



Routledge Advances in Fan and Fandom Studies

EXPLORING DOCTOR WHO FANDOM THROUGH SCREENWRITING PRACTICE-AS-RESEARCH

OTHERNESS, INTERSECTIONALITY AND FAN STUDIES

Kathryn Beaton



Exploring Doctor Who Fandom Through Screenwriting Practice-As-Research

Exploring Doctor Who Fandom Through Screenwriting Practice-As-Research: Otherness, Intersectionality and Fan Studies explores the diversity of fans and how they form and express their identity within fandom. Main themes in this book include otherness, fans with disabilities, fans within the LGBTQIA+ community, and how fandom can enrich the life of a fan.

This book asks readers how a fan develops and performs their identity and proposes a screenwriting practice methodology. Otherness in this scenario includes people who have disabilities are within the LGBTQIA+ spectrum and are neurodiverse. Screenwriting methodology also allows concepts such as disability, sexuality, and otherness to be humanized through characterization and world building as seen in screenwriting practice.

Exploring Doctor Who Fandom Through Screenwriting Practice-As-Research: Otherness, Intersectionality and Fan Studies examines world building, characterization, and story arcs that explore the development of fan identity and how otherness through fandom is expressed. It draws on the lived experience of the author as a disabled LGBTQIA+ aca-fan to add a layer of authenticity to the research. By offering a unique perspective on fandom and identity and how screenwriting methodology is a viable approach to researching these concepts, it looks to spread understanding of a neglected point of view and enhance future works.

Readers who would be interested in this book are scholars and students of fandom theory, screenwriting practice, and those interested in the development and expression of identity as a fan.

Kathryn Beaton has a doctorate in Philosophy, Media, and Communications from RMIT University and a Masters in Screenwriting from the Victorian College of the Arts.

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Otherness, Intersectionality and Fan Studies
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For the othered; you are seen, you matter, you will find your place.



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Foreword

Craig Batty, Adelaide University, Australia

Over the past 15 years, we have seen the growth—some would say explosion—of screenwriting studies. Emanating largely from the UK and Europe, with key contributions from Australia and the USA, forums such as the Screenwriting Research Network and the *Journal of Screenwriting* have facilitated the sharing of ideas, approaches, and case studies for what has come to be known as a dynamic and interdisciplinary field—one that encompasses and indeed celebrates innovations in, and intersections between theory, history, pedagogy, and practice.

Screenwriting practice research, which is largely understood as a form of creative practice enquiry, has emerged as a strong sub-field within screenwriting studies. Championed predominantly from Australia, this area has, over the past decade, become a popular mode of research that spans academia and industry, and is particularly visible in the research training space—namely, the PhD. It was here that I first met Kathryn, as her (then) primary supervisor for her thesis, *The Social Alien: Otherness and Identity Exploration Within Doctor Who Fandom*.

What started as a quest to represent Kathryn's lived experience of *Doctor Who* fandom through screenwriting soon became a tangled, intersectional, and often hilarious journey through the PhD. Alongside her other supervisors, we mused over identity and inciting incidents; character development and cosplay; multiple protagonists and multiple personalities; genre and groupthink; even disability, guide dogs and dating apps. Over nine years, a “simplistic” creative work + exegesis thesis form morphed into a hybrid work of fandom studies, autoethnography, and screen fiction. Like many creative PhDs, the journey taken was simultaneously theoretical, creative, and personal.

As this book attests, Kathryn is an aca-fan—a self-confessed academic who studies the things she is passionate about (“fan” here simply does not cut it). In addition, she is a creative academic, meaning that scholarship, self-reflection, and screenwriting come together to create what can be described as an intertwined work of auto-aca-fan-fiction. Stemming from the final PhD thesis, it is lovely to see that this book captures the essence of such a study for a wider audience. While the final screenplay work (television series) from the PhD is not presented in this book, its reference and shadow presence assure us that

the ideas and insights gleaned during the PhD were made possible through the influence of creative practice.

