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Shaheen Shariff. *Sexting and Cyberbullying: Defining the Line for Digitally Empowered Kids.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. (2015). 219 pp. $32.95 (paperback). (ISBN 978-1-107-62517-4)

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BOOK REVIEW / CRITIQUE DE LIVRE

In *Sexting and Cyberbullying: Defining the Line for Digitally Empowered Kids*, we are reminded that adults need to work *with* children to provide stability and to establish clear boundaries of appropriate online behaviours. Drawing from extant literature on bullying / victimization, moral (dis)engagement, constitutional, human rights, and tort laws, Shariff provides a nuanced perspective of cyberbullying and sexting. She convincingly argues that instead of blaming or incarcerating children, adults need to adopt protective and educative responses for children's offensive online communication. Initiating supportive responses that engage children and youth in their development as socially responsible digital citizens requires adults to examine their own assumptions and biases. Guided by her own results from her *Define the Line* (DTL) research with children and youth aged 8-18, the author highlights online fun versus harm, acceptable boundaries of communication, legal liability for online expressions, intentional and unintentional harm, and the ownership of shared content. Throughout the work, she continues to draw the reader back to her main premise, which is that we, as adults, first need to look at ourselves before we judge the online behaviours of our children.

Chapter 1 provides a thorough introduction to Shariff's main thesis and describes how each chapter will combine to generate a multi-faceted understanding of offensive online behaviours and how current legislation and public and school policies require adaptation in order to meet the needs of our children and youth. Chapter 2 develops a foundation for understanding the issue more substantively, drawing from scholarship on sexism, rape culture, and moral development, intersecting current well-publicized cases of cyberbullying and sexting to demonstrate the legal responses that appear "out of touch." Chapter 3 presents her argument against applying criminal law to charge children with the distribution of child pornography when young people are involved with the non-consensual distribution of intimate images. In Chapter 4, Shariff

considers children's culpability and accountability in civil lawsuits and argues how a range of constitutional, tort, and human rights law may provide more protective and educative messages for children. She concludes the book with recommendations for enhancing children and adult's legal literacy, with a focus on how children's literature could be utilized to help children navigate the blurred lines of appropriate online communication. As appendices, she provides a summary of Canadian and U.S. anti-bullying legislation as it pertains to cases of cyberbullying and sexting, details of her DTL research data, a sample workshop to be used for educating undergraduate students on the complexities of cyberbullying and sexting, as well as a potential course and reading schedule for a university-level course on public policy, law, and digital media.

The strengths of this book lie in Shariff's ability to interpolate the evidence from her own DTL research into her recommendations for changes in perspective. She calls for adults to examine their views, both individually, and collectively on a policy and legislative level. She cautions adults against criminalizing children and youth's online behaviours without considering the prevailing socio-cultural mechanisms that have shaped their development, such as sexism, rape culture, and negative adult role models. In situating these online behaviours within wider sociocultural, historical, and political discourses, Shariff pushes the current preoccupation of bullying / victimization literature from a predominantly individualized treatment of children's behaviour to a perspective that examines the role played by power-laden socialization processes that are pervasive within society. This focus on the contextual, in addition to the individual, is a welcome perspective to bullying / victimization literature, as it encourages readers to think beyond pathologizing children as "victims" and "perpetrators," and criminalizing those who deviate from "blurred" norms of conduct. Her perspectives of sexting and cyberbullying are further articulated through her recommendations for preventative and reactive responses that are both supportive and educative for digitally empowered children and youth.

Throughout her work, Shariff provides several clear explanations for academic terms, most particularly in Chapter 2. However, at times, her delineations among complex legal jargon, court processes, and rulings may reduce the accessibility of her work to wider populations. Other critiques would include her final chapter (on how children's literature could be used to help digitally empowered children and youth navigate their online identities and communication behaviours), which was promising but comparatively underdeveloped, potentially reducing the utility of this book for practicing elementary / secondary teachers and adult caregivers. Additionally, her treatment of the role of parents in helping children and youth become responsible digital citizens was underexamined, as most of her practical recommendations were directed toward school policy and programming, teacher education, and legal responses. Suggestions for parents could have featured in the final chapter, as there are strong associations among positive home-school partnerships and children and youth's pro-social development.

Despite these limitations, this book is highly recommended to anyone who is interested in the complexities of children and youth's online communication, especially how the courts and public and school policies are currently balancing notions of free expression, safety, and supervision, while avoiding censorship and harsh punishment. This book is particularly useful for post-secondary students and teachers, researchers, and law professionals. For instance, from my own experience in working as an instructor in a faculty of education, teacher candidates are desperate for knowledge about cyberbullying policies and best practices for prevention and intervention. This book serves as a valuable resource to support the professional development needs of teachers-in-training. Additionally, Shariff's work also contributes a comprehensive perspective on sexting and cyberbullying as informed by a sociocultural lens. Given that research on children and youth's online behaviours is still in its infancy, Shariff's nuanced treatment of this issue will provide an important foundation for future scholarly work.

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