



Millennial Fandom: Television Audiences in the Transmedia Age

By Louisa Ellen Stein

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No longer a niche or cult identity, fandom now colors our notions of an expansive generational construct—the millennial generation. Like fans, millennials are frequently cast as active participants in media culture, spectators who expect opportunities to intervene, control, and create. At the same time, long-standing fears about fans’ cultural unruliness manifest in rampant stories of millennials’ technological over-dependence and lack of moral boundaries.

These conflicting narratives of entrepreneurial creativity and digital immorality operate to quell the growing threat represented by millennials’ media agency. With fan activities becoming ever more visible on social media platforms including YouTube, Facebook, LiveJournal, Twitter, Polyvore, and Tumblr, the fan has become the avatar of our digital hopes and fears.

In an ambitious study encompassing a wide range of media texts, including popular television series like *Kyle XY*, *Glee*, *Gossip Girl*, *Veronica Mars*, and *Pretty Little Liars* and online works like *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, as well as fan texts from blog posts and tweets to remix videos, YouTube posts, and image-sharing streams, author Louisa Ellen Stein traces the circulation of the contradictory tropes of millennial hope and millennial noir. Looking at what millennials do with digital technology demonstrates the molding impact of commercial representations, and at the same time reveals how millennials are undermining, negotiating, and changing those narratives.

This generation—and the fans it represents—is actively transforming the media landscape into a dynamic, culturally transgressive space of collective authorship. Offering a rich and complex vision of the relationship between fandom and millennial culture, *Millennial Fandom* will interest fans, millennials, students, and scholars of contemporary media culture alike.

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Editorial Review

Review

“A distinctive and original take on participatory culture, *Millennial Fandom* is an impressive study of the cultural and gendered ramifications of social media engagement. It will become essential reading for anyone hoping to understand millennials and the impact of their attitudes toward gender and media use on contemporary culture.”—Jennifer Gillan, author, *Television Brandcasting*

“Stein’s work traverses the networked contours of a rapidly fragmenting media culture to represent fandom in positive, political, and productive ways. She spotlights a new generation and offers an important window on contemporary developments in transmedia storytelling and net-based fan cultures.”—Mark Duffett, author, *Understanding Fandom*

About the Author

Louisa Ellen Stein is an assistant professor at Middlebury College. The book review editor for both *Cinema Journal* and *Transformative Works and Cultures*, she also coedited the essay collections *Teen Television* and *Sherlock and Transmedia Fandom*. Her research interests include the media literacies at work in fandom, gender, and generational influences in media culture, and transmedia technology. She is a proud member of Vatican Cameos, the 2013 winning team of the transmedia scavenger hunt GISHWHES (Greatest International Scavenger Hunt the World Has Ever Seen). She lives in East Middlebury, Vermont.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lawrence Gregory:

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