

Hello? Hi, Leah. Hello. Hi. I'm so sorry that my my background is incredibly messy.

Let me blur that. There we go. Very nice to meet you. Thank you so much for participating. Yeah.

Not a problem. The assigned levels are okay and everything and Yeah. Yeah. Can you see me and hear me as well? Yes.

Yeah. Yeah. Cool. So, this interview will be, like, recorded and used only for academic purposes inside CSM. Are you okay with that?

Can you just tell me a little bit about your research project? Because I don't think I've, like, seen it sort of fully set out what the nature of your project is. So the nature of the project is like, a project that changes or impacts like, the, that, that challenges the, that challenges the misconception of fan fiction up to now. So basically challenging the social stigma, but up to them, I'm trying to find out what the misconception is exactly and what the social social stigma of like fan fiction and fandom inside the UK is up to now and the change and the intervention that has, taken place that, that, up that that that you, you know of and of are often an expert of and up to now the impact of the entire thing. Yeah.

Okay. Yeah. And, is this for like a thesis or this is for a project, like for action research Okay. With, within CSM and, that will take place in December. Like, the the final outcome will, like, will will, like, project the final outcome in December.

Okay. Yeah. Alright. So, yes. I I I got your, your consent form.

I haven't had a chance to sign and fill out yet. Is it okay if we if we do the interview and then I can do that afterwards? Yeah. Yeah. Of course.

Of course. Yeah. Thank you so much. So, just for a little bit of, I've forgotten the words. I'm sorry.

I had I had COVID 2 weeks ago, and it's giving me terrible brain fog. But, just, in any way, putting cards on the table. Yeah. So my research was not very focused specifically on fan creation, fan fiction. It was more fandom as a as an entity as a whole.

Right. So some of the questions that were on your sheet about fan fiction and fan creation in specific, I may not be able to give very detailed answers on. But, I will I will give you as much information as I can. Right. And as the other things that are in there, I can definitely talk about with, a bit more detail.

Have you had a copy of my thesis as well, by the way? Up to now, no. But Okay. It is available for download from academia.edu or from ResearchGate, but I can also just send you a PDF of it if you'd like to see it. That would be brilliant.

Thank you so much. It was very hard to find that. Yeah. Yeah. No.

I'll do that after the after meeting. Yeah. Cool. Cool. So where would you like to, would you like to, like, pick up pick a question to start, like or or would you want want me to do it?

I mean, if if you want to go through the the, the structure of the questions that you sent me looks pretty straightforward, and that seems like a good way of of doing it. So if you want to, go through those, if I start rambling at any point, please do just feel free to stop. I I have ADHD, and I don't know that I'm doing it. So Same, actually. Same.

Definitely. Yeah. Oh, cool. Oh, yeah. So if if I'm talking too long about something, or I seem to be getting off the point, do feel free to wrangle me back in.

If there's anything that I don't feel like I'm gonna be qualified to talk about, I will tell

you, and I'll give you as much information as I can, but then we can just go that way. So That's absolutely perfect. Okay. So could you share a bit about, like, your general background and what inspired you to, like, specialize in anime, manga, and fandom studies in general? Like, what are your concerns in this?

So terms of my background, I grew up in Northern Ireland in the eighties. Yeah. And, at that time, there was a little bit of anime on TV. It was generally hybrid, production. So it was things like mysterious cities of gold, Ulysses 301, Dog Tanyan and the 3 Musker Hounds, which were sort of Japanese European coproductions, which have their own interesting stories to them.

But the the key thing is that there were a lot of Japanese cartoons that were being shown on television in the UK in the eighties and in the seventies as well, and even further back, in fact. The the earliest I find was the, I think the late fifties, maybe in the sixties, which was Marine Boy, the first thing first anime shown on UK TV. But, at that time, they had been kind of stripped of anything that made them stand out as being Japanese. So people who were watching at that time, as far as they knew, it was just another cartoon. Right.

And the interesting thing talking about, about those animes that people my age were watching and people who were older than me were watching is, how despite the fact that we didn't know that they were Japanese, there was nothing signifying that they were Japanese. There was something about them that kind of stuck with us. And a lot of people who are my age for sure who go to anime comms now still very fondly remember those things. And when manga videos sort of came up in the nineties, we sort of ended up going, oh, that looks kind of like that thing I used to enjoy and kind of fold it in that way. Right.

In terms of why my research sort of took me that way, I, I when I first went to university, I did, my bachelor's degree in media studies. And at that time, media studies was about theory rather than production. And, the good thing about doing that is sort of learning sort of cultural criticism techniques and having the freedom to apply it to anything that you wanted. So for when I wrote my, dissertation for my bachelor's degree, I had the freedom to write about anime. That's brilliant.

And, because because it was basically, like, you know, take the frameworks that we have taught you and apply it to something. Right. So I wrote about, representations of women in anime because it was a it was a it's a straightforward subject. It's great for a bachelor's dissertation. I then did a master's degree in media theory.

And for that, I chose to write about, romance, fantasy, and sexuality, I think, in Revolutionary Girl, Lutece, which I'm I'm I wasn't as proud of that one as I was of my of my bachelor's dissertation. Can I ask something? Like, in the anime that that that you said you were centered on, are they considered, like, original works or are they, like, fan fiction or, like, are they mixed together? Or, like Oh, so the the things that I was focusing on, I I was I was focusing specifically on anime content. Right.

The original content. So the in terms of fan fan studies came along a lot later. So I came at it from a sort of, cultural studies, media theory, analysis kind of standpoint. I then after I finished my master's degree, I got a job as a journalist working for a science fiction magazine. I was brought on specifically because they wanted someone who knew anime.

Alright. And, so I was I was there, and I I was there for nearly 5 years. And by the time I left, I was very burnt out by journalism. It, journalism is exhausting. It doesn't pay you very well, and, the hours are very long and inhospitable.

And I sort of started thinking it might be nice to go back to looking at anime with a sort of academic kind of, lens. Right. And, so I ended up, going to Bathurst University initially to do a PhD. Mhmm. For various reasons, the PhD didn't happen, but it did come away with an MPhil, which is like half a PhD.

Okay. And, in that time because at Starshel, it was more just sort of straightforward cultural analysis. But at that time, fan studies as a field of study was sort of beginning to develop a little bit more. There was a fan studies network in the UK, and I was pointed in their direction. I went to one of their conferences.

I went to some other sort of, you know, animation focused conferences as well, because I was working part time, so I had the luxury of being able to do that. Mhmm. And, yeah, just kind of ended up joining in with the fan studies community. And somewhere along the line, I started thinking there hasn't really been any kind of active history of UK anime fandom in specific. Right.

There's because the US fandom is older than the UK fandom, so there's been plenty written about the Americans. Japanese, otaku culture is also documented in its own way. Funny enough, there's no fault about Australian fandom as well, but, comparatively little about UK fandom. And I thought, yeah, I've I've been involved in anime fandom for so long, not so not since the very, very beginning, but for like, since my teens. Mhmm.

And I thought, you know, if if someone's gonna do it, it may as well be me. So, yeah. So I I just started then. My thesis project basically turned into a a history of anime fandom in the UK and how it started, how it has evolved, what things made it. I I wanted to avoid the question of what makes it British because I didn't want to firstly, because I'm Irish, so I'm not British, and I didn't want to be, like, you know, I I didn't want us to be like, oh, British anime fan ever, then be like, yeah, Northern Ireland's beat, but also, when you have to try and define things like what makes something British, what makes something English, what makes something UK, it starts to get very messy.

