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Introduction

The Problem of Media Authorship

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Why write a book about media authorship when it seems that so much is already being said about it? Perhaps we would be better off turning to Facebook, for example, where our news feeds are often dominated by discussion of the creative practitioners behind popular culture and their significance to what we see on our screens. ''David Cronenberg makes strange movies,'' announced the first line of one article shared by one of the editors' acquaintances.[1] Just two items down, a picture from another friend mapped the writing staffs of many popular American television shows back to Joss Whedon as supposed father figure. Whedon reappeared in another friend's post linking to a *New York Times* review of *The Avengers* whose title boldly announced ''A Film's Superheroes Include the Director,''[2] and that linked to a slide show on ''The Work of Joss Whedon.'' Yet, Whedon's star was dwarfed on this day – May 4th, or ''*Star Wars* Day'' to some – by many items discussing George Lucas, some of which extolled his virtues as a master storyteller, many of which expressed dismay with his ''meddling'' with his films, and many of which compared him to other franchise author figures such as Christopher Nolan, J.K. Rowling, J.R.R. Tolkien, and Suzanne Collins. Other posts debated or glowingly commended various newspaper columnists and media pundits' comments from the morning or the night before. Yet another linked to the latest video by online auteur and actress Felicia Day. And while clicking on these links, many of the accompanying ads used their authors to sell: one sidebar, for instance, sold *The Five Year Engagement* as ''from the producer of Bridesmaids,'' while another announced *The Lucky One* as being ''from the acclaimed bestselling author of The Notebook and Dear John,'' and another for the new *Walking Dead* videogame offered a more complex authorial trail by noting that it was based both on the comic book series by Robert Kirkman and on the AMC television series. In this same feed, television scholar Jason Mittell even announced that he had just published a chapter (about television authorship,

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no less!) of his book-in-progress, *Complex TV*, in an experiment in ongoing peer review, whereby Mittell encouraged readers to comment (thus, in some way becoming "co-authors"?) so that he could revise the book prior to publication in paper. Projects such as this call attention not only to the authorship of media, but also to how authorship is mediated, where the technologies and platforms that we use in the course of creativity seem to enable social and collaborative forms of cultural production. So while the news feed of a Facebook user who happens to be editing a book about authorship may certainly be shaped by a bit of self-selection, it seems reasonable to conclude at the very least that there's a vast discourse about authorship already in circulation, and that perhaps this book is thus not needed to call our attention to the importance of media authors or media authorship.

What this book can do, however, is point to what often goes unspoken in all the discourses and issues of media authorship that surround us in everyday life. To see press or marketing for almost any item of media today without seeing the invocation of at least one author figure is rare. Yet each and every item carries with it the ghosts of authors not mentioned. *The Five Year Engagement* might be from the *producer* of *Bridesmaids*, for instance, but who directed it? Who wrote the script? One comment on a friend's Facebook post about *Star Wars* Day alleged that *Star Wars* was taken largely from Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*,[3] while another noted *A New Hope*'s (1977) multiple borrowings from *Hidden Fortress* (1958). Discussions of adaptations often lead to accusations of "ruining" a pristine original and of textual infidelity, moreover, so to invoke "the acclaimed bestselling author" of *The Notebook* and *Dear John* is not only oddly to summon an author without a name, but is also to risk igniting concerns about poor adaptation, and a divergence from "the way the author intended it." And behind each and every one of the above-mentioned texts, we could list at the least tens, and perhaps even thousands, of other faces of the author-as-hero, of individuals who contributed to the creation, envisioning, and realizing of the text, and yet whose names are not listed. If we examine *Star Wars*, for example, even beyond pointing out the obvious influences from Campbell and *Hidden Fortress*'s director, Akira Kurosawa, we might ask about the authorial power of other directors, writers, producers, cast, production designers, special effects designers, matte artists, sound designers, foley artists, and so on. Some of these figures have gained authorial or pseudo-authorial status in popular culture themselves, as with John Williams, the composer of the *Star Wars* music, Ben Burtt, the sound designer, or Carrie Fisher, a cast member who went on to become a writer and who has thus often been suspected to have written parts of the dialogue. Yet others remain untouted, except by the most loyal and informed fan and/or production communities.

On one level, the constant invocation of authors reveals a cultural fascination with them and with the super powers ascribed to them. The narratives – both fictional and non-fictional – that the media delivers become resources for so many discussions and thoughts in our waking and sleeping lives, making it only natural that we often find ourselves keen to find out who made them and how they

made them. The author as figure is often posited as the individual who created the product, he or she who can variously be thanked or blamed, and he or she who then "gave" it to us (witness the language of texts being "from" an author, as if a parcel in the mail). The author is thus imagined to stand at the gateway and threshold between creativity, innovation, wonder, and magic, and us – all of those experiencing and taking pleasure in media culture in the mundane spaces of everyday life. If we are to understand how that world of wonder and magic works, the author is often posited as the figure we must capture and study. Why wouldn't we want to know not only who the magician is, but also how his or her tricks are performed?

On another level – lest all this talk of wonder and magic has readers crinkling their cynical brows – this widespread interest in authorship also reveals a cultural suspicion about precisely how magical they are. Instead of taking this whole system of creativity, mundanity, and the author-as-magician positioned in between for granted, we should see it as a discursive construct. Whose interests does it serve to see the world divided into the magical and the mundane, and if the author is the mediating figure, who has the power to create this figure and to install him or her on that threshold? What, in other words, is at stake in seeing authors in general as magicians, but what too is at stake in seeing any particular individual as an author-magician? As noted above, every nominated author has a wealth of ghost authors standing behind him or her, those whose names have not been invoked – whether by an ad campaign, a review, or a fan in question. What are the strategic reasons, then, to sell one author ("the producer of *Bridesmaids*") in one setting, or another in another setting ("from the acclaimed bestselling author")? Who gets to determine who "counts," who argues over this, and *why* might we argue over it? What cultural work is the author's name expected to do?

