



## PRODUCTION, TECHNOLOGY, AND GLOBALIZATION IN POP CULTURE

Adriana da Rosa Amaral<sup>1</sup> & Simone Driessen<sup>2</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

Following our first Special issue on Fan Studies, Popular Cultures and the Creative Industries, we now turn to our second. Where the first Special issue focused on Fan Engagement, Identities, and Representation in Pop Culture, Part 2 takes a different perspective. The current collection includes 11 articles that focus on researching Production, Technology, and Globalization.

When studying popular culture and fandom, one cannot overlook the elements surrounding, facilitating, or shaping them, hence our focus on production, technology, and globalization. As Hermes and Teurlings pointed out (2021), these new focal points indicate in a certain sense a “loss of popular culture”, because “studies of the popular no longer invoke the notion of popular culture” (p. 228). Yet, what or who determines what “popular culture” means in today’s world?

In Part 1 we established how popular culture is often something of a novelty, and something that is produced (Williams, 2018). However, if we turn to Clark’s (2008) conceptualization we need to understand ‘popular culture’ across three concepts: ‘culture’, ‘the popular’, and ‘mass culture’. This is also where production, technology, and globalization step in. Clark (2008: 21) explains “culture [...] denotes a particular way of life for a specific group of people during a certain period in history.” Moreover, according to her culture is then also a reference to the “artefacts, narratives, images, habits and products that give style and substance to that particular way of life” (2008: 21).

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<sup>1</sup> Adriana Amaral is a professor in Communication at Universidade Paulista and Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. She has an interest in studying the relations and controversies between fans, pop culture influencers/creators and digital platforms. She also directs CULTPOP, a research laboratory developing approaches to the study of pop cultures. She works at the intersection of fan studies, music studies, and digital methods. She has published articles in journals such as *Transformative Works & Cultures*, *Media and Communication*, *Participations*, and book chapters in edited volumes such as *Online Virality* (2024, De Gruyter) and the forthcoming *The Intellect Handbook of Popular Music Methodologies* (2025, Intellect).

<sup>2</sup> Simone Driessen is an assistant professor in Media & Popular Culture at Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands. She has an interest in exploring the intersections of media and popular culture, particularly why fans decide to continue or discontinue their fandom over time. She has published multiple articles and book chapters on popular culture and (music) fandom, in amongst others *American Behavioral Scientist*, the *International Journal of Communication*, *Celebrity Studies*, and *Participations*. She is one of the co-editors of an edited collection titled *Participatory Culture Wars: Controversy, Conflict and Complicity in Fandom* (2025, Iowa University Press).



Over the past few decades, technologies have vastly changed: we have an iPhone, already forgot the iPod, and moved from internet forums to Vine to Threads. And with these mentions, we offer a very limited and basic perspective on the massive changes in the social media landscape. More so, consumers have moved from being mere content consumers to content creators, even being responsible for producing their own content across diverse platforms. And, due to living a media life (Deuze, 2011), or in a media-saturated environment at the very least (Clark, 2008) we can argue that we now in a way live in the Global Village Marshall McLuhan once speculated about.

Nevertheless, we also need to be critical of production, technology, and globalisation in the Creative Industries. Where Issue 1 already highlighted the celebratory aspect of participatory culture, the field of studies dedicated to the precarious and cautious aspects of the creator (and gig) economy is on the rise; discussing visibility and the emotional labor that comes with this perspective (cf. Duffy and Wssinger, 2017; Abidin, 2020; Sun, 2020; Glatt, 2023). And although we can celebrate almost all audiences worldwide having access to the Internet or a diverse range of Hollywood productions, this does not mean that everyone has this access or competing industries like Nollywood or Bollywood getting global reach. Despite audiences being able to consume many similar media texts, think *Friends* (even dubbed in Thai, German, and Spanish), or seeing the Netflix-effect (see Lotz, 2021) in action when watching the latest season of *Stranger Things* with other audiences across the world, or discussing Timothée Chalamet as the Internet's Boyfriend for his transnational appeal (Sobande, 2021): we still need to remain critical of the influence and effect this also might have on the Creative Industries.

