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If the first thread in the book could be described as theoretical explorations of the politics of metrics, a second important thread could be defined by empirical investigations of self-tracking cultures. Here, Lupton and Smith’s (Chapter 4) interview-based study of self-trackers in Australia anchors a series of studies grounded in the theoretical concerns mentioned above, but also working to understand how social actors use self-tracking technologies to reimagine their own embodied autonomy and identity. While self-tracking practices enact new ontologies for their users, they also reflect emerging epistemologies of the self. The chapters by Christiansen et al. (Chapter 6) and Danesi et al. (Chapter 7) capture this ontology/epistemology relationship nicely. The former examines self-knowledge produced by self-trackers about their own health that is both experimental and counter-posed to official forms of medical knowledge (for better or worse). The latter also details the ways knowledge made accessible by real-time self-testing technologies can change the everyday experience of, for example, people living with diabetes. In this sense, the empirical chapters in this collection approach the concept of culture in a way that has been popular in sociology and anthropology for the past few decades, as strategies of action for negotiating everyday life. These strategies can be more or less effective, as Didžiokaite et al. (Chapter 8) discuss in their study of dieting apps, or as Fage-Butler’s (Chapter 9) study of sleep apps concludes. What is clear, however, is that engagements with self-tracking technology can change how social actors see themselves and others by encouraging everyday strategies that exacerbate existing forms of competition or inequality. The two chapters on education are good examples of this effect, as Chan et al.‘s (Chapter 10) discussion of academic metrics describes a reorientation of scholarly work, and the secondary students interviewed by Staples (Chapter 11) describe the effects of self-track ed grade-books that are “pushed” onto students who have no choice about whether to use them.

The overall effect of reading this collection and connecting these threads accomplishes the likely goal of the project, which is to present a cross-section of metric culture research that has the breadth of a diverse range of empirical studies and a theoretical depth that emphasizes just how important datafication and dataveillance are in contemporary social life. The collection does have some limitations, however. Few of the chapters discuss the unequal impacts of data-driven surveillance for racialized communities or other disempowered groups. Thus, there is little discussion of the relative affluence and privilege of the self-tracking community, especially the quantified-self movement. This seems like a missed opportunity because there is an interesting reciprocal relationship with this community and the drivers of surveillance capitalism, including but not limited to the aggressive self-tracking embedded in “tech-bro” culture. There is also an interesting but unevenly discussed undercurrent in many of the chapters related to the labor of self-tracking, especially as it relates to broader the political themes of biopower, control, responsibilization, and capitalism. Taken together, however, the chapters do a good job of charting a field of research that will only continue to grow. The novelty of some of these self-tracking technologies means that discussions are occasionally more descriptive and in a couple of cases quasi-celebratory in tone, but this is wholly appropriate for a collection like this. Overall, Metric Culture is thought provoking and a valuable contribution to an emerging field.