Let us follow up on the case of George Lucas briefly. When Lucasfilm or Twentieth Century Fox sell him as a remarkable author figure, they clearly have their reasons to do so. In a world full of many more movies than any one person could ever see, announcing that *this* movie is special, that it comes from a true visionary, aims to make any film of Lucas' stand above others. In this sense, media authorship plays very similarly to the star system: a form of product differentiation cranked out of the marketing and promotion machines of Hollywood to distinguish product in a crowded marketplace. Of course, this similarity helps us to realize that it's also not quite that simple, since Lucasfilm and Fox in fact sell the movie as multiply-authored, pointing to other members of the cast and crew whose work we are similarly encouraged to see as wholly unique, pathsetting, and magical. This poses actual challenges for those working on "a film by George Lucas," as hierarchies need to be created of who gets to control what. If a whole host of people have supposedly unique visionary powers, how does one bring them all together? In any artform that requires collaboration – as with almost all forms of mass media – authorship will therefore require not just magical ideas but also no small amount of management. How do Lucas, Lucasfilm, and Fox ensure, in other

words, that John Williams can write his best music, Harrison Ford can offer his best performance, Lawrence Kasdan can write his best script, and so on, yet that they can still come together and form something that is not just a cacophonous collection of contrasting creative acts? But the management that these individuals and their marketing teams must perform is also *discursive*. For beyond the actual acts of who does what, Lucas, Lucasfilm, and Fox (and now Disney) will encourage us to see some authors as more active than others. Hierarchies of control and value are not merely required on set: they are required in the press and in the popular imagination regarding what creativity is.

Witness here the battles between Lucasfilm and some *Star Wars* fans. The latter have often contested the idea that *Star Wars* "belongs" to Lucasfilm, and have thus felt free to author it themselves. Some fans create fan film or fan fiction that add new characters to the mix, and that transform other already-existing characters or events. To do so is to challenge the notion of Lucasfilm and Lucas having a monopoly on the realm of magic, as the fans now position themselves on the threshold of magic and mundanity, and allow themselves freedom of movement, rather than seeing themselves wholly as receivers of the gifts from Lucasfilm-approved authors. At times, Lucasfilm has "allowed" this by not challenging the fans over the legalities of their actions, and usually these allowances come when Lucasfilm feels its economic and semiotic interests are not challenged inasmuch as it doesn't stand to lose revenue or control over what the *Star Wars* franchise means and what it does. However, when their interests are challenged, as with much of Hollywood, it has then quickly invoked legal discourses of authorship, rights, and ownership in order to deny authorial rights to fans. Moreover, its approach is not simply reactive, as it also invests considerable capital – through press junkets, "making of" specials, Blu-ray bonus materials, licensed merchandise and books, and so on – in determining exactly who counts as an author, and who counts how much, so that when and if battles do occur, the battles take place on an uneven playing field.

Authorship is therefore about control, power, and the management of meaning and of people as much as it is about creativity and innovation. That makes authorship one of the more vital processes in modern media and culture. The author is a node through which discourses of beauty, truth, meaning, and value must travel, while also being a node through which money, power, labor, and the control of culture must travel, and while frequently serving as the mediating figure standing between large organizations (such as Lucasfilm or Fox) and the audience. No wonder academics and citizens alike are all endlessly fascinated by authors. And no wonder we all discuss authors so frequently, since arguments about creation, beauty, the audience, production, the industrialization of culture, labor, and flows of meaning and cash will often be couched in terms of authorship.

With the author performing so many actual and discursive roles in society, so much is thus at stake in understanding how authorship works, and authorship is a key entry point into examining much of how media culture works. In an age of new and digital media, these issues become even more interesting. For if we have

briefly discussed the authorship of something like the *Star Wars* franchise above, let us also consider the portal through which we arrived at such a discussion, and ask what authorship looks like on something like Facebook. Who authors our Facebook feeds or our Twitter streams? These are massively collaborative productions that defy notions of singular heroic authorship, and that also require us all the more to ask questions of management, by organizations (Facebook), by individuals (Mark Zuckerberg, or an individual Facebook friend), by policy (Facebook's notorious, and ever-changing, privacy settings that determine what we see and can't see), and by algorithm and code. Even individual status updates or tweets quite often defy simple notions of authorship, as they might on the one hand combine the poster's words with another's (retweeting or embedding), and/or on the other hand frame whatever is linked to in a way that adds the voice of the poster to the linked-to subject's words.

Ultimately, then, while the last hundred years or so have been a period of intense fetishization of and dogged belief in the singular author in Western societies, with the likes of Facebook, Twitter, Final Cut Pro, blogs, YouTube, and Pinterest making collaborative, fused, remixed authorship all the more obvious *and normative*, it now strikes us as a particularly opportune time to stop and take stock of exactly what an author is and how authorship works. Along with enabling everyday authorship, perhaps the digital era has cleared away some of the Romanticism and belief in magic that has often doomed discussions of the author to beatification. Such is our hope, and such is the reason for us offering a collection of new statements about media authorship now.

