



Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet: New Essays

Karen Hellekson (Editor) , Kristina Busse (Editor) , Francesca Coppa (Contributor) , Abigail Derecho (Contributor) , Catherine Driscoll (Contributor) , Liz Woledge (Contributor) , Mafalda Stasi (Contributor) , Deborah Kaplan (Contributor) , more... Ika Willis (Contributor) , Angelina I. Karpovich (Contributor) , Eden Lackner (Contributor) , Barbara Lynn Lucas (Contributor) , Robin Anne Reid (Contributor) , Louisa Stein (Contributor) ...less

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Fans have been responding to literary works since the days of Homer's *Odyssey* and Euripedes' *Medea*. More recently, a number of science fiction, fantasy, media, and game works have found devoted fan followings. The advent of the Internet has brought these groups from relatively limited, face-to-face enterprises to easily accessible global communities, within which fan texts proliferate and are widely read and even more widely commented upon. New interactions between readers and writers of fan texts are possible in these new virtual communities. From *Star Trek* to *Harry Potter*, the essays in this volume explore the world of fan fiction--its purposes, how it is created, how the fan experiences it. Grouped by subject matter, essays cover topics such as genre intersection, sexual relationships between characters, character construction through narrative, and the role of the beta reader in online communities. The work also discusses the terminology used by creators of fan artifacts and comments on the effects of technological advancements on fan communities. Instructors considering this book for use in a course may request an examination copy [here](#).

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From Reader Review Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet: New Essays for online ebook

Emily Murphy says

Note: All of these ratings are on a scale of 1-10, 10 being the best.

Quality of Writing: 4

This book felt like I was reading the essays of a precocious undergrad who used big words like "rhizomatic" to sound intelligent. Yes, the essays were intelligent, but I think the most quality writers are those who can use that intelligence for something other than its own rawness, like humor or pith.

Pace: 3

Being a collection of academic essays, it's no page-turner. In fact, while reading it, I'd often want to put it down. However, the length of each essay is perfect - just enough to build a good point, but not enough to beat the horse to death or to bore me.

Plot Development: 5

This is the overall argument development for each essay. Since fan fiction studies are in the humanities, it's hard to have a concrete argument to make. Some manage to argue their point very well (Woledge's "Intimatopia" comes to mind), while others just seem to describe a phenomenon without making any sort of point (Stein's "This Dratted Thing"). So, it balances out to a five.

Characters: 8

In this book, I could see the "fans" in general as characters. And I feel I got a new perspective on fans and fan culture by reading this book. I never realized how many different kinds of fans there are (the dressing up kind, the fan fiction kind, the livejournal kind...). So now I have a new appreciation for that subculture and its nuances.

Enjoyability: 2

I like fan fiction as much as the next fan. By that same token, I dislike academic essays just as much as the next fan. I feel as though the authors are making a big deal about something that, to me, is just a leisure activity (I'm not a fandom-is-a-way-of-life type). I'd rather go read a fan fiction than read about fan fiction.

Insightfulness: 4

Like I mentioned with characters, I learned a lot about fans in general. I also learned about fan communities in the early 2000s (my participation has mostly been in the 2010s). However, that being so, a lot of the arguments made and the predictions posed were outdated, and thus less useful than they could have been. It's interesting as a part of history, maybe, but not for its original intended purpose.

Ease of Reading: 3

They're all academic essays. Not the toughest essays, and not on the most vague topics, but still not for the faint of reading.

Photos/Illustrations: 1

One essay had screenshots, so I feel I have to give this category a number. I wish more of the essays had screenshots, if they had the ability to do so. I'm not familiar with Livejournal and would like a visual. It took me halfway through the essay specifically on Livejournal to figure out what the format was, and that I had

been picturing it wrong for all the other essays. The screenshots that were there were small and grainy. So no points here.

All of this averages to a 3.75/10, giving it a 1.9/5, hence the 2-star rating.

Annie says

Maybe I'm not that into literary critique and more into sociological analysis: some of the articles seemed a bit poor on analysis. Furthermore, the book was published ten years ago and it lost its actuality. Nevertheless, some good things (I liked the piece on intimatopia and the one on writing for queer children felt very important to me).

Anna says

When I found this book on the library shelves, I was immediately interested and grabbed it to take along on my holiday. I was hoping for something that would add to my knowledge of online communities (one of my major interests). I do read fan-fiction on occasion and have been known to dabble in writing it, but I've never been part of the communities of writers and readers this book promised to investigate, and so I approached it as if I were planning to pop to the next town over and see what was different from my own.

I admit I wasn't as engaged in this book as I had hoped to be when I picked it up. That said, I would have read this book for Ika Willis' piece, "Keeping Promises to Queer Children: Making Space (for Mary Sue) at Hogwarts", if nothing else. The essays on slash and OTP writing were thought-provoking, as well. Where I had a hard time maintaining interest was in the historical and mechanical treatments of the topic, which, to be fair, deviated from the reasons for my interest in the book in the first place.