This book makes a further contribution to what I (clearly biased) see as one of the most exciting developments in academia in the past decade—namely, the growth of screenwriting practice research. Couched in the wider field of screenwriting studies—which itself embraces an array of disciplines, from screen studies to literature, cultural studies to history, and sociology to biography—this book is yet another example of the power of research, when allowed to breathe and evolve, to bring new voices and perspectives to the world. At this current time, we certainly need them.

Acknowledgements

One night many years ago, I was having dinner with friends. The topic of pop culture conventions arose, and we joked about how to get in for free with a research grant. I may not have received an all-expenses-paid trip to San Diego Comic-Con, but RMIT University was interested enough in my proposal that I now tell people I have a doctorate in *Doctor Who*.

To my parents, Angus and Liz, where would I be without you? Dad began my journey with *Doctor Who* in the 1980s, though it wasn't until after 2005 that I began my proper rewatch of the Classic series. We finally got mum on board with the Tenth Doctor. Thank you for believing in me when I doubted myself, and for pretending to know what I was on about when I started rambling about my research.

This book would not have been possible without the support of my supervisors. I was fortunate to have four brilliant advisors over the years. To Professor Craig Batty, thank you for sparking the joy that I found in screenwriting research. To Dr Stayci Taylor, thank you for your keen eye to minute detail in my storyline—rewrite after rewrite. To Dr Djoyimi Baker, thank you for a fresh perspective and a much clearer understanding of liminality (and the unintended reinforcement of my love for *Star Trek Voyager*). Lastly, a special thank you to Dr Brian Morris, whose reassurance and kindness ensured that imposter syndrome did not win. Each of you left your unique and indelible marks on my research, expanding my areas of interest. Life has taken me in many interesting directions, and the company I have kept on this particular journey has been a privilege.

I would be remiss to leave out my guides, past and present. My first, Prince, immediately led me to Gareth Daid-Lloyd because he recognized his voice after I watched *Torchwood* for three weeks straight. My second, Zeke, was besotted with Katy Manning and would have happily gone home with her—and I am sure she would never have dressed him up as K-9. My third, Romeo, always thought the stars were there to see him, not the other way around. Meanwhile, my current boy, Bo, has been to everything from fan club meetings to VIP dinners and likes to steal the show in photographs. They have

each shaped my experience as a fan with a disability. My dogs allowed me to attend conventions independently and on my own terms.

There are two others I need to acknowledge. My cats, Cocoa and Latte: Every late night editing was spent with one—if not both—demanding attention. Their presence is so entwined with my research and writing that this book should come with a warning for people allergic to cats. I write this in loving memory of Cocoa, and in devoted subservience to Latte.

Introduction

First airing in 1963, *Doctor Who* centres around the eponymous Doctor, a humanoid alien known as a Time Lord, who has the ability to regenerate into a new form with a new actor taking over the role every few years. The Doctor's spacecraft is called a TARDIS, standing for Time And Relative Dimension In Space, which takes the shape of a blue 1960s British police box. The Doctor travels with companions that are usually human, fighting evil in the universe and defending the Earth from alien attacks. *Doctor Who* subsequently became a franchise across numerous decades and media forms, a result of the sheer breadth of its approach to world building and a large, dedicated fan following—a following that is particularly well placed as a site of investigation of fan cultures through screenwriting practice research.

Within the *Doctor Who* fandom there is an easy icebreaker when meeting new fans, “who’s your favourite Doctor?” No matter the size of fan gathering, be it club or convention, the question is always relevant. Screenwriting-as-practice has provided a unique lens for exploring the *Doctor Who* fandom and sets the stage for an exploration of how screenwriting methodology serves as a dynamic framework for analysing the *Doctor Who* fandom. By integrating the key themes of otherness, intersectionality, and fan studies, this research investigates the intricate relationship between storytelling and audience engagement within the Whoniverse. *Doctor Who* emerges not only as a cultural artefact but also as a participatory narrative shaped by fans, whose engagement with its themes and characters contributes to a continually evolving dialogue between media and society.

