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Book Review of, Seeing fans: Representations of fandom in media and popular culture, edited by Lucy Bennett and Paul Booth

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REVIEW

Seeing fans: Representations of fandom in media and popular culture, edited by Lucy Bennett and Paul Booth

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[0.1] Keywords—Fan studies; Media celebrity; Media industry

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<https://doi.org/10.3983/twc.2019.1568>.

Lucy Bennett and Paul Booth. *Seeing fans: Representations of fandom in media and popular culture*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2016. Hardcover £110 (336p) ISBN 978-1-5013-1845-0; paperback £28.99 ISBN 978-1-5013-3954-7; EPUB/MOBI £31.30 ISBN 978-1-5013-1846-7; PDF £31.30 ISBN 978-1-5013-1847-4.

[1] More than ever, the image of the fan is being redefined. Once told they needed to "get a life," fans have become established in contemporary society and are being discussed in terms of their power, impact, and potential as sociocultural agents. *Seeing Fans* interrogates such relevance, raising an instructive question about fans as influencers in popular culture: Does the contemporary media industry recognize fans as something more than silly, overeager devotees? This anthology offers a mixed response to this question by including a variety of stories told by fans, acafans, and media professionals about how fans are seen in media and popular culture.

[2] In their introduction, editors Lucy Bennett and Paul Booth explain that the collection explores the "multifaceted, complex, and sometimes contradictory" (2) aspects of fans, emphasizing that "fandom is constantly evolving" (8). Indeed, the arguments by the collection's contributors are multifaceted, complex, and contradictory. By turns reinforcing and repudiating each other, the collection's twenty-five chapters situate authors in conversation, granting readers an understanding of where fans are positioned in the current cultural landscape.

[3] Part 1, "Documenting Fans: Shades of Reality," looks at a handful of documentary films about fans of local and global musicians. Chapter 1 pays attention to a less spotlighted fan identity: the disabled fan. Mark Duffett problematizes the illustration of disabled fans in the documentary *Mission to Lars* (2012) as needing the help of normal-bodied, socially successful nonfans, although he acknowledges that the film overall attempts to proffer a different reading about a fan. Also in this