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Lesko, Nancy & Susan Talburt. (2012) *Keywords in Youth Studies: Tracing Affects, Movements, Knowledges*. New York and London: Routledge Press.

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The "youth" of youth studies is often conceived of as a "universal and stable category" onto which researchers, activists, educators and policy makers project their own ideological and moral concerns. Paradoxically, the investment in youth as a subject of research lies primarily in their supposed "transitional" status—located somewhere between child and adult—and in the potential for their "proper" socialization to become disrupted. In *Keywords in Youth Studies: Tracing Affects, Movements, Knowledges,* editors Nancy Lesko and Susan Talburt present what they identify as "Seven Technologies of Youth Studies," through chapters that contain an introductory essay followed by shorter, conceptual keyword essays that interrogate the origin, meaning and use of each word in relation to its corresponding technology (p. 7). Through these concise essays,

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contributors from multiple fields each investigate a popular or previously under-theorized concept within the field, to illuminate the investments and mechanisms at play in (re)productions of youth through the media, scholarship, and political processes. Contributions to this anthology enter into conversation with a wide range of discourses in the field of youth studies, too many to list in a review of this size and nature. However, the editors open by acknowledging their indebtedness to Foucauldian theories of political rationalities and the assertion of Barry et al. (1996) that these rationalities inform the ways that we think about and act upon ourselves and others (p.3). Lesko and Talburt then draw upon Rose (1996) who states that these rationalities, when "applied to the government of youth have a moral, or normative, form that identifies ideals and distributes tasks among various authorities" to regulate youth (p. 3).

The sections of this book are interwoven so artfully that it is a challenge to disentangle each section from the rest. Still, each technology has its own unique function in constructing the stories we currently tell about youth and youth cultures. Accurately described as "a blend of reference guide, dictionary, textbook, and critical assessment that presents and historicizes the 'state of the field' of youth studies, offers theoretically informed analysis of key concepts, and points to possibilities for the field's reconstruction" (p. 5), this anthology provides a corrective to popular trends in youth studies by historicizing the field and redefining "youth" as a multifaceted and complex site of intellectual investments and investigations.

In Section One, *A History of the Present of Youth Studies*, contributors identify key historical and political moments that have contributed to the development of "youth" as a distinct, age-marked population. What makes youth a significant object of inquiry is their transitional status. They are assumed to be both "'at risk' for deviations from proper development for adult work and family roles" and also "correctable" since they are not yet adults (p. 11). As a result, deviations from constructed norms are met with policy interventions and surveillance mechanisms that target individual youth rather than addressing the systematic challenges that youth face. Contributors to this section historically and theoretically contextualize

prevailing ideas about biology, disability, juvenile justice, leisure, school, and work to reveal them as concepts that justify the discriminatory management of specific youth populations in racialized, gendered and classed ways. Through these technologies, systematic injustices are obscured while individual youth are pinpointed as a site of corrective regulation. The essays in Section Two, *Research and Regulation of Knowledge,* reinforce these arguments by illustrating how specific foci and methods of research produce certain "truths" about youth and youth deviance and, subsequently defining appropriate interventions for improving upon youth populations.

Once youth are "revealed" as coherent and comprehensible subjects through the work of expert researchers, they are made sense of through *Populational Reasoning*, the third technology and section presented in this volume. Through this technology, age becomes a category of discriminatory assumptions and policies (p. 111), while behaviors that deviate from the norms established by experts are termed disorderly and attended to as such (p. 117). Notions of agency and resistance are then mapped onto youth actions and subcultural expressions based on scholars' assumptive reasoning about the motives and investments youth hold regarding social justice, culture, and identities. At the same time, contradictory notions of youth as non-agentic "others" justifies the systematic denial of their rights to make decisions about their own bodies. An example of this dynamic is in discourses about trans youth, whose presumably asexual and non-erotic bodies render their very existence implausible (p. 138). Given the challenges outlined in this section, contributors suggest that we take into account the context in which youth take actions (p. 129), critique the ways these actions are interpreted by experts, and then acknowledge the ways that youth are active participants in their own experiences and senses of belonging with self and others (p. 135).

