sound, which taken together “signify ‘ownership’” of the speakers’ thoughts. For Margulies, Zavattini’s pedimento, the process of tracking a person’s everyday activities, becomes Rouch’s pedovision, tracking a character’s reflective state as they walk and talk.

In Person maps a trajectory of reenactments’ drives, from incipient to fully expressed, from fully expressed to subterranean. The juridical impulse of reenactment testimony—present yet somewhat submerged in these monologues—becomes a stand-in for the courtroom in chapter 6, “Trial Stages,” which focuses on Cambodian director Rithy Panh’s films. Panh’s S21: The Khmer Rouge Killing Machine (2003) is an unnerving, extraordinary work that brings together former Khmer Rouge guards alongside survivors of a former security prison. The theatrical, evidentiary, and testimonial aspects of reenactment combine to create, in Margulies’s term, a “parajuridical theater.” The viewer of S21 watches the guards mechanistically reenact their “duties” of tormenting and interrogating the prisoners. In a form of détournement, Panh uses the redemptive and cathartic force of reenactment against itself. For Margulies, the film presents a “mode of replay inviting ethical and historical scrutiny rather than moralistic closure” (216).

The book’s final chapter, on Brazilian filmmaker Andrea Tonacci’s Serras da desordem (2006), examines the troubling representational questions that arise when a Brazilian Indian reenacts his first contact with nonindigenous Brazilians. As she does in S21, Margulies finds in Serras da desordem’s protagonist’s “psychological opacity” an invalidation of the premise long upheld in neorealism and cinema verité that reenactment leads inevitably to redemption or self-knowledge. Instead, in contemporary works such as Panh’s and Tonacci’s, the real/actor becomes “an agent of critical unease” (18).

As reenactment shifts under evolving sociopolitical pressures, while still carrying marks of its earlier uses, Margulies’s book acquires richer and richer layers as it develops. A quick glance at recent films reveals that the drive to play oneself is as strong as ever. In Person will equip viewers encountering an on-screen real/actor to see a dense palimpsest of cinematic predecessors where before they may have detected only a few faint tracings.

KEN PROVENCHER

The Platform Economy: How Japan Transformed the Consumer Internet by Marc Steinberg

“Platforms are everywhere,” reads the first sentence of Marc Steinberg’s The Platform Economy: How Japan Transformed the Consumer Internet. Hyperbole? Yes and no. Of course, platforms are “everywhere,” as dominant forces in global media industries and consumer behavior, both online and offline. But to think of them as “everywhere” is to risk forgetting or ignoring their origins and histories. “Platforms” structure the design and rhetoric of contemporary media to such a degree that even venues that predate the entire platform concept, such as movie theaters and print magazines, function today discursively as platforms. Given their ubiquity, platforms seem to resist nuanced critical historicization that doesn’t simply glorify or demonize the impact of platforms on economics, society, and culture.

The Platform Economy is therefore a most welcome intervention into the heated rhetoric surrounding the “platformization” of the media industry. While acknowledging the ubiquity of the term, The Platform Economy argues that an accurate historicization of platforms and their underlying theories can and should include ideas and influences outside the globally dominant “big four” of Apple, Amazon, Facebook, and Google. As the book’s subtitle indicates, histories of platform technologies and their related business and cultural practices must include Japan as a prototypical site of mobile Internet development that predates the iPhone and the Android smartphone. This reframing of history suggests that while Apple or Google may not have an obligation to acknowledge Japanese contributions to platform theory, those contributions are profound enough that scholars ought to recast the concept of media platforms in geoeconomic terms.

The book’s introduction takes Japan’s heretofore minor role in the annals of platform theory as a point of departure. Japan’s secondary position relative to European and American platform theory may correspond, Steinberg argues, to its diminished role in the global smartphone marketplace ever since its own market was overtaken by Apple and Google in the early 2010s. Steinberg reasserts Japan’s leading role in platform development due to the astonishing success of Docomo’s i-mode service in Japan in the late 1990s. He provocatively claims that even though Docomo had only limited success exporting i-mode to other countries, Apple and Google never succeeded where Docomo and others failed. Rather, Apple and Google built upon what made i-mode successful: the reconceptualization of the mobile Internet as

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a platform-based economic system providing “contents” to its users through microtransactions.

