Introduction

Why Still Study Fans?

CORNEL SANDVOSS, JONATHAN GRAY, AND
C. LEE HARRINGTON

"Most people are fans of something"—with this assertion we began
the first edition of this anthology in 2007. Today, following continued
technological, social, and cultural changes, fandom is an even more com-
monplace experience. The proliferation and simultaneous transformation
of fandom are well illustrated, for instance, by the emergence of "fan" as
a common description of political supporters and activists. Shortly after
the first edition of this volume was published, Barack Obama's primary
campaign illustrated the capacity of grassroots enthusiasm through the
now-existent infrastructure of social media (combined with the effective
management of mainstream media) to transform his outsider's bid into
a two-term presidency. Much of what set Obama's 2008 campaign apart
from its predecessors were the enthusiasm, emotion, and affective hope
that his supporters, voters, *fans* invested in that campaign.

Much has happened since the celebrations of Obama's election
in November 2008. In the world of entertainment, streaming is now
a commonplace route to access music, television, and film for many
households across the world. The acceleration of the shift from physi-
cal media to digital distribution channels has created new incentives
for telecommunication providers and online retailers to gain control-
ling stakes in content rights and production, echoing similar efforts of
media hardware manufacturers in the 1980s with the arrival of home
VCRs. DVD rental turned streaming service Netflix and online retailer
Amazon are creating and/or co-funding serial fan objects from *House
of Cards* to *The Man in the High Castle* at increasing rates, and Netflix
regularly resurrects canceled or former fan-favorite programming. In

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Britain, former state monopoly telecoms provider BT was so concerned by Rupert Murdoch–owned Sky's push into its domain of landline and Internet service provision that it acquired extensive soccer rights for the UK market as a response, pushing the value for domestic Premier League TV rights past seven billion dollars for 2016–19 (BBC 2015). These examples illustrate how the unparalleled availability of mediated content and entertainment via digital channels combined with the difficulties to monetize content in digital environments have put fans at the heart of industry responses to a changing marketplace.

As a consequence, representations of fans in mainstream media content have at times shifted away from pathologization to a positive embrace of fans' vital role for contemporary cultural industries, and are now commonly part of the narratives that constitute the textual fields of (trans)media events from the cinematic release of the latest *Star Wars* installment to global sporting events such as the Olympics. "We're all fans now" has become a familiar refrain in countless popular press think pieces, and was even the marketing slogan for the fifty-second Grammy Awards in 2010. And (a very particular form of) fan banter and identities have even been central to one of the most successful and lucrative television shows of the past decade, *The Big Bang Theory*, while *The Walking Dead*'s aftershow featuring fan debriefing of the night's episode, *Talking Dead*, often out-rates many otherwise hit shows. Yet with these changing and proliferating representations of fandom, a crucial point of reference to (early) fan studies has shifted, too.

Three Waves of Fan Studies Revisited

In the introduction to our first edition, we divided the development of the field of fan studies into three waves with diverging aims, conceptual reference points, and methodological orientations. The first wave was, in our reading, primarily concerned with questions of power and representation. To scholars of early fan studies, the consumption of popular mass media was a site of power struggles. Fandom in such work was portrayed as the tactic of the disempowered, an act of subversion and cultural appropriation against the power of media producers and industries. Fans were "associated with the cultural tastes of subordinated formations of the people, particularly those disempowered by

any combination of gender, age, class, and race" (Fiske 1992: 30). Within this tradition that was foundational to the field of fan studies and that spanned from John Fiske's work to Henry Jenkins's (1992) canonical *Textual Poachers*, fandom was understood as more than the mere act of being a fan of something: it was seen as a collective strategy to form interpretive communities that in their subcultural cohesion evaded the meanings preferred by the "power bloc" (Fiske 1989). If critics had previously assumed fans to be uncritical, fawning, and reverential, first-wave scholarship argued and illustrated that fans were "active," and regularly responded, retorted, poached. Fan studies therefore constituted a purposeful political intervention that set out to defend fan communities against their ridicule in the media and by non-fans.

In its ethnographic orientation and often advanced by scholars enjoying insider status within given fan cultures, the first wave of fan studies can be read as a form of activist research. And thus we referred to this wave as "Fandom Is Beautiful" to draw parallels to the early (and often rhetorically and inspirationally vital) stages of identity politics common for other groups hitherto Othered by mainstream society. Similarly, early fan studies did not so much deconstruct the binary structure in which the fan had been placed as they tried to differently value the fan's place in said binary: consumers not producers called the shots. As such, and in this defensive mode of community construction and reinforcement, early fan studies regularly turned to the very activities and practices—convention attendance, fan fiction writing, fanzine editing and collecting, letter-writing campaigns—that had been coded as pathological by critics, and attempted to redeem them as creative, thoughtful, and productive.

The underlying advocacy of first-wave fan studies derived its legitimacy from fans' assumed disempowered social position and their problematic representation in both public and academic discourses. Mass media of the time had a near monopoly on the representation of fans (or any other group for that matter). Their often stereotypical portrayal of fans and fan practices has been widely documented and discussed since Joli Jensen (1992) highlighted the similarities in the portrayal of fans as part of an undifferentiated, easily manipulated mass in media representations and early mass communication scholarship (see, for example, Bennett & Booth 2016; Duffett 2013; Hills 2002; Sandvoss 2005). In 2007

we examined how such representations were still common, as in a *New York Post* spread on "Potterheads," which, like many other media representations before, constructed fans as the representational Other. Such negative representations can still be found—on occasion even at the hands of those engaged with the field of fan studies, such as academic and filmmaker Daisy Asquith's documentary for the British Channel 4 network *Crazy about One Direction*. Participant and One Direction fan Becky reported her dismay at what she perceived as the gross misrepresentation of her fan practices and attachments: "they made out like . . . I don't have no life, and that I just sit outside Harry's [Style, member of One Direction] house every weekend waiting for him to appear."