This study applies screenwriting methodology to uncover how the narrative structures and thematic elements of *Doctor Who* influence and reflect fan identity and engagement. The series' narratives are analysed in relation to broader social issues such as representation, systemic inequality, and the lived experiences of diverse communities. Fan practices like cosplay, fanwriting, and online discussions reimagine and expand these stories, showcasing fandom's active role in reshaping cultural narratives. These interactions illuminate the reciprocal nature of media and audience, where *Doctor Who* and its fans engage in a creative exchange that extends far beyond the screen. Aca-fans reside within

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both academic and fandom realms. Fan-created content that is accepted within a fandom but is not part of the official story is known as fanon.

By incorporating fan studies, this research positions *Doctor Who* as a rich text for examining how media engages with representation, identity, and power. This study highlights the participatory nature of fandom, demonstrating how audiences' critique and redefine these themes through creative expression. Screenwriting techniques are central to this analysis, offering tools to investigate the construction of nuanced characters and complex story worlds. This introduction establishes the foundation for understanding how screenwriting-as-practice not only enriches the analysis of *Doctor Who* but also serves as an academic methodology for exploring the intersections of narrative, identity, and cultural participation.

Screenwriting Practice Methodology and Fan Studies

Screenwriting-as-practice is an innovative and invaluable methodology for studying fan cultures and identities, merging creative production with critical theoretical analysis. By crafting creative artefacts such as screenplays or television bibles, researchers can translate complex fan theories and cultural insights into vivid narratives. These artefacts not only serve as expressions of research findings but also act as exploratory tools, allowing theoretical concepts to be examined and reimaged within fictional contexts. When paired with critical analysis, this dual approach facilitates a richer and more comprehensive understanding of fandom and its cultural implications.

Central to this methodology is the process of world building, a defining aspect of screenwriting. World building enables researchers to construct immersive environments that simulate the dynamics of fan engagement. Within these fictional settings, behaviours such as role-playing, fanfiction writing, and cosplay can be represented and analysed in ways that highlight the intersection of fan identity and narrative structure. This practice sheds light on the intricate relationships between fans and the worlds they inhabit, providing a deeper understanding of how fandom intersects with broader social issues such as identity, community, and representation. Through screenwriting, researchers can explore these multifaceted layers in ways that traditional academic approaches might overlook.

The iterative nature of screenwriting aligns seamlessly with reflexive research practices, where cycles of reflection and revision enhance both creative output and critical insight. Screenplays evolve through drafts and feedback, mirroring the academic process of refining ideas based on ongoing discovery. This interplay between creativity and analysis fosters a dynamic research approach, allowing screenwriters to adapt their narratives as they gain new insights. The creative artefact becomes a living document, reflecting both theoretical exploration and the evolving nature of fan engagement.

Furthermore, screenwriting facilitates the embodiment of fan theories within narrative structures. Abstract concepts, such as how fans engage with

identity, representation, and belonging, can be woven into character arcs, storylines, and the worlds they inhabit. This narrative embodiment brings theoretical ideas to life, making them tangible and accessible while demonstrating their practical implications. For example, exploring themes of intersectionality in a screenplay allows researchers to illustrate the ways in which diverse fan identities influence and are influenced by the media narratives they consume.

This methodology also bridges disciplines, fostering collaboration between screenwriting and fan studies. By integrating creative and critical approaches, researchers can illuminate the mutual influence of storytelling and fan culture. The artefacts produced not only advance theoretical understanding but also invite further dialogue between practitioners and academics. This intersection showcases how fan behaviours shape narratives and, conversely, how narratives inspire and guide fan creativity.

Screenwriting-as-practice thus represents a robust and versatile framework for investigating the complex interplay between fandom and storytelling. Its combination of world building, narrative embodiment, and reflexive iteration offers fresh insights into the cultural dynamics of fandom. By merging creative practice with theoretical analysis, this methodology deepens our understanding of how fans engage with media and contribute to its evolution. In doing so, it enhances both the study of fan cultures and the broader field of narrative research, positioning screenwriting as a vital tool for academic inquiry.