Particularly, with technologies developing fast and disappearing too: when X was (temporarily) banned in Brazil this also indicated a loss of (fannish) archives, curatorship, and access to (another) global network. And although it is meant as a joke, the credo "come to Brazil", which we see many Brazilian fans posting on social media, still holds true that some bands do overlook certain areas of the world, Taylor Swift's Eras world tour did cover many countries, but 'only' covered Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil in the Global South, and Japan, Singapore and Australia in the East.

Still, as Clark (2008: 19) already argued: "by communicating with others through reference to popular culture, we are able to place ourselves socially and to ascribe meaning to our own actions". And, as Ang (2020: 288) argues "we now live in a world where some other major sites of struggle have come to dominate our ways of life" like climate change, the rise of China, or technological transformation: all topics where popular culture might help us make sense of.

Through a diverse array of papers, Part 2 explores these topics, narratives, processes, and technologies. This Special Issue highlights the impact of new media platforms, the transformative role of technology in fandoms, and the transcultural exchanges that characterize the global pop culture



scene. From the marketing triumphs of blockbuster films to the digital phenomena and tools reshaping fan interactions, this collection provides insights into the evolving landscape of pop culture production and consumption and its relation to the Creative Industries. Doing so, it once more highlights how the boundaries between entertainment, leisure, pleasure and the Creative Industries are becoming blurry.

Across the papers it is highlighted how the intersection of production, technology, and globalization defines the contemporary Creative Industries, offering new paradigms for understanding pop culture. This issue examines the innovative processes behind the creation, distribution, and consumption of pop culture. The works in this collection are driven by studying these aspects with technological advancements and global interconnectedness in mind.

## **POP CULTURE, FANDOM AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES OR PLATFORMS IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES**

The discussion about pop culture, fandom and new technologies or platforms in the Creative Industries covers 5 papers that opens this edition with cutting-edge discussions on AI, Intellectual Property, Sound Studies, transmedia and TikTok. The first article is "*New toys, new apps, new idols: K-pop's AI imaginary*", by Sarah Keith (2024). It discusses how AI is imagined in processes of cultural production, using K-pop as a case study, exploring perspectives of K-pop management fans, industries and the IT sector in depicting AI as a future-making technology. The discussion calls for further critical analysis of AI as a socially constructed concept, and its implications for the future of music.

Sound Studies and new technologies have been an important theme in the field of media studies. But a gap in literature has been the relation to sound and listening to pop music in this field. Thiago Soares, Lianna Genuino and Thainá Belém (2024) explore the sonic turn in fan studies discussing the re-recording of a Taylor Swift album in "*Escuta de fã nos álbuns regravados de Taylor Swift*" (Fan Listening to Taylor Swift's Re-Recorded Albums). The article proposes a discussion on listening as a framework for understanding the relationships between songs, fandom and phonographic albums through the investigation of fan-made podcasts and other materials. It also highlights the recognition of artists' distinctive sonic trademarks identifiable by fans and addresses nostalgic and self-reflective dynamics focusing on *Speak Now (Taylor's Version)*.

The norwegian TV Show called SKAM and its transmedia marketing is the research object of "*Estratégias de propagação transmidiática e inovação dos remakes da série norueguesa SKAM*" (Transmedia propagation strategies and innovation in the remakes of the Norwegian TV Show SKAM). In this article, Alciane Nolibos Baccin and Julianny Ribeiro Cardoso (2024) from has the aim to understand whether the



transmedia propagation strategies of the seven international remakes of the series *Skam* innovate upon the original Norwegian version (2015–2017). It focuses on understanding propagation strategies, fan behavior, and the reception of the different versions.

In “O registro de marca enquanto instrumento de proteção de expressões usadas por fanbases” (Fandom and Intellectual Property: Trademark Registration as a tool for protecting expressions used by fanbases), Ana Clara Ribeiro and Paula Giacomazzi Camargo (2024), make connections between music fandoms, trademarks, Intellectual Property and legal aspects in their article.

