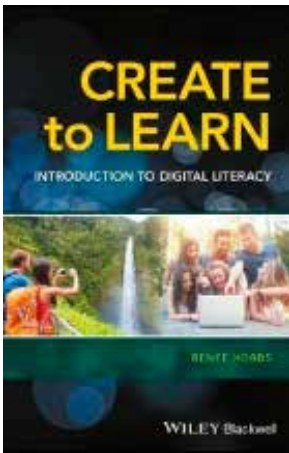


BOOK REVIEW AND MEDIA RECEIVED



This theoretical grounding and its clear presentation are thrilling. However, Hobbs simultaneously integrates eminently practical media-making information in the book as well, including a step-by-step guide for how to structure a "scope of work" document, for example. Further, the second section of the book specifically addresses how to use nine forms of digital media production: blogs and websites, digital audio and podcasting, images, infographics and data visualization, vlogs and

screencasts, video production, animation, remix production, and social media. *Create to Learn* is the book that instructors of digital literacy have been waiting for. With luck, its impact will trickle upward, from students to faculty, possibly affecting pedagogical practices generally and maybe even administrative thinking more broadly.

Immediations: The Humanitarian Impulse in Documentary

By Pooja Rangan

Duke University Press, 2017

264 pp./\$94.95 (hb), \$25.95 (sb)



What does endangered life do for documentary? The question reverses assumptions concerning the work of participatory documentary, and it is posed in numerous innovative ways in this vital new text by Pooja Rangan, building a theoretical structure for the reader to scale and survey the urgent philosophical concerns of documentary media today. As Rangan demonstrates, the often unconsidered participatory gesture pervasive in humanitarian media—gifting a camera to a work's subject—can participate in

inventing the disenfranchised humanity the project claims to redeem. In various diverse examples throughout *Immediations: The Humanitarian Impulse in Documentary*, documentary forms are found to work to regulate what counts as human not in spite of, but because of, their humanitarian uses.

Introducing "immediations" as a neologism theorizing tropes of participatory documentary that intervene to empower dehumanized subjects, Rangan foregrounds operations whereby disenfranchised subjects represent themselves in a mode characterized by

After the results of the 2016 presidential election and widespread head-scratching related to the paucity of critical thinking skills nationally, alongside evidence of the power of social media and algorithms to produce obfuscation and lies, it is clear that critical digital media literacy is essential. If our academic leaders lack the vision to enable its integration, books such as the three surveyed here continue to provide the tools for faculty and students to move forward anyway. They show clearly that we must do the ethically imperative work of reimagining teaching and learning to attend critically to the role of media in the lives of our students, and we must do so despite pernicious funding cuts, risk-mongering, and institutional roadblocks. If the current American powers that be have their way, yet another decade will go by without these essential changes.

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emergency. Producing a sense of spatial and temporal immediacy central to the urgency and directness of the genre promoted by Scottish documentary producer John Grierson, these tropes are premised upon dissolving mediation to evidence attributes of humanity in place of its perceived absence, potentially revealing the ideological work that goes into defining it.

This text follows in the path of other important books and essays on documentary and discriminatory paradigms of representation by Fatimah Tobing Rony and Trinh T. Minh-ha. Here Rangan elaborates forms of othering developed to work not through exclusion but supposed inclusion, participation, and empowerment. *Immediations* shows the lie in a blind embrace of reflexivity, and overturns basic assumptions around technological advancement and the ability for subjects to represent themselves.

Throughout the four chapters, Rangan addresses diverse clusters of media formed around humanity's boundary conditions: childhood, refugeehood, disability, animality. In doing so, she introduces further theorizations of immediation that should prove useful for ongoing engagement by scholars, including the formulations of "pseudoparticipatory documentary," "liveness," and "having a voice." For Rangan, the humanitarian impulse elicits two sides of a misguided problematic: representing the humanity of suffering others, and inviting them to do so themselves. These are defined respectively as the "dominant" and "resistant" voices of documentary, and found to be ubiquitous across humanitarian media. She also, however, defines the possibility of a third, *autistic* voice, offering various potential forms of "mimetic surrender."

