Praise for *A Companion to Media Fandom and Fan Studies*

“Twenty-five years ago, the publication of *Textual Poachers* by Henry Jenkins (1992), effectively launched an exciting new field of fan studies. The publication of this large, multidisciplinary volume demonstrates beyond a doubt that both fandom and fan studies have come of age in the digital era. Established and new scholars alike reflect critically on a range of media texts, fan identities and fan practices in a number of contexts – material, geographical and online. Taken together, the issues and concerns raised will be of interest not only to fans and fan scholars but to anyone with an affiliation and affinity to popular culture in a highly-mediated world.

**Rhiannon Bury**, Associate Professor, Athabasca University. Author of *Television. 2.0: Viewer and Fan Engagement with Digital TV* (2017, Peter Lang)

“Paul Booth brings together an impressive range of scholars, disciplines, and approaches in his *Companion to Media Fandom and Fan Studies*. Engaging with the most current research and broadening the field to include previously neglected topics, this collection raises the bar for fan studies scholarship.”

**Kristina Busse**, University of South Alabama

“As fandom becomes increasingly embedded in the structures and processes of our global, networked media environment, there is an urgent need to take stock of what we already (think we) know about emotionally involved media consumption. Paul Booth’s *Companion to Media Fandom and Fan Studies* does precisely that, providing a thought-provoking and highly readable anthology that maps out the complexities and contradictions of Fan Studies’ past, present, and possible futures. Pushing the field into previously uncharted waters while also impressively reassessing and adding to seminal debates, these essays will undoubtedly help to shape the landscape of fan research for years to come.”

**Richard McCulloch**, Fan Studies Network Board Member and Lecturer in Film and Cultural Studies, Centre for Participatory Culture, University of Huddersfield, UK
Wiley Blackwell Companions to Cultural Studies
Advisory Editor: David Theo Goldberg, University of California, Irvine

This series provides theoretically ambitious but accessible volumes devoted to the major fields and subfields within cultural studies, whether as single disciplines (film studies) inspired and reconfigured by interventionist cultural studies approaches, or from broad interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary perspectives (gender studies, race and ethnic studies, postcolonial studies). Each volume sets out to ground and orientate the student through a broad range of specially commissioned articles and also to provide the more experienced scholar and teacher with a convenient and comprehensive overview of the latest trends and critical directions. An overarching Companion to Cultural Studies will map the territory as a whole.

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17. A Companion to Popular Culture
    Edited by Gary Burns
It is with great happiness that I dedicate this book with love to my sister, Anna—although we share very few fandoms, we’ll always have Gilmore Girls.
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   Finally, and foremost, to my wife Katie Booth, who has had to deal with long hours of editing, questions about obscure vocabulary, and too many conversations about fandom to even count. Thank you to all!
This volume, *A Companion to Media Fandom and Fan Studies*, is intended to be a resource for contemporary scholarship of media fandom, a guide to avenues of fan studies research from the past, and an outline of new areas of fandom and fan studies research that could begin to be, or should continue to be. *A Companion to Media Fandom and Fan Studies* has five main aims: (1) to synthesize the literature surrounding important theories, debates, and issues within the field of fan studies; (2) to trace and explain the social, historical, political, commercial, ethical, and creative dimensions of fandom and fan studies; (3) to explore both the historical and the contemporary fan situation; (4) to present fandom and fan studies as models of twenty-first-century production and consumption; and (5) to identify and comment upon emergent trends in order to bring light, and relevance, to fan studies as a unique field of study. The importance of studying fandom has often been stated: Lucy Bennett (2014) notes that “the fan studies field of scholarship [opens up] an avenue where fans [are] treated and viewed as active and creative individuals; the study of which potentially offers rich insights into media consumption, identity, textual engagement and communications” (6). The study of fandom has taken many paths and informed multiple disciplines. This volume cannot hope to encompass all of fan studies, but is rather an attempt to distinguish unique attributes of the field and augment contemporary fan research.