And, so I didn't want to sort of go in and be like, what makes it particularly British? So instead, I ended up taking the tack of what are the things about UK fandom that are different from American fandom, European fandom, and how did it end up that way? What was it about the culture of the UK that shaped anime fandom? So that's kind of the tackle I ended up taking. Right.

Okay. So in your experience up to now, what are the most common misconceptions about fan created content, like fan fiction, fan art, like, like, anything, that is fan created? The misconception or the social stigma is is there, like, anything related to that? There was a lot more in in terms of anime fandom, there was a lot more of it in the nineties because anime was still very niche. Manga video was producing a manga video was releasing a very particular type of anime, and so that was kind of the conception that people had.

And so anything that was related to anime was viewed with a degree of suspicion. Mhmm. In terms of fan created works, I don't know that there's anything in anime fandom specifically which is unique to anime fandom. The, the suspicion and the stigma about fan created works tends to be a thing that affects, all fandoms, really. All fandoms.

And, so this is, like I said, this is a thing which I am not so specialist on. It's not a thing that I covered in as much detail. Other people have talked about this, in more detail, and I've I've cited them in, in my thesis, so you can get citations from there. But the the stigmas about fan works tend to be, there's a feeling that they are lesser than other forms of creative expression. And, you know, when I was in my teens, I wrote a little bit of fan fiction.

I sort of dabbled in doing some, you know, fan art and stuff, and, you know, the the fan art wasn't very good. I'm definitely much more of a writer than I am an artist. But, but, yeah, there's it's that feeling of, oh, well, you know, it's it's not been properly published. So so so it's not valid, you know, and, you know, you don't have qualifications, and, you you don't have the backing of, sort of big companies and you've with fan fiction in particular because, it's stuff that is written by, you know, people who are not doing it professionally and doing it entirely because it's a labor of love and, because there isn't really, like, gatekeeping in terms of their ability to publish it and, you know, the the the arrival of the Internet makes it so much easier to share your work around. When I started out, if you wanted to share your fan fiction with people, the Internet was very much in its infancy.

It was sort of bulletin boards, and, you know, it was easier to access those if you were affiliated to a university. But if you were if you were writing fan fiction and you wanted to share it with people, you kind of had to know a fanzine that might publish it. So so there was an editorial process to an extent. And, then, you know, once the Internet developed a bit and it was much easier to share things and, the size of files was less of an issue. And then, so you started out with, you know, people sharing things on Life Journal, which was a free microblogging service.

And then, fanfiction.net came up, and that was a place where you could just upload, anything, and there was no real editorial process. I never used fanfiction.net myself, so I don't know if they had, like, a moderating moderating team. But regardless, it was, you know, low barrier to entry. Mhmm. And then other things which have come up since, like, Wattpad, archive or our archive of our own.

And archive of our own, as I understand it, does, they have more of an active kind of moderation role, but at the same time, they're still they're they're relatively hands off. So, you know, they will moderate it if they get complaints about it, I guess. Right. But, but, otherwise, there's nothing stopping you from uploading basically anything that you want, and as long as it's tagged appropriately so people don't find something that they're not looking for by accident. You know?

But, because it's low barrier to entry, it's produced by people who are doing it not for professional gain, but for, for their love of the thing that they're a fan of and to share with other fans. Mhmm. And I think as well to an extent because Mhmm. Fan creation is largely run by women. Okay.

I don't know who this quote came from. I read this on Tumblr a long time ago, but there's a quote which is that, in fandom, women are creators and men are curators. So men are more likely to Nice. Yeah. Men are more likely to collect stuff and that's how they express their fandom.

They they collect things. They they own, you know, figures and, trading cards and that kind of thing. And women are more likely to be the ones who are producing fan art, fan fiction. Cosplay for a long time was very female dominated. Mhmm.

So, and it's very easy when when when women are interested in things, and this is the thing that goes back as far back as you wanna go with fandom in general. If women become interested in the thing, it becomes devalued. Yeah. Yeah. And you you look at the way, you know, journalists in the sixties talked about female fans of the Beatles.

Mhmm. And, my friend Helen McCarthy, who is, you know, she she has been involved in

anime fandom in the UK since way before day 1. She was there right at the very beginning. Yeah. She started, like, going to, sci fi conventions.

Mhmm. And I remember talking to her about this and thinking you know, I I thought natural progression was science fiction conventions, which would then, you know, anime was like a natural offshoot of that. But talking to her, it was interesting because there was actually, like, an intermediary step in there because the old school science fiction conventions tended to be more literature, trad sci fi, and, you know, hard sci fi. And it was, Asimov and, Tolkien and, you know, the the sort of the classic sort of works of literature. And they were always very sniffy about people who were coming in who were fans of, media, which when Helen says media, she means television.

Right. So, she was going in as a Star Trek fan first and foremost, and, you know, Doctor Who fandom as well Uh-huh. And heavily, heavily female. And, apparently, the general response from the male fans who were there, who were there for their hard sci fi, their trad sci fi, who were very, very sniffy about it, was to, basically treat the female fans who were there as lesser because they were because they were into the media stuff, they they were into the soft stuff, you know, it's like, that's not real sci fi, and it's it's so wild because, like, so much of the sort of the classic sci fi, there are so many, like, I I remember thinking Doctor Who was very much a male thing. And, you know, the resurgence of it then in the, in the mid 2000s was a lot more balanced because it was for a modern audience.

But, I mean, I I remember growing up with a little bit of Doctor Who and my dad in particular being like, this isn't for girls. Yeah. And, and and, anyway, Star Trek is, you know, the the the stereotype of the Trekkie is broadly speaking male, and, the stereotype of the sort of obsessed fanboy is broadly speaking male, and, it's more recently that sort of, you know, the the acknowledgment of fangirl has come in, but all the sort of the older traditional media stuff has this negative male stereotype attached to it, and it's so funny because, according to Helen in the UK, the way it started out, this was how the women were coming in, and the women were coming in and carving out their own space. And, anime fandom kind of did a similar thing. Right.

Anyway, I'm sorry. I'm aware that I should have gotten off topic there, but, yeah, the one of the sort of the big, stigmas about fan created content is, I think, down to the fact

that it is gendered to a degree Right. The fact that it is done by people who are unqualified Mhmm. And, and the fact that, like I say, there is low barrier to entry. You there's nothing stopping you from writing 10,000 words about, a romantic pairing that never happened, like, but you wish it did and then putting it on the Internet.

And you don't even need to use, something like, Wattpad or a03. You if if you can if you have access to the Internet, you can probably you can sign up for Tumblr for free. Yeah? You can you can very easily get, like, a Blogger, you know, page or, or WordPress. These are free to use, and they do a lot of hard work for you.

So, yeah, I think that's a reason why there is a negative stigma attached to them. And can I ask, like, the the time when this is, like, happening, is this misconception still happening, like, right now in 2024, or has it been, like, outdated, like, say in 2014 or in the 2000, like, a specific timeline in a way? The interesting things are that, again, sort of not not within anime fandom, but in some fandom circles, there has been fan works which have ended up gaining a level of legitimacy legitimacy through one means or another. So, it's it's well known that 50 Shades of Grey was originally a Twilight fan fiction. Cassandra Clare, who started out writing comedy Lord of the Rings fan fiction, then used that to leverage becoming a published author in her own right.