Another important aspect is the impact of BookTok on the Brazilian Book market. Gabriel Mattos and Daniel Kamlot (2024) analyzes the relation between content creators, TikTok and the physical bookstores in “Livrarias físicas como territórios criativos da creator economy e os booktokers da Geração Z” (Physical bookstores as creative territories of creator economy and the Gen Z booktokers).

## POP CULTURE, FANDOM, AND GLOBALIZATION IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Fan activities in K-Pop and Otaku Fandom, BTS Lyrics, *Les Misérables* transformative fanfiction, the cultural scene of food festivals, K-dramas and fashion and fandom in videos are also the subjects of studies in the context of globalization in the creative industries.

“Uma Análise do fandom K-pop “Orbit” do grupo Loona” (One analysis of K-Pop Fandom Orbit from Loona group) discusses how fan productions take place in online communities and what are their main activities on Facebook platform. In this study, Manoela Barbosa and Geórgia da Cruz Pereira (2024) also describe how algorithmic logic has been incorporated to mobilize audiences around idols.

Leticia Batista Dornelas and Natasha Vicente da Silveira Costa (2024) analyse Victor Hugo’s novel *Les Misérables* (1862) and three fanfiction works that settled “*Les Mis*” in a contemporary alternative universe, published between 2014 and 2015 in the article “A fanfiction transformativa de *Os Miseráveis*, de Victor Hugo, “os amigos do ABC reimaginados”. (The transformative fanfic *Les Misérables* from Victor Hugo, the ABC Friends reimagined).

Another case study is the one that explores the methodological approaches of content analysis in discussing BTS lyrics, in the paper “Processo metodológico para análise de conteúdo de letras de música: extração e identificação de mensagens em álbuns do BTS” (Methodological Process for Content Analysis of Song Lyrics: Extraction and Identification of Messages in BTS Albums), written by Jhyenne Gomes and Mirna Tonus (2024), that details all the phases of Gomes’s MA dissertation.

The discussion on cultural scenes has been widely spread in many fields from Music to Sociology and Communication, discussing a variety of cultural aspects of different countries. In “Festa completa



com afetos e pertenças: um caso de estudo em torno do festival da comida Continente, Porto-Portugal” (Complete Celebration with Affections and Belonging: A Case Study on the Continente Food Festival, Porto-Portugal”), Diego Rebouças and Paula Guerra focus on the universe of food festivals and their fandom culture, that has increasingly become a mandatory stop for understanding the cultural dynamics of contemporary societies. The authors discuss ‘Continente Food Festival 2023’ (in the city of Porto, Portugal) as an emblematic case, that promote an analysis of how food and music, as the core of the event’s programme, become vectors of aggregation and sociability for the elaboration as a cultural scene.

The paper “Moda, semiótica e recepção dos fãs: Uma análise do clipe “Jogo de Louça” dos artistas Toto de Babalong e Gaby Amarantos” (Fashion, Semiotics and Fan Reception: Analyzing the video Jogo de Louça” from the artists Toto de Babalong e Gaby Amarantos) written by Marcos Daniel da Silva Oliveira (2024) investigates the intersection between fashion, semiotics and fan perception in the music video ‘Jogo de Louça’ by the Brazilian artists Toto de Babalong and Gaby Amarantos.

And the last paper of this edition is Ligia Prezia Lemos and Mariana Marques de Lima Pinheiro’s “Oppa Scam” and Romantic Relationship in K-Dramas idolatry and Fan Activism in Brazil”, a research that addresses the reception of K-dramas by Brazilian fandom in terms of transculturality, in which fans from Brazil play a fundamental role in the promotion, dialogue and sharing of content related to both actors and characters. It focuses on analyzing issues related to masculinity and the idealization of the South Korean man in K-dramas, which can lead to the dissociation between fiction and reality.

The diversity of themes, objects, countries (Australia, Brazil, Portugal) authors, institutions, and theoretical and methodological approaches represented in this Special Issue may bring many discussions on the field of pop culture, fan studies and creative industries.

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