Skinner, John, Gilbert, Keith and Edwards, Allan (eds), *Some Like It Hot: The Beach as a Cultural Dimension*, Meyer & Meyer Sport, Oxford, 2003, Sport, Culture & Society series vol. 3, ISBN 1 8412 6098 3, 206 pp.

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This book argues, as others have before it, that the beach has replaced the bush as the location of the Australian imaginary. It brings together 10 disparate but germane articles, each exploring different aspects of beach culture from Peter Spearritt's magisterial essay on freedom and commerce at the beach to Jeff Lewis's detailed study of the surfer. This book is a useful foil to Douglas Booth's 2001 cultural history *Australian Beach Cultures* in that it picks up themes suggested by Booth and interrogates them rigorously.

The body on the beach is a particularly fruitful area for investigation. Jennifer Webb focuses on the body caught in the liminality of the beach where land and sea meet, where the everyday and the extraordinary intermingle and where we are faced with both our sensual being and potential non-being (that is, death). Other articles on the body look at the changing discourses around sun-tanning and nudity.

Commodification of the beach is another theme explored in depth. The processes of sponsorship have had a commercialising effect on both surfing and surf-lifesaving. While journalists like Miranda Devine might find the study of beach culture insufficiently academic, Australian surfwear companies dominate the billion dollar international leisurewear market, so the beach is no longer just a matter of theoretical interest to cultural studies but also a pressing economic issue for many Australian employees and investors, and so is doubly deserving of research.

One intriguing issue that reading this book raises is how the big surfwear companies (Billabong, Rip Curl and Quiksilver) can avoid the Levi effect where once-fashionable leisurewear loses its cachet and becomes dated. The surfwear companies are caught in a paradox: the more successful they are, the more mainstream they become; and the more mainstream they become, the less fashionable they are.

The media are an important part of the solution to this conundrum as they have been important to the construction of beach culture over the last century. From the Gidget and Beach Party movies, through the soul surfing of *Endless Summer* to the contemporary constructions of surf company marketing videos and *Home and Away*, the media have been suggesting new ways to see and be at the beach. Jeff Lewis's take on the 'Charlie can't surf' scene from *Apocalypse Now*, where Colonel

Kilgore's surf stars have to 'surf or fight', reveals the lack of distance between expressive transgression and imperialist conquest.

Keith Beattie's article 'Radical Delirium: Surf Film, Video and the Documentary Mode' makes a great contribution to understanding the power of the surf film to sell a lifestyle. The pure surf film caught the imagination because it intermingled documentary and avant garde styles. This combination would not have been allowed in a supervised studio system, and was only made possible by the independent production and exhibition of the lone auteur travelling the coast, showing their last film in local halls at night while shooting their next film at the local surf breaks during the day. This is how surf film stayed outside the mainstream while creating its own mainstream and the lessons are there for the surfwear industry to learn.