However, while caricatures of fans in mainstream media persist, their context has changed. As Asquith quickly learned in the aftermath of the broadcast of *Crazy about One Direction*, mediated discourses about fans have been transformed over the past decade through social media, which give fans themselves a voice and the opportunity to publicly respond. One Direction fans feeling misrepresented responded on Twitter and elsewhere with vehemence. A defensive Asquith sought to justify herself: "their response to the film is so much more extreme than anything I chose to include. It's really been quite shocking" (Izundu 2013: n.p.). Not only can and do fans now respond publicly to such representations, the caricatures now also sit alongside the many more humanizing and respectful depictions, reflecting the commercial imperatives of a digital marketplace noted above. Furthermore, there appears little evidence of the generic position of being a fan to inform such demeaning representations. Rather, belittling portrayals of fans reflect social and economic stratification that persists most notably along the lines of gender, ethnicity, class, and age, which in turn are reflected in *specific* fan cultures and the choice of fan objects. In other words, fan cultures commonly subject to ridicule and other negative forms of representation—from Potterheads to *Twilight* fans (Busse 2013; Click, Aubrey, & Behm-Morawitz 2010; Hills 2012), fans of *The Only Way Is Essex* in Britain (Sandvoss 2015), and funk fans in the favelas of Brazil (Monteiro 2015)—are those associated with the young, the female, the queer, the outsiders, the poor, the ethnically different. These fans are discriminated against, not as fans, but as members of groups that their fandom represents. Indeed, many dismissive representations of

given fan cultures are interfandom discourses driven by fans seeking to enforce lines of demarcation and distinction between themselves and other fans (see Williams 2013), such as when, for example, rock fans lambast pop music fans in a move that is regularly aged and gendered, and based upon a desire to place rock above pop in a cosmic hierarchy of musical genres.

The second wave of fan studies moved beyond the "incorporation/resistance paradigm" (Abercrombie & Longhurst 1998), by finding a new conceptual leitmotif in the sociology of consumption by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1984). This second wave of work on fans (see Dell 1998; Harris 1998; Jancovich 2002; Thomas 2002; Dixon 2013) highlighted the replication of social and cultural hierarchies within fan cultures and subcultures. In these studies, the answer to why fandom and its academic analysis matters is thus a very different one. Documenting how the choices of fan objects and practices are structured through fans' habitus as a reflection and further manifestation of our social, cultural, and economic capital, such studies were still concerned with questions of power, inequality, and discrimination, but rather than seeing fandom as an a priori tool of empowerment, they suggested that fans' interpretive communities (as well as individual acts of fan consumption) are embedded in existing social and cultural conditions. These studies were still concerned, for instance, with questions of gender, but they no longer portrayed fandom as an extraordinary space of emancipation and reformulation of gender relations. Instead, the taste hierarchies among fans themselves were described as the continuation of wider social inequalities (Thornton 1995). Finding its reference point in Bourdieu's conceptualization of the habitus and thus highlighting the importance of the specificity of fan objects and the individual and collective practices of fans—in other words, who is a fan of what and how—such work thus highlighted the task that subsequent scholarship in fan and audience studies increasingly embraced: the creation of a conceptual and typological apparatus that allowed scholars to position and compare specific studies and findings.

However, while the second wave of fan studies proved effective in demonstrating what fandom is not—an a priori space of cultural autonomy and resistance—it had little to say about the individual motivations, enjoyment, and pleasures of fans. If Fiske's (1989, 1992) explanation of

fandom as subversive pleasure was overtly functionalist, so would be attempts to explain fans' interests and motivations through the notion of the habitus alone. As much as popular media representations of fans have failed to ask why audiences become fans and why "fans act as they do" (Harrington & Bielby 1995: 3), the academic analysis of fandom was now in danger of committing the same omissions.

In addition to engaging with the task of refining typologies of fandom following Nicholas Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst's (1998) foundational work in this respect (see also Crawford 2004; Hills 2002; Longhurst 2007), the subsequent body of work we described in the first edition as the third wave of fan studies sought to broaden the scope of inquiry to a wide range of different audiences reflecting fandom's growing cultural currency. (Indeed, one might regard the third wave as a dissipation of what was previously a loosely coherent subfield into multiple projects with multiple trajectories that *combined* still have the force of a new wave, but that individually have carried fan studies into many diverse neighboring realms.) As being a fan became an ever more common mode of cultural engagement, earlier approaches based on a model of fans as tightly organized participants in fan cultures and subcultures did not match the self-description and experience of many audience members who describe themselves as fans (see Sandvoss 2005). When Jenkins wrote *Textual Poachers* (1992), fan communities were often relegated to conventions and fanzines. Today, with many such communities' migration to the Internet, thousands of fan discussion groups, websites, and social media networks populate cyberspace, and plenty of lived, physical space too. Similarly, mobile media bring fan objects out with their users everywhere. In turn, these changing communication technologies and media texts contribute to and reflect the increasing entrenchment of fan consumption in the structure of our everyday lives. Fandom has emerged as an ever more integral aspect of lifeworlds, and an important interface between the dominant micro and macro forces of our time.

