



parts of the population. We must be critical of algorithms because they have the bias of the developer built into them and we must work towards systems design that can work towards equality. She believes that willful blindness by some creators leads to a need for a more inclusive technology. The result, she hopes, is for understanding the need to investigate what our technical choices mean.

In the third section, Broussard switches her focus to how technology and humans must work together. She uses the example of a hackathon to explore how technology develops and potentially disrupts society or industry. Her experience on the Startup Bus hackathon showed how technology may or may not develop and the significant work that it takes. Broussard proposes a way forward—namely a collaboration between humans and machines. Machines will be able to handle a lot of mundane work but not the unusual or out of range cases which require human intervention. This approach and these type of systems are called “human in the loop systems.”

She notes several new organizations (AI Now Institute, and Data and Society) which are pressing for responsible

and open computing. Within the AI community, there is nascent understanding that algorithms have been discriminatory and there is a movement to address this. Broussard is raising awareness that technologists and programmers have disciplinary priorities that guide their decisions which at times have obscured the humans that technology is supposed to serve. She concludes that humans are the main point of technology, and the needs of all people, not just a subset, should benefit from the technology that is being developed.

This book is appropriate for the general public, computer science students, librarians, information professionals, and policymakers concerned with the increased presence of Artificial Intelligence in everyday life. Anyone intrigued with ethical implications of Artificial Intelligence or Machine Learning will find this book informative and useful. It could also be used in library and information science programs for courses on Artificial Intelligence.

Monitoring the Movies: The Fight Over Film Censorship in Early Twentieth-Century Urban America

Author _ Jennifer Fronc

Publisher _ University of Texas Press, 2017. 216 p. Hardcover. \$90.00. ISBN: 978-1-4773-1379-4.

Reviewer _ Clay Waters, Masters of Library & Information Studies, University of Alabama.

Censorship is a topic of perpetual relevance, especially in the library field. In *Monitoring the Movies: The Fight Over Film Censorship in Early Twentieth-Century Urban America*, Jennifer Fronc, an associate professor of history at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, surveys the chaotic birth of the popular film industry over the period 1907–1924 and the war over film content during that span.

The chapters are arranged chronologically, retracing the national fight over film content, as various taboo subjects like abortion, white slavery, and racial intermarriage were addressed (or exploited) within the emerging medium. Similar ground was covered by Lee Grieveson in *Policing Cinema: Movies and Censorship in Early-Twentieth-Century America* (2004), the subject of a lengthy note in *Monitoring the Movies*. But Fronc’s work is bolstered by voluminous correspondence from the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures, and the 40 pages of notes (in addition to an appendix, bibliography, and index) signal a comprehensive appraisal of this facet of the Progressive era. Along the way, there are a few light anecdotes,

including one involving a melodramatic film about a railroad strike that featured a scene of a burning trestle, a special effect that meant the film’s costs ran into “many hundreds of dollars” (40).

However, the overriding theme of *Monitoring the Movies* is the running battle between voluntary censorship (a position advocated, predictably, by the emerging movie studios) and official state and local censorship boards. Voluntary censorship’s main advocate was W.D. McGuire Jr., executive director of the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures, formed in 1909. McGuire led a multi-year, multi-front battle for voluntary regulation of films, to hold off mandatory censorship by city and state bodies. “By 1916,” Fronc writes, “with the creation of its affiliated National Committee on Better Films, the NB was functioning as the national chaperone for motion pictures” (5). McGuire understood “National Board’s first principle” to be “protecting motion pictures from political censorship” (44).

Film, the “newest medium of expression” (3) was regarded as a possibly harmful entertainment outlet for the



general public, possibly contributing to the delinquency of the nation's women and children. It was an emerging art form that was not considered any kind of art at the time. That opinion was underlined by a 1915 Supreme Court decision, *Mutual Film Corporation v. Industrial Commission of Ohio*, that ruled First Amendment protections did not apply to motion pictures.

Fronc opens each chapter with a representative movie and the contemporary controversy it engendered, whether over scenes of violent content, racial intermarriage, or "white slavery," i.e., forced prostitution. The introduction, "The Origins of the Anticensorship Movement," begins with a plot summary of *Enlighten Thy Daughter*, a controversial 1917 film which faced calls for censorship for its themes of premarital sex and abortion.

Fronc reveals how reformers targeted not only film content, but the safety of the "nickelodeons" themselves as possibly unsuitable places for women and children to gather, amid concerns of overcrowding and fireproofing, and even worries that celluloid was flammable and thus a possible safety hazard. Yet some reformers approved of the nickelodeons, which in their minds challenged the dominance of the saloons.

Although there was religion-based disapproval of film content, opposition also was driven by Progressive social welfare concerns of the era. Fronc demonstrates that groups like the Women's Christian Temperance Union exercised genuine political power even in the years before women's suffrage, employing what she neatly describes as carrying a "maternalist mandate" (6). Censorship was not always a matter of banning movies; pressure groups like those against animal cruelty would object to specific film scenes, such as the explicit bullfighting portrayals in *Carmen*, which featured the famous actress Theda Bara in the title role (she is also on the front cover of *Monitoring the Movies*).

In 1916 the battle was joined, with the National Board, or "NB," obliged to rebut reports from the General

Federation of Women's Clubs that films contributed to youth delinquency, while promoting its own local branches of the Better Films committees as a voluntary regulatory force. Fronc uses the NB files to flesh out the personality of Louise Connolly, who traveled the South promoting the committees. Connolly was viewed with suspicion as an NB representative: "Virginians remained highly attuned to the perils of regulation from 'carpetbaggers' into the twentieth century . . . [some observers regarded] the NB as nothing more than a tool of the industry" (21).

In the concluding chapter, "Censorship and the Age of Self-Regulation, 1924-1968," Fronc quickly sketches out how McGuire's sudden death in 1923 led to NB's retreat from activism, and how the infamous murder trial of film comedian Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle eventually led to the production guidelines popularly known as the Hays Code. Fronc then skips ahead to a 1965 Supreme Court decision that state censorship boards were a form of unconstitutional prior restraint. Films could no longer be banned by state boards, only rated. Responding in 1968, Jack Valenti of the Motion Picture Association of America devised a voluntary film rating system, a version of which is employed today.

For a book on film, *Monitoring the Movies* is light on images, with 14 small black-and-white photos inserted throughout the text that include only basic identifying captions. The book may have benefited from a more wide-screen overview (to coin a phrase) rather than the tight focus on names and acronyms connected to various pressure groups from the period—especially when fused to a narrative that by necessity jumps around from state to state.

Those caveats aside, Fronc has made a well-researched contribution on a fascinating period of tug-of-war over early films. Film and free-speech historians will find *Monitoring the Movies* a comprehensive analysis of the censorship debate during the Progressive era and would welcome this impressively detailed book on the shelf.

Lust on Trial: Censorship and the Rise of American Obscenity in the Age of Anthony Comstock

Author _ Amy Beth Werbel

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Reviewer _ Christine Schultz-Richert, University of Alabama.

In her work, *Lust on Trial: Censorship and the Rise of American Obscenity in the Age of Anthony Comstock*, author Amy Werbel explores the unintended consequences of the forty-year vice suppression campaign of America's first

professional censor, Anthony Comstock. Equal parts a history of lust in art and a legal history of the cultural importance of the First Amendment, this work offers an inspiring tale of artist-, activist-, and attorney-led revolts against