

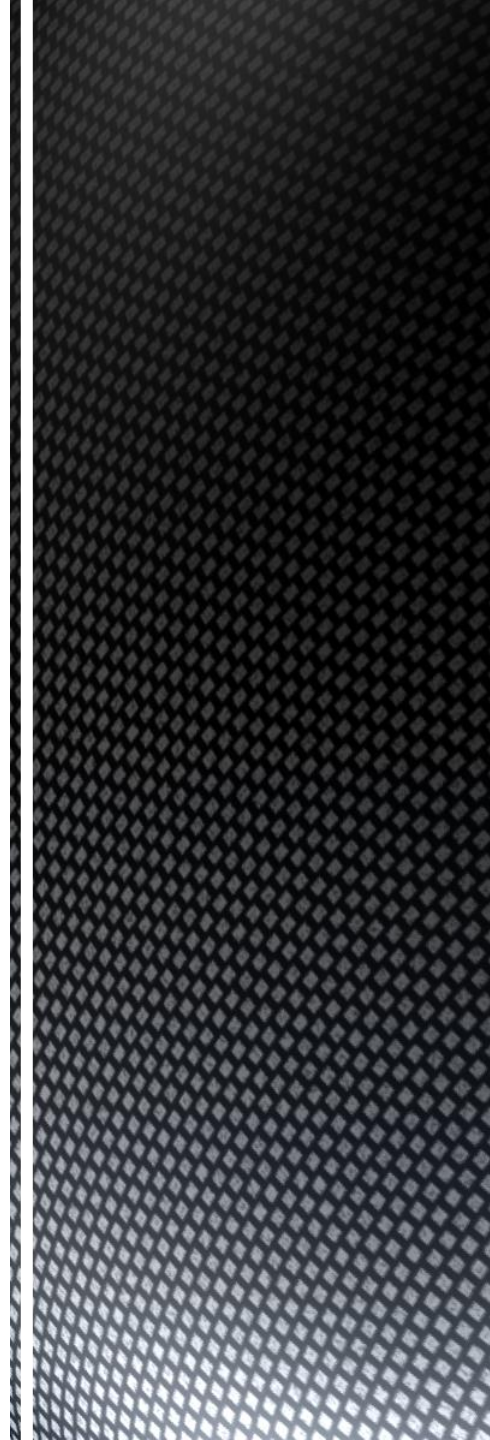
FASHION & CONSUMER EXPERIENCE

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FANDOM

Key-words



- Fans constitute a particularly active and vocal community of consumers whose activities direct attention onto [the] process of cultural appropriation. (Jenkins 1992, p. 28)

FANS

- Michel de Certeau (1984) has characterized such active reading as “poaching,” an impertinent raid on the literary preserve that takes away only those things that are useful or pleasurable to the reader:
- “Far from being writers ... readers are travellers; they move across lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write, despoiling the wealth of Egypt to enjoy it themselves” (174).
- De Certeau’s “poaching” analogy characterizes the relationship between readers and writers as an ongoing struggle for possession of the text and for control over its meanings. (Jenkins 1992, p. 24)

