

Process Assignment 3: Fandom Analysis

For the first major step in your work on Project 2, you analyze a fan community to understand how it works as a writing ecology. Before you write any of this assignment, you will need to choose your fandom and find a range of texts produced within it. In order to have sufficient material, you will need at least 5 texts, but more will be useful. Try to find a wide variety of types of text: forums, recaps and reviews, news sites, wikis and other information sites, personal blogs, analyses, and so on. Choose based on what seems applicable to your fandom. Read these texts closely, looking at them both individually and together. Apply Cooper's ideas about writing ecology to them. Then, when you have done this research and reading, move on to the written part of the assignment:

Create a preliminary overview of the writing ecology you've just studied, using Cooper's five systems as a guide. Type answers to the following questions, one by one. Do not copy or retype the questions in your own document; numbering them is enough. The length of the responses is based on the answer to another question: "How much do you need to write to make sure you understand how this fan community and its writing ecology works?" Basically, this is preparation for your Project 2; the more you do here, the more you will have to work with in the rest of the process. That said, I can't imagine that sufficient answers would fit on one side of a page.

1. Based on the texts you've found and read so far, what are some of the most important **ideas** this fan community discusses and writes about? What specific issues, topics, and questions about the fan object do they write about? Which seem to be most important or frequently raised?
2. Based on the texts you've found and read so far, what are some of the **purposes** of the fan texts? Why do people tend to write what they write? What are they hoping to achieve within the community? How do these purposes build community?
3. Based on the texts you've found and read so far, what is the nature of the **interpersonal interactions** visible in the community? How do the fans interact? How would you characterize these interactions in terms of tone and style? How do you see elements of intimacy and power in these interactions? (As Cooper means these terms.)
4. Based on the texts you've found and read so far, what are some of the **cultural norms** of this fan community? What sense do you get of how the community functions? How do the fans assume roles in the community? What sorts of hierarchies or status does the community seem to have? What sorts of rules and boundaries seem to be present (or absent) here?
5. Based on the texts you've found and read so far, what are some of the **textual forms** present in this ecology? What kinds of texts seem to be most common and least common? What do they use these forms for? How do the forms suit the community's purposes and ideas?

You will also include a list of the texts you looked at in the process of writing this; the list needs to include the specific title of the text, what it is (e.g. recap, forum, analysis, etc.), as well as an author when there is one.

The Fandom Analysis is worth 100 points total, and I will evaluate it based on variety of texts referenced, evidence of analysis and thought, clear and thoughtful application of Cooper's ideas, and the following of directions.

Due: Friday, March 24 (submitted in class, in print, double spaced, stapled)

Why Are You Doing This Assignment? In the short term, this assignment gives you the chance to explore the writing ecology of your chosen fandom to become familiar with it, to find potential ideas to look at later, and to become more familiar with the concepts of writing ecology. In the long term, your work sharpens your skills at: finding internet-based sources, understanding the workings of websites, analyzing a range of different texts, synthesizing ideas, and applying a specific theoretical lens to that analysis and synthesis.

Homework for Tuesday, March 7: To get you started on this assignment, you will analyze a **forum** within your fandom. Choose a forum, read its homepage to understand its form, goals, content, and rules. Then, read through at least three different threads, looking at them the way we did our example in class. Type up some notes on what you saw in that analysis, using Cooper's five systems as a guide: ideas, purposes, interpersonal interactions, cultural norms, textual forms.