things are mediated and the consequences of that mediation” (17). This mindful provocation is representative of the book’s overall tone, one that is compelling and deeply enlightening.

*Dying in Full Detail* stands out further for its successful achievement of “a critical reassessment of documentary death” that emphasizes “[t]he affordances of digital image technologies” (6). For many fields of interest, particularly film and media studies, her book represents an intervention that is remarkably useful in its application of classic theories of documentary, spectatorship, and their intersections to the study of digital technologies and their political functions. With an eye to the future, made manifest in its concluding remarks on the death of digital video, the book locates itself in a distinct moment, making it utterly timely and ensuring its relevance for years to come.

By intervening as she does, Malkowski not only provides readers with insight into the long-standing visual pursuits of documentary with regard to death, but also with important methodological concerns that are applicable to a number of other contexts. As digital platforms continue to evolve and provoke new apprehensions, one’s understanding of such phenomena as murders streamed over Facebook Live will be vastly enriched by the work that *Dying in Full Detail* so adroitly performs.

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**The Act of Documenting: Documentary Film in the 21st Century** by Brian Winston, Gail Vanstone, and Wang Chi

Documentary refuses to fit into a particular genre or form. Its aficionados often celebrate documentary’s grounded connection with the real and its ability to change the world. That said, even before digital interventions (or distortions), documentary’s claim on the real has always had a shaky foundation. It is also very difficult to pinpoint documentary films that have sparked societal revolutions, a difficulty that has not deterred documentarians from (remaining committed to attempting to) making films that promote social change. These ambiguities about documentary’s ontologies, and these claims and counterclaims about documentary’s political efficacy, have preoccupied many documentary scholars from Jane Gaines to Tom Waugh, and continue to maintain a hold on the writers of *The Act of Documenting: Documentary Film in the 21st Century*, Brian Winston, Gail Vanstone, and Wang Chi. This is an unusually timely book with an explicit agenda to assess and interpret the changes in practices of documenting and the claims made concerning the sociopolitical transformations brought about by documentaries.

Have digital platforms completely altered documentaries? How can scholars and critics evaluate the impact of documentary films beyond measuring their box-office revenues or aggregating the likes they receive on social media? Has the legitimation of subjectivity in contemporary documentary media led to giving voice to the previously excluded and confronted norms of objectivity haunting the documentary?

*The Act of Documenting* carefully explores these questions by advancing three key arguments about contemporary documentary practices. First, the authors agree that the digitization of documentary holds significant potential for interaction, participation, and collaboration, but contend that such affordances cannot be taken for granted and need to be interrogated and re-evaluated. Second, they persuasively demonstrate that studying contemporary documentary cinema is not only about researching digital filmmaking processes, but also involves exploring how subjectivities are creatively inserted into documentary films and discourses. Third, they ask documentary enthusiasts to go beyond lines of inquiry aimed at categorizing documentaries to understand the essential act of documenting.

These are all compelling arguments, and in making them, the authors engagingly discuss a variety of documentaries (and/or “docmedia”). Such documentary projects range from the web/interactive documentary (web-/i-doc) *Hollow* (Elaine McMillion Sheldon, 2013–), about the rural communities of McDowell County, West Virginia, to the brilliant and controversial *The Act of Killing* (Joshua Oppenheimer, 2013), dealing with the mass killings in 1965–66 of alleged communists in Indonesia. The book discusses the often theorized *Chronique d’un été* (Chronicle of a Summer, Edgar Morin and Jean Rouch, 1961) as a point of comparison to *Ji E De Cun Zi* (The Starving Village, 2010), a fascinating study by Zou Xueping of memory and place in the village of Zoujia, Shandong Province, China. Such a deep and wide temporal-geographic canvas is necessary for a book like this that seriously takes up the challenge of assessing transformations in and legacies of documentary. It is important that such a work not be overly selective about its examples, and that it explain how situated concerns mold documenting acts, their aesthetical treatment, and their political affects. *The Act of Documenting* does this well, and it is a major achievement.