There is little doubt that fandom—defined in various ways in the chapters that follow—has become a more viable and visible presence in today’s media environment (Booth 2015). New digital technologies and tools have illustrated a rise in prominence and visibility of the so-called “geek culture.” As fans have embraced technologies like Tumblr, Twitter, and YouTube, the ease of finding and spreading fan work has helped facilitate a rise in knowledge about fandom in mainstream culture (see Jenkins, Ford, and Green 2013). At the same time, media corporations are taking note of fandom as well, as the industries both market to fans and create opportunities for fan interaction (Booth 2015). Fandom is itself changing as it becomes more commonplace—some fanfiction authors are monetizing their fandom by publishing fanfiction as novels (e.g., E.L. James’s *Fifty Shades of Grey*), and other fans are behind the camera as professional filmmakers (e.g., J.J. Abrams). And just as more people may be aware of fandom because of super-sized conventions like Comic Con, so too are many fans residing in less public areas to try to avoid the spotlight that comes with negative media attention (see Bennett and Booth 2016).
Yet, fandom is not new nor something that emerged simply because of digital technology and Tumblr culture, and many of the digital activities that fans engage in in the digital environment are similar to the analog activities from years past (Booth and Kelly 2013; Booth 2016). As the chapters in this volume indicate, fandom is far older than Tumblr and far vaster than *Fifty Shades*. The major focus of this volume is two-fold. First, it offers multiple perspectives on key issues in fan studies. These perspectives speak to one another as the authors have been encouraged to read and comment on each other’s work. The second focus of the volume is on exploring the issues of fan studies moving into the future. What are the ethical considerations of fandom in the twenty-first century? As fans become mainstream consumers, how can they retain their subcultural identity (Jenkins 2007)? The multiple chapters in this volume speak to scholars and students of fandom, a population that is growing, in a world where fan studies is constantly shifting.

Fan studies as a field is barely three decades old, but in that time, it has produced an enormous amount of literature and interest from the scholarly community. In just thirty years, fan studies scholars have seen the growth of two journals dedicated solely and specifically to fan studies (*Transformative Works and Cultures* and *The Journal of Fandom Studies*, not to mention additional journals focused on audience analysis such as *Participations* and *Intensities*). Fan scholars have witnessed the publication of scores of monographs and edited collections dedicated to fan studies, including some that are widely considered canonical within and outside the fan studies sphere (e.g., Jenkins's (1992; 2012) *Textual Poachers*; Lewis's (1992) *The Adoring Audience*; Penley's (1997) NASA/Trek; Hills's (2002) *Fan Cultures*; Hellekson and Busse's (2006) *Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet*; Jenkins's (2006) *Convergence Culture*; Gray, Sandvoss, and Harrington's (2007) *Fandom: Identities and Communities in a Mediated World*) and many hundreds of journal articles and book chapters that focus on fandom and fan studies. New book series (e.g., the Fan Phenomena series at Intellect, the Fan Studies series at the University of Iowa Press, the Transmedia: Participatory Culture and Media Convergence series from Amsterdam University Press) and new conferences and scholarly groups (e.g., the Fan Studies Network, the FSN Symposium, the Fan and Audience Studies SIG at the Society of Cinema and Media Studies) speak to the rise in interest in the discipline. There are fan studies programs at universities, fan studies networks of scholars, and fan studies tracks at major international conferences.

All this exists, and thrives, in the academic world; but this then begs a number of related questions. First, to what extent have fan studies become legible in the larger academic discourse? Have fan studies scholars created a new discipline? Is fan studies more legitimized than it has been in the past? Jenkins's (1992) influential *Textual Poachers* was originally written before “fan studies” existed (in fact, it helped usher in the field) but in the years since its publication, does fan studies remain, as Sam Ford (2014) suggests, “a robust, respected space within cultural/media studies” (54) or has it become a space of its own? For Ford “‘fan studies’ remain[s] an ‘undisciplined’ discipline” and “many of its practitioners … are unwilling and quite averse to provide such discipline” (54). The contributors to this volume also remain unconvinced about the legitimacy of fan studies within larger discourses; there remains a certain “underdog” quality to fan studies in terms of mainstream academicrespectability. Ford (2014) goes on to note that fan studies continue to be a powerful field because of this separation rather than despite it—we must “maintain a cohesive community around the concept of fan studies while not losing its porous boundaries that are essential to facilitate the continued incorporation of new methodological approaches, new types of fandoms and media industries, and new issues/angles to be tackled” (54). In my own work, I’ve attempted to navigate this disciplinary mechanism at a time when “fan studies has become a destination rather than a journey” (Booth 2016, 232).

