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Introduction

New Directions in Fan Studies

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The current era of fan studies is typically marked by the publication of Henry Jenkins's (1992) *Textual Poachers* and Camille Bacon-Smith's (1992) *Enterprising Women*. Both books explore the subculture(s) of media fans, revealing the richness, complexity, and meanings of fan activities in important new ways. Since that time, fan studies has exploded as a vibrant, interdisciplinary, and cross-national focus of inquiry. Intersecting audience studies, media studies, and consumption studies in ways that advance all three areas of inquiry (as well as others), recent studies of fans and fandom force us to rethink key questions of identity, performance, practice, genre, gender, sexuality, self, affect, race, ethnicity, and nationalism.

The articles in this issue represent significant advances in fan studies to date. Matt Hills ("Patterns of Surprise: The 'Aleatory Object' in Psychoanalytic Ethnography and Cyclical Fandom") focuses on overlooked patterns of consumption in fan studies. Through psychoanalytic case study analysis, he introduces the notion of cyclical fandom to explore new questions of fans' self-discovery and self-transformation through media consumption. Drawing on earlier foundational work by Wolfgang Iser and Herbert Marcuse, Cornel Sandvoss ("One-Dimensional Fan: Toward an Aesthetic of Fan Texts") explores the relationship between text and fan in micro and macro contexts. Arguing that fan studies have undertheorized the actual act of reading, Sandvoss juxtaposes the concepts of polysemy and neutrosemey to analyze key differences between literary and fan texts and readings. Jonathan Gray ("Antifandom and the Moral Text: Television Without Pity and Textual Dislike") explores textual dislike and antifans' engagement with discourses of morality through analysis of an online TV discussion Web site. Arguing that antifans' identities, community interactions, and (dis)pleasures can be just as nuanced and complex as those of fans, Gray explores what might be called the "darker" side of media fandom. Will

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Brooker's investigation of the Lewis Carroll Society of Great Britain ("'It Is Love': The Lewis Carroll Society as a Fan Community") reveals nuanced similarities and differences between popular and high culture fandom in terms of issues such as fan practices and performances, cultural power, self-understandings, and relationships to "legitimate" arenas of knowledge production. Melissa C. Scardaville ("Accidental Activists: Fan Activism in the Soap Opera Community") explores the distinction between active fans and activist ones, providing new insight into the thoughtfulness and rationality of such activity and behavior. Her work serves as corrective to the established history of organized TV fandom by comparing daytime versus primetime industries and reminds us of the continuing importance of genre to fan identities and practices. Finally, our own contribution ("Global Television Distribution: Implications of TV 'Traveling' for Viewers, Fans, and Texts") addresses viewership and fanship in a global context, drawing on the "traveling theory" of global television to examine the role of distribution practices in transforming our understandings of TV viewers, fans, and texts.

In short, these contributions challenge established scholarly and common-sense notions of fandom as enduring (Hills's cyclical fandom), as enabled by textual polysemy (Sandvoss's neutrosemy), as reflections of textual like/love (Gray's antifandom), as entrenched in the popular (Brooker's literary fandom), as apolitical or prepolitical (Scardaville's fan activism), and as rooted in industry practices of production and consumption (our look at media distribution). The authors write from a variety of academic disciplines and draw on a range of theoretical and methodological approaches, from psychoanalysis to industrial capitalism and from case study to participant observation. Although this special issue is titled "New Directions in Fan Studies," these articles make important contributions to cultural studies, audience studies, television studies, and media studies more generally.

We would like to thank Laura Lawrie, managing editor of *American Behavioral Scientist*, for the opportunity to edit this special issue on fan studies. We also thank each of the authors, with whom it has been a genuine pleasure to work.

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