Members of fanfic communities will appreciate that the authors are academics but also fanfic writers themselves, and that they make a point to avoid acting as if their treatments are purely academic. Essay authors refer to their own works, their OTPs and favorite genres, and discuss their own experiences with the communities they're writing about.

Karen-Leigh says

A book about fan fiction which contains references to many stories I have read and enjoyed, many writers whose names are familiar to me. Detailed essays about specific fandoms I am interested in and follow. History of the fandom that I lived through from its internet beginnings to date. Some essays were a bit esoteric and bored me but for the most part I found them fascinating.

Mai says

Not all the essays in this book are equally good but it was a fantastic resource for my dissertation on fan culture. Derecho's essay alone is worth the tenner I paid for the ebook. Not sure I'd recommend it as a primer

for beginners in fan studies, but if you have any experience in the area at all, whether as a fan or a scholar, you're sure to find this book interesting.

Elisabeth says

Lots of good research and good ideas, though definitely written for the academic - the language can get dense. Some ideas were new to me - I particularly enjoyed the discussion of intertextuality in both fanfic and conventional literature, and the concept of intimatopia. There are a couple of odd statements that seem to collapse fanfic with slash, its most popular subcategory: the assessment that all stories are either porn or romance doesn't apply to fic in general but might be said to apply to slash, and the presentation of intertextuality would apply equally well to the supercategory though only the sub is analyzed. Overall, an interesting if challenging read.

However I did skip the chapter on videogame fandom.

Nara says

Heavily on the academic side of fan studies, to the point of lay incomprehensibility in several of the articles. But when it's good, it's good, and it's doing some thinking that I haven't seen done before. The scholars represented are excellent thinkers who are thoroughly grounded in the community they are studying and have what is in some cases remarkable insight into how it works and what it does.

Mireille Duval says

I picked this up as research for an essay on feminism and fandom. I liked it, though my degree of interest varied a lot. The first section was my favorite, and I loved the Brief History of Media Fandom. The literary analyses didn't work for me, it felt too academic and it was less interesting when you didn't know the stories (also, the one analyzing her own fic was a bit sketchy for an academic essay). All in all, even though it's already a little dated, it's a great read if you like to analyze fandom, to know where it comes from and what it can do.

Clare says

This short review is also posted with a link to information about slash on my blog at <http://inputs.wordpress.com/2008/12/0...>

Quite interesting with some useful if rather rushed definitions of some of the jargon used by fan fiction writers in the introduction. A large proportion of the articles in this edited collection are about slash.

Slash represents, in terms of volume, the smallest section of fan fiction but it is one that academics gravitate towards with a passion - all that transgression and interesting deviance to wax theoretical over!

Anthony Salazar says

Though the essays become repetitive after the first few chapters, this book was interesting as it opens the mind to introductory concepts of fan fiction in a clear, cohesive way.

Jennifer says

A set of essays about fan fiction--the first I've seen published since the general fandom shift to Livejournal, which made it valuable for that alone! There were two or three essays that were awesome, and another two or three that were interesting, and then two or three that made me roll my eyes--that's a pretty good proportion for a set of essays on pop culture. The discussion of roleplay journals on Livejournal was fascinating, and overall the essays that look at how LJ has changed the dynamics of fandom (I don't really agree with the common blanket assertion that it's fragmented it, but none of the essays are that glib about it either)are really fascinating.

Highlyeccentric says

This was a quick re-read of about half of the articles - I revisited ones I'd liked before and ignored the rest. The essay on 'archontic literature' remains brilliant, and I'm astounded I've survived this far without citing it.

Andrea says

Un conjunto de ensayos muy interesantes. Se aborda el tema del fanfiction desde distintas perspectivas y se intenta aportar nuevos conceptos teóricos menos restrictivos. Eso sí, tal como explican en la introducción, las conclusiones de los ensayos están lejos de ser generales y en ocasiones, parecen demasiado específicas a partes muy concretas del fandom. Pese a todo, es una lectura que ayuda a ampliar el enfoque en el estudio de este fenómeno, que ha estado siempre muy monopolizado por las ideas de Jenkins.

John Carter McKnight says

Terrific anthology focusing on contemporary fan spaces, particularly LJ. Very strong set of entries, all with new and valuable additions to the field. Blend of fanfic as text and as performance within community: good material for literary studies as well as anthro folks.

Rd says

An excellent look at Internet based fandom from multiple viewpoints. I came away with a better

understanding of how and why I interact with fandom myself. The only reason I can't give it five stars is because the academic language that was often used was difficult for me to understand at times. However, if fandom is a topic of interest for you I highly recomend this book.