In the first of three chapters analyzing the development of platform theory in Japan, Steinberg focuses on the loaded term “contents” as crucial to the book’s understanding of Japan’s leading role in platform discourse. Steinberg notes a rhetorical shift in recent Japanese media business and management discourse from “media mix” to “contents mix.” The shift may appear subtle, but it implies a coming to terms with the digitization of transmedia contents that increasingly rely on platforms for delivery. The word “media” connotes a tangible requirement on the part of the user to own and operate one or more forms of hardware and software. The intangible term “contents,” meanwhile, refers more directly to characters, settings, and narratives that users consume.

The rhetorical shift from “media” to “contents,” Steinberg argues, has had the effect of reducing users’ anxiety over the fragmentation of their consumption habits and the loss of privacy that platforms demand. “Contents” have greater value and meaning than the media required to access them, which in turn allows platforms to turn “contents” more easily into consumer goods—and makes platforms all the more necessary for turning those contents into consumer goods. The relation between “contents” and “platforms” appears interdependent, as a measure not just of the media environment but also of the discourse regarding it.

Steinberg follows the “contents discourse” in chapter 1 with “platform typology” and the history of platform theory in chapters 2 and 3. Throughout all three chapters, readers may be disappointed in the amount of space devoted to analyzing material written by and for market researchers and business managers: the discourses that Steinberg calls “executive theory” (66). Lengthy passages from white papers, managerial guides, company histories, and the like are clear and yet can at times, perhaps unavoidably, make for rather dry reading. Steinberg argues that it is these works—such as Kokuryō Jirō’s 1995 book Open Network Management, and subsequent writings by Kimura Makoto and Negoro Tatsuyuki—that make it clear that the concept of the “platform business” in relation to e-commerce was developed in Japan well before European and American writings ever appeared on the same subject.

Steinberg’s interventions develop a “new genealogy” of platform theory, including a chart, effectively placing the Japanese-language writings of Kokuryō, Kimura, and Negoro temporarily ahead of those of Jean-Charles Rochet, Jean Tirole, Geoffrey G. Parker, and Marshall W. Van Alstyne (121). Great credit is due to the complexity with which Steinberg addresses some of the ethical and theoretical implications of this new genealogy. For instance, he does not claim to know whether the European and American theorists were consciously aware of, and therefore sidelined, the earlier Japanese work. If they were not aware of it, he says, then the reader can consider the platform concept to be a phenomenon of “plural genases” or “parallel genesis” (120). Steinberg further cautions that he is not, in turn, simply proposing an “East over West” argument, given Japan’s nominal position as part of the Global North. That position notwithstanding, The Platform Economy clearly aims to rectify the timeline of transnational platform theory by acknowledging the determinant role of researchers and writers in Japan.

Chapters 4 and 5 move from theory to practice, examining, respectively, the creation of Docomo’s i-mode and that of Niconico Video, the YouTube of Japan. Having already demonstrated that Japanese platform theory predates European and American theory, Steinberg further demonstrates that the Japanese i-mode format—which revolutionized the cell phone into a device that could also manage ticket sales, bank accounts, and email—predates the no-longer-so-revolutionary iPhone and Android smartphones. Apart from a touch-screen interface and a mini-slab form factor, the smartphone has simply replicated the concept and functionality of i-mode as a “megaplatform” that is simultaneously an object and a marketplace. Steinberg credits and extensively quotes three “architects” of i-mode for these developments: Enoki Kei’ichi, Matsu-naga Mari, and Natsuno Takeshi (134). As he does with the European and American theorists, Steinberg is not interested in claiming a causal connection between the theories of Kokuryō et al., and the design work of Enoki et al., but again shows a clear associative connection between Japanese theory and practice that precedes the business plans of Google and the design concepts of the iPhone.

Chapter 5 may be the strongest of the book, given how it integrates the conceptual and theoretical approaches of the earlier chapters with a specific aspect of cultural production in Japan. Steinberg focuses on Niconico Video, an online streaming platform that is the product of a merger between the telecom Dwango and the publisher Kadokawa. Niconico, a YouTube-like platform, is distinguished by a comment overlay system that lets users write text directly onto uploaded videos. Steinberg sees this as an alternative form of platform capitalism more closely aligned to the i-mode formula and thus more in line with Japanese “net culture” (192) than Google Play, Amazon Prime, or Netflix.

