Academic book review

Academic book review should consist of the following parts:

**Introduction.** All good pieces of academic writing should have an introduction, and book reviews are no exception. Open with a general description of the topic and/or problem addressed by the work in question. Think, if possible, of a hook to draw your readers in.

**Summary of argument.** Your review should, as concisely as possible, summarize the book’s argument. Even edited collections and textbooks will have particular features intended to make them distinctive in the proverbial marketplace of ideas. What, ultimately, is this book’s raison d’être? If there is an identifiable thesis statement, you may consider quoting it directly.

**About the author(s).** Some basic biographical information about the author(s) or editor(s) of the book you are reviewing is necessary. Who are they? What are they known for? What particular sorts of qualifications and expertise do they bring to the subject? How might the work you are reviewing fit into a wider research or career trajectory?

**Summary of contents.** A reasonably thorough indication of the research methods used (if applicable) and of the range of substantive material covered in the book should be included.

**Strength.** Identify one particular area in which you think the book does well. This should, ideally, be its single greatest strength as an academic work.

**Weakness.** Identify one particular area in which you think the book could be improved. While this weakness might be related to something you actually believe to be incorrect, it is more likely to be something that the author omitted, or neglected to address in sufficient detail.

**Conclusion.** End your review with a concluding statement summarizing your opinion of the book. You should also explicitly identify a range of audiences whom you think would appreciate reading or otherwise benefit from the book.

Remember, academic book review is an analytical piece of academic work. It is not equivalent to book summary.