At the same time, Matt Hills (2016) asks us “whether the formalization of an academic discipline and its legitimation are one and the same thing?” (xvi–xvii). Indeed, one of the most pressing
concerns about the future of fan studies lies in trying to maintain that porous boundary as the field itself concretizes. Fandom has become a popular topic across multiple disciplines; fan studies is a truly multidisciplinary field of study. Yet, to maintain that multidisciplinary emphasis, the less formalized structures of fan studies have to be maintained as well. That's the problem with disciplines: Jenkins (2012) argues that “Disciplines define borders and set priorities. Disciplines decide what counts and on what terms” (5). Indeed, the decisions made when putting this volume together matter. Books like this one can be detrimental to maintaining disciplinary porosity, as any attempt to create a repository of content—even one as vast as this one—necessarily leaves some things out, concentrates on others, and inches ever closer to more concrete boundaries. Certainly, it has not been my intention, in assembling the following 34 chapters, to deliberately include/exclude anything, but every choice has consequences, and every book has its own limitations (the strictures of the publisher, of publication, of availability of authors, of timing). I hope that scholars who read this book and see an absence or lacunae in its pages will endeavor to fill that gap, just as I have endeavored to bring together scholarship that has expanded the boundaries of what I've considered fan studies here.

**Structure of the Book**

One counter to this stricter disciplinary boundary is to approach topics through multiple perspectives, and in this volume I have strived to include a variety of content. The authors of these chapters come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences, and are at various stages of their careers, further highlighting the inclusive and diverse field of fan studies. After writing drafts of their chapter, authors were invited to read and comment on the other chapters in their Parts, with the intent of creating greater cross-fertilization of ideas and connections across topics.

The volume is divided into five Parts; very roughly, these Parts form a mirror, where the first and last Parts look to the past and future of fan studies, respectively, while Parts II and IV examine the fan experiences in historical and digital contexts. Part III emphasizes the cultural studies background of fan studies. Each Part explores the boundaries of fan studies while opening new avenues of exploration.

Part I, “Histories, Genealogies, Methodologies,” focuses on the multiple genealogies that can be traced through fan studies. Although fan studies have their antecedents in cultural studies and media studies, the history of the discipline can be drawn from multiple perspectives. The first four chapters can be seen as complements to each other, as each explores these perspectives in great detail. We start with a chapter by Henry Jenkins that explores fandom as an aspect of participatory culture, one which facilitates the social negotiation of the meaning and value of popular texts, enables grassroots creative responses, and provides a context for debates about issues of representation, diversity, and inclusion in the digital age. Chapter 2 by Daniel Cavicchi takes us back in time to explore fandom from the main preoccupations of nineteenth-century America: baseball, celebrity, concerts, and theatre productions. By developing these avenues, Cavicchi reveals how much scholars’ present investigation of fan studies depends on links to fan practices in the past. In Chapter 3, Alexandra Edwards develops an understanding of fandom based not on the science-fiction fans of the 1930s and 1960s, but on traditional literary practices such as scrapbooking, writing letters to the editor, and submitting stories to magazine contests. By articulating a point of view that emphasizes alternate modes of fan activity, Edwards illustrates the flexibility of fan studies as a field of study. As if to demonstrate this flexibility, Karen Hellekson, in Chapter 4, offers a more traditional view of the historical development of fan studies as emergent from the Science Fiction League. For Hellekson, linking fans to this originating group helps us see the sense of activism and shared sense of purpose common in fan communities today.
Other chapters in Part I help narrow (and expand) the definition of fandom through discussions of scholarship, methodology, representation, and ethics. In Chapter 5, C. Lee Harrington and Denise Bielby explore changes in the scholarship of fandom in the twenty-two years since the publication of their (1995) *Soap Fans*. Their chapter historicizes fan studies from a media studies perspective. Ross Garner’s emphasis on autoethnography in Chapter 6 explores the methodological import of fan studies on investigations of self-reflexivity. Garner debates and discusses the most appropriate ways to use self-analysis as a methodology for fan studies work, and draws on his own fandom of Manic Street Preachers as a key exemplar. Lucy Bennett explores representations of fans in popular journalism in Chapter 7. Her chapter examines how fandom is constructed and “made sense of” by newspaper writers across a ten-year span—a span of time (2000–10) that saw increased digital fandom and a stronger visibility of fans in general. Finally, Ruth A. Deller summarizes and augments current research on the ethics of studying fans in Chapter 8 by examining topics such as participant anonymity, valuations of free labor, protection for vulnerable subjects, and qualms about participant observers. Deller offers practical advice for fan researchers, both novice and experienced, on how to respond to changes and challenges in a digital environment.