Within academia, considerable debate has raged about what authors are, how much authority they have over a text (or how much author is in authority), how much power our practice as analysts accords them, how much power we should or should not accord them, what their relationship to the text is, what they do for and to texts, and what is at stake in studying them. The chapters in this collection revisit these questions to offer fresh answers. Whether we care about art or industry, creation or reception, production or consumption, text or theory, culture or aesthetics, or all of the above, the author naggingly reappears as a problem to be solved. If authors need ''solving,'' though, this also suggests that fresh answers, theories, and understandings of how authorship work may have significant knock-on effects for our understandings of how art, texts, production cultures, audiences, power, identity, aesthetics, and meaning work.

We have endeavored to collect voices from across various disciplines and addressing various media products. Thus, chapters cover authorship of everything from the films of Robert Bresson to the videogames of Square Enix, from Disney's institutional authorship of Hilary Duff to collaborative cultures of making music, from the video store clerk as author to the nation-state as author of itself and of citizens, from amateur video storytelling in the slums of Nairobi to the business strategies of advertising and promoting Bollywood, from authorship on Twitter to authorship in the board room, and from the penning of comic books to practices

of authorship by fans, music coordinators, production designers, cast members, academics, and more. Authorship has more often been studied in highly contained settings, and yet our goal in assembling such a diverse selection of subjects, writers, and disciplinary frameworks has been to eke out some grander truths of authorship through comparison. We have no definitive answer of what an author is, no easy statement to share in this introduction that could be underlined or highlighted and that could thus spare the reader the journey ahead. Rather, we hope that the chapters that follow will challenge readers to think of the many different ways in which authorship works: as a mediator of aesthetics and meaning, as an act of power and control, as industrial strategy, as something to be practiced, something to be contested, and something to be won, awarded, denied, hoarded, and/or shared. All in all, this means that the business of solving the problem of media authorship is as much about asking critical questions as it is about providing concrete answers.

Chapter Summaries

While each of the chapters in this book offers its own unique perspectives on media authorship, a shared set of research questions unites them all. While the popular discourses of our Facebook feeds (and other sites where authorship discourses are constructed) seem to suggest that we know it when we see it, the chapters comprising this collection first and foremost problematize the question of what authorship *is*. This means not just accepting tacit definitions of practices and tacit assumptions about what constitutes creativity, but also engaging in critical thought about how all that cultural production is imagined and made meaningful. Through what discourses and cultural processes is media authorship produced? How does the authorship of different media – and the mediation of authorship more broadly – demand that we give our attention to the contexts in which creative agents and their practices unfold and are made culturally intelligible? This means thinking not just about where media authorship comes from, but also who that authorship is constructed around, how, by whom, in what kinds of cultural spaces, and for what purposes. Authorship is therefore not just a question of art and individual expression, but also of social and institutional structures that govern cultural production, enabling, compelling, and authorizing some forms while constraining others.

By interrogating authorship as culture – and thereby, as something we can both construct and deconstruct – we are able to do more than legitimate creative genius worthy of note in those Facebook feeds; instead, we can explore how the attributions of authorship and claims of authority we make give specific value and meaning to the practices, creative or otherwise, of mediated everyday life. We can conduct grounded research into how authorship is rendered visible and invisible. We can understand how authorship is not a natural phenomenon, but a set of

cultural values and concerns variably mobilized in different historical moments and geographic locales. We can think about how authorship has helped constitute the hierarchies between media, considering how literature and film have been legitimated through claims of the genius and vision of individual auteurs compared to forms of cultural production marked as more commercial or collaborative in television, videogames and emerging digital media – in which competing claims to authorship have now worked to construct new structures, practices, and ideals of creativity. In interrogating its relationships with struggle and power, we might not be able to define authorship in a neat, systematic way, but we can start to make sense of the culture that informs it and that it supports in turn. Asking questions about authorship, rather than just producing new claims about authorship, is the best way to get at that culture.

With these shared questions, the authors showcased in this book were able to study authorship in a wide variety of contexts and yet produce a collective intervention. The answers they offer in the attempt to solve the problem of authorship feature a diversity of tones and registers, but from this diversity of approaches and case studies comes a harmony in which the most valuable ideas reinforce one another. Again, this collective contribution is not a definition of media authorship, but something that goes beyond while leaving the topic an open question; instead of a single definitive statement, the book works as a whole to propose a plan of how media authorship might be further problematized in both creative practice and scholarly examination of it. From that outlook, media authorship can be theorized and historicized as a discursive, legal, and practical phenomenon; it can be contested as a site of struggle between multiple parties claiming authority; it can be industrialized within structures and institutions of cultural production; it can be expanded to include new labor categories, emerging sites of creativity, and shifting understandings of the audience; and it can be relocated outside of the commonsense realm of creativity in spheres like retail, marketing, the nation-state, and even the divine.

The first section of the book, **Part I: Theorizing and Historicizing Authorship**, therefore, aims to demonstrate what that theorization and historicization of authorship might look like. On the level of theory, the chapters in the section all extend from a shared concern with authority and agency, seeking to understand how authorship has been deployed as a concept to mediate tensions between the two. On the level of history, these chapters seek to understand how creative practices are themselves dynamic, changing phenomenon, but together they recognize that what practices count as authorship in what contexts has also been a matter of flux and change.

