



Critics, Ratings, and Society: The Sociology of Reviews

By Grant Blank

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Critics, Ratings, and Society: The Sociology of Reviews By Grant Blank

How do we make choices in an information-saturated world? Prior studies often assume that the problem is coping with the volume of information. They rarely ask how people judge the validity of new information. But we are all forced to depend on secondary sources that no one has the time or resources to verify. In *Critics, Ratings, and Society* Grant Blank confronts these issues through an investigation of independent evaluations and reviews. Reviews are widespread; they rank products ranging from books and films to automobiles and computers. They are important not just because they influence success and failure of products, they also make or break reputations and careers, and often play a critical role in stratification, power, and status. Reviews are shaped by the interaction of media editors, product makers, and consumers into credible cultural objects. These are processed into two types of rating systems: connoisseurial reviews that depend on the unique skills and experience of a single reviewer, a connoisseur; and procedural reviews that are based on the results of tests, well-defined procedures that allow reviewers to rank groups of similar products. Both rating systems construct hierarchies of products. Blank develops a new theory explaining the circumstances where economic concerns like price are overshadowed by review-constructed hierarchies. When this happens, culture constructs markets. He argues that review-constructed hierarchies are widespread as a consequence of inherent structural characteristics of contemporary capitalism and, as a result, reviews will become more important in the future.

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Editorial Review

Review

In the most extensive treatment to date, Grant Blank uses a comparative study of reviews to analyze the social construction of expertise and the role of gatekeepers in our consumer-oriented society. As a result, we learn a great deal about the production and consumption of credibility and social status. This book is a must-read for sociologists of culture, economic sociologists, and anyone interested in understanding the cultural mediation of the market in advanced capitalist societies. I give it "two thumbs up." (Penny Edgell)

. . . a fascinating interdisciplinary study . . . (Day, Gary *Time Magazine Education Supplement*)

Much to his credit, Grant Blank shows reviews and ratings to be far more important and relevant than they may seem at first sight. . . . Blank's new book is not just a research monograph on critical rating systems. It also seeks to clarify the ways in which credible information is created and received and how reviews and ratings contribute to the creation and maintenance of status distinctions. (*American Journal Of Sociology*)

Grant Blank skillfully and convincingly situates reviews squarely in the nexus of key sociological concerns about status, choice, economics, and culture. *Critics, Ratings, and Society: The Sociology of Reviews* takes us inside the review process to reveal the social organization of the public evaluation of goods and experiences and, along the way, illuminates their significance in everyday life and usefulness in social research... This is a must read for economic and cultural sociologists and for anyone struggling to make sense of the bewildering variety of products and experiences confronting consumers on a daily basis. (Cook, Daniel Thomas)

About the Author

Grant Blank is assistant professor of sociology at American University in Washington DC. His special interests are in the sociology of culture, the influence of computers and electronic networks, and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Paul Hinojosa:

Reading a guide tends to be new life style in this era globalization. With reading you can get a lot of information that will give you benefit in your life. Having book everyone in this world can certainly share their idea. Publications can also inspire a lot of people. Plenty of author can inspire all their reader with their story or even their experience. Not only the story that share in the textbooks. But also they write about the knowledge about something that you need instance. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your children, there are many kinds of book that exist now. The authors these days always try to improve their skill in writing, they also doing some analysis before they write with their book. One of them is this Critics, Ratings, and Society: The Sociology of Reviews.

Bertha Greene:

Playing with family inside a park, coming to see the marine world or hanging out with good friends is thing that usually you might have done when you have spare time, then why you don't try matter that really opposite from that. A single activity that make you not experiencing tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you already been ride on and with addition info. Even you love Critics, Ratings, and Society: The Sociology of Reviews, you are able to enjoy both. It is very good combination right, you still desire to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh come on its mind hangout men. What? Still don't understand it, oh come on its identified as reading friends.

Jane Rippeon:

Your reading 6th sense will not betray you actually, why because this Critics, Ratings, and Society: The Sociology of Reviews guide written by well-known writer who knows well how to make book that can be understand by anyone who also read the book. Written in good manner for you, still dripping wet every ideas and writing skill only for eliminate your own personal hunger then you still uncertainty Critics, Ratings, and Society: The Sociology of Reviews as good book but not only by the cover but also from the content. This is one book that can break don't assess book by its include, so do you still needing a different sixth sense to pick this specific!/? Oh come on your studying sixth sense already said so why you have to listening to another sixth sense.

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