Part II, “Fan Practices,” brings to light specific fan practices as they have manifested in fandom and fan studies throughout the history(ies) of the discipline. Fans are often some of the most textually productive audiences, with fanfiction stories, videos, cosplays, and other creative works having been authored by fans for decades. Topics in this section include the material practices of fans, the creation of fan videos, fandom at conventions, fan nostalgia, fanfiction writing, fandom as productive activity, and fan costuming.

Part II begins with Chapter 9 by Lynn Zubernis and Katherine Larsen who describe fandom outside of textual boundaries—fandom, as they put it, in the “real world.” While much attention has been directed at online fan activities, especially factoring in burgeoning social media platforms such as Twitter, Tumblr, Pinterest, and Instagram, less work has been done on the equally growing desire for physical interactions with objects of fandom and fellow fans. Zubernis and Larsen argue that physical fandom through conventions and tourist sites offers tangible and intimate experiences that differ significantly from those of the textual. The focus on materiality continues in Lincoln Geraghty’s Chapter 10 on nostalgia and remediation in children’s culture. Geraghty brings to light pre-Internet media objects like Transformers and G.I. Joe, as they have been remediated through toys and video games. He argues that an explosion of nostalgia in contemporary media forces us to reconsider personal and public memory of childhood. In Chapter 11, Nicolle Lamerichs explores another tangible outgrowth of fandom and nostalgia—the fashion that accompanies contemporary media objects. Professional and fan-created clothing lines draw inspiration from contemporary cult media, like her example of the emerging phenomenon of fan couture.

The final two chapters of Part II explore more digitally-focused fan practices. In Chapter 12, Francesca Coppa takes perhaps the most notorious genre of fanfiction—slash fiction—and contextualizes it in terms of the theory and history of drag performance. She offers a number of salient areas of comparison, including appropriation and overdetermination, within both genres. Katharina Freund, in Chapter 13, turns to fan vidding—the editing of film and television footage set to music to create a particular story—as a way of expressing changes in the history of fandom through the advent of digital technology. Focusing mainly on the history of vidding, Freund’s chapter delves into vidding communities through explorations of online spaces like LiveJournal and Tumblr.

Part III, “Fandom and Cultural Studies,” focuses on fandom as a global and cultural phenomenon. Fandom crosses borders, and helps cohere different groups of people. Chin and Morimoto (2013) call this the “transcultural” aspect of fandom, whereas fandom can bond people in a way
nationality might not. In addition, this Part examines cultural issues—of age, gender, nationality, race, and ethnicity—as specific markers upon fandom and fan cultures. Although fandom is made up of multiple types of people, from various backgrounds, there are still significant cultural factors that play a role in the interpretation and development of fan audiences. For example, even as fandom has become a more mainstream identity, Busse (2013) has written about the way feminine styles of fandom have been devalued in contemporary culture. Here, astute fan studies readers of this volume will notice that there more attention has been placed on race and nationality rather than gender and fandom in this Part than may be expected—gender studies has been one of the most engaged aspects of the field. As far back as 1992, Jenkins discussed gender in *Textual Poachers*, Bacon-Smith concentrates on gender in *Enterprising Women* (1992), Jensen (1992) notes gender as a pathological characteristic of the fan, Fiske (1992) locates gender as a major theme (specifically noting that he has “not found studies of non-white fandom,” 32), and Lewis (1992) devotes an entire section to it in *The Adoring Audience*. Today, scores of books and articles focus on gender, while nationality, race, and ethnicity are still relatively untouched in fan studies (with some obvious exceptions: Stanfill 2011; Wanzo 2015; Warner 2015). In no way do I want to indicate that gender is not crucial to understanding contemporary fandom—it undoubtedly is—but in the interests of exploring new boundaries for fan studies I actively solicited chapters on nationality and race.