In the first of these chapters, John Hartley seeks to distinguish between creativity and authorship, arguing that in historical usage the term ''author'' ''never was a simple individual, but *one who channels system-level or institutional authority into text*'' (original italics). While his chapter is far reaching – tying authorship to emergence, public sphere, industrialization, and property rights – Hartley begins, in fact, with

the figure of God as the authority from which creativity was derived and made powerful through the idea of authorship. In conceiving of authors as agents of systems more so than sources of individual intention and agency, Hartley casts a critical eye on the "narrative of the self" and the way that do-it-yourself publishing and social media have everyone responsible for participating in authorship. Kristina Busse follows up these concerns with an exploration of the ethical basis of authorship, asking how and why it matters who the author behind a text might be. Surveying literary understandings of the author, as well as those of Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault, she focuses specific questions of authorial responsibilities, privileges, and identities in specific contexts of production and reception. From examinations of hipster racism to fandom, she argues that it matters not just who is authoring culture, but also how the context we have for making sense of that authorship matters. Complementing these ethical perspectives, Olufunmilayo Arewa follows with an examination of authorship from a legal perspective, equally concerned with the history of copyright as with musical forms as well as race and ethnicity. Arewa argues that Western traditions of classical music have sat at odds with models of creativity based in collaboration, borrowing, or copying in African-based musical forms like blues, jazz, gospel, soul, and rap. Uncovering the ways in which hierarchies of race and class have shaped authorial rights, she makes a compelling argument about the inadequacy of copyright and issues a call for alternative structures that "recognize borrowing as a norm and incorporate better delineation of the scope of acceptable borrowing and mechanisms for compensation that better recognize the reality of sharing and collaboration in creation."

Jonathan Gray follows this critique of copyright's racial hierarchies with a similar attempt to uncover the contingency and selectiveness of authorship discourses. Seeking to understand the temporality of authorship, Gray sees authority over a text as a something of a moving target, constructed in specific discursive circumstances but reconfigurable and reconstructed in successive moments. His argument, ultimately, centers upon the idea of authorial flux, in which clusters of authorship and authority are continuously built and rebuilt. Equally concerned with this idea of flux is Colin Burnett, who problematizes the notion of fixed authorial vision and worldview in examining the collaborations between film director Robert Bresson and his frequent cinematographer Léonce-Henri Burel. Studying production materials, Burnett theorizes an "intentional flux" in Bresson's work that can account for the historical and social conditions in which individual creators' intentions are negotiated and in which solutions to creative problems are found. Pointing to the "hidden hands at work" in film as well as television and videogames Burnett explodes the concept of intention often assumed as the basis for authorship while paying close attention to the specific choices made by human agents working in social relations. Together, these five chapters push us to understand authorship in terms of shifting social relations, specific contexts, and systems of power.

The second section of the book, **Part II: Contesting Authorship**, builds upon these theoretical interventions to posit authorship as a field of contestation. This means correcting utopian rhetoric about creativity and free expression – particularly in a digital age defined by social media and participatory culture – and engaging in questions of conflict based in ownership, creative constraints, competing claims to authority, and above all, marginalization within the kinds of hierarchies that so often mark the cultures of media authorship. In concert with one another, these chapters examine authorship as something asserted amid the power relations of industry and other social institutions, in which multiple claims to authorship circulate in tension with one another.

Looking at the ways in which contemporary media culture is understood to be a site of co-creativity, participation, and collaboration on the part of consumer-users, Derek Johnson considers the politics of collaboration and asks how the discursive imagination of audiences in those terms reinscribes them and their creative practices within dominant hierarchies and markers of legitimacy. Putting the gendered devaluation of toy/television property *My Little Pony* in tension with claims of authorship surrounding producer Lauren Faust and the franchise's participatory audience, Johnson complements Foucault's notion of the ''author function'' with an ''audience function'' in which certain gendered, sexed, and aged audiences serve as a prop in the process of constructing and imagining authorial legitimacy. Brian Ekdale continues this corrective to the utopian rhetoric of participation, arguing that marginalization and difference persist even when removed from the industrialized realm of Hollywood. Focusing on young producers of non-profit self-representational media in Nairobi slums, Ekdale describes authorship as a battle between creativity and constraint where personal stories are not produced or owned by individuals or communities, but ''constructed at the intersection of individual autonomy, personal histories, existing stories, and circumstances.'' Even in self-representational media, therefore, authorship is something fought for, negotiated out of the constraints of production.

Returning to the commercial realm, Michele Hilmes offers in her chapter a historical examination of how claims of authorship have been attributed and arbitrated in the broadcasting industry by trade organizations such as the Radio Writer's Guild. In addition to its relevance to debates about seriality and writing for broadcast media today, Hilmes' history offers insight into how authorship has been asserted in the face of institutional structures and forms aimed at effacing the work of creativity. In radio broadcasting, she identifies the emergence of what she calls ''streaming seriality,'' in which ongoing production and the lack of a closed, individual text has troubled traditional notions of originality and authorship. Moving from broadcast history to the contemporary moment, Matt Hills explores what he calls discourses of ''counter-authorship,'' wherein competing claims to television authorship emerge in response to industry power relations. Hills argues that ''[a]nalyzing processes of TV authorship in this manner means starting not from the end-product's credits, but rather addressing the

journey whereby a range of authors are effectively written out, or opt out, along the way.'' Offering a case study of the BBC series *Torchwood*, and the authorship claims made by and attributed to figures like ''absentee landlord'' Russell T. Davies, showrunner ''tenant'' Chris Chibnall, and US networks like FOX, Hills suggests that the identities of channels, programs, and author cannot all be aligned without compromise, contestation, and struggle. Closing this section is Ian Gordon's analysis of multiple authorship in comic books, wherein he argues that industry structures have been set up to deny the authorship of figures like Joe Shuster, Jerry Siegel, and Jerry Robinson with moral claims to characters like Superman and Batman, in favor of contractual obligations to other parties. Gordon offers an account of moral authorship, legal limbos, and negotiation over corporately owned resources shared by for-hire labor over long periods of time. In positioning authorship as a site of multiplicity, and offering a detailed account of how rights to authority are assigned, Gordon – like each of the authors in this section – understands media authorship as a site of cultural tension.