Third-wave work has thus sought to change the goalposts of inquiry. On the micro level of fan consumption, third-wave studies have explored the *intra*personal pleasures and motivations among fans, refocusing on the relationship between fans' selves and their fan objects (see Thompson 1995), and resulting in, for instance, a range of psychoana-

lytic or psychoanalytically inspired approaches (Elliott 1999; Harrington & Bielby 1995; Hills 2002, 2007; Sandvoss 2005; Stacey 1994). On the macro level, third-wave research on fans extends the conceptual focus beyond questions of hegemony and class, to the overarching social, cultural, and economic transformations of our time, thereby offering new answers to the question of why we should study fans. Here fandom is no longer only an object of study in and for itself. Instead, third-wave work aims to capture fundamental insight into modern life—it is precisely *because* fan consumption has grown into a taken-for-granted aspect of modern communication and consumption that it warrants critical analysis and investigation. Third-wave fan studies help us understand and meet challenges beyond the realm of popular culture because they tell us something about how we relate to ourselves, to each other, and to how we read the mediated texts around us.

Fans Studies between the Personal and the Collective

Such work exploring the intrapersonal dimensions of fandom has proven surprisingly contentious. To Henry Jenkins (2014: 286), for instance, within fan studies "there has always been a sharp divide between those who study individual fans and those who study fandom as an imagined and imaginative community," which Jenkins believes fails to reflect realities of contemporary fandom and which carries a regressive quality that appears to jeopardize the achievements of first-wave fan studies. Jenkins (2007: 361) points to his "concerns that a return to individual psychology runs the risk of reintroducing all those pathological explanations that we fought so hard to dismantle" in the afterword to the first edition of this volume. To Jenkins (2007: 361), a focus on the fan's self is especially problematic in an era in which networks of user productivity and connectivity have moved to the center of attention of media and communication scholars:

> It seems a little paradoxical that the rest of the people involved in this conversation are more and more focused on consumption as a social, networked, collaborative process ("harnessing collective intelligence," "the wisdom of crowds," and all of that) whereas so much of the recent work in fan studies has returned to a focus on the individual fan. [. . .] While

sometimes a useful corrective to the tendency of earlier generations of
fan scholars to focus on the more public and visible aspects of fan culture,
this focus on the individual may throw out the baby with the bathwater.

Jenkins is undoubtedly correct in the assertion that with the rise of
digital technology the above themes have moved to the center of our dis-
cipline. However, we do not recognize the fault lines he sketches out. His
intervention is a useful reminder that different traditions persist within
fan studies. In using the label "waves" rather than "phases," we sought
to reflect that different conceptual and methodological approaches
reached their high watermarks at different points in the development of
the field, yet that concerns and approaches of earlier waves have become
far from irrelevant. As we have demonstrated above, while instances of
demeaning representations of fans have become less common, certain
fan cultures remain subject to representational othering. Conversely,
some fan cultures were never confronted with the same type of patholo-
gization, most notably fans of most highbrow arts. In the study of fans
subject to persistent social stigmatization, the initial aims of the first
wave of fan studies have lost little of their significance. Similarly, ques-
tions of hierarchization and structuration within fan cultures remain
important for the persistence of precisely such inequalities.

Within such diversity, we recognize not a "sharp divide" but rather a
reflection of an increasingly theoretically and empirically rich field of
study. Moreover, the dichotomy between the study of the interpersonal
and the intrapersonal seems to us misleading: as numerous prominent
instances attest (see Harrington & Bielby 1995; Hills 2002; Sandvoss
2005; Bailey 2005), scholars who have sought to explore and theorize
the intrapersonal bond between fan and fan object still acknowledge
the collective and communal dimensions of fandom, too. Studying the
intensely personal attachments of fans does not preclude understanding
"fandom as an imagined and imaginative community" (Jenkins 2007:
361). Whether focusing on the role of place, pilgrimage, or *Heimat*, the
interplay between fandom and academia, or the role of fandom within
the life course, such work has examined the individual psychology of
fandom within its wider social context.

To us, then, the intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions appear
to be complementary, intrinsically connected parts of the same eco-

system of analysis. Jenkins is undoubtedly correct to link the rise of convergence culture with the emergence of unparalleled forms of fan/user productivity and connectivity, of collective action and interest-centered networks, groups, and communities. However, a second trajectory of digital culture is equally obvious and, in fact, closely interlinked with the emergence of such communities: the rapid *personalization* of media content and media use brought by the unparalleled accessibility of digital content, the ubiquity of personal individual and mobile (screen) media, social media, customer relation management, and the general "algorithmization" of digital media encounters. While fields such as political communication have long turned to the analysis of the consequences of these processes of personalization (see, for example, Sunstein 2007), fan studies ought not to disregard questions of the interplay between a fan's self and processes of personalization in digital media as the relationship between fan and fan text is the most personal and affectively motivated relationship between text and reader we can find.