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As someone who regularly teaches a class on contemporary documentary and the future of archives, I often depend on scattered texts dealing with such specialized topics and practices as reality TV, gamedocs, mockumentary, web-/i-doc, and performativity and subjectivity in documentaries. *The Act of Documenting* is a first work of its kind (barring anthologies) that I have come across in the last five years that eclectically distills scholarship in each of these above-mentioned areas to effectively map and analyze the field of contemporary documentary studies. It does so by dividing its focus into two parts: the shorter first part explores the digital potentials of documentary, and the longer second part examines the “actual effects” that the act of documenting has on the “filmed,” “filmer,” and “spectator.” The two parts of the book are broken down into a set of chapters that have precise and helpful subheadings highlighting concepts, values, and practices.

In the first part, the authors explain that documentary is often presumed to be authentic and trustworthy but that such claims are increasingly difficult to make in the digital era. With digitization, not only has there been a loss of indexicality, but also, as the authors point out, digital manipulation makes it difficult to trace such loss or detect the tampering of evidence. The web-/i-docs that are being collaboratively produced can seem to be always-emerging and temporally unbounded, and yet they remain vulnerable to the planned obsolescence marking digital media: sometimes websites that house these documentaries need to be updated, reformatted, and/or shifted to new platform interfaces. At times, the authors seem to want to locate most of the navigational affordances in nonlinear interactive documentaries within the paradigm of narrative(s). I wish there were a more open-ended approach to the influence of database technologies and game logics (ludonarratives).

In documentary filmmaking and scholarship, the triadic and incessantly shifting relationships among documentarian, filmed subject, and audience is considered of utmost importance. The reciprocal ways in which the filmed, filmer, and spectator are entangled is recognized by the authors, as they provide sophisticated approaches toward making sense of these relationships. For instance, in the second part of the book, they investigate how documentary affects the filmed (in terms of performing for/co-creating with the audience and filmmaker), the filmer (in relation to bringing subjective expressions to a documentary cinema often burdened by expectations of objectivity and sobriety), and the spectator (with regard to the conditions of reception and the impact of documentaries).

Similarly, in a chapter dedicated to subjectivities, the authors compellingly explain how feminist interventions and personal sensibilities can transform a documentary’s overt social/activist agenda into a deeper expression of “cultural anguish” and “social need” (137). Here the authors analyze canonical works in this mode by Agnes Varda and Mona Hatoum, and then apply those learnings to discuss intertextually (and intermedially) the Inuit filmmaker Alethea Arnaquq-Baril’s *Angry Inuk* (2016). Some of the book’s most rigorous conceptualizations of embodiment, gendered subjectivities, and the politics of performativity in autobiographical documentaries can be found in this chapter.

What I found myself particularly appreciating about this book is the effort by the authors to subject assumptions about intended effects of a particular documentary value or practice to rigorous interrogation. For example, they note that often audiences or critics might think that filmmakers were ethical if they followed the procedure of having the filmed subjects sign consent forms. However, they argue that consent forms can end up offering protection to the filmer rather than making sure that no harm comes upon the filmed (168). They also cautiously and skillfully present several examples that show how giving voice to the marginalized through the documentary medium does not automatically empower these filmed communities.

Finally, the book candidly discusses the limitations of discourses surrounding documentary’s “impact” and “engagement,” whether in the form of tangible policy changes for affected communities or “externally undiscernible consciousness-raising effects” (194–95). This is an admirable attempt, and it would have been great if the book here had engaged with how scholarship on the “popular” could be brought to bear on documentary scholarship. While one often thinks of Bollywood, Hollywood, Nollywood, and (vernacular) music videos and telenovelas as popular, one never quite labels documentaries popular. Is it because documentaries are supposed to be too scholarly or too artistic or too critical, or is it just because documentaries do not often attract that many spectators or audiences? All these assumptions about documentaries are indeed changing, and the book is a remarkable effort to wrestle with, and make sense of, these transmutations.

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