While many of the above chapters recognize authorship as a phenomenon made meaningful in and by industrial forces, the third section of the book, **Part III: Industrializing Authorship**, works to push these observations further, focusing on how corporate structures shape and are shaped by authorship. This means that these chapters aim to rethink some of our common assumptions about authorship, rejecting ideas that it might be tied to art free of industrial constraints and that the most commercial of popular culture is not authored in its market-driven purpose. Instead, these chapters put authorship in direct relation to the commodification of culture and the reification of social identities; they situate collaboration as a site of compromise and institutional control; they think about authorship as a kind of identity suited to product differentiation; and above all, they consider authorship as a strategy and practice tied up in commercial and institutional demands.

To open this discussion, Anamik Saha explores how, in the commodification of production by the culture industries, diasporic subjects find their work undermined and their alternative or oppositional narratives of cultural difference reified. Drawing from an ethnography of British South Asian cultural production in the theater, and critiquing works of cultural studies that would divorce study of texts from their context of production, Saha argues that non-white playwrights and theater companies working in the West find their work impeded and subverted in such a way as to demand that we consider those industrial structures as authorial forces in and of themselves. To position *industry as author*, Saha argues that ''the increasingly standardized and rationalized processes of contemporary cultural production limit and restrict creative freedom and that thereby takes on authorial powers in itself.'' Following Saha, Stephen Teo too seeks to understand what happens when cultural production occurs within highly rationalized systems, exploring the work of film director Li Hanxiang in the Shaw Brothers studio system of 1950s and '60s Hong Kong. Unsatisfied with approaches based in either auteurism or collective collaboration and seeking to account for non-Western

modes of cinematic authorship, Teo theorizes Li's erotic films at Shaw not as Romantic authorship, but as Cynical authorship, where Li was no solitary genius, but someone whose authorship was tied up in the ''problem of the system.'' Situating Li's authorship in relation to both studio and generic constraints, Teo's understanding of collaboration marks negotiated compromise not in opposition, but instead as an ''innate element of authorship.''

Moving from film studios to television networks, Catherine Johnson's chapter considers authorship as a site at which conflicts in ownership and authority in broadcasting and television programming are enacted. She sees the branded television channel as a central paratext that, through ''idents'' and other markers, constructs an identity for television programming, authoring it in the process. Authorship, in this sense, is an ''augmentation'' of pre-existing programming and our experience of it – something that shapes it and makes it identifiable in certain ways. By tracing a history of network branding into the cable/satellite era and also into the contemporary moment of digital convergence, Johnson shows how the branding of MTV, FOX, and ITV offers a clear authorial voice and has attracted audiences in service of those networks' commercial needs. Similarly concerned with branding is Lindsay Hogan, who in her chapter examines the ''star machine'' with which Disney has cultivated a stable of young female stars and used them to target ''tween'' audiences. This puts authorship in tension not just with branded corporate identity, but also with branded star texts – the intertextual tensions of which Disney seeks to maintain and manage in their branding practice. Focusing on the discrete motivations and strategies within different subsidiaries and divisions in the Disney empire, Hogan paints a picture of corporate struggle to maintain dominance, figuring that corporate authorship as ''a constant process of meaning production among various groups (or authors) competing for control.'' Corporate hierarchies and brands play a crucial role in Mia Consalvo's chapter as well, where she considers how Square Enix, the Japanese developer of the *Final Fantasy* and *Dragon Quest* videogame franchises, have approached the creation, sales, distribution, and marketing of their product on a transnational level. Consalvo situates corporate authorship not just with globalization, but specifically within a disposition of cosmopolitanism that positions hybrid subject positions as the ideal. This corporate cosmopolitanism, she argues, provides a ''polymorphic vision'' in which games are conceived of as something to be reauthored for different contexts. These critical studies of the institutions of authorship are also complemented by an interview with Ivan Ask with, a producer of transmedia narratives and platforms. This interview gives insight into how authorship might figure into corporate strategy defined by opportunity cost, management principles, architectures, and discourses, and the value of controlling access.

If authorship has been the subject of competing claims and monopolistic seizures, we offer in the fourth section of the book, **Part IV: Expanding Authorship**, a lens through which the boundaries of authorship might be rethought and made to be more expansive. Indeed, if authorship can be considered a kind of hoarding

of creative and cultural authority, this section might be imagined as the reality-TV-style intervention into that oftentimes problematic habit. These chapters each work to bring an inclusiveness and diversity to our recognition of creative contributions in the spaces and work routines of cultural production, often in opposition to auteurism and other dominant discourses of authorship that would deny them. Together these chapters expand the range of sites and practices at which we might look for creativity, authority, and legitimacy. Beyond pointing to new authors, however, these chapters are also concerned with theorizing the creative pleasures of collaboration and putting these in tension with the conflicts highlighted in the Part III of the book. Of particular concern here is the role of the audience, both as a site of interaction and collaboration with professional media workers (and the discourses surrounding them), and as a site of authorial activity on their own.