To be fair to Jenkins, his call is based in concern that earlier gains not be lost, though he does not object in and of itself to new work being conducted. Francesca Coppa is more orthodox in seeking to enforce a narrow definition of fandom and opposing broader sets of questions about a wider set of fans. In response to the introduction to the first edition of this book, Coppa (2014: 74) claimed:

> Arguably this broadening of subject represents a *change* of subject. It seems unfair to say that early fandom scholars *overlooked* the broad spectrum of regular fans to focus on "the smallest subset of fan groups" (Gray et al. 2007: 8)—the creators and participators for whom fandom was a way of life—when that was precisely their defined object of study.

Coppa's argument—though this remains unacknowledged in the text—is based on reinforcing a binary distinction between fans and "normal audiences" that much of the first wave of fan studies embraced, reaching as far back as Fiske's work (and most clearly articulated in Fiske 1992). The epistemological flaw here is apparent. The object of study is defined through its adherence to a preconceived conceptual position leading to a circular logic: fans are found to be highly networked

and participatory, because to be considered fans they need to be highly networked and participatory. All definitions are, of course, normative constructions, but key criteria in this process are existing practices, uses, and experiences. Coppa points to the labels employed in Abercrombie and Longhurst's typology (1998) as not matching fans' self-descriptions, but seems less concerned that her proposed narrowing of the field disqualifies vast numbers of others, who either self-describe as fans or are commonly regarded as fans in everyday life discourse, as possible subjects of fan studies. As such, a resistance to exploring and understanding a wide range of fan types and practices risks entrenching a very specific form of fandom practiced predominantly by white Anglo-Americans for a starkly limited set of fan objects. Certainly, Mel Stanfill (2011) and Rebecca Wanzo (2015) note how white fan studies has been, while Lori Hitchcock Morimoto and Bertha Chin (in this volume) similarly note how Anglo-American it has been. Moving forward (and backward, in how it tells its history, notes Wanzo), a vibrant fan studies (third-wavers included) cannot examine only "fans like us," but must challenge itself to explore how fandom changes in mode and type across demographics and globally, so that the "us" expands.

Consequently, we are encouraged by the degree to which the third wave pushes ever outward, and we now see an exciting diversification of interests, questions, approaches, and subjects. Rather than a sharp dichotomy in either fan practices or the study of fan practices, fandom in its summative meaning (rather than being used synonymously to describe a given fan culture) constitutes a spectrum in which a multiplicity of practices, groups, and motivations span between the polarities of the personal and the communal—yet with either dimension informing aspects of fans' practices and attachments at least residually. Studies of fans need not all be discussing the same types of fans, practices, or engagements to have a symphonic quality when considered in total. What is important for our purposes here is a recognition that the key challenge remains to preserve the specificity of voices of diverse fan experiences, and where appropriate developing macro theoretical positions from them, while being able to place the specificity of studies of particular fan cultures or groups in a wider contextual understanding of typologies and maps of fandom across different genres, interpersonal and intrapersonal dimensions, rather than misreading particular fan groups as

singularly representative of all fan practices and motivations. Such contextualization remains particularly important in a field in which the preferred methodological approach (ethnography) hitherto heavily leans toward capturing the voices of those who have a high degree of social connectivity and visibility to researchers.

It is, hence, in recognition of fan experience being both personal and communal to varying degrees that we chose the subtitle of this anthology: *Identities* and *Communities in a Mediated World*. Because fandom has become an increasingly important identity resource in a world that has undergone profound transformations over the past four decades—as a result not only of the rise of digital communication technologies but also of the related forces of globalization and post-Fordism giving rise to what Bauman (2005) usefully described as "liquid modernity"—being a fan may be as important to one's community memberships as one's sense of self. In an era in which traditional markers of identity in high modernity such as employment, class, marriage, and (national) belonging, but also age, religion, sexuality, and gender are increasingly instable, fluid, and on occasion ephemeral, the imagined but voluntary communities we join through fan attachments are as important as the self-identity that is constructed and narrated by fans individually (cf. Harrington, Bielby, & Bardo 2014; Sandvoss 2003, 2014).

The main trajectories of the third wave of fan studies are informed by this duality of community *and* identity. These include the continued methodological and epistemological reflections about the relationship between academic enquiry and fan cultures and reflection of the field itself; the study of anti-fans, fantagonisms, and conflict between fan groups; an examination of changing forms of (digital) textuality, including in particular the role of paratexts; reception and value in fandom; the interplay between space, place, belonging, and fandom; the role of fan identities, experiences, and practices in the life course; the intersection of fandom and formal and informal political processes and activism; and forms of fan-generated content, fan productivity, and the eroding boundaries between media production and consumption. Whereas we focused on the first two of these in the first edition of this volume—and while they have attracted extensive attention in edited collections elsewhere since (see Larsen & Zubernis 2012; Duits, Zwaan, & Reijnders 2014)—the remaining five themes constitute the sections through which

this updated volume seeks to contribute to the key debates in contemporary fan studies and beyond.

Fandom, Technology, and Convergence Culture

Before we introduce each of these sections, we want to turn briefly to a wider theme that has come increasingly to inform and span across these third-wave trajectories, and the wider field of media and communication research more generally: the study of technological change and its impact on users' practices.

