overt and tangible forms of racism, discrimination, and oppression. Erica Stein considers the figure of the gangster and its relationship to notions of real estate and upward mobility in select films and television shows and demonstrates how these gangster narratives highlight the criminality of the American dream, in that they are reliant on the mistreatment and oppression of class and racial difference.

The essays in Part IV, "Race, Place, and Space," consider the intersections of race, gender, and other domains of identity in a range of spaces, including small, personal, and private spaces, such as the dressing room, and large, public spaces, such as the theme park. In broad terms, they explore

the points of convergence between the regulation and control of spaces and the ways in which bodies and racial discourse are controlled. They also emphasize the emancipatory potentialities and restrictions made available through these spaces and how various characters of color must find ways to negotiate their identities in places that reinforce and perpetuate hegemonic, supremacist values.

Desirée J. Garcia, for instance, examines the role and function of the Black maid within the space of the dressing room, as represented in classical backstage musicals produced in Hollywood, and makes a case for how these films paradoxically enable and inhibit women's achievement. Sarah Louise Smyth examines the ubiquity of whiteness and the absence of people of color in British heritage cinema, focusing particularly on the spatiality of the country house and its capacity to challenge the ideals of patriarchal whiteness that it upholds and perpetuates. Merrill Schleier, in her examination of queerness, race, and class in midcentury film, explores similar logics of the white spatial imaginary as conveyed through suburban space. In particular, she examines how Gerd Oswald's film *Crime of Passion* (1956) implements prescriptive gender and sexual ideologies and racialized suburban structures/practices as a way to confine its protagonist's queerness and difference. Finally, Peter Kunze examines how Black media culture uses theme parks as a narrative setting and, in turn, interrogates how this space simultaneously engages with and destabilizes neoliberal ideological frameworks. The four essays in this part thus create a broad narrative that explores the tensions and complications that arise when considering race vis-à-vis various lived and fictional experiences, and they reflect on how considerations of race and space complicate and further nuance our understanding of notions such as class, labor, and entertainment as represented in film and television.

Part V, "Style and/as Intersectionality," takes an in-depth look at how style and aesthetics can be used to either mobilize or foreclose intersectional thinking and explores the ways in which formal, material, and structural elements are used (often self-consciously) to construct an intersectional space. This part stresses both generative and unproductive ways of using form to convey a politics of intersectionality. While some essays explore how a text's aesthetics and formalistic features demonstrate an underlying investment in intersectional frameworks even as its surface features indicate otherwise, others demonstrate how intersectionality is used in a tokenistic fashion, offering viewers a text that seems politically viable

and radical on a surface level but proves, on closer inspection, to be conservative and assimilationist in its purview.

Ina Rae Hark, for example, points out how all of the events that occur in the police procedural *Happy Valley* (2014) reduce the show's political potentialities by focusing on the protagonist's psyche as a site of intersectionality, thus making the show's intersectional connections a diegetic product of the protagonist's mind that simply serve as metaphors for her consciousness. Kirsten Moana Thompson points out how Disney's *Moana* (2016) focuses significantly on the aestheticization of material surfaces and how these surfaces espouse traits such as liminality and hybridity, ultimately suggesting an underlying politics of (self-reflexive) intersectionality. Conversely, Malini Guha examines how the formal features of Bertrand Bonello's *Nocturama* (2016) initially gesture toward an intersectional politics but are proved to be flat on closer inspection. In spite of *Nocturama*'s implementation of a seemingly intersectional style, Guha makes a case for how it ultimately implements intersectionality in an "ornamental" fashion. All in all, the essays in this part invite us to explore how formalistic and aesthetic features can push viewers to think about the need for and importance of structural change and, furthermore, the extent to which these features augment (or foreclose) the antihegemonic bent and emancipatory potential of intersectional thought.

It is our hope that the essays in this volume establish innovative and unexpected possibilities for examining and interpreting spaces as represented in film, television shows, video games, and new media. We anticipate that these possibilities will open up new avenues for approaching spatial inquiry as an invitation for political action or for complicating our understandings of the relationship between spaces represented onscreen and the bodies that inhabit them. The chapters serve as an index to the worlds, spaces, and people represented in (new) media and how these representations make claims about different possibilities and difficulties for being, moving, dwelling, and coexisting with others. *Media Crossroads* offers a variety of case studies that explore both the potentialities and the limits of intersectional approaches to space and gender, drawing assistance from other fields of criticism and inquiry that include, but are not limited to, critical race theory, queer theory, new media studies, economics, and cultural studies. Readers are encouraged to explore generative commonalities and tensions among the essays found in the entire collection. We hope readers will develop a nuanced understanding of how different genres and media provide distinct and fresh ways to think through the

connections among space, gender, identity, and oppression and how these connections can be effectively examined via cultural productions created for the screen. We envision these chapters as starting points in important conversations in the study of gender, space, identity, and screen cultures, and we are certain that the readers of this book will expand, modify, and draw from this volume to suit their intellectual, political, pedagogical, and critical needs.