Jenny Kennedy, **Digital Media, Sharing and Everyday Life**, New York, NY: Routledge, 2020, 140 pp., $108.42 (hardcover).

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Digital Media, Sharing and Everyday Life by Jenny Kennedy looks into the processes of sharing in digital culture and the complexities that arise in them. Drawing on practice theory, this book constructs a theoretical framework of sharing practices in digital culture and answers some fundamental questions, such as: In everyday practices of digital media use, what is sharing and how is sharing mediated? The book illustrates the ways in which sharing constitutes a distinct form of communication in digital culture and explicates the relationship that technology and digital culture both have with sharing.
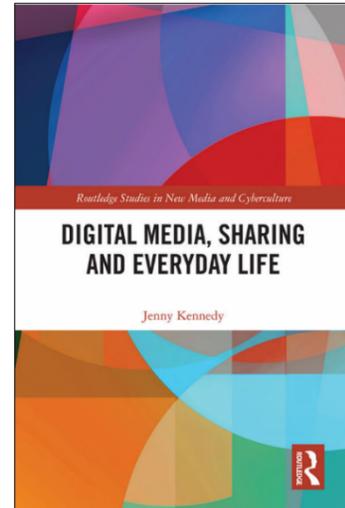
This book is organized into two sections, plus an introduction, where the author presents the subject of study and outlines the book's content. *Sharing* is a term with "intricate and multifaced meanings" (p. 2) that can be defined from social, cultural, economic, and political perspectives. The book takes a sociomaterial approach, focusing on two central themes—the technological context of sharing and the labor of sharing—and aiming to construct a new theoretical framework to describe sharing practices in digital culture through analysis of empirical data.

The first section, including chapters 1–3, reviews existing literature on sharing from different perspectives to situate an understanding of cultures of sharing. Chapter 1 examines the pervasive narratives of sharing in digital culture, clarifying the development of sharing practices. The chapter shows that sharing in early Internet culture was a practice of "developing and maintaining social hierarchies and reputations" (p. 12). It is argued here that social narratives and imaginaries of sharing have been "discursively framed" (p. 18) by various political and economic actors and that the evolvement of sharing as a social norm precedes social media platforms.

Chapter 2 surveys existing theoretical approaches to sharing in the fields of anthropology, sociology, social psychology, consumer research, and economics and identifies the need for a new approach. This chapter traces back sharing to gift-giving to demonstrate that sharing reinforces social relations and stands for "an essential communicative set of practices with social consequences" (p. 19). In order to provide nuanced accounts of sharing practices in digital culture, this chapter identifies three distinct narratives: sharing as an economy, sharing as scaled distribution, and sharing as social intensity. Through the synthesis of literature, it shows that there is still no agreed definition of sharing and calls for a new approach to this field.

Chapter 3 briefly describes the basic tenets of social practice theories and argues for practice-centered approaches to sharing. This chapter shows that there is still much room for improvement in terms of "how sharing is framed theoretically in relation to gift-giving, exchange and reciprocity," and "how sharing is configured as an economic, distributive and social practice" (p. 34). Social practice theories aim to understand the dynamic aspects of social life without "prescribing agency or structure as the organizing force" (p. 35), and hence it fills the need for many scholars to develop understandings of sharing further. This chapter examines the key elements of practices and their arrangements and investigates sharing practices and perception of sharing norms through a qualitative study of everyday uses of social media platforms and networks. Sharing, as a practice, can be recognized by the configuration of symbolic values, materiality, and competencies.

The second section, chapters 4–6, analyzes the empirical data to investigate the practices of sharing in digital culture, with a special focus on the symbolic processes of sharing and its accompanying complexities. Chapter 4 examines the boundaries of disclosure and argues that sharing is an evolving social norm (van Dijck, 2013), which involves constant negotiations around privacy. It looks into participants' sharing practices to see how they perceive, define, and enact boundaries in their social networks. Through the examination of the data, the chapter demonstrates that digital culture intensifies the negotiation of the boundaries of disclosures by confronting the boundary between self and others, privacy and control. Sharing performances are shown to challenge the boundaries of disclosure by means of context collapse, which repositions boundaries of sharing, learning norms of socially acceptable sharing, and reprieve and assistance in pursuit of social connection.

Chapter 5 focuses on reciprocity in sharing, arguing that reciprocity is a necessary "condition of possibility" for sharing (Kennedy & Milne, 2013) and at the same time an important means of "establishing and maintaining social relationships" (p. 108). It explores the expectations and conditions of reciprocity in sharing and examines reciprocity strategies. Sharing is considered "a process that holds expectations of reciprocity" (p. 87). Reciprocity brings others into the exchange and extends the boundaries of communities. It is, therefore, important to acknowledge the centrality of reciprocity in the communication process in order to understand the complexity that "operates beyond the person sharing" (p. 87). Strategies of reciprocity include equivalence of sharing practices, considerations of consequences, and listening. These strategies elucidate the labor of sharing and indicate that acts of anticipation, interpretation, and understanding in sharing require that participants engage in both immaterial and affective labor.

Chapter 6 delves into the interplay between the materialities of technoculture and sharing practices, focusing on how technological affordances are "intimately connected with sharing practices" (p. 108). It stresses the intimacies of technologies in sharing practices and examines key aspects of materiality and technoculture from micro, meso, and macro interpretations of mediated affordances. Materiality of technoculture plays an important role in sharing practices. Sharing in digital culture is mediated by the affordances of interfaces, devices, and networked publics. People rely on contexts and past experiences in negotiating these affordances and hence perceptions of these affordances are "subjectively differentiated" (p. 131).

Overall, this book makes useful reading for media and communication, with insightful descriptions of sharing practices in digital culture and the complexities that arise in them, and with demonstrations of the use of social practice theories in analyzing empirical data that come from participants' everyday use of digital devices, networks, and social media platforms. This book undoubtedly deepens our understanding of the practices of sharing in a networked culture and develops a new feasible approach to this field. Additionally, the style is very accessible not only to experts and students in relevant fields but to more general audiences as well. Admittedly, if the book could provide a conclusion highlighting the major findings and the implications at the end of the book, it might reduce the sense of the book ending somewhat abruptly and hammer home the key points about sharing and digital media the author stresses in the book. Nevertheless, the importance of this book, both theoretical and practical, cannot be overstated. It represents an essential read for scholars and students in fields of media and communication, sociology, new media, and cultural studies.

References

Dijck, J. van. (2013). *The culture of connectivity: A critical history of social media*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Kennedy, J., & Milne, E. (2013). Public privacy: Reciprocity and silence. *PLATFORM: Journal of Media and Communication*, *5*(1), 21–33.