Digitization and convergence have had tremendous impact on how media are created and used in the past two decades. Thus, for instance, professional production processes and practices have been recalibrated (as documented by Caldwell 2008; Mayer, Banks, & Caldwell 2009; Banks, Conor, & Mayer 2013); new forms of mass entertainment such as gaming have grown in their wake (Banks 2013); the coproduction and the utilization of user-generated content has changed production regimes and business models; and the means and channels of distribution—and thus in turn the nature of texts as content reflects its digital form—have been "revolutionized" (Lotz 2014). Gray and Lotz (2012: 54–55) have pointed to the segmentation of televisual texts that has always been part of television's continuous, everyday life textuality, yet that dramatically excelled in the digital age so that "many shows are experienced all the more often in segmented forms, as Hulu, YouTube, Facebook, embedded clips in blogs and other platforms" that "allow viewers to circulate segments ripped from the remains of the text"—and thus, we may add, that allow enunciatively and textually active fans to post, repost, remix, and embed content in their commentary or other paratexts, thus constructing, amending, or reinforcing the boundaries of their fan object. In remaining true to advocacy as a key aim of his work in a predigital age, Jenkins's work in particular has shifted "from resistance to participation as the core frame of fandom studies" (Jenkins 2014: 294) as new communication technologies have necessitated cultural industries to work with and embrace fans, thus emphasizing the potential of forms of collaboration and cooperation within fan cultures, and between fan cultures and cultural industries.

It is this optimistic embrace of the potential to change regimes of cultural production—and its move away from the assumption of op-

position between the cultural industries and political progress that has long been central to cultural studies—that has prompted a frequently critical and skeptical response, with some scholars warning that the new media era may be cause for more concern than excitement. Certainly, for all that seems different and new, the production of entertainment texts central to various fan cultures remains often within regimes established in the era of mass communication. Film, television, and music production regularly continues to follow a studio-, broadcaster-, or label-based production model, leading to notable continuities in the political economies of content production. It is easy to understand why those concerned with the consequences of such regimes have expressed considerable unease with the burgeoning body of work highlighting democratizing, participatory, and creativity-enhancing practices as an assumed consequence of the eroding boundaries between media users and producers, strongly associated with technological change and in many ways epitomized and summarized in the figure of the fan (see Turner 2011). Richard Maxwell and Toby Miller (2011: 594) declare, "The lesson of the newer media technologies is the same as print, radio and television: each one is quickly dominated by centralized and centralizing corporations, regardless of its multi-distributional potential." According to Maxwell and Miller, to see the real economic and ecological costs "through the fog of cybertarianism, we need to establish some 'autonomy from the industry and fan logics' (Beaty 2009, p. 24)" (2011: 594). Others within fan studies, no less, have voiced concern with the degree to which convergence culture tends to privilege the same straight white middle-class Anglo-American men that previous media regimes did, gifting fannish tools to them while excluding or containing the still-marginalized fans in ever more effective, insidious ways. They point, too, to media industries' savvy, if cynical, co-optation of fans as unpaid labor for content creation and promotion (Busse 2009, 2013, 2015; Coppa 2014; De Kosnik 2012; Scott 2011; Stanfill 2011, 2015; Stanfill & Condis 2014).

This "new screen ecology" that Stuart Cunningham (2015) sketches out in his research of digital video platforms and in particular YouTube is thus of course one that operates within the framework of a post-Fordist global capitalism, and in particular under Google's corporate control, raising a host of questions about the power of algorithm as a means of

social control and possible exploitation of an outsourced freelance work force (see Morreale 2014). However, we agree with Cunningham (2016) that with its over one million content creators who receive some level of remuneration through YouTube, of which many have crossed from high-intensity fan enthusiasm to petty production, what he describes as the clash between the NorCal business models of tech giants and the SoCal framing of the traditional media entertainment industry has created more than just new packaging for traditional media entertainment content (such as Netflix). Instead, new forms of genres and textuality give voice to a different and often more diverse group of content producers. As Cunningham and Craig (2016: 5411) conclude, "platforms such as YouTube exhibit facilitation rather than content control and much greater content, creator, service firm, and language and cultural diversity than traditional media hegemons." This shift in representational power and by extension of the capacity not only to remix and rework existing fan objects but to create new fan objects and texts beyond their initial framing by traditional cultural industries does not in itself set us all on the path to textually productive fandom. Yet it also highlights the limitations of the opposing macro analysis that sees corporatist control alone, blind to significant changes underneath admittedly still at best oligopolistic ownership structures, and it invites contemporary fan scholars to make sense of these multiple dueling forces with greater nuance.

Positioning such diversity in its context is instructive with regard to the question of the interplay between technology and fandom but thus also offers a way forward for contemporary fan studies. The type of approach that Cunningham and Silver (2014: 150) describe as a "middle-range" approach that fills in the gaps between "raw empiricism and grand or all-inclusive theory" in our eyes offers an effective model for fan studies with its significant theoretical advances in recent decades alongside a rich ethnographic heritage, but still an underdeveloped contextualization of much of its qualitative research in particular. It is through such midrange approaches that we propose to explore the main trajectories of third-wave fan studies beyond the underlying theme of technology—textuality, space, temporalities, participation, and citizenship. In turn these themes reflect the spectrum of enquiry spanning from the intrapersonal to interpersonal dimensions of being a fan, from identity to community.

