

H-Net Reviews

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Joe Sanders, ed. *Science Fiction Fandom*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1994. xii + 293 pp. \$59.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-313-23380-7.

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Science Fiction Fandom is a collection of essays about the history of fandom and present-day fandom, including conventions and fanzines. The book is not a study of science fiction, although it contains interesting insights about that field. It focuses on fans, most of whom read science fiction, collect it, read fanzines, and associate with other fans, and on fandom, which the authors call “a way of life,” “a subculture,” and “a microcosm.” Yet this is not an anthropological study but a series of essays by fans.

Non-fans think of fandom as a breeding ground for professional writers and critics of science fiction. Such writers as Sam Moskowitz (who contributes a chapter to this book), A. Merritt, Arthur C. Clarke, and Isaac Asimov made the switch from fandom to professional ranks. *Science Fiction Fandom*, however, indicates that most fans, if they write, do so as amateurs. They are, instead, interested in things like discussing science fiction and the future, collecting science fiction, reading fanzines, and

attending conventions.

The book contains an annotated bibliography and a “Glossary of Fanspeak.” Even with the glossary, some of the essays are so full of fanspeak that they are difficult to read. Some also refer without explanation to events possibly familiar to most fans—such as when Richard Bergeron “(figuratively) shot himself in the foot”—but incomprehensible to most non-fans.

Science Fiction Fandom is interesting for the science-fiction fan. Although not scholarly, it should also prove useful to one interested in writing a scholarly study of fandom.

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