That is not to say that gender is not a concern of the authors in Part III. In Tom Phillips’s Chapter 14 on wrestling fandom, he delves directly into two largely misrepresented cultural identities: age and gender. His chapter examines representations of mature women fans of professional wrestling through what he calls “synecdochic fandom,” or how a particular kind of fan becomes shorthand for all fan activity. Mature women who are wrestling fans offer one type of synecdochic fandom where the fan stands in for what cultural commentators wish to other within cultural meanings of sports fans. Chapter 15 also uses gender as one lens to view the hierarchies within fan communities, but author Bertha Chin explores other ways that hierarchies can be formed as well. Chin’s chapter uses the works of Pierre Bourdieu to discuss social capital in terms of knowledge and presence on social media. In Lori Morimoto’s Chapter 16, the issue of transcultural fandom takes center stage, as she explores how fans from one culture mix with fans from other cultures. She uses ethnographic data from interviews to explore three such intersections: Japanese women fans of Hong Kong star Aaron Kwok; the clash of socially and industrially devalued women readers and writers of English language slash fanfiction with male-dominated production cultures; and African American women’s experiences as fans within a hegemonic subculture of normative online fandom.

The following two chapters, Chapter 17 and Chapter 18, both explore Otaku culture, a Japanese subculture with ties to fandom. Miranda Ruth Larsen’s “Fandom and Otaku” outlines both terms as mutually interactive, yet does not link the two as synonyms. Rather, she overviews the history of otaku as a term as a way of opening up fan studies to include different marginalized identities from non-Western cultures. In “Otaku Pedestrians,” Marc Steinberg and Edmond Ernest dit Alban develop a specific argument related to Otaku as a “mobile fan subject position” in relation to urban spaces, such as shops and stores. They develop an understanding of the otaku as a consumer subject position within infrastructures of commodity circulation, focusing mainly on Otome Road and Ikebukuro.

The final three chapters of Part III look specifically at issues of race within fandom and fan studies. In Chapter 19, Mel Stanfill unpacks the unspoken assumption of “whiteness” in fandom and fan studies, and the complications that arise with that assumption. Stanfill examines what makes fan studies avoid race as a topic and outlines the dangers of a “colorblind” analysis, and unpacks the dynamics of non-white fan audiences, arguing that race needs to be more centrally located within fan studies work. Rukmini Pande’s Chapter 20 uses an intersectional approach to
fandom, to critique the privilege surrounding notions of race/culture/ethnicity. She uses interview data to explore how non-white fans navigate white-centric spaces of fandom in order to develop a “lens of criticality” linked to ethnic identity, digging deeper into the operations of fandom communities. Finally, Chapter 21 by Jessica Seymour explores a specific race-related fan practice—racebending characters within fan art. Racebending describes the drawing and editing of characters in media to present them as more racially diverse. Seymour argues that although this may seem to be a transformative shift in fan works, in fact it challenges the default imagining of characters as white, even if the text never specifies race.

Part IV, “Digital Fandom,” examines the role that social media and digital technology have had on fan practices. Digital technology has in many ways paved new avenues for fandom: fans can now produce and distribute original materials in wholly unique ways, including self-production of media and self-funding on crowdfunding sites like Kickstarter. Topics in this Part include the use of digital technology in the classroom, the development of active fan communities through social media, transmedia texts, digital dislike and male privilege in digital fan communities, and online fandom of canceled texts.

In Chapter 22, Melanie E.S. Kohnen examines Tumblr as a pedagogical space and describes her experiences using it in the classroom. She argues not only that Tumblr is useful for the classroom, but that Tumblr itself can be a pedagogical space where critical conversations about media are already taking place. Our students need merely join them. The next two chapters approach digital technology as a way to harness social and active audiences. In Chapter 23, Casey J. McCormick underscores the affective attachment fans have toward the works of Joss Whedon. She explores a specific “Whedony” fandom as both powerful to fans and commodifiable by the media industries. Mélanie Bourdaa next explores fan activism in Chapter 24, focusing on the fan reaction to the death of a main character in the television series The 100. Bourdaa analyzes the organization of fans into non-profit groups that fight for better representation in the media. Bourdaa’s chapter segues into Chapter 25, in which Louisa Stein also examines the potential of digital technology to facilitate communication between fans and media producers. For Stein, new technologies have offered both the means for media producers to hear and potentially address fans’ concerns, but also a space for fans to create their own content. She specifically examines official and fan-created “spinoffs” of television series, especially those that fans can proclaim as canon.

