‘prominence’ over the Freudian school since the 1960s (p. 306). In doing this, she also mentions (albeit rather briefly) the ‘ideological tensions and differences’ that have existed between these schools of psychoanalytic thought (p. 328).

Additionally, I was intrigued by Damousi’s argument that psychoanalysis is currently being threatened by what she calls the ‘pharmaceutical revolution in Western societies’ (p. 331). Since the 1980s, she writes, pharmaceutical drugs offering ‘immediate alleviation’ to users have been preferred over the ‘listening method’ that has been a central feature of psychoanalysis (p. 331). Damousi even quotes one analyst as saying that nowadays patients frequently “come for a short time” and ask: “How long is this going to take?” (p. 330) This kind of attitude is reflective of what Stephen Bertman calls a ‘hyperculture’: that is, a culture dominated by the need for quick-fix solutions and instant gratification. Interestingly, Damousi does not explore the link between this hyperculture and the birth of the ‘pharmaceutical revolution’ (and, hence, the potential demise of psychoanalysis). That, however, might be a project for another book.

Overall, *Freud in the Antipodes* is a significant contribution to the fields of psychoanalytic studies and Australian cultural history. Damousi admits early in the text that ‘there remain many untold stories’ about the role that psychoanalysis has played in shaping a variety of cultural forms (including literature and film) in this country (p. 3). That may be true. However, the story that Damousi tells demonstrates the important point that (despite popular assumptions) Freud has certainly left his mark on Australian society.

Jay Thompson
*University of Melbourne*

---


Media historians typically employ one of two methodological frameworks: the ‘top down’ approach where communications law and policy analysis are said to lay the foundations of the communications landscape, or the ‘bottom up’ technique where reception is considered the central influence on media culture. From the rivalry between both camps, one might conclude that the two discourses were mutually exclusive. Exponents of ‘hard’ policy analysis often deride postmodern cultural theorists for producing incidental scholarship. For their part, academics in cultural studies typically charge policy analysts with

---

underestimating the ‘soft’ power resultant from the dialogue they see between the reception and production of popular culture.

Thomas Doherty’s *Cold War, Cool Medium* demonstrates how the two approaches can be reconciled in one seamless text. For Doherty, America’s early television industry emerged as a cultural phenomenon that was simultaneously driven by the forces of commerce and technology and mediated by the nuances of Cold War culture.

The established profile of fifties television is one of a bland and unadventurous medium, a technology hopelessly tethered to post-war conformity. Other television historians, notably Erik Barnouw, have argued that early television was committed to maintaining the kind of cultural homogeneity that largely defined America during the Cold War. According to the existing paradigm then, the development of early television was stunted by nervous sponsors who tinkered with the content of nightly programming to placate the fickle loyalty of consumer/viewers at home.

Doherty revises this familiar portrayal. He uses the established commercial dynamics of the industry to suggest that corporate interests were equally responsible for some of television’s more progressive achievements. Despite the lure of self-censorship, the creative expression encouraged by the technical and stylistic conventions of early television could not be contained. The public’s insatiable appetite for live broadcasts, for example, encouraged a counterpoint to the repressive politics of McCarthyism. Public forums and televised hearings, claims Doherty, ultimately helped undermine the influence of Cold War rhetoric and hasten the downfall of some of the period’s most powerful demagogues, including McCarthy himself. As Doherty writes, ‘to tune in to the television of Cold War America is to see a portrait more textured and multicolored than the monochrome shades fogging the popular imagination’ (p. 18).

According to Doherty, the commercial dynamics of early television also helped further race relations in the United States at a time when the civil rights movement had not yet found conscious allies in mainstream American culture. Fearing reprisals from alienating black consumers and offending powerful organizations like the NAACP, television’s corporate sponsors actually encouraged even-handed depictions of African Americans on T.V. Early television, maintains Doherty, therefore inadvertently helped to bridge race relations in the United States at a time when Hollywood films lagged well behind in their depictions of African Americans. The difference accentuated the widening gap between big and little screen entertainment. Where Tinsel Town sold packaged amusement, television offered viewers an organic medium, shaped and defined by the dialogue between receivers and producers of popular culture. As Doherty puts it, ‘the expansion of freedom of expression
and the embrace of human difference must be counted among [television’s] most salutary legacies. During the Cold War, through television, America became a more open and tolerant place’ (p. 2).

Along the way of making this argument, Doherty also overturns some of television history’s more tenacious myths. According to the author, it was not Nixon or Kennedy who set precedent for the modern visual presidency, but Eisenhower who truly inaugurated the medium for political address. Through Doherty, Eisenhower emerges as a precocious manager of early telegenic appeal.

The book’s powerful insights detract nothing from its entertainment value. Doherty does not spare one trope in the catalogue of poetic devices, and the resulting text is one rich in detail and which yet remains accessible to a broad audience. In addition to its list of achievements, the book also serves as an instruction manual on how to bridge the divide between academic and general readership. Superbly written and brimming with anecdotes that range from the tragic to the hilarious, Cool Medium has earned places on the library shelf as well as on the coffee table.

Ironically, the book’s rhetorical strength exposes its only limitation. At times, Doherty’s discussion may grow too descriptive for some, leaving impatient readers hungry for a more commanding analytic distance in the writing that might help to reign in some of the author’s more sprawling detail.

Academics will no doubt be frustrated by the book’s murky citation style, which does not always clearly distinguish between reference material and Doherty’s own assertions. The author’s rich and obscure references invite readers to peruse his sources, but the job quickly grows tedious as industrious readers are forced to dig through the book’s inefficient note structure.

These criticisms are incidental when weighed against the value of the book as a whole. Already an accomplished and prolific author, Doherty’s latest work ensures that he will make a significant contribution to the canon of television history. Cool Medium is as colorful as the postwar culture it helps us better understand.

Yannick Thoraval
University of Melbourne


Romance novels, loved by thousands and spurned by thousands more, continue to attract a bad press. The recent Romance Writers’ Conference in