John Caldwell looks to expand our study of authorship by looking at below-the-line labor of craft and technical workers in Hollywood production cultures, where expressive control and creative identities might be constructed and operate in opposition to those of recognized auteurs at the above-the-line level of writers, directors, and producers. Looking at contracts, industry policies, and practices of paying overworked labor in ''authorial capital,'' Caldwell sees authorship as something dictated by industrial structures but also produced and negotiated through professional rituals and everyday work routines. Considering the claims that workers make to authorship through texts from sizzle reels to tweets, Caldwell considers below-the-line labor as an ''authorship brokerage'' in which workers try to affirm their creative agency even as it is blurred and erased by top-down forces. Caught himself within these forces, professional production designer David Brisbin offers his own perspective on these issues by focusing our attention on one specific site of labor ignored by these traditional above-the-line auteurist claims. But rather than place production design in tension with auteurism, Brisbin notes that ''[e]mbedded in the idea of the *auteur* is shared authorship'' (original italics), figuring the relationship between director and production designer as a marriage. In provocatively suggesting that this marriage often involves directorial affairs with visual effects supervisors, however, Brisbin captures the tensions in these collaborative relationships as new industrial relationships form in response to new technologies, and furthermore, he identifies production design as a site of continued dependence on the part of directors, as they that design can imagine the worlds and spaces increasingly in demand by participatory audiences.

Louisa Stein's chapter follows this possibility to a logical conclusion by placing additional creative agents in the role of collaborator: both actors in the professional realm, and fan audiences in the realm of grassroots cultural production. Examining the cult television series *Supernatural*, Stein explores how its authorship cannot be understood without reference to the social networking platform of Twitter, which has been used both by recurring cast member Misha Collins as a means of performing a particular counter-authorial identity, and by fans to allow them the

ability to participate in the ongoing co-creation of that identity. Stein reads Collins' performance as a marginal site at which fans might be allowed to play, and in doing so, ''the mostly female fans perform and thus author their own fan personae as transgressive, aggressive, and overtly sexual, yet intellectual, digitally skilled, and self-aware.'' Yet Stein complicates this performed authorship by putting it in tension with the disciplinary power of writers and producers, identifying a push and pull between the authorized and the unauthorized in this new frontier of co-creation. The audience also figures as a primary concern for Suzanne Scott, who looks at how the authorial identity of Zach Snyder, director of *Watchmen* and *Sucker Punch*, has been tied up in how audiences are both imagined into and excluded from hegemonic forms of cultural production. Scott identifies Snyder as one of several ''fanboy auteurs'' who is figured to straddle the line between professional producer and amateur fan, negotiating several cultural contradictions in the process. The fanboy auteur, she argues, is a gendered performance that allows the fanboy auteur to ''evade the feminizing stigma of fandom and paternalistic arrogance of the auteur simultaneously.'' In offering a vision of authorship that ''thrives within tensions between the commercial and the subcultural, the mass and the niche, the recognizable and the intertextual,'' Scott's case study explores the new, expanded models of authorship we might consider while also remaining critical of those possibilities. Along with these four chapters come two additional interviews meant to expand the horizons at which we might continue that critical research in the future. The first is an interview with Bear McCreary, a music composer most recognized for his work on television series including *Battlestar Galactica* and *The Walking Dead*. As with Brisbin's chapter, this interview turns our focus to an often ignored category of creative work; but it also puts into relation (and often tension) with authorship the construction of professional identities, the pleasures of working in a collaborative medium, and the dynamics of engaging with fan audiences through blogging and other digital media practices increasingly embraced by media professionals. Megan Sapnar Ankerson's interview with Molly Wright Steenson, a digital studies scholar with a long history of working in the web industries, works to consider authorship in terms of networked creativity. Because web production – whether professional or amateur – involves a significant amount of remixing (whether at the level of code or content), web work at once stretches the limits of authorship while also relying on traditional foundations in intellectual property. The interview thus helps us to understand what web authorship might be, and how it might be located at the level of code, infrastructure, and new communicative forms such as Twitter and Pinterest.

By pointing to the new online spaces in which we might look for authorship, we can transition into the final set of critical interventions made by this book, in that we can conceive of authorship as something to be relocated. The question ''where might we find authorship?'' may seem geographic as much as anything else, in that the spaces in which authorship is considered range from South Asia to North America to Africa. Yet we do not imagine **Part V: Relocating Authorship** as defined

by ''globalization,'' or at least not anymore than in any other part of the book (as we have strived for international and transnational diversity throughout). Instead, this section might be thought of as an attempt to locate authorship outside of the traditional, commonsense bounds of creativity and production culture. To what other spaces – physical or conceptual – might we move our study of media authorship? The chapters in this final section offer a wide range of possibilities – from thinking about media authorship at the site of retail exchange, to the offices of promoters and marketers, to the legal and juridical realm of the nation, to the space of the almighty divine, and self-reflexively to the arena of scholarship itself.

This final section begins with Aswin Punathambekar's examination of the Hindi-language film industry in Mumbai, and the ascendance to power and authority of in-house marketing divisions, public relations firms, and advertising agencies over the past two decades. Although these categories of media labor remained relatively marginal to that industry prior to the 1990s, the rise of new technologies and new media platforms brought with it a shifting set of industrial relations in which these upstart professional fields were able to reposition themselves as centrally important by virtue of their ability to ''facilitate interactions and exchanges among professionals in film, television, and advertising despite what appeared to be incommensurable regimes of value and modes of knowing the audience that defined those industries.'' Crystallizing the relationship between authorship and audience explored in the previous section and elsewhere in this volume, Punathambekar identifies the discursive role of the audience in legitimating new classes of workers and imagining new kinds of authorships and authorities – even for those outside of the creative realm. Dan Herbert makes a similar move, but locates authorship not in the audience per se so much as in the practices of media workers who organize the shelves at independent video stores. In Herbert's analysis, authorship is an organizational category within the retail space that works to position directors as auteurs; the authorship of film directors is thus something operative and disseminated through these commercial spaces as much as the practice of producing the films themselves. As such, Herbert considers the work of video store clerks as a kind of authorship based in making selections and devising ways to organize and make production work meaningful – although, as he also points out, directors such as Quentin Tarantino have subsequently laid claim to the video store as a means of constructing their own authorial identities. In this way, Herbert convincingly positions video store culture as ''co-constitutive of contemporary practices of auteurism.''