The youth who adheres to the norms outlined and addressed in the previous sections is the one allotted the status of a worthy "potential" citizen, or citizen in the making. These youth and their counterparts, the undeserving youth, are the topic of Section Four: *Citizenship Stories.* Contributors to this section illuminate the markers that distinguish "at risk" youth from those who pose risks to the social order. For example, Kabula

attends to the ways that, positioned as humanitarian efforts, interventions to protect "disadvantaged" children in "third-world" countries actually serve to validate infantilizing discourses about third world citizens as well as the surveillance and control of their populations by imperialist nations (p. 167). Through essays in this section, scholars elucidate the means by which potential citizens are regulated through systematic stories and policies that concern both material and ideological spaces, and encompassing public spheres as well as the embodied practices of youth.

In the fifth section, *Mobilities and the Transnationalization of Youth Cultures*, authors frame spaces, embodiments and culture as ongoing processes with which youth constantly engage. For example, Henriques suggests that by viewing *musicking* as a practice comprised of activities and people rather than studying music as an object, we can get a stronger sense of the context, meaning and resistance at work in youth productions of musical culture (p. 219). This section, in particular, emphasizes the dynamic ways that mass media and Internet technologies provide avenues for youth to actively interpret and engage with their worlds in innovative and sometimes political ways. Here contributors showcase the complex and often-overlooked agencies that youth continue to exercise in the face of regulative mechanisms.

Section Six, *Everyday Exceptions: Geographies of Social Imaginaries,* attends to the ways that youth represent both hope and threat. "The notion of in-betweenness is at the heart of the ambivalence with which youth are often viewed and also the exceptionalism that sometimes overdetermines this category. Youth are assumed to fall between the cracks of 'innocent' childhood and 'stable' adulthood, to be dangerously outside of normative social structures and teetering on the brink of revolt" (p. 237). Anxieties over the potential of youth to produce cultural interventions through media production, and the romanticized idea that youth are the primary bearers of hybridity and cultural innovation both sustain conceptions of youth as located at the threshold of threat and promise. As such the figure of youth has been central to the construction of moral panics concerning the the future of society, and the focus of remedial interventions aimed at

the protection and proper socialization of youth populations (pp. 274-75). Distinctions between "good" and "bad" youth, however, are made visible through stylistic and spatial arrangements that aren't always intuitively linked to their outcomes. For example, Dumont argues that safe spaces actually reproduce dominant ideologies and marginalization of youth through their delineation of segregated safe spaces within persistently discriminatory institutions (p. 259). This is a critical intervention into one of the most prolific and well-meaning initiatives promoted on behalf of youth protectionism. Moreover, contributors attend to the ways that spatial arrangements, styles, and labels attributed to specific youth groups have their own histories and social meanings, lending to the simultaneous spectacularization and "othering" of disenfranchised youth, as is the case with "street children" (p. 262) and instances of youth violence (p. 277).

The editors conclude their text with a section on the technology of "Enchantment," critiquing the well-meaning places from which many educators and scholars of youth operate, and exploring the multifaceted investments and challenges in the field. Noting that the fascination with youth often comes from adult professionals in the helping fields and in academic circles, contributors to this section provide critical insights into how youth studies might be approached more productively if we let go of overly optimistic or paternalistic approaches to studying youth. Authors also acknowledge the functions of nostalgia, romanticism and paternalism at work in the stories that we tell about youth and the ways that adult researchers, educators and activists construct and attend to those narratives. For instance, Anderson critiques the co-optation of youth issues and movements by nostalgic adults, harkening to the "good old days" of their own activist investments in the 1960s and 70s (p. 316). Instead, he argues that adult activists should "see themselves in solidarity with young people to address the concerns young people identify as important, not the other way around" (p. 317).

In its entirety, *Keywords in Youth Studies* represents youth and youth cultures as sets of practices rather than as static concepts, successfully challenging and offering correctives to the discourses of expertise that have heretofore constituted the field of youth studies. Rather than taking

the category of youth as a fixed problematic, contributors reconcile the complexities and agencies that have been historically stripped of youth as a researched and regulated category. Moreover, the organization of this anthology allows for easy navigation by the reader who wishes to delve into a specific area of inquiry relating to youth. The editors effectively invite readers "to enter the text through multiple points and to create their own unique connections across concepts" (p. 8). This makes it accessible to scholars who are deeply entrenched in youth studies, or even those who are hardly aware of how their own work might connect to the field. I highly recommend this text for anyone studying youth cultures, identities and practices in this moment.

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