

- Sarah Hagelin and Gillian Silverman. *The New Female Antihero: The Disruptive Women of Twenty-first-Century US Television*. U of Chicago P, 2022. \$95 clothbound, \$26 paperback. 288 pp.

Watchers of the BBC's television series *Killing Eve* know that, even with both MI5 and MI6 agents at the helm, the show's most compelling character was the villain, Villanelle (played by Jodie Comer). By the end of the series, there was arguably no difference between the assassin and the sleuths who pursued her. Although Sarah Hagelin and Gillian Silverman's *The New Female Antihero* is about American television and thus not about *Killing Eve*, it understands that ours is an age of disruptive women. The antihero is having her moment, Hagelin and Silverman argue, but they remind us that the female hero has always been "an oxymoron": "women are not expected to rescue society," but rather "demonstrate its values and commitments" (2–3). The heroic has traditionally been a category better suited to men. Female characters have thus always had one foot in the "transgressive category of the anti-hero" (3).

Hagelin and Silverman, however, are noticing a trend over the past 10 years that goes beyond transgression. Historically, women on TV have "fulfilled a pro-social function: they bring people together; they smooth interactions; they domesticate the foreign or unfamiliar" (203). Even as female sleuths have always been disruptive, they also often fulfill the pro-social function of restoring a kind of order. *The New Female Antihero* zeroes in on women who don't. These characters don't want it all; they "reject the responsibility of shepherding broken men and a beleaguered economy into the 21st century," and they might, instead, want "raw naked power . . . or even worse, absolutely nothing" (xii). This is not a