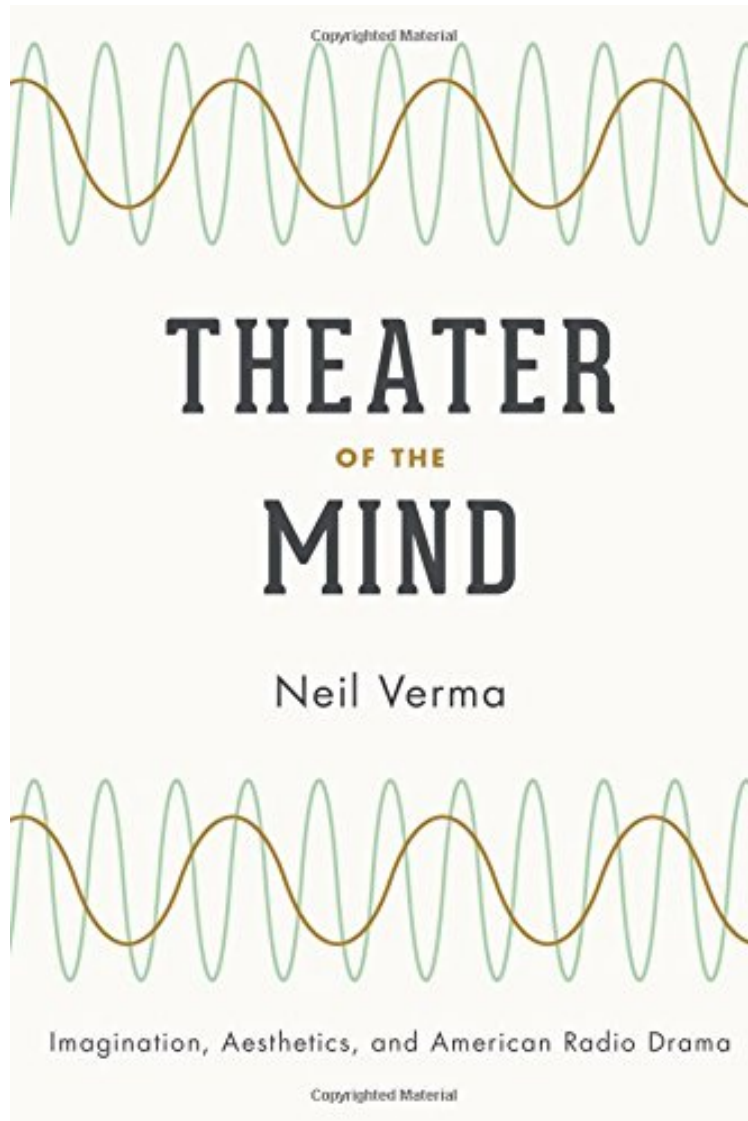


# Theater of the Mind: Imagination, Aesthetics, and American Radio Drama

Neil Verma

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**Neil Verma : Theater of the Mind: Imagination, Aesthetics, and American Radio Drama** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Theater of the Mind: Imagination, Aesthetics, and American Radio Drama:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Theater of the Mind a great book to read By R. Swain Neil Verma has written a comprehensive account of the history of the Golden Age of Radio with revealing detail. Anyone who is

interested in the fascinating history of radio drama before television and block-buster movies began to mesmerize audiences will love this well-researched account. As an early radio history buff, I found many new facts that I wasn't aware of on this subject. The illustrations and charts that the author includes helps to show that radio's golden era can be subdivided into periods of time based upon what was happening in American society and the world in general. I found Theater of the Mind (and "from the mind" and "for the mind" as the author explains) a fascinating read.<sup>2</sup> of 2 people found the following review helpful. Great insight, but a little too academic at times  
By Nick Palmer  
As a longtime fan of old radio shows, I was thrilled to come across this book. There's plenty of books on the history of radio, but I've had trouble finding any writing on the topic that addresses it seriously as an artform. Verma's book really digs deep, examining the evolution of radio storytelling in an intelligent and well-argued way, filled with specific examples that have changed the way I hear some of my favorite programs. At times it can be a bit too academic, but overall I found it to be a compelling read.

For generations, fans and critics have characterized classic American radio drama as a theater of the mind. This book unpacks that characterization by recasting the radio play as an aesthetic object within its unique historical context. In Theater of the Mind, Neil Verma applies an array of critical methods to more than six thousand recordings to produce a vivid new account of radio drama from the Depression to the Cold War. In this sweeping exploration of dramatic conventions, Verma investigates legendary dramas by the likes of Norman Corwin, Lucille Fletcher, and Wyllis Cooper on key programs ranging from The Columbia Workshop, The Mercury Theater on the Air, and Cavalcade of America to Lights Out!, Suspense, and Dragnet to reveal how these programs promoted and evolved a series of models of the imagination. With close readings of individual sound effects and charts of broad trends among formats, Verma not only gives us a new account of the most flourishing form of genre fiction in the mid-twentieth century but also presents a powerful case for the central place of the aesthetics of sound in the history of modern experience.

**\*\*Winner of the Best First Book Award from the Society for Cinema Media Studies\*\***