And, I I don't know if she still produces fan related works, but, that's you know, nonetheless, that's like oh, it's a it's a stepping stone. There's there's more you it's it's a middle finger in the face of people who are like, oh, you'll never get it. You'll never get anywhere just writing your fan fiction. And it's like, well, it's it's still writing at the end of the day. It's still through and it can still get you places.

You might just have to, you know, market it slightly differently. Market it differently. Definitely. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. And, could you share like any examples of successful interventions or like initiatives that help to change, what you know as negative perceptions of fan fiction up to now? I don't really have any specific examples for fan fiction off the top of my head. I mean, aside from, you know, the very well known things, you know, the fact that 50 Shades of Grey became such a big hit, you know, to the extent that it spawned a whole

bunch of other, you know, sort of, low rent erotica, and it was well known that that started out as, as fan fiction. But, you know, that's a that's a problematic example to use because that still came in for plenty of criticism from a whole bunch of sites.

It came in for criticism from people who were disgusted at this this idea that women had access to this this filth and were just reading it on the train. But then you also had, you know, criticism from people who were involved actively involved in kink communities and saying this is a horrible representation of who we are. You know? So I can't think of any specific examples where things have changed as a result of things that fans have done. From the anime side of things in terms of the acceptability of, anime as a medium, it has come much more from just the fact that people have kind of aged in a way that has meant that things have had to change.

And from my side of things, looking at the way anime fandom has changed in terms of the demographics, what the big sort of the big shifting point really was, the arrival of Pokemon. Oh, okay. Pokemon and, from friends who were there at the time have also cited card Captureskura. Right. Because those were 2 things which had been popular in the US.

They had been, naturalized not naturalized was what's the word for it, Localized, you know, and and again, in the way to sort of remove what, there's a Japanese academic who refers to cultural odor. Yeah. So, sanitized in a way that removes anything Japanese about them. You know, the the infamous example being, the the onigiri, the rice balls in Pokemon, which are described as jelly donuts, even though they're very clearly not jelly donuts. And, those because if they were coming in at a time where, a lot of us who were people who were my age were sort of in their late teens Mhmm.

And were just delighted to have easy regular access through through television Yeah. To an anime series. And it didn't matter that it was for children, but also children of the time were watching it and loving it. Mhmm. There's a whole section in my thesis about the, the media panic about Pokemon when it first happened.

Not so much because of the anime, but more because, there were a lot of tabloid newspapers who were very upset about the consumerism of it, which to me was very

funny because, like, you know, name me a toy franchise that is not overly consumerist, you know. But, Pokemon stuck around. It's it's been enduring. And, and I I wrote about this in my thesis. I didn't have the, the things to back it up at the time, but I do know, from having been in anime fandom for so long and seeing how things change that, there are people who grew up watching Pokemon who are now adults married with children, and their children are still able to watch Pokemon.

Mhmm. But also because, you know and it's it's market force at work. Oh, Pokemon is popular. Well, oh, Digimon. That's a similar thing.

Okay. Let's bring that in. And then you took well, oh, well, Yu Gi Oh, that's kind of similar as well. In you go. And, Did it become popular because of, like, Pokemon?

Like, it kind of, like, flowed in through the media. The the way the way the industry works is they see this thing is working, and it's making a lot of money. Right. What's a similar thing that we can use to make more money? And, you know, again, sort of the late nineties, early 2000s, there wasn't a huge amount of anime on TV, but, there was enough stuff that was coming through and which was being broadly considered unobjectionable, you know, which is a big change from the way anime was treated in the nineties.

Nineties. And, the market was just basically going, yeah, there's money in this. Let's keep going. Yeah. It's, so much of it basically comes on to capitalism.

Right. And it doesn't really matter if they're, like, original or not. It just matters, like, the, how large the audience is. And Yeah. Pretty much.

Yeah. And, and this is the other interesting thing as well as these sort of the debates about things which are clearly very anime influenced, but which, you know, are not originating from Japan. And, you know, in the process of, you know, putting because one of the things I asked in my thesis was about, people's favorite anime, or, you know, their starting points. And, the younger people, I I was it was getting a little more tricky with them because they were saying things like Avatar the Last Airbender, or or RWBY,

which to my mind, clearly anime influenced, but which I did not think personally counted as anime. And I I didn't count them as anime, but it's it's a thing to note.

And there are so many hybrid things now, where and it's because people who have grown up people who grew up watching it are now of the age where they're creating their own stuff. Yeah. And, and the number of things which end up coming into being because someone had access to tech Mhmm. That at home that they could create their own stuff on, and then that just got picked up by some aspect of the industry. I I believe, I mean, Hazbin Hotel, I think, started that way.

Mhmm. And that's, you know, very clearly got anime influence. The, the creator of, the She Ra Netflix series, I believe, also started producing her work on on the Internet and just kind of, you know, posting stuff on the Internet, and it got picked up to to work on She Ra. There was, that's Andy Stevenson. Right?

I think. Sorry? Like, Andy no. No. Stevenson.

Like, the the creator who created, like, Nimona, I think? Yes. Yes. That's what I was trying to think of. Yeah.

Again, like, I I it was wild after the movie came out. It was so well received Yeah. To then just, like, go on Tumblr and find her original concept sketches from years ago and and her reblogging them and being like, I can't believe that this was, you know, 5 years ago or whatever. And yeah. There there is more there is more crossover in terms of it's easier to get into the industry now because the Internet provides a means by which you can produce your own work and put it out there.

Getting a foothold is another thing, and you do have to do a certain amount of your own marketing, but, the the barrier to entry, again, is much lower than it was, you know, 20, 30 years ago. Right. So I think the Internet has definitely been a big force for change with a lot of things, and, the fact that it is so easy to go on the Internet and just post your work. Yeah. It Right.

So is it right to conclude that there's, like, a huge gray area between, like, what's original and what's technically fun fiction and like, there's a huge gray area in in in between in the media. And yeah. I'm not sure that I'd say there's a huge gray area, but, it's again, you start to get messy with definitions. If you wanted to take the absolute, like, stiffest definition of what is original in terms of anime content or in terms of manga content, then it is, a a product which is produced professionally in Japan by a Japanese writer, artist, Japanese production company. But then it starts to get muddy when you have things like, you know, the Koreans and the Chinese have their own versions of, of manga Yeah.

And and, you know, producing their own animated content. And then you've got Americans who are producing hybrid works, arguably hybrid works, which are very clearly influenced by the stuff that they started out watching. And and then you there's there's the messy question of, you know, well, a lot of the animation itself is produced in Korea or in China Yeah. For what is otherwise considered an American series. So then does does that they're using the same techniques.

And then you have your Production IG, for example, who work on animation for western products. I believe Production IG produced the animated segment for Kill Bill, for example. And, you know, is is that anime? Does that count as original content? Yeah.

And then as well because, you know, the works that are coming out as a result of people producing their fan works and then getting attention because they're popular on the Internet. You know, a lot I think a lot of people don't go down that sort of, that pathway, that rabbit hole to sort of say original or not original, because it's because it gets messy. Mhmm. But, but, yeah, no. I can I can see how you could make an argument for, this being, like, a sort of a legitimizing of Fan Works to an extent because yeah?