In spite of the problematic implications and applications she outlines, rather than dismissing the proposition of surrendering the camera, Rangan nevertheless embraces this act's radical

philosophical implications, and extends them toward relational modes that may appear irrational or self-destructive. The prospect of letting go of the human does not lead the author to propose a posthuman political subject, but instead to define a nonhumanist ethics of mediation reflected in her scholarly methodology, approaching “the author, spectator, and medium of documentary as dynamic contingencies that are coproduced in the event of mediation and that do not precede or follow from it in any predetermined manner” (15).

Rangan moves diagonally across disciplinary boundaries and media forms, tracing the past and future of theory and practice concerning participatory documentary. *Immediations* offers substantial theoretical matrices for scholars to contend with going forward, and new challenges for interdisciplinary practitioners. Previous iterations of sections and chapters appear in journals such as *Camera Obscura*, *Differences*, and *Feminist Media Histories*, and the occasion of *Immediations*' publication was marked by a special launch

event at UnionDocs with screenings of works not addressed in the book that demonstrated the deep relevance of its ideas.

This text should prove useful for researchers working across a wide range of fields and specializations including documentary studies, film and media studies, disability studies, anthropology, postcolonial theory, posthumanism and animal studies, theorizations of disaster and risk, and critiques of humanitarianism and neoliberalism. In addition, it poses a special challenge for practitioners in documentary, media literacy, visual art, and performance, and those in different stages of giving and receiving cameras and their images. Ultimately, it is Rangan's generosity as a thinker in approaching these questions from multiple directions that should allow for the text's wide use and appreciation.

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BOOKS

And Now: Architecture Against a Developer Presidency: Essays on the Occasion of Trump's Inauguration, edited by the Avery Review. Columbia Books on Architecture and the City/256 pp./\$20.00 (sb).

Authenticity? Observations and Artistic Strategies in the Post-Digital Age, edited by Barbara Cueto and Bas Hendriks. Valiz/160 pp./\$24.00 (sb).

Contemporary Art and Digital Culture, by Melissa Gronlund. Routledge/220 pp./\$39.95 (sb).

Culture War: Affective Cultural Politics, Tepid Nationalism, and Art Activism, by Camilla Møhring Reestorff. Intellect/327 pp./\$51.50 (sb).

Digital Resistance in the Middle East: New Media Activism in Everyday Life, by Deborah L. Wheeler. Edinburgh University Press/194 pp./\$27.00 (ebook).

Ecstatic Worlds: Media, Utopias, Ecologies (Leonardo Book Series), by Janine Marchessault. MIT Press/355 pp./\$35.00 (hb).

Evaluating Media Bias, by Adam J. Schiffer. Rowman & Littlefield/150 pp./\$27.00 (sb).

Fandom: Identities and Communities in a Mediated World, 2nd ed., edited by Jonathan Gray, Cornel Sandvoss, and C. Lee Harrington. New York University Press/437 pp./\$30.00 (sb).

Media Activism in the Digital Age, edited by Victor Pickard and Guobin Yang. Routledge/231 pp./\$39.95 (sb).

Post-Truth: How Bullshit Conquered the World, by James Ball. Biteback Publishing/306 pp./\$15.95 (sb).

Public Policies in Media and Information Literacy in Europe: Cross-Country Comparisons, edited by Divina Frau-Meigs, Irma Velez, and Julieta Flores Michel. Routledge/304 pp./\$39.95 (sb).

Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest, by Zeynep Tufekci. Yale University Press/326 pp./\$26.00 (hb).

What Journalism Could Be, by Barbie Zelizer. Polity/328 pp./\$24.95 (sb).

EXHIBITION CATALOGS

What Does the Image Stand For?, edited by Ami Barak. Published in conjunction with the 2017 edition of *Momenta: Biennale de l'Image*, held in approximately fifteen sites across Montreal, Sept. 7–Oct. 15, 2017. Kerber/176 pp./\$45.00 (hb).

DVDS

Art of the Prank, directed by Andrea Marini, produced by Andrea Marini, Judy Drosd, and Michele Malfetta. Relight Films/85 min/\$295.00 (colleges/businesses/other institutions); \$89.00 (K–12 schools/public libraries).

How to Start a Revolution, directed by Ruaridh Arrow, produced by Richard Shaw. The Big Indy in association with Lion TV/82 min/\$250.00 (colleges/universities); \$125.00 (high-schools/nonprofits); \$6.00 (digital download).