Five Directions between Identities and Communities

The first section is dedicated to the (changing) nature of the very point of reference against which fans' affective engagements and attachments are constructed: fan objects and their textual form. The first three chapters examine the categories through which we can evaluate and appreciate different fan texts aesthetically, culturally, and socially in a post-Bourdieusian era and thereby critique the neglect of aesthetics in contemporary cultural studies. Sandvoss, in juxtaposing traditions of textual criticism in literary theory and media studies, proposes a model of aesthetic judgment rooted in Reception Aesthetics that reemphasize the act of reading as a form of dialogue with a textual Other. Further exploring the boundaries of fan texts and fans' textuality alike, Kristina Busse explores strategies for the evaluation of fans' own textual productivity in the form of fan fiction, which according to Busse foregrounds intertextuality and communal performativity to a greater degree than most literary texts, though this remains a distinction of degree rather than kind. Matt Hills, in turn, rejects a notion of aesthetics that serves as functional political judgments, questions the role of fan scholars as both academics and part of media audiences, and suggests, based on a critical reading of Barthes's lectures on the neutral, a reflexive understanding of fan scholars' aesthetic judgments as hermeneutic constructions of self-identity. Fans' roles as cultural producers in their own right also raise legal issues concerning textual ownership and copyright explored by Rebecca Tushnet. In tracing legal judgments and controversies concerning fans' alleged infringement of copyright laws, Tushnet juxtaposes legal and moral dimensions of copyright, and suggests that fan practices shed light on the meaning and implications of copyright. Concluding this section, Katriina Heljakka's chapter broadens our analysis of fan texts to objects and examines the interplay of physical objects and performativity in fandom through the study of fan toys in adulthood. Rather than functioning as collectibles, these toys come to serve as means of "paedic" pleasure based on the practices long associated with fandom: appropriation, customization, textual productivity, and performance.

Shifting our focus from text to context, the second section examines the spaces of fandom and the framing of fan practices and identities through the places in which they are manifested, as much as the converse

process of the shaping of fan spaces through fans' affective attachments, emotions, and actions. Continuing the analysis of material objects, Daniel Cavicchi examines artifacts from nineteenth-century American "music lovers" to explore how the commodification of music generated a new form of fandom engaged with music's own singular effects and the personal qualities of music performers, and investigates early models for cultural consumption predating the development of mass communication technologies, thereby highlighting the inherent symbiosis between fandom and modernity even preceding the formation of the term "fan" in late nineteenth-century sports coverage. The interplay between communication technologies and place is further examined in Lucy Bennett's study of the controversies among fans and artists surrounding the use, or nonuse, of smartphones or cameras to share and record concert attendances focusing on Kate Bush's recent London concert after a three-decade hiatus and her request to fans to abstain from recording any part of the show. In contrast to the general assumption of fans being on the forefront of embracing new, digital technologies, Bennett finds that Bush enthusiasts sought to construct a sense of authenticity through the rejection of the use of communication technologies in an in situ setting that allowed for the nostalgic performance of a space of belonging. Questions of the fan performance in space in the case of concertgoers are also the focus of Mark Duffett's study by exploring a type of performance so ingrained in many in situ attendances by fans, yet rarely studied: screaming. According to Duffett, screaming constitutes a secular form of what Durkheim has described as totemism through which the collective dimension of in situ fandom is exercised within the public realm and, hence, constitutes a meaningful form of performative citizenship. Moving from spaces of fan performance to spaces of fan pilgrimages, in reference to Robert Aden's (1999) work, Will Brooker juxtaposes the physical and virtual travels of *X-Files* fans by immersing themselves in their favorite texts. Brooker documents a dual process in which our experience of place is shaped through media consumption and vice versa. Finally, developing the theme of experiences and communities in mediated space and its interrelations to physical space, the type of midrange approach we have been advocating here is well illustrated in Lori Hitchcock Morimoto and Bertha Chin's analysis of fandom in its transnational contexts, which critically examines the use

of generalized references to fandom and "fannish" practices in English-speaking fan studies that lack awareness of their geosocial specificity, thereby, albeit unwittingly, creating a normative identity position and experience expectation.

Alongside the by now well-established focus on the role of space and place in fan identities and communities, recent work has significantly advanced our understanding of the temporalities of fandom, both in respect to the longitudinal development of fan cultures and individual fan affiliations and with a particular focus on the role of fandom within the life course, marrying concerns of fan studies and gerontology. Melissa Click charts the interplay between the longitudinal developments of fan texts and fans' life course by examining fan reactions to Martha Stewart's rise, fall, and rebranding, offering a complex cultural resource through which fans negotiate changes in their personal lives as much as the wider world. The theme of loss in fandom, prominent in the experiences of Martha Stewart fans, is developed further in Denise Bielby and C. Lee Harrington's analysis of fan reactions and responses to the death of *Glee* actor Cory Monteith. Fans' reactions to Monteith's death and to the on-screen death of Monteith's character (Finn), the implications of these deaths for other elements of *Glee*'s storyworld, and fans' subsequent commemorative practices reveal how experiences of loss are linked at both individual (fan) and collective (fandom) levels. Further developing the theme of how fandom intersects with identity articulations throughout different life stages, Henry Jenkins examines one of the most common practices through which personal histories of being a fan are constructed and narrated: collecting. Arguing that examining the types of stories comics tell about collecting can offer new understanding of relationships between fandom, collecting, and consumer culture, Jenkins ultimately suggests these stories reveal collecting practices to be representations of the self, not of the Other. Alexis Lothian in turn proposes that at a time when LGBT representations at last seem to have become part of mainstream media entertainment, the temporalities of media space in which fans create transformative fan works such as "Friendly" and "Healing Station Argh" from seemingly outdated source texts maintain the capacity to create utopian readings freed of the narrow framing of queer mainstream texts that might facilitate substantive social progress in their dialogue between past, presence, and utopia.