And I I don't like to say legitimizing of Fan Works because I don't I don't like to talk about Fan Works as being an illegitimate, but, but it's it's the way it sort of gets perceived. Yeah. Okay. So given your, YouTube channel and blog, how do you see, like, digital platforms in general playing a role in changing perceptions of fan created

content? I mean, we've already I've already talked about this a little bit.

I think the, and it's it's a thing I, sort of had in the conclusion of my thesis is just how how big a part, Internet the Internet is going to play and Internet platforms are going to play. And there were things that have come up since I completed my thesis, which I could not have foreseen. And, you know, things like TikTok. TikTok is a big one, and also because the thesis was completed, before the pandemic hit, and, so I I could not have foreseen how we would all be aggressively shifted onto Internet platforms and how many people would deal with not being able to, get together with their friends to talk about stuff Mhmm. In person by, finding ways of doing it online through, Zoom or Skype or and then, you know, the number of people who started recording podcasts.

Mhmm. Because and, again, you know, there are plenty of platforms that are available that make it very easy for you to create and upload your own podcast about anything you want. And, you can put it for free on on some of these platforms, and it's just there. And there's no one telling you what you have to have in it. There's no one saying, you know, you must upload x y zed about this subject.

You can just do whatever you want. And I think as long as the Internet continues to move in that direction Mhmm. You're gonna see a continued evolution and a continued hybridization Right. Of, fan content and, you know, original works. And especially because, you know, I don't know a huge amount about Webtoons, but it does seem to be like Webtoons are that kind of thing where people are making use of a platform to post things which look reasonably professional, but which are fundamentally fan works.

Right. And and, yeah, you know, TikTok as well, like, you know, TikTok my TikTok algorithm is I get a lot of cosplayers. Uh-huh. And and it's cosplayers finding ways of taking, like, trending signs which have come from somewhere else and then applying them to a cosplay. And, you know, there's a there's an argument to be made about that being a transformative work.

Mhmm. And, yeah, it's it's fascinating seeing that because, like, this this is a level of engagement that I could never have imagined when I was in my teens. Yeah. Right. And, it's, Yeah.

I think I think, basically, just because there is a lack of gatekeeping. And, I mean, you know, it remains to be seen how the Internet is gonna unfold with sort of all the, you know, things with AI and, the web 3.0 stuff and, you know, things that are, you know, arguably messy and unpleasant and Yeah. Actual low value. But, yeah, it remains to be seen how people are going to make use of those things because there's always a possibility that someone will find an inventive way of using AI, for example. Yeah.

And, yeah, I I see a few of them. I I see things like, you know, sort of, pop songs being covered by Spongebob characters. You know, you someone's using an AI voice filter. Mhmm. And, you again, I don't wanna get into the sort of the messy debate about, you know, sort the the the validity of AI in terms of, you know, well, it's scraping data from somewhere and it's, you know, it's not ethical, but then people are using it in ways that kind of recontextualizes what AI was meant to do.

Mhmm. I think things are gonna continue to evolve in that way, and I think as well the the fact that so many streaming platforms are not only, like, gleefully embracing Japanese works, but also, like, paying to produce their own. Mhmm. And, you know, the, Critical Role anime on Amazon Prime, for example. Right.

Yeah. And, Netflix, I think, was the first one to do it with a series called Knights of Cydonia, which they paid for, but which was made in Japan. And I think, yeah, basically, it's because the Internet makes it so easy to share, it makes it so much easier for fans to find each other and build communities and have, like a groundswell. Yeah. It's, it becomes much easier for the big the big companies to look at it and go, oh, well, there's a presence there.

Uh-huh. Time to exploit. Right. Okay. So, in this case, can accurate, like, archiving of fandom history, help combat, like, the the existing negative stereotypes?

Or, is it, useful in this way? Like I don't know that it would be useful per se for combating negative stereotypes. The reason why I started, wanting to archive things to do with UK anime fandom is because, so much of and because UK anime fandom is a

it's a young fandom. You know, the, the the general argument is that UK anime fandom began in 1990 at EasterCon. There are plenty of other things which happened before that, but the general kind of because, EasterCon was, like, the first anime convention in the UK where there was an actual dedicated anime screening, like, timetable.

And, and it's kind of the first place where a bunch of people were coming together and, you know, either they already knew about anime because they knew how to get it from the sort of video shops and, people who'd lived overseas who could have sent them videotapes, but then also people who had never seen it before and were interested in, you know, because they were there for sci fi. They were there for, Doctor Who or Star Trek or Lord of the Rings or, you know, any of those other things, and then finding, crossover ways of being interested. But because this was pre Internet and specifically pre broadband, so much of the material from that time is ephemeral, and so much of it is currently now being lost, Yeah. That's right. Or, or or is in danger of being lost.

And the fact is that as well, a lot of people who started out, you know, who were there at the beginning Mhmm. Who experienced a lot of that have have started to die. Right. And and they take their archives with them, unless it's actively documented. And I I really didn't want to, I didn't want things to get lost and because there were things that were that I did not experience and that I didn't know about, so I needed to talk to people who were there Mhmm.

And take their records. And, you know, again, there are sort of, the unreliable narrator kind of argument, you know, sort of, just because you were there and you're being honest in what you remember doesn't mean that you are remembering it accurately. Mhmm. But I felt that it was important to have this record as a sort of knowing where you came from kind of thing. And, I I've I've a joke that I told for years that is very it's very funny to tell young people who are going to anime conventions now, what it was like to do a masquerade in the a cosplay masquerade in the nineties.

Wow. Okay. Because, the the joke is, you know, if you go to you don't even need to go to, MCM Comic Con. You can go to one of the, the smaller, more fan run conventions and see their cosplay, masquerade. It's unrecognizable from what it was in the nineties, or rather the nineties, it's not recognizable to the the kids who are going now.

MCM Comic Con, the masquerade is arguably the biggest event for the of weekend. Uh-huh. It's a you know, they block out several hours for it. They have big prizes. They take part in big competitions.

The first anime convention I went to was in 1997. There were 12 people in the masquerade. Oh. It it lasted half an hour, and it started on time. Wow.

That is, like, really very different. Yeah. Yeah. And and I I tell this to younger people who are very used to, you know, it it's a several hours long thing. You can be waiting around for a long time.

It will probably start late because there's all this stuff that they need to pull together. Exactly. And then I'm just, like, half an hour, 12 people. Start started on time, finished on time, and there's, like yeah. Could you describe, like, what the cosplay office looked like at that time?

Oh, yeah. So, because, we were sort of putting it together by ourselves as best we could, and, you know, the the easy accessibility of cosplay materials now, you know, good quality wigs, thermoplastics, 3 d printing, oh goodness, no. Couldn't couldn't have even imagined that. I I've been to I went to an anime convention and, you know, anime conventions have become a lot more kind of, relaxed in terms of what cosplay you'll see at them. There'll be people who will do some more sort of general science fiction properties or other sort of cartoons and things.

I I went to an anime convention one time, and there was a guy in the masquerade who was wearing a full set of Warhammer 40 k armor Mhmm. Which, I think he had made out of fiberglass and foam. Yeah. Unthinkable unthinkable in nineties. You you would not have had that.

