

## Editor's Introduction

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It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the death of Professor Martin Barker, the founder of this journal, in September 2022. While Martin's commitment to *Participations* remained strong until the end, Issue 19.1 was the last to which he was able to contribute. Issue 19.2 is therefore the first to emerge without Martin's involvement in the editorial process. While he will indeed be much missed, *Participations* intends to honour his memory by continuing to publish new and emerging scholarship in the field. And I know Martin would have been delighted to see so many excellent papers published in this issue that testify to the strength of a field that he helped to establish and to which his contribution was unparalleled.

Although during the early months of 2022, Martin was unsure about the future of the journal, it is with great confidence that we can now confirm that *Participations* has found a new home and a new editorial board who will be taking over in 2023. On behalf of the retiring editorial collective, Ernest Mathjis, Rhys Fowler and myself, I would therefore like to thank and welcome Liz Evans, Daniela Treveri Gennari and Bridgette Wessels into their role as the new editors of *Participations*. Meanwhile, Matt Hills, Renee Middlemost and Celia Lam will continue their roles within the wider editorial group.

We are delighted that *Participations* will be in such safe hands and that Martin's vision for the journal as the pre-eminent location for cutting edge innovations in the field of audience and reception studies research will continue to be realised. Issue 20, to be edited by Feona Attwood and Clarissa Smith, is already in train and will include essays addressing Martin's considerable legacy to the field.

Future correspondence, papers and proposals for theme issues should therefore be addressed to [editors@participations.org](mailto:editors@participations.org).

## In this Issue

As usual, this issue of *Participations* consists of a special theme section, this time on the *Dynamics of Film Audiences* edited by Bridgette Wessels and Lito Tsitsou who are both at the University of Glasgow, and a section comprising eight general papers. While four of these also address the topic of film audiences, the others continue to demonstrate the diversity of audience research in different contexts. Given that Wessels and Tsitsou offer their own introduction to the papers in their section, I will restrict this editorial overview to the general papers.

First up is an engaging paper by Katrina Aveyard who practices a form of critical self-reflection and auto-ethnography as she tries to explain why she continued to watch the Australian film *Crocodile Dundee* (of which she really didn't approve) as a form of ambivalent pleasure when she relocated to England. This experience prompts Karina to engage in a series of reflections about the filmic tropes of masculinity and the Australian outback and what it means to view these as a migrant from afar. Of particular interest is the discussion of how one negotiates the complexity of a somewhat uncomfortable national identity and the performance of this in everyday life. As someone who has also relocated from the UK to Australia, I am well aware of how this manifests itself in odd and surprising ways.

Susana Tosca and Victor Navarro Remesal are also investigating the transnational career of film, although in their case it is the ways in which Japanese anime has been experienced by Spanish viewers during their childhood. As their research reveals, this remembered experience is coloured by nostalgia intertwined with deeply affecting memories of childhood. It might be noted that this paper is dedicated to Martin Barker who helped steer it to completion.

The question of affect is central to the next paper by Kaisa Hiltunen and Minna Rainio from the University of Jyväskylä in Finland. In this case, they are interested in the kinds of affect produced by the experience of watching environmental films that address climate change. While the three films that are watched by their focus groups are very different, including both experimental and documentary approaches, this research demonstrates that it is the emotional reaction to the vulnerable state of nature and climate change that is portrayed that matters most in terms of how the viewers will respond and act into the future.

Clarice Greco from Paulista University in Sao Paulo Brazil is once again concerned with the screen experience, although in her case it is with the ways in which watching Brazilian telenovelas might constitute a form of national 'cult' viewing. In order to explain how this might be so, Clarice revisits the familiar concept of the cult text in order to challenge Northern hemisphere conceptions of what a cult text might be. Greco then goes on to provide a fascinating account of the experience of watching Brazilian telenovelas within the rituals of everyday life before turning to the fans themselves to explore their vernacular understandings of cult within their own national context.

Hagen Nelson and Vincent Georgie offer another insight into the experience of watching film in their account of how the Windsor Film Festival in Canada negotiated the challenge of the Covid pandemic by pivoting to a two-week drive-in experience. In this essay they report on the political, economic, social, technological and environmental (PESTLE) factors that were brought to bear in this instance. As this account reveals, it was quite a process to get the festival up and running, but the effort was rewarded by enthusiastic attendance and financial success, suggesting the drive-in might just still be a viable screening model.

Rebecca Britt and PS Berge direct our attention to a different kind of screen and the communities of practice that form around video games. Their focus here is on the game *Persona 5* which has become something of a transmedia and transnational phenomenon. By employing a computational content analysis of a specific *Persona 5* Reddit thread, the researchers were able to identify three core levels of discourse involving the moderation of their community, gameplay and the fandom surrounding the game itself.

Fabienne Silberstein-Bamford is also concerned with communities of practice, in this case in relation to fan fiction. In her essay, we are presented with the concept of the 'Fanfic Lens' which is defined as a specific set of literacy skills that young fans, who actively write and post fan fiction online, acquire as a result of their socialisation within the fan communities they join.

In relation to fan practices, Mark Stewart offers us a big picture in terms of the unspoken understandings of what it means to perform one's fandom in an 'appropriate way'. The article explores in depth how appropriate or inappropriate fandom might be understood in a range of contexts, as well as how it has been operationalised in practice in order to propose a broad framework for how this concept might be best understood.

Louise Ejgood Hansen is also offering a big picture, in this case how the more general concept of 'participation' in cultural events might be better evaluated and understood. Employing the cultural activities that took place in 2017 when the city of Aarhus was declared to be the European Capital of Culture, Louise explores the aspects of participation that are worth considering when attempting to define what participation in the various experiences on offer might mean in practice.

Finally, in signing off as Editor here, I would like to thank all the authors of all these papers for their scholarship and goodwill, but most of all for their patience during what was indeed a difficult and sad year for the journal. I am, however, cheered by the prospect that *Participations* has a secure future.