Chapters 26 and 27 follow, both exploring different aspects of toxic fandom within the digital environment. In Chapter 26, Bethan Jones unpacks digital dislike and fan antagonism within online communities, especially those surrounding popular culture texts like Fifty Shades of Grey, the 2016 Ghostbusters reboot, and Gamergate, the sustained attack on feminists on Twitter revolving around video games. She argues that each of these texts engages with antifan discourses of dislike and hatred, and has different ethical considerations. Katie Wilson, in Chapter 27, also discusses Gamergate as a toxic space, but also includes the Rabid Puppies—the Hugo Award contrarians who attempted to disrupt the awards by stacking the awards against more liberal and message-heavy works. Wilson links both these groups to the rise of men’s rights conservative organizations that seek to fight feminism and perceived slights to the state of male privilege. The last chapter of Part IV, Rebecca Williams’s Chapter 28, explores her (2015) concept of “post-object fandom”—a fandom that survives longer than the media text. Through the case study of Hannibal, an NBC television series based on the Hannibal Lecter series of books by Thomas Harris, Williams considers how fans reacted to the ending of the series and how they continued their fandom post-object through material and digital practices. At the end of the Part, we turn again to the idea that digital and material practices are not that separate after all.
Part V, the final section of the volume, “The Future of Fan Studies,” develops ideas that took germination in Part I, but instead of looking to the past, explores new paths for fan studies scholars. In an attempt to present new ways of approaching the subject, this section critiques some of the methodologies and focuses of fan studies over the first thirty years. Topics in this section include areas of fandom yet unexplored, changing scholarship on fandom, and new approaches to fandom and fan studies.

In Chapter 29, Mark Duffett, the author of Understanding Fandom (2013), a textbook of fan studies, unpacks what “fan studies” has meant over the years and how it has focused primarily on media instead of music fandom. He outlines some thoughts on fandom after writing the textbook and his reaction to the field as it grows more cohesive. Matt Hills’s Chapter 30 uses a fan studies methodology to explore areas of high-culture media consumption that are not necessarily considered when discussing fandom. Using an approach he calls “implicit fandom,” Hills explores fandom of the “great author” Jonathan Franzen and unpacks fan-like activities of Franzen readers, such as generating debates, attending talks and festivals, and collecting rare first editions. The discussion of literary fandom is continued in Roberta Pearson’s Chapter 31, which examines literary societies like the Sherlockians and Janeites—those fans of the works of Jane Austen—as neglected fandoms. She argues that such groups are largely ignored by fan studies scholars and we must embrace that with which we are not familiar in order to develop fan studies further. A similar argument is made in Alan McKee’s Chapter 32, focusing instead on porn consumers as fan audiences. McKee brings together two disparate areas of scholarship—porn studies and fan studies—to argue that both have something to offer the other. Porn studies offers a specificity lacking in fan studies, while fan studies offers an analysis of consumer agency lacking in porn studies. For McKee, porn consumers can enter into fan-like habits and it behooves us to study them as such.

The final two chapters of the volume turn from specific focuses in fan studies to questions of methodology and interpretation. In Chapter 33, Anne Jamison examines fanfiction, with its networks of sources, allusions, tags, and communities, as a challenge to the ideology of the autonomous work of art. Using Deleuze’s discussion of the assemblage, Jamison raises questions about source, originality, autonomy, and authorship—and focuses on a unique fan-like text, “Text from Cephalopods,” to present a reading on fanfiction itself. Finally, in Chapter 34, we return to the questions of methodology that opened the volume, as Tisha Turk unpacks the meaning of the oft-cited interdisciplinary value of fan studies. She discusses the implications and misuses of the term “interdisciplinary,” offering multidisciplinary as a more accurate description of what fan studies has been. Looking forward, however, she uses interdisciplinary studies as a guide to developing ideas about what an interdisciplinary fan studies might actually look like, and the value of such an approach.

Throughout this volume, the authors have striven to maintain a connection to the fan communities about which they have written. We must continue to emphasize the fan in fan studies. As I’ve written previously (2016):

Fan studies needs to remain engaged in the fan communities, which themselves are ever shifting and changing. To define fan studies is to (artificially) define the fan; a limitation of disciplining fan studies would therefore be imposing an (already hypothesized) identity of the fan onto the investigative subject. (233)

In order to maintain its freshness, its cultural relevancy, and its power, fan studies must never stray far from the fan.
References