Fanwriting Practices: Meta, Fanfic, and Representation

Fanwriting represents a transformative cultural phenomenon, empowering marginalized voices to challenge dominant narratives while reimagining media through the lens of personal and collective experiences. By engaging with the source material critically, fanwriters do not remain passive consumers but become active participants in reshaping stories, addressing omissions in representation, and broadening the scope of traditional media storytelling.

Through practices such as meta-writing and reinterpretation, fanwriting serves as a form of cultural critique. Meta-writing, specifically, offers a platform for analytical exploration, allowing fans to deconstruct original texts, dissecting character motivations, thematic constructs, and relational dynamics. This approach extends beyond the mere act of storytelling, functioning as a space where intellectual inquiry meets creative innovation. By embedding alternative perspectives or delving into underexplored character depths, fanwriters provide a critical commentary on the limitations of mainstream narratives while enriching them with diverse and multifaceted viewpoints.

Central to this creative engagement is the focus on representation—particularly the underrepresentation and misrepresentation of marginalized identities. Fanfiction has emerged as a powerful vehicle for reimagining narratives where sidelined characters take centre stage. Techniques such as race-bending, queering relationships, or presenting nuanced portrayals of disability and mental health enable fanwriters to address the gaps in representation left

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by original creators. These reimaginings go beyond critique, crafting narratives that challenge societal norms and expand the possibilities for inclusivity in storytelling.

The intersectional lens adopted in much fanwriting is especially significant. By exploring the confluence of gender, race, sexuality, and mental health, fanwriters reject reductive stereotypes and promote narratives that resonate with lived experiences. These stories, born from personal and collective realities, critique the shortcomings of mainstream media while showcasing the richness and complexity of human diversity. This interplay of critique and creation highlights the potential of fanwriting to challenge entrenched norms and envision alternative realities.

Fanwriting is inherently communal, thriving within the collaborative spaces of digital fandom. Online communities act as vibrant hubs for creativity, intellectual discourse, and mutual support. Within these spaces, fans share their works, offer constructive feedback, and collectively explore new ideas, fostering a dynamic environment where storytelling becomes a shared act of cultural activism. The narratives born of these exchanges are not solely personal expressions but collective responses to broader societal conversations about diversity and inclusion.

Digital platforms have further amplified the reach and impact of fanwriting. By democratizing access to creative and critical tools, these platforms enable fans from diverse backgrounds to participate in reshaping media narratives. Online spaces provide a stage for voices that might otherwise remain unheard, empowering creators to share their visions with a global audience. This interconnectedness ensures that fanwriting remains a dynamic and evolving practice, continuously reflecting the diversity of human experiences.

Fanwriting transcends traditional boundaries of storytelling, emerging as both a critique of cultural norms and a reimagining of societal narratives. By challenging dominant portrayals and advocating for inclusivity, fanwriting contributes to a more representative media landscape. Fans, through their active engagement, reshape the media they consume, fostering spaces where diverse voices and stories can thrive. This participatory culture not only enriches contemporary media but also advances broader dialogues about identity, power, and representation in society.

Cosplay: Identity Formation and Performance

Cosplay is a dynamic and transformative practice that transcends the boundaries of simple imitation. It functions as a multifaceted mode of personal expression and communal engagement, allowing fans to embody characters they resonate with while connecting to broader fandom communities. Cosplay exists in diverse forms, ranging from the precise replication of characters' appearances to more interpretive approaches like bounding and closet play, demonstrating its adaptability and inclusivity. These practices not only reflect individual creativity but also foster collaboration, particularly in group cosplay, which emphasizes collective identity and shared narratives.