Moving from the possibilities to the actualities of political engagement and action, the fourth section explores citizenship and political participation in and through fandom within and beyond popular culture. The intersection of popular and political communication is well illustrated in Jonathan Gray's analysis of news fans, demonstrating how fandom—a mode of media reception long derided as trivial, overly emotional, and peripheral to the political sphere—is in fact central to our engagement with information and entertainment alike. Gray sees these viewers' fannish proclivities as potentially contributing to, not detracting from, the serious functioning of politics and citizenship formation. Studying the converse process of traditional political narratives and concerns informing the textualities of popular culture, Abigail De Kosnik traces the development of such narratives in fan fiction, arguing that such works invite readers to form an affective investment in the political sphere. Next, Aswin Punathambekar explores questions of public culture and citizenship in contemporary Indian cinema and its associated fan cultures. Through an analysis of fans' engagement with Indian film music, Punathambekar challenges global media studies to treat seriously the implications of fan practices for the development of culture industries worldwide. Fan participations in the public sphere are also at the heart of Dayna Chatman's analysis of Black Americans' live Twitter commentary about the ABC prime-time drama *Scandal*. Chatman concludes that both Black fans and anti-fans of the program participate in a meaningful public discourse through everyday talk that carries the potential to support the emergence of collective politics and activism. Contrasting the experience of fans as potential activists, Lori Kido Lopez and Jason Kido Lopez chart the difficulties in activists' attempts to engage fans in a political cause, the thus-far-unsuccessful campaign to rename the Washington Redskins NFL team. Highlighting the centrality of sports fandom as an arena of political debate, Lopez and Lopez document some success of the campaign through activists' utilization of oppositional fandom within the NFL.

Activist campaigns by, with, or targeted at fans in turn all highlight the eroding boundaries between media production and use and the consequential empowerment of fans as commentators, disseminators, and content creators. Our final section documents and analyzes the different forms of fan labor and interactions between fans and producers inform-

ing these shifting boundaries. Mizuko Ito maps practices of fan-created subtitling as enabling access for global audiences to Japanese anime, arguing that they form part of the emergence of a hybrid public culture that combines commercial and noncommercial participation incentives. The role of the commercialization of fan practices is further examined in Anne Gilbert's study of the fan-producer relationship at San Diego Comic-Con. Mapping the asymmetrical power relations between professional producers and fans, we witness in situ manifestations of the clash between industry strategies and fan tactics echoing in its de Certauian distinction the canon of early work on popular audiences and serving as a reminder of the limits of change brought by digitization in the balance of power between media industries and fans hitherto. Highlighting the still potentially antagonistic relationship between producers and fans, Derek Johnson examines conflict and "fantagonisms" between rival fan factions, and between fans and the institutional producers of fan objects, each battling for control of the diegetic universe, focusing on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*'s much-debated sixth season. In her analysis of fan interactions with actor Orlando Jones, Suzanne Scott argues for a move toward a more intersectional understanding of fan identities, and for a critical reflection on the form of fan identities that are privileged by industry as well as in academic enquiry. Beyond the qualitative dimension of fan identities, power relations between industries and fans are determined through the ways in which fan audiences are quantified and measured. Philip Napoli and Allie Kosterich examine the use of social media in audience measurements, arguing that the use of social media data—to the extent that they allow for an accurate reflection of fans' sentiments—strengthens the voice of fans in industry decision-making processes and in potentially facilitating greater diversity, though they remain acutely aware of the continuing prevalence of traditional audience ratings.

Fans 4.0: Will Studying Fans Still Matter?

With Napoli and Kosterich's concern for how to quantify fan audiences, and thus by extension how to draw the boundaries between fans and those who aren't, we return to a final but central question about the future of fan studies. In his afterword to the first edition of this volume, Jenkins

(2007: 364) speculated playfully whether the category of "fandom" will lose its analytic utility as being a fan becomes a virtually ubiquitous practice and as "maybe there is no typical media consumer against which the cultural otherness of the fan can be located." If anything, the concern over fans constituting a distinct category has become even more acute in the intervening years. As we have illustrated here—and as the chapters that follow document in greater detail—fan practices and affective attachments take many different forms across a wide spectrum of contemporary culture and far beyond what we have historically regarded as the "popular." At the beginning of this introduction, we pointed to forms of grassroots enthusiasm in American politics that rose to the fore in the 2008 presidential election as bearing parallels to, and possibly being a form of, fandom. Eight years later, what was once a sideways look at the political activism from the perspective of fan studies had become common currency in public discourse. In the 2016 presidential primaries, references to "fans" of given candidates not only abounded, but also were more accurate than ever: Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders's campaign, with its call for profound political and economic change, was driven by a level of youthful grassroots enthusiasm that outshined previous campaigns, including its forerunners in 2004 with Howard Dean and 2008 with Barack Obama. As news outlets now routinely resort to the label "fan" in describing those supporting given candidates, their wider rhetoric is strongly reminiscent of previous representations of dynamics between stars and their fans, as in ABC News' (2016) headline worthy of describing any papal encounter by the latest boy group- or actor-heartthrob: "Bernie Sanders Brings Excitement to Fans during Whirlwind Vatican City Trip." Many other news media including the BBC (2016) highlighted how affective investments of Sanders fans and Clinton supporters had led to intense manifestations of trolling and anti-fandom between the two rival camps. However, while the affectively invested support and collective grassroots action in support of a candidate appeared to be the domain of center-left politics in the early years of the digital era, recent years have witnessed the same forms of practices and motivations, from emotive attachments, digital interpretative communities, and fan-generated paratexts to public performances of fan identities and collective action, utilized in the emergence of reactionary movements such as the Tea Party in the United States or various

anti-immigrant parties and movements in Europe such as the UK Independence Party and Pegida. As James Hay (2011) observes, Tea Party activists indeed carry many of the hallmarks of the participatory, textually active, and networked user. They are undoubtedly fans of a given cause and of given politicians representing this cause, such as former Alaska Governor Sarah Palin (see Ouellette 2012).

