

missionary efforts to evangelize the world—an agenda that has been correctly criticized as not other-oriented, but imperialistic and patronizing. Flory and Miller realize this, and make some correctives in their typology, but they also seem biased against the Resisters in a way that begs for data. That is, they end by saying that the “Resisters are simply fighting a losing battle.” This leaves the reader wondering if the Resisters really fit into the typology in the first place, or are Flory and Miller just doing a little wishful thinking. Are these groups really in decline? It is certainly possible, but this book spends the greater part describing Resisters as one of the emerging forms of Post-Boomer Christianity, only to predict its demise. Perhaps it has moved beyond emerging?

These conundrums raised at the end of the book really make it worth reading. The typology is interesting, the stretching of it even more so, but it will be the lingering questions and applications that push the study of contemporary religion to the next level. It is virtually impossible to get the pulse of social change while it is in process, but Flory and Miller have done just that. I will surely use this text in my sociology of religion course, and I will recommend it to all who are curious about contemporary religion, because it is as accessible as it is provocative.

Media Unlimited: How the Torrent of Images and Sounds Overwhelms Our Lives, by **Todd Gitlin**. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 2007. 272 pp. \$15.00 paper. ISBN: 0805086897.

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Despite nearly a half century of studies documenting variation in how races/classes/genders are stereotypically depicted in press or how protestors are depicted less fairly than police or how video games may or may not contribute to more aggressive behavior in teens than TV shows, we have all missed a central feature of contemporary life: we have chosen to spend most of our waking hours engaging with communication technologies. Or as Todd Gitlin puts it

in *Media Unlimited*, “In a society that fancies itself the freest ever, spending time with communications machinery is the main use to which we have put our freedom” (p. 6). In this brief volume, Gitlin undertakes the ambitious project of exploring the magnitude, nature, and history of what he describes as a “torrent of media images.” In three fascinating and eminently readable chapters, Gitlin reminds us just how massive and fast the “media torrent” is (Chapters One and Two), and covers the more familiar territory of how the largely American culture of the torrent has spread throughout the world (Chapter Four).

According to Gitlin, a variety of historical, economic, and social explanations can help to account for the development of the “media torrent,” but no single reason (e.g., capitalist profit-motive) can explain it all. Much of the expansion of the media can be explained through the growth of cost-cutting technologies. Whereas attending a theater performance in the early Nineteenth century cost one-third of a laborer’s daily wage, in 1910, a visit to the nickelodeon cost only 1/40, and, by the 1960s, a television (over its lifespan) cost a mere 1/360 of a daily wage.

However, more significant than this facile technological argument, Gitlin suggests, are the answers that can be found in careful readings of Karl Marx and Georg Simmel. Though he died before the introduction of most of the mainstays of the “media torrent,” Marx “understood that capitalism required popular distraction” (p. 33). Gitlin equates the happy distraction offered by mass media with Marx’s description of how religion provided workers with a way of briefly escaping miserable lives. Moreover, Marx was aware of the way early capitalism endowed products with “mystical” properties, describing the early form of commodity fetishism in *Capital*. Nonetheless, Gitlin claims that Marx was more focused on production than consumption and never truly understood the capacity of consumption to offer people genuine pleasure “as real as our labor” (p. 35).

More useful for understanding the popularity of media today, claims Gitlin, is Simmel’s work on the growth of cities and the money economy. In an increasingly rationalized society, people need emotionally charged entertainment as a way of escaping

the highly rational mode of interaction in everyday life. Because long-lasting emotional experiences could get in the way of work obligations, people came to “crave . . . particular kinds of feelings—disposable ones” (p. 41). The media torrent, with its ability to offer an immense variety of brief emotional experiences, was the perfect salve for the tedium of everyday life. Thus, with a constant demand, argues Gitlin, corporate media outlets were all too willing to offer a seemingly endless supply.

In his chapter on the speed of the media torrent, Gitlin offers findings from two brief content analyses—one of bestselling novels and the other from popular magazines—demonstrating the tendency toward a far more staccato writing style in recent years that employs more brief sentences. Gitlin also suggests that Hollywood movies and television shows have increasingly moved at faster tempos, best exemplified by the Keanu Reeves’ thriller, *Speed*, and the innovative children’s show, *Sesame Street*, which features incredibly short, rapid-fire segments. Though Gitlin is certainly successful in documenting the trend toward speed and how it was enabled by technological growth, his explanation for popular demand for speed is less satisfying: “The dirty little secret is that ours is a civilization that revels in the pure experience of speed” (p. 105). That people delight in speed is no doubt a reason why producers create fast movies, but it remains unanswered why so many people take pleasure in speed.

The weakest part of the book (Chapter Three) comes when Gitlin delineates several ideal typical styles of coping with the media torrent: fans, critics, paranoids, exhibitionists, ironists, jammers, secessionists, and abolitionists. Given that Gitlin has spent much of the book problematizing a facet of contemporary life that many of us take for granted, it is a surprise that rather than describing more closely what broad social reforms we might pursue, we are given a far more personal account of how most people deal with the torrent. Though Gitlin clearly worries about the political and social consequences of the massive influx of media, his too-brief treatment of the political fallout and what can be done about it leave the reader feeling helpless in the face of a tidal wave.

In the new 2007 afterword, Gitlin notes the trend to media multi-tasking and that one of the victims of the expansion of electronic media usage has been book reading. At the same time, he seems delighted by the growth in amateur access to media, praising the capacity of the Internet to allow for political mobilization by groups like MoveOn.org and for increased balance of media giants by average citizens on political blogs and YouTube. Of course, citizens are limited in their expression by the rules set forth by the major companies like YouTube, WordPress, and Blogger that provide users with their virtual forum. But, more importantly, whether created by citizens or corporations, all of these sources add to the ever-expanding media torrent. As Gitlin notes in conclusion to the 2002 portion of the book, liberal and conservative alike, nearly all media reformers “share an ideal: more media, more of the time” (p. 209).

Authentic New Orleans: Tourism, Culture and Race in the Big Easy, by **Kevin Fox Gotham**. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2007. 288pp. \$23.00 paper. ISBN: 9780814731864.

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Both tourism and urban development have been heavily—if not ponderously—theorized, with master paradigms including neo-Marxist political economy, technological determinism, free-market public choice, and post-modern dramaturgy. More often than not, texts are strong on frameworks and weak on facts. Happily, Kevin Fox Gotham provides us with a refreshing approach to a range of interlocking subjects: urban political history, the growth and transformation of the tourist industry, the deeply troubled American history of race, the ever shifting balance among global, national and local forces, and the continually changing social construction of authenticity. His theorizing is eclectic, helpful, and always rooted in a thick narrative that includes actors, places, processes and events.

As in his previous major work on Kansas City (*Race, Real Estate, and Uneven Develop-*