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Editorial: Introduction to the Third Issue of Fandom | Cultures | Research

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Fandom | Cultures | Research
ONLINE JOURNAL FOR FAN AND AUDIENCE STUDIES

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Editorial

Introduction to the Third Issue of Fandom | Cultures | Research

ABSTRACT

KEYWORDS

journal, fan studies, German fan studies, media studies, reviews, conference reports, fandom voices

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Editorial

Introduction to the Third Issue of Fandom | Cultures | Research

If the first phase was about getting started, this one is about getting serious... in the best possible sense. Thanks to the generous support, feedback, and engagement we received, *Fandom | Cultures | Research* has grown into a space for ongoing exchange and reflection. This exciting new issue is filled with a variety of topics, once again highlighting the immense diversity in the field and its approaches.

Two texts focusing on anime fan culture frame the six research papers. Opening, Violetta Janzen examines the fan discourse on the term ‘genre deconstruction’ in the anglophone anime community, analyzing its negotiation and application, particularly regarding the Japanese TV series *Puella Magi Madoka Magica* (2011). The study shows how the term was adopted from academia, redefined to function as a value indicator and legitimizing strategy, and used to establish hierarchies of knowledge. Indira Neill Hoch examines the maintenance of Tumblr by its users as a practice of ‘repair’ and ‘broken world thinking,’ essential for the community’s continued inhabitation of the platform. Drawing on qualitative interviews and meta-fandom analysis, Neill Hoch illustrates how users continually intervene to sustain Tumblr through collective labor, expressing affection for the site in spite of technological shortcomings and social brokenness.

Using a longitudinal, sensory autoethnographic approach, Sofie Stobberup explores how the Warner Bros. Studio Tour of *Harry Potter* functions as an affective infrastructure that curates ‘emotional heritage’ and ‘homecoming’ for the fanbase, while also negotiating tensions created by upscaling and commercialization over time. Looking at D&D-focused livestreams, *Critical Role* (2015-) in particular, Jackson Wyndow employs Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) and symbolic interactionism to argue that these streamed sessions offer an entertaining, practical demonstration of gameplay that introduce both the mechanical and socio-cultural rules of the table top role-playing game to viewers and players.

Christina Vollmert proposes a conceptual framework for understanding internet aesthetics (like cottagecore) as a form of ‘productive fandom’ where mood and sensibility, rather than a single source text, become the object of fannish investment. The article argues that these aesthetics operate as affective, symbolic infrastructures that facilitate collaborative world-building, post-individual identity work, and the negotiation of cultural belonging in the postdigital era. Closing, David Höwelkröger synthesizes ‘database consumption’ with the genre of vernacular, connoisseurial YouTube anime reviews, specifically analyzing the platform Anime Sins. Höwelkröger shows how reviewers consume anime by cataloging perceived flaws, tropes, and clichés as non-narrative data.

In the review section, eight recent publications in the field are discussed—from Jane Austen fan-fiction to Asian queer popular culture, from *Star Wars* to *Joker*. Further, Svenja Reiner reports from the Sources of Historical Fan Research conference in Cologne (May 2025). The issue closes with another entry in our Fandom Voices series.

We hope you enjoy reading this new issue of *Fandom / Cultures / Research* and look forward to your feedback and suggestions. The editorial board would like to thank Elsa-Margareta Venzmer for her crucial support in launching this project. From now on, she will invest her energy in other projects, and we wish her all the best for these endeavors.

Yours sincerely,
the Editorial Team

