**NONFICTION REVIEWS**

*Twin Peaks*, by Julie Grossman and Will Scheibel

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Julie Grossman and Will Scheibel here offer a valuable addition to the TV Milestones series of short, affordably-priced studies of, well, TV milestones (though some may quibble about whether some of the shows selected for study merit that categorization, and one certainly should question the suggestion that most TV milestones are American, given the paucity of non-American shows considered in the series so far). Given that these books are typically short, and reduced further in word count by the inclusion of images, Grossman and Scheibel face a serious challenge. Though the original series consists of only 30 episodes (the pilot plus twenty-nine regular episodes), Grossman and Scheibel unquestionably had also to deal with the prequel movie *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me* (1992), and the series reboot as *Twin Peaks: The Reboot* (2017), consisting of an additional 18 episodes, or Parts, as co-creator David Lynch prefers to define this project as a single work rather than a series of episodes. They have chosen as well to consider various connected works, from the movie version of the pilot (created for European distribution as a stand-alone film and therefore given an ending partly cannibalized for the series proper) to the numerous paratextual tie-ins, mostly books, that the series generated. Since their books consists of only 89 pages of text and two of notes, and since they acknowledge that “the *Twin Peaks* story world invites an exhaustive filling in that produces the illusion of completion; on the other hand, such filling in could be, in theory and perhaps actually, endless” (83), it is unsurprising that, for all of the book’s merits it perhaps leaves as much unsaid as do the various iterations of *Twin Peaks*.

This is not a criticism of this engaging and insightful book, or if it is, it is a minor one. Grossman and Scheibel demonstrate formidable knowledge of *Twin Peaks* and of the critical tradition it has inspired already, deftly referencing a significant amount of previous scholarship without descending into merely repeating what has been said before or overwhelming the reader with citations. Grossman and Scheibel address important questions about the show. Perhaps their most useful contribution to *Twin Peaks* scholarship comes in Chapter 3, “‘I am dead, yet I live’: Femmes Fatales and the Women of *Twin Peaks*.” Lynch’s treatment of women in his work has often inspired criticism, but Grossman and Scheibel ably argue not only for the extent to which women as depicted in *Twin Peaks* are complexly grounded in various filmic traditions (notably film noir)
but are also themselves depicted complexly and with both nuance and sympathy. Grossman and Scheibel are in agreement with the ongoing rehabilitation of the reputation of *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me*, and its focus on Laura Palmer speaking insightfully to its sympathetic depiction of Laura and praising Sheryl Lee's fearless performance. The book devotes a brief chapter to the depiction of three characters, Leland, Dale Cooper, and Laura, all of which are useful, but the one on Laura is a welcome reading of Lee's bravura performance.

Less interesting (to me, anyway) is chapter 5, “Peaks Paratexts: Adaptation, Remediation, and Transmedia Storytelling.” While Grossman and Scheibel make a solid case for how *Twin Peaks* blurs not only generic and formal lines within film but also the lines between different media via the numerous paratextual materials (treated, it would seem, as canon), my own preference would have been for a few more pages of close analysis of the television show. The book grapples from the beginning with the extent to which *Twin Peaks* is seen very much as the work of David Lynch—which is of course significantly strengthened by both the prequel movie and 2017 reboot, all directed by Lynch and cowritten by Lynch—but they also point out that this construction of the show as a “Lynchian’ text” comes “notwithstanding the inherently collaborative nature of television authorship” (10), which this auteurist view tends to overlook. However, the book itself tends to keep the focus primarily on Lynch or the Lynchian aspects of the show. For instance, the bulk of season two passes largely without comment. One might argue that this is justifiable given the generally lower esteem in which much of season two is held, but the book not only presents itself as focusing on *Twin Peaks*, not Lynch, in its title but also explicitly acknowledges that there is more to the show than Lynch. The paratext chapter is the clearest acknowledgement of this, but a deeper look at the non-Lynch and non-Lynchian components of the show itself would have offered a fruitful, because generally less-explored, direction for a chapter.

Nevertheless, this book is an easy read that offers both a useful overview of the show itself and the critical tradition surrounding it, and valuable insights in its own right. Fans of the show should find the style accessible (academic jargon and bafflegab is largely absent), while students and scholars will find both a useful refresher and intriguing lines of inquiry—again, notably in the way women (and the feminine generally) are handled. Recommended for any library with a Film/TV collection, and affordably priced for anyone interested in the show.

**Dominick Grace** is now an independent scholar, after 30 years in the academy. His primary area of research interest is popular culture, especially Canadian SF and comics. He is the author of *The Science Fiction of Phyllis Gotlieb: A Critical Reading*, co-editor of several books, including ones on Canadian comics and Canadian literature of the fantastic, and author of multiple essays on topics ranging from medieval to contemporary literature.