

memorial trajectories and thus widening the perspective beyond the two world wars of the twentieth century.

As should already be clear, this is a rich, thoughtful, and thought-provoking collection—very competently edited and handsomely produced. It will prove an important resource for students and scholars of American literature, history, and culture; and it is also of considerable interest to students and teachers of postcolonial literature and of narrative theory. A further asset is Edward T. Linenthal's reflections, in a Commentary Epilogue which nicely complements Hebel's Introduction, on the critical gains as well as the theoretical and analytical complications of using a concept such as "memory." "Transnational labors of remembrance," Linenthal helpfully reminds us, "by definition challenge boundaries" (449). Surprisingly, the volume contains no index. This is unfortunate, since an index would not only have made the book more user-friendly but would also have served to interlink the various essays' critical and thematic concerns.

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Nakamura, Lisa. *Digitizing Race: Visual Cultures of the Internet*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007. 248 pages. ISBN-10: 0816646139; ISBN-13: 978-0816646135. Paperback \$17.55.

In this study, Lisa Nakamura explores a range of intersections between individual and cultural depictions of race and embodiment in digital imagery and visual culture. These include the examination of a number of graphic artifacts and visual elements encountered or employed on the Internet, particularly in the decade following the introduction of image-capable web browsers. While more a series of fascinating case studies than an integrated theoretical critique, her overview of various transition phases from a text to a graphically-oriented Internet serves as a useful accounting of practices and interface elements still in use and in need of critical examination.

In accomplishing this, Nakamura extends the inquiry initially articulated in Cindy Selfe and Dickie Selfe's 1994 "The Politics of the Interface: Power and Its Exercise in Electronic Contact Zones." Nakamura examines individual desires for more visible and more personal online representations of race and gender—from customized "AIM buddies" to "beaner dreamer avatars." These concern ongoing, problematic issues, as evidenced

by more contemporary iconic representations in social networking sites such as *Facebook*, virtual worlds such as *Second Life*, or massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs) such as *World of Warcraft*. Significantly, Nakamura repeatedly demonstrates how issues of race are so often marginalized (literally in many instances) through her consideration of mainstream digital culture. A more recent example of this practice appears with the proliferation of sites and “how to” web pages concerning Obama’s “Hope” presidential campaign poster. A few minutes of time and a digital image allow users to substitute their own images for Obama’s and/or change the accompanying caption.

At times Nakamura’s commentary appears more about visual culture in general—particularly television and cinema—rather than that created on or via the Internet. Following a chapter opening focused on HBO’s *Six Feet Under* TV series, the discussion of “reborn dolls” (composites from various toy models) appears at most tangentially connected to networked interfaces and online representations. In another chapter, although the explorations of race and representation in *Minority Report*, *Gattaca* and *The Matrix* series are insightful and intriguing; those remain feature movies and do not offer actual visual cultures of the Internet but Hollywood-ized future visions thereof. Additionally, the Internet here is almost exclusively USA-based, and research on race, gender and digital representation elsewhere is unfortunately absent. Another concern arises from Nakamura’s comments on pictures from Abu Ghraib prison, as she claims that “[t]he truth of these images remains unquestioned because the notion that someone might purposely falsify them seems incomprehensible.” Yet the visual culture of the Internet is quite often “false,” an attempt to create rather than reflect reality. This is noted in connection with the fictional computer interface and browser used for a Jennifer Lopez music video addressed in the book’s “Introduction,” and any acceptance of digital image “truth” needs further and more critical consideration.

Nakamura’s critique of ways in which individuals and groups address and, at times, renegotiate depictions of race and gender through their use of digital images exposes a continuing tension. Is the Internet about its individual users, or those users as depicted by its increasingly corporatized owners? Nakamura’s exploration of online user representations also presages current privacy dilemmas involving the accumulation and sharing of user data by *Google*, *Facebook* and others. Her consideration of whether completely digitized creations of humans can threaten conceptions of

“authenticity, singularity and identity” bring Mary Louise Pratt’s “contact zones” into digitized visual as well as linguistic culture. How closely, for example, should one’s avatar in *Second Life* resemble oneself? What image of oneself is constructed by the commercialized web through targeted advertising as it appears on-screen, in response to search queries or in connection with database-mined email and IM messages?

While opportunity and ability to go online present initial public challenges, Nakamura capably examines some of the deeper concerns of the “digital divide”—such as in connection with measuring “media interactivity” rather than simple “access.” Her discussion of “*kinds* of access” reflects the tensions between hopes for youth culture and its engagement with the Internet and the skills needed to modify, interpret and criticize the resulting and connected visual culture. Although somewhat narrow in its geographical scope, Nakamura’s critical study provides an illuminating and reflective analysis that merits the attention of scholars of visual culture and visual rhetoric.

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Bloom, Harold, ed. *Bloom’s Modern Critical Views: Alice Munro*. New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009. vii, 210 pages: ISBN 978-1-60413-587-9, hardcover \$40.50.

One must be impressed by the reach of Harold Bloom’s reading project and elucidation of the Western Canon. His series *Bloom’s Modern Critical Views* is an abundant productive survey of a vast temporal and geographical space in literary history. The first book in the series was published in 1969 on Kate Chopin, and this year already thirteen new titles have come out. His critical view on Alice Munro arrived in 2009 which corresponded quite timely with her receiving the *International Man Booker Prize* for life-time achievement. The form of the series is an introduction by Bloom where he discusses the writer in question and his or her place within the canon followed by a selection of critical essays. Given the scope of the critical undertaking, it is understandable that the increasing speed of publications involves short-cuts in the readings. But, one is still troubled by Bloom’s only reliance on the *Selected Stories* from 1996 for his comprehension of Munro’s writing. As a result he misses almost half of her production and several of her more important stories, and this when there is an excellent se-