Despite these differences, Steinberg cautions against viewing Niconico as a rupture in media globalization, instead
seeing it as part of a continuous and transnational process of platformization. The manner in which this chapter considers not only the history of the Niconico platform but also its social, cultural, and aesthetic implications allows Steinberg to present an outstanding synthesis of Japan-specific material that raises productive and critical questions about platformization on a broader scale.

Depending on the reader’s own preconceptions of the cost-to-benefit ratio of platforms, the book could be taken as one that sorts out who earns the blame versus the credit for the rise and development of the platform economy. As media platforms demand more and more personal information in exchange for “access,” *The Platform Economy* can seem like an updated origin story of how media technology developed more quickly than its users could understand or control. The impressive feat of Steinberg’s book is that it allows both interpretations of platformization to emerge: a fuller questioning of global media industry dominance and critiques the dominant notion that the subject of 1970s feminism was exclusively and uncritically white. As Warren elegantly puts it, *Subject to Reality* “seeks out the surprisingly intertwined political, social, and discursive threads that wound their way into documentary filmmaking during these periods, focusing intently on gender, race, and class politics throughout” (1).

Undergirding this study is an ongoing commitment to the political and ethical viability of realist documentary, an assertion that directly challenges the historical dismissal of this aesthetic strategy found in the ideological critiques of feminist film theory, as well as in critiques of ethnographic realism’s association with imperialism and racial discrimination. In common with recent work that complicates this antirealist stance and with historiographic projects that rethink the dominant narratives of 1970s feminism, Warren argues that relegating documentary realism to an inferior status simplifies and ignores the gendered, raced, and classed complexities of 1970s feminist interventions that emerge in the films. Across the book’s four chapters, Warren performs close readings of films and archival materials that insightfully highlight the myriad ways in which films from both periods share an ethical commitment to the “Other” and to representing race (as well as gender) through ethnographic impulse and politicized realism, both critiquing and bolstering established hierarchies of power.

The book is simply organized into two halves, with the first two chapters dedicated to the ethnographic films of the 1920s–1940s while the latter two chapters attend to 1970s feminist documentary. Chapter 1 pays attention to the marginal figures of Frances Flaherty and Osa Johnson, more commonly known as the wives of famous documentary filmmakers Robert Flaherty and Martin Johnson, respectively. The feminist historiographic impulse of this chapter uncovers the labor performed by these women as collaborators in the creation of documentaries attributed to their husbands, influence that has been previously neglected by historians of both documentary and feminist film. Warren closely reads an archive of personal letters, public writings, and promotional materials alongside the films to uncover Frances’s and Osa’s artistic and physical labor during the filmmaking process, as well as the affective and reproductive labor they performed behind the scenes. More than simply reinserting Frances Flaherty and Osa Johnson into the annals of documentary, though, this chapter crucially analyzes the ways that white femininity was mobilized in the service of documentary’s ethnographic impulse through a politics of representation that both challenged and confirmed racial and gender stereotypes.

**SONIA MISRA**

**Subject to Reality: Women and Documentary Film by Shilyh Warren**

Shilyh Warren’s *Subject to Reality: Women and Documentary Film* is a reparative project addressing two undertheorized or misremembered periods of women’s documentary filmmaking: ethnographic films of the 1920s–1940s, and realist feminist documentaries of the 1970s. By placing these two seemingly distinct periods in conversation, the book’s transhistorical framework excavates the overlooked labor of women in documentary history, as well as the previously unacknowledged political and aesthetic legacy of the early work as it emerges in what Warren calls the “anthropological aesthetic” of 1970s feminist documentary.

Issuing this historiographic corrective, Warren not only repositions these early documentaries by women within canons of documentary film and feminist film history, but also highlights the ways in which the ethnographic impulse that runs through both periods brings racial difference to the fore and critiques the dominant notion that the subject of 1970s feminism was exclusively and uncritically white. As Warren elegantly puts it, *Subject to Reality* “seeks out the surprisingly intertwined political, social, and discursive threads that wound their way into documentary filmmaking during these periods, focusing intently on gender, race, and class politics throughout” (1).

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