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#NotMyShip

Extended English Abstract of “#NotMyShip: Die Entwicklung von Anti-Fandoms innerhalb populärer Fanfiction”

ABSTRACT

Fan fictions are an essential part of fandom. They interpret and expand the universes of series, serve as spaces for interaction, and indicate a series' popularity. The phenomenon of anti-fandom must also be considered in this context, as this form of fandom also (unwantedly) contributes to the popularity of certain fan practices like fan fiction writing and, in return, to the popularity of the series. Paradoxically, anti-fandoms—characterized by negative criticism and rejection—often increase the popularity of a series by fueling discussions through negative comments. Whether it is competing anti-fandoms or politically heated debates, for example on queerness between pro- and anti-shippers, these phenomena reveal the themes that are most important to fans. Fan rankings also play an important role in this context. They operate as popularity indicators that directly reveal what is popular within the fandom and what is not.

Using two quite different comparative examples, *Star Trek* and *My Hero Academia*, this paper focuses on analog fan letters and user comments on digital platforms such as Reddit and Wattpad in order to understand recent dynamics in anti-fandom discourses within popular fan fiction communities. Both the historical development of anti-fandoms in fanzines and their current manifestations online are analyzed to understand how debates about canon, fan hierarchies, and socio-political issues, such as LGBTQIA+ representation, shape the reception and production of pop-cultural artifacts. Furthermore, the shift from analogue to digital media has not only expanded the scale and intensity of anti-fandom but also introduced new tools for measuring and negotiating popularity (e.g., tagging and ranking systems). By analyzing historical and ongoing examples of fandom wars, this paper seeks to deepen the understanding of how fan cultures negotiate conflicts, demonstrating that fandoms are dynamic and contested spaces shaped by both collaboration and opposition.

KEYWORDS

anti-fandom, popularity, canon, fan fiction, shipping

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Anne Deckbar is a PhD candidate at the Collaborative Research Center 1472 “Transformations of the Popular” at the University of Siegen, where she has been working on the project *The Serial Politics of Pop Aesthetics: Superhero Comics and Science Fiction Pulp Novels since 2021*. Her research focuses on fan studies, comics studies, seriality and paratext, as well as memory culture and pop culture.