

Interdisciplinary Media Studies: Transmediality, Closure and Technology in Fandom and Comic Studies

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Comics cannot be isolated from their active audiences. Scholars have investigated the fans who attend San Diego Comic Con (Scott, 2011), who draw their own manga (Lamerichs, 2014), and who socialize at comic stores (Woo, 2011). Despite this deep entwinement of comics with their audiences, comic studies and fan studies have developed as two different disciplines, which could work together more closely. Whereas comic studies often tend to center on the medium comics, fan scholars commonly investigate how audiences respond to a particular source-text, and remix or rewrite the story.

In this paper, I argue that the two fields can be connected, and could profit from each other's outlook and concepts. I focus on three areas where these disciplines find common ground. The first is transmediality, meaning that stories are increasingly shifting between different media. Iconic characters, such as Batman, have been rewritten many times in comics, cartoons, games and film.

The second concept is narrative closure. Increasingly TV shows are rebooted or finished comic format (e.g. *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*, *Power Rangers*). What happens when comics function primarily as an ending to a story, and thereby have a very particular function in a transmedia story?

Finally, technology is changing how comics are created, and how their fans communicate. The platform economy, with platforms such as Kickstarter, is drastically changing the relationship between fans and creators. Moreover, blockchain and artificial intelligence will soon impact who earns money with comics and who creates them.

Overall, I push for interdisciplinary media studies, in which words such as comic or fandom studies are just labels that we should move beyond. To truly understand the current media landscape, we need to stay relevant and focus on larger trends in entertainment.

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Biography:

Dr. Nicolle Lamerichs is senior lecturer and team lead at Creative Business at HU University of Applied Sciences, Utrecht. She holds PhD in media studies at Maastricht University (2014). Her book *Productive Fandom* explores intermediality and affective reception in fan cultures. Her research focuses on participatory culture and new media, specifically the nexus between popular culture, costumes, storytelling and play.