Hector Amaya moves the discussion of authorship even further from questions of creativity, individuality, and agency within film, television, or new media production cultures. Instead, he seeks to define authorship in a legal way, ''one that defines authorship as ownership of action that establishes legal responsibility and legitimate authority.'' His case study considers Mexican narcocorridos, hip-hop forms that narrate the lives of drug dealers and have been subject to state censorship out of concern for their normalization of drug violence. Amaya asks

what this censorship tells us about the nation-state, and ultimately concludes that in its affirmative attempts to define juridical and aesthetic forms, censorship acts as a means through which the nation works to author citizenship. But while ''the nation-state authors citizens,'' Amaya suggests that this authorship/censorship fails because our transnational relationships with media are often divorced from a specifically national identity. While Katrien Pype moves to resituate the study of media authorship in relation to discourses of the divine – a move toward cultural authority that some may see as higher than even the nation – she nevertheless returns our examination of media authorship to the place where John Hartley began. Through her participant ethnography of Congolese television serial production, in which she performed herself with CINARC, the most popular performance troop in Kinshasa, Pype explores questions of ownership, originality, and inspiration in improvisational forms, explaining how they were attributed in this context to a sacred and holy force. In her analysis, Pype wrestles with the way that attributions of African authorship by scholars in the West have both reproduced stereotypical perceptions of primitivism and imposed Western concerns and value over that cultural production. Yet instead of presenting this attribution of authorship as the quaint superstition of an Other – or legitimating the idea of authorship from a higher power – Pype allows us to see authorship as something contextual and socially constructed that we can denaturalize in critical scholarship. In concert with the other chapters in this section, therefore, this work encourages us to see authorship as something not inherently tied up in creativity, practice, and individual agency in industrial structures, but rather as something that we have often imagined into being there and in numerous other cultural realms. And finally, an interview with Kathleen Fitzpatrick, a pioneer in the exploration of how digital technology might enhance the production of scholarship, offers a self-reflexive glimpse into how scholarship itself is authored, and how that authorship might change in the future. Advocating for change in the way that scholarship is communicated via emerging communication technologies, Fitzpatrick points to how the production of knowledge is in transition, and allows us to consider how all our claims about media authorship are themselves mediated practices of authorship.

Authoring a Book about Authors . . . With Many Authors

So by way of further scratching the surface of authorship, and putting these questions and conceptual lenses into some practice here before letting the following chapters develop them, let us begin by contemplating this book as authored product, and how it challenges us to consider the politics of collaboration, who ''truly'' is an author, and why this matters.

As an edited collection, not a ''single-author'' tome, the authorship is thoroughly collaborative. And yet even that collaboration is marked by power lines and

hierarchies. As editors, we played a key role in selecting who would contribute, and when receiving first drafts we had the power to call for revisions, with the implicit threat of dropping a contribution if it did not toe a line that we set. Each contributor gave us a first draft, which we then commented upon. Sometimes this process involved suggesting ideas that we felt should be included in the chapters, offering us the chance to add our own voices to their chapters. At other times, we found ourselves disagreeing with a writer's argument, or arriving at different conclusions, which forced us then to determine whether we would like to intervene and insert our authorship more determinedly, or whether to sit back and honor the writer's authorship. This collaborative process of revision was moreover a mediated process of authorship itself, taking place through communication technologies such as email, embedded comments in word processing software, and extending into dialogue on social media platforms. Surely this mediation shaped how our suggestions, intended to be helpful pushes toward productive transformation, may have alternatively read as overbearing or constraining notes from meddling managers. Practically, though, and especially in a field such as academic writing, where one receives little direct remuneration for most written work, we could only ask for so many changes anyway: should we ask for more, an annoyance factor would definitely set in for some writers and they would abandon us. Thus we mention our own ''powers'' not to claim authorship over the constituent chapters here, but instead to point to an interplay. This interplay extended to ourselves, too, as the two of us were never in perfect agreement and would often need to hash out differences of opinions or strategy – again, with the mediation of that process both enabling and constraining resolution.

Wiley-Blackwell, meanwhile, had powers as publisher to set overall word length, to make its own demands with regards to the contributor composition, and as we typed these words, we knew that they could in theory reject them and refuse to print them. We also knew that the their reviewers could similarly play such a role, as it is common for reviewers to request the deletion of entire chapters. What we did not predict was that Wiley-Blackwell would demand that our preferred authorial order for the collection – Derek Johnson and Jonathan Gray – be reversed to the order you now see on the cover. Following submission of the manuscript, on the rationale that Jonathan was the more senior and published author, and hence the one they felt would be more marketable, the press insisted that Jonathan's name should come first. Our editor explained that for a commercial press such as Wiley-Blackwell, marketability was the key consideration in determining authorial order and, thus, who might be perceived to be in a lead position. Our own impassioned arguments that Derek had in fact put more blood and sweat into the editing were not received well, and we were left with the option of sticking with ''Gray and Johnson'' (while inserting this passage here and giving Derek his due by placing his name first for this Introduction) or trying to dissolve our contract with Wiley-Blackwell, and finding another publisher. And thus we witnessed first-hand how attribution isn't just about who did what, as the (perceived) discursive value

of ''Gray'' trumped the greater productive and intellectual value brought to these many pages by Johnson. Instead, in the face of (and arguably constituted by) two completely different logics of attribution, our authorship was as much about a struggle over power, authority, and the politics of intellectual work.