The first masquerade that I took part in, again, this was 1997, it was a convention called, Shinenkai. Yeah. There were 2 people in it who were cosplaying as, 2 characters from

Bubblegum Crisis. So one of them was one of the nightsabers in the suit of armor Right. And the other one was a boomer, which was a, like, a robot.

They were made out of, thick craft foam Mhmm. And I don't know how they shaped it, and then covered in fur fabric. Mhmm. And, you know, tell someone now who specializes in making robot suits for cosplay, suggest to them that they use upholstery foam and fur fabrics to make their costume, and they will look at you like that you've got 2 heads. That's amazing.

My, you know, I started out, you know, making, costumes. I was looking at, you know, things in anime or video games that I liked the look of and then relying on the fact that my mum knew how to use a sewing machine and could attempt to figure out how to replicate things. I see. But my very first my very first costume was, Farangese from Heroic Legend of Arslan, and that was things that I already know. To slightly interrupt because we have only like 2 and a half minutes so Oh.

I thought it was 45 minutes. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. It is technically.

I think so. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Hold on.

Sorry. Yeah. Are we still linking? Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. I mean, it should have another 10 minutes, I think. Interesting. Okay. Okay.

Cool. Cool. Cool. Okay. Okay.

Yeah. So so so sorry. Carry on. Could you, like, Yeah. Yeah.

Could you, like, expand on, like, the reaction, like, of the audience, like, the general public, what their reaction, like, were when when they saw, like, people wearing cosplay

outfits, like, from the 19 nineties to now. Yeah. So even that that's that's a relatively recent thing. I it it it blows my mind a little bit now to see people who go to things like MCM, and they're in full cosplay on the tube because, you know, when I started out in the 90 there was there was the shyness of budget in the nineties, and, you know, into the 2000s. And you you brought your costume to the place where you're going to be cosplaying and you changed into it and you stayed there, and, you know, the the closest we got to sort of going out in public in costumes was at Monami Con which is the UK's longest running fan run convention because there's a McDonald's, like, opposite the hotel Yeah.

And people didn't wanna just, like, go get changed out of their costume to go to McDonald's and get, like, some chicken nuggets, so they were just going in costume. And the first few times, the staff were sort of bewildered by it, but they've been at the same site for so long now that the staff are just used to it. Mhmm. And, people just in general are are really used to it now as well. And, I, you know, I I'm still very shy about the idea of going out in public in costume Mhmm.

Rather than getting changed at whichever venue I'm going to, but there are lots people who you know, I've I've taken the DLR to MCM Comic Con, on Comic Con weekend, and everyone's getting on in full costume, and they're getting on at, Canning Town. So they've come there on this Jubilee line as well. So, you know, people are people are not shy about it, and maybe because it's London, people don't tend to sort of stare at people quite as much, but, but, yeah, there's just a more general kind of knowledge and acceptance of it, and words like cosplay have entered into, like, general vernacular. Yeah. You know, people talk about cosplay in terms of things that have nothing to do with cosplay, like costume play.

They they tend to talk about it in terms of, like, someone affecting the image of something else. You know, I've seen it in politician circles. I I'm sure I remember hearing Keir Starmer at one point saying that Boris Johnson was cosplaying as such and such in terms of being a sort of a political leader. Uh-huh. And it's interesting to see Shit.

Hello. I'm so sorry for that. Sorry. That's okay. I'm so sorry.

The the the meeting had an error. I'm so sorry. Please continue. We're very sorry. Yeah.

Yeah. No. I was I was saying about sort of seeing how, fandom language has been co-opted by, non fandom circles and places that you wouldn't really expect to see it. And it is in feels like politics, and you're seeing it being, you know, invoked in things which are not anime related, and, or things that are not fandom related. And, yeah, I think it's just it speaks to the pervasiveness of, this culture and, the visibility of fan culture because, yeah, and I keep going back to the same point, but I think the the the Internet means that there is a very low barrier to entry.

There is very low gatekeeping, and, it's very easy to disseminate, things to do with your fandom in specific and also fandom as a whole. Oh, okay. And what advice would you give to, like, fans and creators to better communicate the value of their work to a broader to a broader audience? Like, fan fandom creators of, 2024, say? Yeah.

See, that's that's an interesting thing to ask because I'm I grew up in anime fandom at a time when society as a whole was actively hostile to it. Yes. And it's and especially actively hostile to it if you were a female fan of it because, manga video was very consciously choosing to release stuff that was, aimed at a young male audience. There was a lot of sex in it. There was a lot of violence in it.

It was, I think it's Jonathan Clements who uses the phrase the beer and curry crowd. It was stuff that was being released for the explicit purpose of appealing to young men who were going out on a Friday, Saturday night, getting drunk, getting a curry, and just wanted to watch something that was gonna be, you know, extreme. Yeah. Yeah. Because young men have not changed.

So, as a female fan in the nineties, if you were into anime, because this the overwhelming perception of anime was the manga video output. And, you kind of just learned that you had to be stubborn with it. You just had to dig your heels in and say, I'm not going anywhere. And, the, the fact that as well, and this was, like, again, you're from the pre anime fandom. You know, the the media fans, the women who were going to try out sci fi conventions and saying, we're we're making our space and you can't get rid of us.

Yeah. There's an you have to be stubborn, and you have to kind of, like, stick to what you're doing. Mhmm. And so from my side of things, like, you know, advice to people who want to, you know, produce their own, fan fiction or produce their own fan art and, they they can put their stuff online, but they're, you know, worried about people making fun of them. People are always gonna make fun.

It's it's the nature of things, and, you know, it's, it's it's interesting looking at sort of intergenerational, arguments on the Internet, and, you know, sort of gen z is calling them millennials cringe, and, yes, like, everyone. It's it is the nature of being that young people call older people cringe. It may have different name at different times, but it's fundamentally, you you look at people who are older than you and you should go, that's that's just embarrassing. That's stupid. It's like date.

Yeah. Every everyone is going to be a critic. The best thing that you can do is to, stick to your guns. If it's still bringing you pleasure, if it's still bringing you joy, aside from the criticism, and especially if you have managed to build yourself into a community. And it's so easy to find community, on the Internet these days.

You can draw strength from that. You can continue going that way and, expressing your love of whatever it is you are a fan of through that. And, you know, at the end of the day, you can you can be criticized. You know, you can you can post a cosplay video on TikTok or, you know, a a, like, fan animation on YouTube, and you may get some negative comments from people. But, the negative comments are not gonna stop you from like, they're not gonna physically get in the way of you being able to produce more stuff.

If you stop producing stuff off the back of negative comments, it's because you have decided to. And yeah. So this this is where I go back to. You just have to learn to be stubborn. You gotta dig your heels and say, I'm not going.

I'm happy here, and I'm not leaving. Yeah. And, and, you know, and again, you know, if, if you're, if what you're doing is not hurting anyone, then why does anyone have the

right to tell you to go? Yeah. Definitely.

I I think I'm guessing. I I think I'm, I I'm wildly guessing that fan fiction has been like, compared to either porn or erotic, like, in in history. Correct? Oh, yeah. I mean, again, you start getting messy in terms of your what what is the definition of pornography?