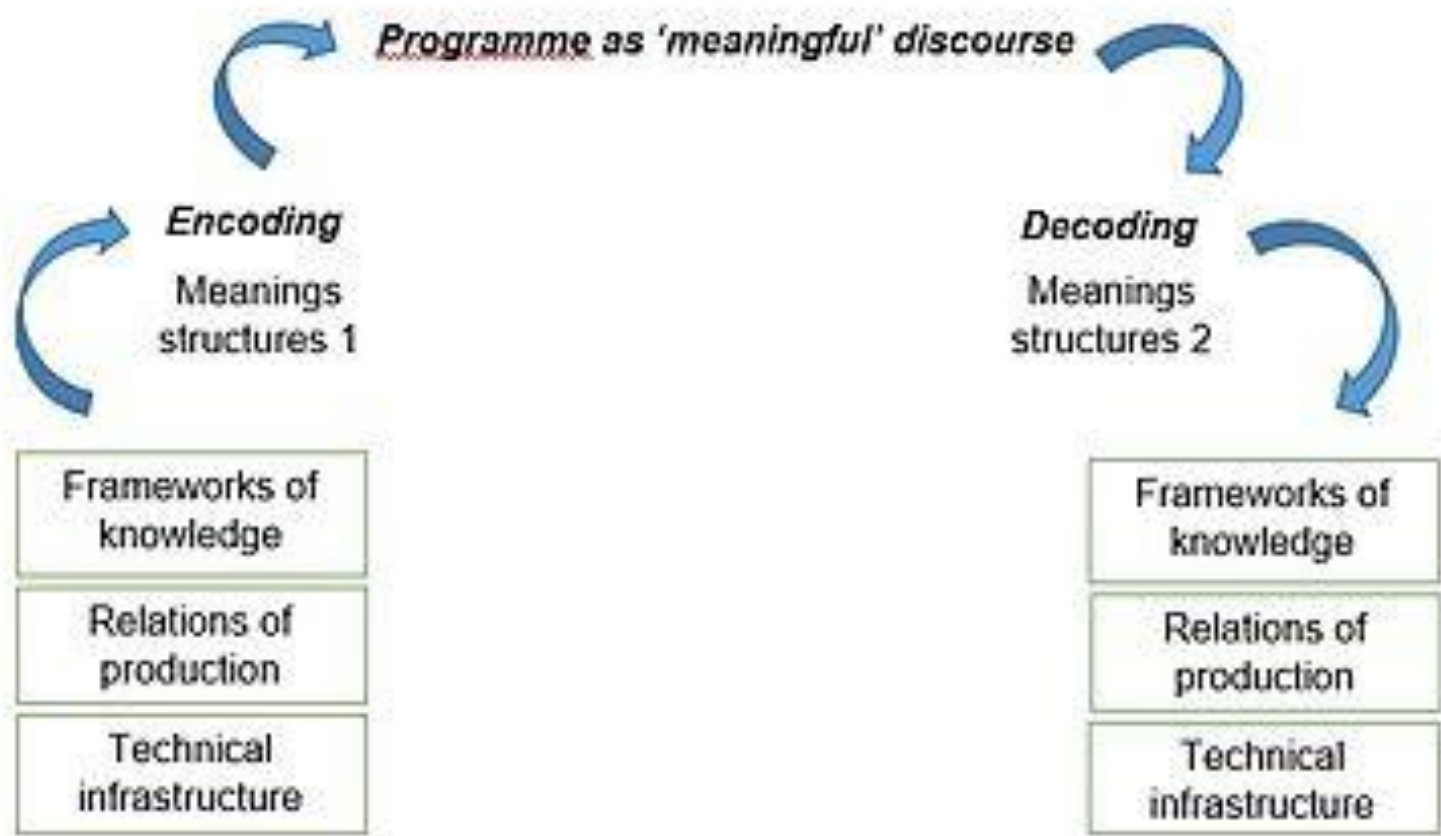
FANS AS TEXTUAL POACHERS

- De Certeau offers us another key insight into fan culture: readers are not simply poachers; they are also “nomads,” always in movement, “not here or there,” not constrained by permanent property ownership but rather constantly advancing upon another text, appropriating new materials, making new meanings (174).

FANS AS NOMADS

- **The semiotic productivity:** is characteristic of popular culture as a whole rather than fan culture specifically. It is essentially interior, being concerned with how audience members understand media texts.

FANS AS PRODUCERS



FANS AS PRODUCERS

- **The textual productivity:** Fans produce and circulate among themselves texts which are often crafted with production values as high as any in the official culture. The key differences between the two are economic rather than ones of competence, for fans do not write or produce their texts for money (Fiske 1992:39).
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cHArumGeGLM>

- **The enunciative productivity:** fan talk is the generation and circulation of certain meanings of the object of fandom within a local community... But important though talk is, it is not the only means of enunciation available. The styling of hair or make-up, the choice of clothes or accessories are **ways of constructing a social identity** and therefore of asserting one's membership of a particular fan community (Fiske 1992:38).

FANS AS PRODUCERS



- “the self is a symbolic project which the individual must actively construct out of the available symbolic materials, materials which "the individual weaves into a coherent account of who he or she is, a narrative of self-identity."
(Thompson 1995)

THE REFLEXIVE PROJECT OF THE SELF

- «Precisely because identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies» (Hall 2000. «*Who needs 'identity'*» «?»).
- Especially media discourses and practices.

BUILDING IDENTITY

- (gender) identity is “a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame”
- One’s gender is performatively constituted in the same way that one’s choice of clothes is curtailed, perhaps even predetermined, by the society, context, economy, etc. within which one is situated.
- Performativity is a series of practices which mark body according to a grid of intelligibility in such a way that the body itself becomes a familiar fiction
- Identity itself is an illusion retroactively created by our performances
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bo7o2LYATDc>

PERFORMATIVITY



- We live in the 'performative society' – a society in which the human is crucially constituted through performance.
- *Contemporary life is a matter of spectacle: the goal is to see and to be seen.*

PERFORMATIVE SOCIETY

- *Poaching* is no longer a struggle against the media industry power, but has shifted itself in the *cut & remix* culture enhanced by digital technologies.
- *Collecting* is now guaranteed by endless online repertoires provided both by media and grassroots products, according to the logic of collective intelligence and sharing.
- *Consumption* concerns more traceable and searchable objects whose value lies precisely in being associated with specific cult media imageries.
- *Performing* becomes an ordinary everyday practice managed through the symbolic materials provided by media.

FANDOM PRACTICES ... NOW

- One of the link between fans and cult products is expressed in terms of fashion poaching, and then, in terms of fashion performance.
- Within fandom communities, the appropriation of clothes – or better, the appropriation of costumes – has always been functional as the representation of the individual's identity as a fan in contexts that validate these appropriations and performances (such as fan meetings, conventions, parties).

FASHION POACHING AND PERFORMING

- 'cosplay' is a typical fandom trait and represents a negotiation space between 'objective' processes (the industrially produced media text that pushes the consumption) and the 'subjective' processes that are able to explain the fan's interest, passion and engagement (Hills 2002).
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sE_d5rD4U6Y



- Fashion industries are aware of the fan's constant search for fashion items and brands, so they have begun to colonize the media imagery in a less indirect way.
- For example, they exploit the product placement strategy, which can be viewed as a sort of merchandising of the media protagonists' identities and can expand the media consumption experience.
- Audiences, in fact, wish to identify with the media content and are ready to buy original clothes from the media content.

FASHION BRANDS AND PRODUCT PLACEMENT

- There is not a single and distinctive model to imitate, but many fashion experiences to be inspired by in representing the self.
- The audience seems uninterested in imitating a specific role model by assuming it as a whole (Gauntlett 2002), especially because it is often set in a context very different from their own (such as historical, dystopian or foreign), or because the audience loves some characters' traits while rejecting some other features.

**TO IMITATE OR
TO BE INSPIRED
BY?**