All of our acts of authorship, moreover, occur within an even broader institutional context that dictates what we are likely to say and how we are likely to say it. Senior contributors, for instance, found it easier to agree to write whatever they wanted to, whereas our initial conversations with junior contributors were marked by concerns (theirs and ours) that they had other projects and statements earmarked for peer-reviewed journals or for monographs that needed to take priority, or that they needed to reserve some of their material for such venues. For readers who are not aware, within academia a firm hierarchy of which venues ''count'' more than others exists for hiring and tenure committees (due to commercial considerations such as the one we experienced), and not only are chapters seen to count less than blind peer-reviewed journal articles, but commercial presses are occasionally regarded as less prestigious than university presses. Thus some of our contributors had institutional forces impacting their authorship in serious ways, while other potential contributors' authorship was impacted so forcefully as to ensure it never occurred in the first place.

We are also conscious of the role that distribution will play in authoring this book. Wiley-Blackwell will price the initial hardback release of the book at a rate not conducive to everyday sales or even classroom sales. They also have a certain profile as a publisher. Thus, we have been aware of a likely audience, and have at times written to that audience. Sometime between now and the release of the book, moreover, Wiley-Blackwell will design a cover, one that we will likely have limited ability to contest, and yet one that will play its own role in communicating to audiences what the book is about, and hence in authoring it. As with many acts of authorship, the cover will, whether intentionally or not, make a claim of some kind of authority. The back cover, meanwhile, will list our institutional affiliation and some other books by us, to insist on our authorial heft, and on a specific type of authorial heft (how differently might you feel if those small bios listed us both as having spent fifty years working in Hollywood, for instance, or if they listed us as carnival workers whose other books were collections of jokes about the circus?). At conferences, Wiley-Blackwell will then put it next to other books, thereby suggesting it is such-and-such a type of book. And they will likely send out email notices to announce its publication, and their choice of which mailing lists, who to send notices to, which representative authors they list, and what they say about us will itself play a role in creating ideas of what the book is about. The discourses of authorship created about this book, in other words, will aim to perform what it is and will make numerous claims about its value, meaning, and relevance.

Yet, perhaps you will not be reading Wiley-Blackwell's or our preferred version of the book. Perhaps instead you have a photocopied version of it, or of only some of it, thereby rendering moot the meanings of the cover or of other chapters. If

so, in theory Blackwell (and its corporate parent Wiley) may wish to take steps to protect their and our "authorial rights," since they are (very literally) invested in a certain version of the book, a version that is closely tied to, and fronted by, a specific notion of authorship. In the meantime, though, we could then ask questions about who re-authored the book and how, toward what ends? Why were certain chapters omitted and others featured? Perhaps an instructor with a focused intended use for the book decided to patch together only those chapters that served that use. Perhaps, moreover, those chapters have now been lifted from their "original" context and put in a reader that includes other materials, as the hypothetical instructor has included them in his or her act of authoring another collection.

In sum, our authorship is not just our authorship. It is not now as we write this, it will not be when this book goes to press, nor will it be at any point in the future. If this is the case with an academic book with many contributors, surely it is even more the case with all of the products analyzed by those contributors. When we turn to the products of the media industries, we often see items worked on by hundreds of individuals. Not only will each of these individuals work within constraints set by those above them in power hierarchies, but they will conduct their acts of authorship aware of being surveilled by superiors, potential employers, friends, and so forth. If our acts of authorship in this book are circumscribed while also being performative, so too are theirs, and yet the networks of power, collaboration, and surveillance within which most of them work are significantly more complex and intricate than with this current book. However, just as each modification of authorship to this book forces the question of *why* – why this modification and what purpose does it serve? – and *how* – who has the power to modify authorship, and in what circumstances? – so can and should these questions be asked of the media industries. A great deal could be learned about the power hierarchies and about notions of creativity and value within academia by examining the authorship of this book (see the interview with Kathleen Fitzpatrick in this volume for more discussion of academic authorship), and while that exploit may seem more or less interesting to any given reader, we should *all* care about learning the power hierarchies and notions of creativity and value that surround and support the production cultures of today's media industries. These industries serve millions, hope to serve millions more, generate billions of dollars, and are often some of the key industries in any society. They network considerable power, and their products become, perforce, some of the most prominent, known, and common, communal messages and stories. To ask about their authors is to ask about how these industries work, what they do, how and why they do it, and how and why audiences bother with them.

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Precisely because our authorship is not just ours, we would like to end this introduction by thanking the many people who have authored alongside us. Like

the end of a summer blockbuster, we'd love to let a very long set of credits roll now. Instead, we'll simply say thank you to you all, and single out especially the contributors to this collection, who have been a joy to work with, and who have been consummate professionals, as has Wiley-Blackwell's editorial staff, led by the inimitable Jayne Fargnoli. Jennifer Smith also deserves credit for careful attention given to proofreading and formatting, and further thanks go to our families, our colleagues, and our grad students who willingly batted some of these ideas around with us.

Notes

1 Russ Fischer, "'Cosmopolis' Clip: What, Exactly, is Haunting the World?" *Slash Film* May 3, 2012, http://www.slashfilm.com/cosmopolis-clip-haunting-world/.

2 Dave Itzkoff, "A Film's Superheroes Include the Director," *New York Times* April 11, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/15/movies/joss-whedon-directs-the-avengers.html?_r=1&smid=fb-share.

3 Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 3rd edn (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2008).