A critical aspect of cosplay lies in its role as a platform for exploring representation and inclusivity. Within the cosplay community, questions surrounding the portrayal of disability remain pertinent. While some argue that non-disabled cosplayers portraying disabled characters can foster greater awareness, others view such portrayals as inauthentic or appropriative. Conversely, cosplayers with disabilities often integrate their lived experiences into their creations, transforming cosplay into a site of empowerment and visibility. These debates echo broader societal conversations about representation and respect, urging greater awareness of inclusivity in fan practices.

The advent of the digital age has revolutionized cosplay, offering new opportunities for visibility and interaction. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube enable cosplayers to share their work, receive real-time feedback, and connect with global audiences. This digital exposure has transformed cosplay into a more accessible and collaborative endeavour, fostering cross-cultural exchanges that enrich the practice with diverse ideas and techniques. The blurring of lines between hobby and commerce, as some cosplayers transition into professional roles, underscores the evolving nature of this fan activity in the contemporary era.

Despite its openness, cosplay communities often operate within social hierarchies. The emphasis on “screen accuracy” highlights these dynamics, where detailed and precise costume replicas are frequently idealized. Such hierarchies can influence social standing within the community, placing pressure on cosplayers to conform to high standards of craftsmanship. Group cosplay adds complexity, as collective performances are often judged by their cohesion and overall quality, creating an interplay between individual expression and group identity.

Conventions serve as crucial arenas for cosplay, shaping its norms and practices. These events provide a platform for fans to showcase their creations, engage with others, and participate in performative social interactions. Conventions also uphold standards for behaviour and costume choices, balancing inclusivity with broader cultural norms. Beyond conventions, cosplay extends into charitable endeavours, where fans use their creativity to support social causes, enhancing both personal fulfilment and community visibility.

The study of cosplay through a screenwriting lens offers unique insights into its performative and narrative dimensions. Screenwriting, with its focus on character development and storytelling, provides a framework to explore the motivations, conflicts, and transformations of cosplayers. By viewing cosplayers as characters within a broader narrative, scholars can analyse their interactions, growth, and the ways they negotiate identity and community dynamics.

This interdisciplinary approach enriches our understanding of cosplay as both an individual and collective practice. By merging screenwriting methodologies with cosplay research, we gain a deeper appreciation for its role in media engagement, identity formation, and creative expression. Cosplay emerges not only as a celebration of fandom but also as a powerful lens for examining the intersections of media, community, and social change. Through

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this convergence, the evolving boundaries of creativity and representation are illuminated, contributing to the broader discourse on the transformative power of fandom.

Conventions: Locating Fandom

A creative narrative set within the immersive environment of a fan convention provides a rich framework to examine the layered dynamics of fandom, identity, and community. Conventions are more than just gatherings; they act as performative spaces where fans engage in complex negotiations of identity, community, and hierarchy. These interactions unfold in ways that reflect broader societal constructs, illustrating the fluidity and diversity of contemporary identity formation. As spaces that simultaneously foster inclusion and division, conventions exemplify the tensions inherent in fan communities, where shared passions intersect with individual expressions of identity and expertise.

Within these transitional spaces, fans explore and express their identities, connecting deeply with their chosen fandoms while navigating social hierarchies that influence their sense of belonging. While conventions are often celebrated as inclusive, welcoming spaces, they can also reinforce competitive dynamics. Standards such as “screen accuracy” in cosplay or the dominance of particular fandoms illustrate the stratified nature of these events. Some fans find validation and community through these hierarchies, while others may experience alienation. These dynamics mirror larger societal tensions, highlighting how conventions operate as microcosms of broader cultural interactions.

The transformative impact of digital media has further reshaped the fan experience, extending the physical space of conventions into an ongoing digital dialogue. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter allow fans to showcase their creative work, exchange ideas, and build global communities, creating an interstitial space that sustains fandom between in-person events. Digital interactions amplify the visibility of fan practices, enabling a continuous negotiation of identity and belonging across online and offline contexts. For many, the digital realm complements the convention experience, offering a more expansive, accessible platform to engage with fandom.