The supporters to whom the label "fan" was most naturally and possibly most frequently applied in the 2016 presidential campaign were equally found on the far right: those who in their millions lent voice to and proudly displayed their affiliation with property-developer-turned-reality-television-performer Donald Trump. The textuality of Trump-the-candidate was that typical of a fan object: intertextual, mediated, polysemic. His campaign persona in the Republican primaries was based on his performance as the host of *The Apprentice* (which in turn is based on Trump's previous media appearances and self-branding efforts). Like popular fan objects in sports, Trump sought tirelessly to brand himself under a banner of "success," inviting a self-reflective affective bond with his fans who were left to color in the then-still-substantive ideological blanks according to their own, often diverging, beliefs and convictions. And many had no hesitation in calling themselves a "fan" of their preferred candidate. Trump's rise during the 2016 campaign further illustrated Jenkins's (2014: 285) acknowledgment that "there is nothing about participatory culture that would inevitably lead to progressive outcomes" and further highlighted the extent to which being a fan permeates many spheres of mediated engagements—political, cultural, and economical—in our everyday lives. Does this then, as Jenkins (2007) pondered, not without mischief, erode the usefulness of the notions of fans and fandom in their academic analyses?

Our answer remains a resounding a "no." We believe that the ubiquity of fans and fan practices makes the case for studying fans and fan cultures more pressing than ever. Indeed, as many academic and popular think pieces have struggled to explain the rise of Trump—and related phenomena from Fox News, Breitbart, and Sean Hannity to the Tea Party and Sarah Palin—better answers will require an awareness of how being a fan and becoming part of a fandom work.

Similarly, such universality of fan objects does not allow for a conceptualization of fans and fandom that is dependent on binary distinc-

tions, or for its universal and a priori embracement. If as ideologically and performatively diverse practices as, say, slash writing and right-wing campaigning draw upon identificatory investments and both articulate participatory fan practices, then there may indeed be no mainstream culture remaining against which to demarcate fans as generic sets of practice. Attempts to maintain such binaries through definitions that exclude those outside the sentiments expressed in "Anglo-American, typically imagined as white, middle-class, and heterosexual" (Morimoto & Chin, this volume) fan cultures of science fiction and television drama seem, as we suggested above, largely arbitrary attempts to fit the object of study to a preconceived conceptual or political position, which remain also unaware of the relative privilege of such fan cultures in a global context. To be clear, we do not, as Coppa (2014) suggests, argue that the fan cultures at the heart of first-wave approaches ought no longer be considered. They are clearly encapsulated in broader definitions of fans, as is reflected by their multiple inclusion in this volume. What we *do* argue for are approaches that enable us to meaningfully conceptualize the obvious differences but also the—possibly less apparent—similarities of such seemingly divergent practices, and that acknowledge the interplay between fan and fan object, between agency and structure, that inevitably shape the quality and texture of fans' emotions, practices, and performances. The rich and diverse trajectories of third-wave fan studies we have outlined here, combined with typological advances and the recognition of both the intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions of fandom, seem best equipped to achieve this.

After a decade of studies have documented how fan practices and attachments have proliferated across cultures, territories, and genres, little doubt remains that the practices and affective motivations associated with being a fan have come to shape much of our reception of, and engagement with, mediated content. This process of "fanization" is, however, not an otherwise neutral process simply enhancing participation. It is precisely because being a fan is more than just participation, because it carries an affective and identificatory dimension, because it shapes and is shaped by the personal and interpersonal, that the concepts of "fan" and "fandom" continue to matter and differ vis-à-vis many other terms used in our discipline to describe prosumers, citizen journalists, activists, influencers, amateur content creators, etcetera. The implications of "fanization" span

across many cultural spaces including entertainment, arts, commerce, citizenship, and politics. They are profound and significant in all these realms. However, it is possibly its manifestation in political processes and the public sphere that illustrates why studying and theorizing fandom matters most lucidly. Among may other things, fanization has contributed to young activists forming cornerstones in recent presidential campaigns; to the personalization of politics (cf. Corner & Pels 2003; Stanyer 2012) and to media celebrity converting into political capital ever more instantaneously; to a disjuncture between affectively invested form and fans' beliefs and convictions that lead to a loss of trust and disillusionment (Sandvoss 2012, 2013); to the rise of extreme political partisanship on the right as a form of anti-fandom as much as of fandom; and it has thereby contributed to—though far from being singularly responsible for—a remarkable and dramatic erosion of rationality, civility, and reason in contemporary political and public life in the United States and beyond.

The binary oppositions against which fandom could once be conceptualized as oppositional practice may be fast disappearing. Yet, as these examples illustrate, the more being a fan is commonplace and the more it is "just like being any other media user," the more it matters; the more it shapes the identities and communities in our mediated world and with it the culture, social relations, economic models, and politics of our age.

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