You know, does it have to be sexual? And, you know, it it's, there's plenty of nonsexual fan fiction, but which nonetheless exists to act as a form of wish fulfillment for the reader, for the writer, and, you know, sort of the the the phenomenon of, your name, fan fiction where it's, you know, it's it's fan fiction written about a character in a, a TV show or, from the something else. Yeah. And as you're reading it, you see, like, where it says y n. And when you see y n, you put your own name in.

So you are reading the fan fiction as yourself. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And and there may be no sexual content in it, but you there there could be an argument that could be made about there being a a pornographic element to that because it's a form of wish fulfillment.

But, I mean, who cares? Yeah. Yeah. But no. But, and for sure there is an awful lot of, and there always has been a lot of fan fiction and fan art which has had a sexual element to it.

Definitely. And, you know, I I was I was discussing with some people recently and, yes, yes, someone being like, oh, you know, shipping started with the X Files. And I was just like, the the word shipping may have started with the X Files fandom, but shipping as it as it is had been around for a long time. And and then people were sort of saying, oh, you know, Kirk and Spock, and I was like, oh, no. Go back further.

Go back way, way, way further. Before the 19 nineties. Before Sorry? Before the 19 nineties. Even before that.

Before the nineties, before the sixties. I I know that there was Lord of the Rings fan

content. Wow. Yeah. And you can go back even further than that.

I, I I wouldn't be able to, like, off the top of my head, I couldn't say exactly at what point, but as long as there have been works of entertainment, there have been fans of those works of entertainment, and there have been people who have wanted to make their own stuff. Right. Yes. I think, actually I need to double check this, but I think, Emma, the novel Emma Yeah. Bartered out as, Pride and Prejudice fan fiction or Jane Austen fan fiction.

It was, like, the the author, like, centered in on a lesser known character who was in a Jane Austen book and went, oh, what about her story? And just, like, wrote this whole thing about it. I need to double check that. Don't do not quote me definitively on that, but I'm sure I read somewhere that, like, it it started out as a work of, they wouldn't have had the terminology for it, but it was fundamentally fan fiction. Yeah.

And, yes. And again, you calling it pornography, trying to sort of denigrate it in that way, it does a lot of it come down to, you know, there's no gatekeeping. It's not a professional thing. It's largely done by women. It's an easy enough thing to tear down, and especially if you are very, sort of, you know, stuck in your ways about how, literature ought to be or how, storytelling ought to be or how creative works ought to be, how art ought to be.

And, I I think this is why fans, in particular, do need to develop, they need to develop a thick skin. They need to learn how to be stubborn and dig their heels in. I I feel like so much of this comes back to the same concept over and over again because, the more things change, the more things stay the same. Like, you have a bigger platform now, and it's easier to get to, but people are still going to be critical of it. So you need to have the same defense mechanisms that we had, you know, in the nineties, in the eighties, even further back.

Right. Okay. Cool. I only have, like, a couple of questions left. So, how do you think how do you think that, can we foster a more inclusive and positive perception of fan of fan created works in the future?

Like, up to now, we have, like, archive archive of our own and, I think OTW and, like, a lot of, like and Reddit and a lot of like online social media that's like an official, platform for fan for fan fiction. And, do you think, that can foster, like, a more inclusive and positive perfection. I think the fact that fan studies academics are so often coming from a fan you know, they're they're fans first and foremost and then academic second, or they they have to try to get the balance between the 2. The the talk of the Aka fan, the scholar fan. Yeah.

The fact that fan studies is, you know, becoming more and more apparent and more and more sort of well established. It's I I mean, I still get people who I I say to them, you know, my academic specialism is fan studies, and they sort of look at me like ceiling fans? I'm just like, no. No. Like like fans of stuff.

And it's the the idea of it being an academic field of study in and of itself is still kind of new to people, but there are people who are working in that field who are very well, qualified and knowledgeable to talk about some fandom phenomena that we see now, which may not, on a first blush, look like fan phenomena. And, I I remember seeing in the in the immediate wake of the the riots in, on 6th January, I saw fan academics saying, here's why a fan academic is a good person to talk about this. Because what you were seeing, it was it was violence. It was a mob. It was a riot.

Mhmm. They were acting off the back of the fact that they were fans of something. Ah. And that may be a sort of simplistic or a slightly off kilter way of describing it, but at the end of the day, they were people who were so into Donald Trump that that that they were willing to overthrow the government for it. Wow.

You know? And it's important to understand these things. And, you know, and again, like, I, I'm a big fan of folding ideas on YouTube, and I've watched his video essay on, NFTs, a a good few times, NFTs and, metaverse and, and the meme stocks phenomenon. And I there's one of them where he says that, it's not a fandom as we generally understand it. But if you if you've if you're plugged into fan studies and you understand all the kind of structures that go into being a fan of stuff, they're exactly fandoms as we understand them.

It's just using a newer medium. And and you see the same kind of slavish devotion and the same kind of, you know, sort of, the weird communities that build up around each other, and, you see the same kinds of toxicities. Mhmm. And, you know, because for sure, there are toxic fandoms, and there always have been. And, these very specific ways that a lot of the web 3.0 fandoms Yeah.

Tend to be, like, they they are very peculiarly toxic in a sort of very cultish kind of way, but it's not the same thing as saying it's not a fandom as we understand it. It acts absolutely is a fandom as we understand it. It's just really, really ramped up, you know. That's okay. And, I think in terms of sort of fostering, so the question is about sort of fostering understanding.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Exactly. Yeah.

Yeah. I mean, it's it's tricky because at a certain point, people have to meet you halfway. Mhmm. And, fan communities can do all they can to try and sort of come forward and meet non fan communities and say, we're not bad people. We're not terrible people.

This, you know, this this is stuff. But there's things we can engage with. If they are dedicated to misunderstanding you and painting you in a bad light, there's only so much you can do about it. And it was a similar thing in the nineties as a female anime fan in the UK and trying to come forward and assist people. Yes.

I know that all you know is Legend of the Over Fiend and, Fist of the North Star and the extreme sex and the extreme violence. I assure you, it's not all about that. But if they don't wanna listen, you can there's only so much you can tell them. And, you know, and then you then you end up falling back on the defense mechanism and being stubborn and digging your heels in and saying, right. Fine.

Forget it. Yeah. So you're talking about, like, experience with the anti fandom in a way, like, anti fandom people in a way. Anti fandom is a little bit of a different thing. Anti

fandom tends to be an an interfandom dynamic Right.

Which, you know, as I understand, it tends to arise from fans of thing a don't like the fact that there are fans of thing b Alright. Okay. And therefore criticize the existence of thing a. Oh, I get what you mean. I know.

Yeah. And and that tends to be a thing that comes up in shipping. So, you know, so peep people who were sort of, you know, all in on, Aang and Katara in, in Avatar Yeah. Versus people who thought that Katara would be better off with Zuko. Yeah.

And and so that kind of anti fandom and the sort of, going into spaces that are occupied by the other fandom and, you know, criticizing them that way. You know, so the the anti Reylos is another one, you know, the the Right. Rey, Rey from, Star Wars and, Kylo Ren, you know. Yeah. And, you know, so anti fandom anti fandom is an intra fandom thing.