Incorporating a fan convention as the narrative backdrop in a creative work invites deeper exploration of the cultural rituals, power dynamics, and interpersonal interactions that define fan communities. These conventions serve as pivotal settings, where characters confront challenges, navigate hierarchies, and experience personal transformations. Through these character arcs, the narrative mirrors the tensions and triumphs of real-world fandom, illustrating how individuals and groups negotiate their identities within these vibrant, often contested, spaces. Conventions become sites of performative identity and community building, rich with opportunities to interrogate themes of belonging, power, and creativity.

Screenwriting, as a storytelling medium, offers unique opportunities to delve into the intricate world of conventions. By focusing on the nuanced

motivations, conflicts, and relationships of characters, screenwriters can authentically capture the vibrancy of fan culture. Authentic dialogue, detailed visual storytelling, and thoughtful character development enable writers to represent the complexity of fan practices and the emotional stakes of participation. Such narratives not only entertain but also resonate with audiences familiar with the multifaceted realities of fandom.

As fandoms and conventions continue to evolve, they reflect broader societal shifts toward inclusivity, diversity, and intersectionality. These changes present exciting opportunities for storytelling that embraces the vibrancy and complexity of fan culture. By grounding narratives in the detailed, dynamic world of conventions, creators can explore the evolving interplay of identity, community, and creativity, crafting works that both celebrate and critique the transformative power of fandom.

Collecting: Fan Activity and Identity Formation

Exploring the practice of collecting within fandom reveals a complex and dynamic activity that extends far beyond the mere accumulation of objects. Collecting becomes a performative act that shapes individual identities while reflecting the broader social structures inherent within fan communities. This practice offers a unique lens through which to examine fan engagement, shedding light on the relational dynamics, hierarchies, and motivations that characterize fandoms. As fans collect artefacts, they participate in a process that is simultaneously personal and collective, reinforcing connections with both individual memories and shared cultural experiences.

At its core, the act of collecting is deeply emotional. Fans often form profound attachments to their collections, driven by a combination of nostalgia, the thrill of acquisition, and a desire for social validation. The objects collected transcend their material form, becoming symbols of identity and belonging. Whether it is a rare comic, a limited-edition action figure, or a custom-made artefact, each item represents a connection to a fandom, a moment in time, or a personal memory. In this way, collecting is not just a solitary pursuit; it is an activity that fosters communal bonding, as fans gather to share their passion, exchange knowledge, and validate one another's involvement in the fandom. Through these interactions, fans are not passive recipients of culture; they actively engage in creating and redefining their identities by curating, sharing, and preserving the artefacts that define their fandom experiences.

However, collecting within fandom also gives rise to complex social hierarchies. Rare and valuable items, such as limited-edition merchandise or first-run collectibles, often confer prestige within the community. Collectors of these coveted items are frequently revered, held in high esteem for their resourcefulness, knowledge, and dedication to the fandom. Yet, this hierarchy can foster envy, competition, and exclusion. The pursuit of exclusivity often leads to a culture where status is tied to the rarity and perceived value of one's collection, leaving less experienced or more casual collectors on the periphery. These

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dynamics mirror broader societal structures, where social status is not inherent but constructed through interactions and the value placed on individual contributions. Thus, fandom hierarchies are not solely based on the size or uniqueness of one's collection but are also shaped by the enthusiasm, passion, and social engagement demonstrated within the community.

The concept of the “collector-creator” further complicates the landscape of fandom collecting. Fans who create their own artefacts—whether through crafting, customizing, or curating experiences—introduce an additional layer of value. These fans do not simply acquire; they contribute to the fandom by filling gaps left by commercial entities or by producing alternative forms of engagement. By creating unique items or fan art, these individuals carve out their own identities, distinct from traditional collectors, and gain social capital based on their creativity and innovation. This shift toward a participatory culture challenges traditional notions of value and authenticity, highlighting the evolving nature of fandom, where active participation is increasingly defined by the creation and sharing of content, rather than simply the accumulation of it.

