



# Understanding Fandom: An Introduction to the Study of Media Fan Culture

By Mark Duffett

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Fans used to be seen as an overly obsessed fraction of the audience. In the last few decades, shifts in media technology and production have instead made fandom a central mode of consumption. A range of ideas has emerged to explore different facets of this growing phenomenon. With a foreword by Matt Hills, *Understanding Fandom* introduces the whole field of fan research by looking at the history of debate, key paradigms and methodological issues. The book discusses insights from scholars working with fans of different texts, genres and media forms, including television and popular music. Mark Duffett shows that fan research is an emergent interdisciplinary field with its own key thinkers: a tradition that is distinct from both textual analysis and reception studies. Drawing on a range of debates from media studies, cultural studies and psychology, Duffett argues that fandom is a particular kind of engagement with the power relations of media culture.

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### **Editorial Review**

#### **Review**

[Duffett's] strategy is primarily educative: to usefully and clearly explain the methods, discourses and debates that emerge from thinking about a body of work on fandom ... The book [has] immense value as an introduction to media fandom. Duffett's authoritative voice and theoretical acumen are much needed as fan studies becomes a pressing subject for more than a few graduate researchers. -- Daniel Cavicchi *Popular Music*, Vol. 34.2 A well-researched, clearly organized, and forcefully argued revisionist treatise. [Duffett] has crafted an innovative, positive study on media fan culture that challenges the previous negative interpretations of Theodor Adorno and many other 20th-century writers. Duffett's arguments are both convincing and ground-breaking ... a massive stride forward in recognizing the flexibility, imagination, multi-generational make-up, and synergy among media fans. -- B. Lee Cooper, *Newman University Popular Music and Society* In a world in which digital media are near ubiquitous, facilitating unprecedented access to and participation in mediated content, the affective preferences and attachments by which fans choose to engage with certain content over others out of the digital plethora of texts become central to understanding contemporary life and culture. *Understanding Fandom* offers an impressive overview of unparalleled scope in examining the many traditions, concepts and methodologies in the study of fans. It is an indispensable text for students and scholars alike. -- Cornel Sandvoss, Senior Lecturer, Department of Sociology, University of Surrey, UK An accessible overview that defines, organizes and develops fan studies as an area of inquiry. Mark Duffett is inclusive in his assessments and insightful in his suggestions. He offers a valuable compendium of what fandom can tell us about how we make--and are made by--our connections to popular culture. -- Joli Jensen, Hazel Rogers Professor of Communication, University of Tulsa, US

#### **About the Author**

Dr Mark Duffett is Senior Lecturer in Media and Cultural Studies at the University of Chester, UK.

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