People who are outside it who are opposed to fandoms, I don't think there's really a name for them. I don't wanna say normies because that's a horrible way of saying it, you know, but I I think when you're outside of the fan communities and you are criticising people for being fans of something, you you tend to sort of neglect the fact that you are also fans a fan of something. Oh, right. And and I think people who don't kind of actually think about the dynamics of fandom in that way and tend to dismiss it a little bit, think that their fandom is different Right. So, as an anime fan, the comparison that came up a lot was football fandom, and it's like, you know, why why is it normal to want to go and watch football team every Saturday Mhmm.

And not normal to want to watch the latest episode of my favorite TV show. Mhmm. Yeah. And, I I think as well because because football is so long established as being a sort of mainstream thing and sport in general, there there is this sort of, like, brain fog again. There is this sort of hostility Yeah.

Between sports fans and cult media fans, for want of a better term, because one of them is very mainstream and very accepted and very normal, and the other one is weird

people who are into this thing that's not real. And, but even then, it gets funny because, like, people who people who are big fans of EastEnders and soap operas can be very dismissive of people who are fans of sci fi. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Definitely. Definitely. There there is for sure, there is some kind of sociological examination of, like, how these things get, differentiated and, you know, where they Mhmm. Where the cracks start to appear, and, you know, the points at which people kind of actively consider their involvement with their fandom versus people who just sort of, you know, yes. I'm a I'm a football fan.

It means I watch football, and that's all they ever think about it. But, but, yeah, it's not the same thing as anti fandom per se. It's more like, I guess it's more like a kind of, like, self assurance that you're normal, and you're not like those people. And and you still see that even then within fandom circles. You usually see the anime fans who are like, oh, yeah, you know, I'm into I'm into anime, but, you know, but I'm not a Naruto fan.

Yeah. And and then the Naruto fans would be like, oh, yeah. Yeah. I'm into Naruto, but, you know, I'm not I'm not into demon slayer. Yeah.

Or there in a way. I mean, I don't I don't know if there's actual conflict between those fandoms versus sort of pulling filling out examples. And then the whole, like, sort of, you know, Steven Universe is the worst fandom, and then they're, like, oh, no. But the Invader Zim fandom was much worse than that, and then the Invader Zim fandom will be, like, oh, but the Homestuck fandom was much worse than that. And, Right.

Yeah. There's a I can't remember the name of the book now. It's a book about football fandom. It's a novel, in which, the narrator does say about there being, like, rabbit holes. And, you know, even within football fans, so you you'll have the the guy who goes to see, like, who watches every match on TV or every sort of, big league batch on TV, but he's not as far down the rabbit hole as the person who watches all of the, like, sort of the minor leads on TV.

And he's not as far down the rabbit hole as peep as a person who, has a season pass to

a local stadium. And and it sort of, you know, goes down down down down down that way. And it kind of works that way in all fandoms, really. I think it's just that some fandoms are a lot more conscious of it than others. And I think the ones that are most conscious of it tend to be the ones that have come in for most criticism because they either they started out not mainstream or they are currently not mainstream.

Right. Okay. Last question. So, could you, like, explain, the link between, like, academic research and, like, kind of like things you post in the media, like like, parodies or, like, TikTok videos and fan art, like, kind of, like, academic research as in theory and videos and art, as, grounding grounding work, like, kind of like down to down to earth stuff. Kind of explain the link between that.

Explain the link in terms of being a producer of both or That and, kind of like the role that academic research can play or Aka fans play in influencing public opinion about creating content. Yeah. Again, it's, it's a visibility thing. And, you know, like I say, people are still I'm still I still meet people who are surprised by the existence of fan studies. And, you know, they'll they'll be very familiar with the fact that cultural studies exists or that, you know, film theory exists, but, you know, say fan studies, audience studies, can, you know, that's a that's a new one to them.

That's the thing I think that will develop. I think that is interesting to me is, you know, the the things that I posted on my YouTube channel are, you know, I set up a camera at an anime convention where I had managed to get them to agree to let me do a talk about some aspect of my research, which, to be honest, is not particularly difficult at UK when I'm wrong conventions. There's there's a little bit more of a, a gatekeeping process or an editorial process with American comms that have an academic track, but UK comms are small enough that and they need content badly enough. But, yeah, unless you unless you pitch something really truly awful, chances are they'll they'll let you do it. But, but I was just posting these things, and they were literally just I was putting together a presentation.

I was, you know, I had a a loose approximation of a script because I just knew what I wanted to talk about, and then I just had the camera filming me. Mhmm. And I put that on YouTube. And the thing that is interesting to me now is seeing the rise of the video essay. Mhmm.

And, you know, the, creators like hbon or Guy Folding Ideas, you know, there's a lot of people now who are producing incredibly well researched and very academically valid, video essays. And I've I've mentioned, like, 2 of my favorites there, but there are so many who are doing it who are doing so well. And a lot of them are, women, people of color, queer people, the the you know, transgender people as well. There are so many really good transgender video essayists, and and they tend to have such good takes on things and such, good, insight into things, and they know how to do the academic work to present their argument. And it's not just sort of, you know, well, I've got a camera, and I've got a thing to say, although there are plenty of people who do that as well.

But there are lots of video essays now which are incredibly rigorously researched. And, you know, on the on the level of an academic paper, if it was to be written out and fully sourced and everything, and, the fact that so many of them are 2, 3, even 4 hours long now. Do you remember, like, the the creators of the video essays that you mentioned before? Yeah. So, I mean, yeah, the one of one of the most well known ones is hbomborguy.

Right. So, Harris Bruce is his name, Harry Bruce. He in the last few because he started, like, just sort of doing, you know, short videos where he was laughing at, like, alt right men complaining about how women don't like them. Yeah. And then it sort of turned into, he started doing a bunch of, you know, video game analysis, but it was more sort of, like, this is why I like this video game, and then he, sort of transitioned into doing longer form video essays about wider transitioned into doing longer form video essays about wider subjects Mhmm.

Fully researched. And, you know, he he, a few years ago did a I think it was, you know, hour and a half long video about, vaccine hesitancy, for example, and, you know, said said in that, I'm never doing another video essay this long again. And then, a couple of years ago, did a 2 and a half hour long video about the, is a popular sound effect on the Internet. Uh-huh. And, you know, most recently, at the end of last year, did a 4 hour video about plagiarism on YouTube.

Oh, right. And, so not everything that he does is about media analysis, but, but it's

always sort of, you know, it's it's very cogently set out and Mhmm. Presented and, when he sources stuff, it's, you know, it's from valid sources that have been interrogated. There's a lot of research that goes into them. Folding ideas, I really enjoy because he takes very dense subjects and makes them very accessible, especially things to do with tech.

And then there like I say, there are a lot of queer women of color who are producing video essays, which have usually a feminist slant, a queer study slant, an intersectional or, you know, sort of from a racial standpoint, because that's a viewpoint that they need to present, because it's not being heard any other way. And, a lot of these people, like, may not have the sort of mainstream attention, but are nonetheless you know, if if you use YouTube for a decent amount of time, you've probably encountered some of these, or you've heard people talking about them. And, it's it's it's a meeting which is kind of becoming a valid thing in and of itself, and especially because the amount of work and, you know, Defunctland is a, you know, a YouTube documentary series about old theme park rides Uh-huh. Which which no longer exist, and the amount of work that goes into them. And, again, these are several hours long.