The digital age has transformed fandom collecting in profound ways. Online platforms, social media, and digital collectibles have reshaped how fans interact with each other and with their collections. Virtual spaces enable fans to showcase their collections, trade items, and connect with global communities, broadening the scope of fandom interactions. However, digital collectibles, such as NFTs or virtual merchandise, introduce new challenges around authenticity, ownership, and value. The exchange of intangible goods complicates traditional notions of collecting, forcing fans to reconsider their motivations and relationships with the objects they collect. These evolving practices underscore the growing importance of identity and social capital in an increasingly connected world, where both physical and digital artefacts contribute to a fan's sense of belonging and recognition.

Collecting within fandom is a rich, multifaceted phenomenon that intertwines personal, social, and cultural dimensions. By examining the motivations and relational dynamics of collecting, we gain insights into the complexities of fan identity and the ways in which fandoms function as sites of both individual expression and collective belonging. As fan communities continue to evolve, driven by technological advancements and shifting cultural norms, the significance of collecting as a cultural practice will only deepen. For screenwriters, weaving collecting practices into narratives offers a powerful tool for character development and storytelling, creating multidimensional characters whose pursuit of artefacts reflects the emotional and social complexities of fandom. By exploring the personal and communal aspects of collecting, writers can craft stories that resonate with audiences familiar with the intricacies of fan identity and community.

Otherness and Intersectionality

Doctor Who has long stood as a beacon of diversity, engaging with themes of otherness and intersectionality through its expansive narrative. From its

inception, the series has utilized its time-travel framework to comment on societal issues like race, gender, class, and sexuality, making it a progressive force in the realm of science fiction. The Doctor's regenerative ability, which allows for changes in physical form, gender, and personality, challenges conventional notions of identity, positioning the show as a platform for non-binary and fluid representations of selfhood. These transformations invite a broader understanding of identity, echoing the ongoing shifts in societal norms and values.

The Doctor's companions, each representing diverse backgrounds, further reinforce the show's commitment to exploring issues of race, class, and gender. As they journey across time and space, these characters confront and challenge various forms of systemic oppression, such as colonialism and gender inequality. Their personal growth is tied to these confrontations, making the series not only an adventure but also a space for critical reflection on power dynamics and societal structures. Through their experiences, *Doctor Who* emphasizes the importance of empathy, adaptability, and compassion, qualities that transcend the typical hero-villain dichotomy found in traditional narratives.

The intersectional approach within *Doctor Who* extends beyond the Doctor and companions to the show's antagonists, who often embody oppressive systems like fascism, xenophobia, and rigid patriarchy. These villains contrast sharply with the Doctor's inclusive, fluid nature, underscoring the importance of unity, understanding, and compassion in the fight against injustice. In this way, *Doctor Who* presents diversity not just as something to be accepted but as an essential force for social progress. By actively embracing diversity, the show suggests that it is through inclusivity that societies can evolve and thrive.

Integral to the series' ongoing success is its commitment to a collaborative storytelling process that incorporates a range of diverse voices. The inclusion of writers, directors, and actors from varied backgrounds has enriched the thematic scope of *Doctor Who*, ensuring that marginalized communities are not only represented but are also given agency and depth within the narrative. This inclusivity within the creative team has allowed for more nuanced portrayals of intersectionality, further expanding the show's relevance and resonance with a global audience.

World building plays a pivotal role in *Doctor Who*'s exploration of intersectionality and otherness. Each new alien society or futuristic dystopia introduces a set of social structures and hierarchies that reflect or challenge real-world issues. These settings provide a platform for the show to critique contemporary societal systems, imagining more just and inclusive futures. The Doctor's relationships with companions—whether human or non-human—emphasize empathy, solidarity, and the shared responsibility of overcoming injustice, reinforcing the show's moral core that inclusion is not just a choice but a necessity for social harmony.

At its heart, *Doctor Who* serves as a narrative platform that reflects the complexities of identity and societal structures. Through its blend of science fiction and social critique, the show offers a vision of a more compassionate, inclusive