And the amount of work and the amount of research and, they're they're entirely valid as academic works. It's just that they are put into place where you you don't need to pay for a subscription to see them. Yeah. And yeah. And and this this is a point of contention as well, like the sort of the the gatekeeping of academic writing, and it's it's it's so hard to, as an academic, get your writing, seen by people who would be interested in it because they have to pay for a journal, which is obscenely expensive because they're expecting, universities to pay for it.

Mhmm. And, yeah, it's it's great to tell people who desperately need a paper, but they can't afford the journal, you know, to to get it. Just, like, just drop the academic an email. They'll send you a PDF. They don't get paid for it.

Yeah. I do for it, though. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

No. For if if you need a paper and you can't find it on, like, Google Scholar or something, just email the academic. They will probably give just give you a copy and

say thank you very much for wanting to read it. Yeah. I started this by saying I will send you a copy my thesis if you would like to read it.

Yeah. Yeah. And it's, so much of it comes back to the Internet, makes it so much easier to spread this stuff, and it makes it so much easier to consume this stuff. And, I think that helps a lot with the visibility. And I probably have gotten away the original question here.

Yeah. But that was amazing. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

I think, so let me check my my my, questions to see if there are other things. I think up till now, we are we are good, I think. So thank you so much for, like, the the entire interview. Yeah. No problem.

I'm terribly sorry it got cut off now. So I'm I'm aware that it got progressively darker and I didn't turn any lights on, but yeah. I I absolutely like like, the entire, like, I'm a huge fan of, like, a lot of fan fiction works and, like, I I I'm like a very aware that's nerdy is like a very cool thing. Definitely. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. And But it Yeah. It's a funny thing as well, just sort of in terms of, like, oh, nerdy things aren't cool. And it's just like but if you look at, like, the sort of the big media franchises of the last few years, they've all been nerdy things.

Like, the, the Marvel Cinematic Universe is a juggernaut. Mhmm. Star Wars is massive. Mhmm. The the biggest TV series on TV for a long time was Game of Thrones.

Mhmm. And, you know, the the thing is that nerdy things, are actually a lot more mainstream now. And, you know, I did have a thing about this in my thesis as well about sort of, you know, the the strange thing of sort of treating, geeky things as being niche and weird when so many of the most popular things in media now are nerdy things. Things that because the the magazine that I started working on after I got out of university was, SFX Magazine. And the number of sort of popular franchises now, which

are things that would unequivocally be covered in SFX Magazine, you know, which, you know, is was sold out for such a long time as being a place for cult media and, you know, nerdy things and weird people.

And I was like, no. Because, you know, the things that are on the front cover of, of SFX now are things that are very mainstream. And, yes, it's funny. People have sort of held onto this idea of geeky things as being weird and niche when, that's not actually the reality that we're living in. Right.

Are, are there still people who are like, caught on, like, doing like, I just want to do original works. I, I don't really want to do fan fiction. Are these people still people like that? I'm not Oh, yeah. Probably.

Funny funny, it's a thing that I actually find myself thinking about a while ago because, I, I I'm certain I have a novel in me. I just don't have the focus to sit down and write it. But, I I just ran into this thing a while ago where I, actually thought about writing an original work based on some d and d characters that I created, because, they're they're characters that I created and who had their own story, but which didn't really get to be explored in the course of the D and D game I was playing. So I was just like, well, what if what if I just wrote that myself? And I was like, does that count as fan fiction?

Yeah. Right. Because because it's because it's taking the d and d kind of structure and using the things that are established in d and d canon, such as it may be, but telling an original story using original characters that I created. And then it was like, well, then if I if I was to do this and I wanted to put it somewhere, then where where would it go? Because, like, does it count enough as fan fiction that I could put it on a o three?

Probably not. Could I put it on Wattpad? I don't know enough about Wattpad. And, I think there are people who are mostly interested in writing original works and who just want to kind of share them and put them out there. But I I don't know that they're necessarily looking to operate in the same sphere as people who want to produce fan works.

Right. I think probably if you're writing your own short stories and you're not looking to, like, publish them and you just wanna, like, put them somewhere where people can read them, you're more likely to just have, a WordPress site. Mhmm. And, you know, and and be engaged in short fiction communities Right. Rather than trying to court people who are active on a03 or on Wattpad or on, you know, Tumblr fandom circles.

Yeah. It's it's it's funny. There there are a lot of dynamics that work the same way. They just work independently of each other. Yeah.

Right. Okay. Though, if it's like transmedia, so so, you said, like, that, you have, like, characters from DND, and you wanted to turn turn this into a novel. It's it's the me if the media has changed, is this fan fiction? Like This is the question.

Yeah. So it's like, you know, it's I'm I'm using, someone else's property. I'm using D and D, and, you know, the the monsters I was gonna have, the characters encounter were gonna be D and D creatures. There was the settings are gonna be things that have been established in D and D. The character archetypes, the, the races and so on were gonna be taken from d and d Yeah.

But they're my characters Yeah. Telling my story. And and it is that thing of, you know, I could I could theoretically lift them out of a d and d setting and just bring them over here into a different fantasy setting, which is my own fantasy setting. And there you've got an original work. That's neat.

But fundamentally created for the D and D setting. And and then I go it it it brings you back to, 50 Shades of Grey being originally a, twilight fan fiction. So, you know, E. L. James wrote their own little story about Edward and Bella and then just went, oh.

Mhmm. You think? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Definitely. Oh, wow. Yep. But, yes, it it starts to get it starts to get messy and confusing, and then just and this is why it's it's problematic problematic to try and define these

things too rigidly because they find ways of defying it. They find ways of blurring the boundaries, and it's difficult to say it reaches a point where it's difficult to say that's not valid.

Right. That was really, really intriguing, though. I I really hope that's, like, to to read your novel and to, like, see your world created. Definitely. Maybe eventually.

Like I said, I've got a million and one kind of projects and I just need to have the executive function to sit down and do the music. That's actually the same. Thank you so much for this, Indua. That, that was like really, really fruitful. And I'm sorry for like the technical like issues.

Oh, that's okay. As long as the, the end video is okay. Yeah. Thank you so much. Do you mind if I take a screenshot?

Because like this entire, interval was recorded, like, on an MP 3 format. Yeah. Yeah. So I'm taking it now. Okay.

Let's see. Okay. Cool. Thank you so so much. No problem.

So I will, I'll fill out the consent form and get that to you. Is it okay if I e sign it? Oh, yeah. Yeah. Definitely.

Yeah. Cool. Because I Yeah. I I I could do the, like, sort of taking a photograph of my signature and trying to paste it in, but it it's easier to just e sign it off PDF. So Yeah.

That's absolutely right. Yeah. Cool. Alright. I'll I'll sort that out.

Get that to you. I will, send you a copy of my thesis so you can have a look through that as well if you so desire. Yeah. No problem. And, yeah, also do feel free to go through

the, the bit biography on that because, I I ended up having because there's a not a there's a good bit about anime fandom, but I was having to pull from a lot of other places for fans of my studies.

So there'd probably be other avenues that would be worth you checking out for the purposes of your research. That's absolutely brilliant. Thank you so much for participating. Do let me know when there's something to do with this I can see because I would love to see it. Thank you.

Thank you so much. Alright. Right. I'll see you later. Thank you so much.

Yeah. Have a good evening. Yeah. You too. Bye.