(Buchanan 2015, 385; see also Wise 2011). And, third, to think with the concept of assemblage it is not sufficient to simply add up or combine the elements that media studies usually considers (texts, technologies, individuals) and leave it at that. N. Katherine Hayles reminds us the concept of assemblage is a critique of the idea that a unified subjectivity preexists events: subjectivity is produced by the assemblage and not assumed in its construction (2012, 24).

6

Audience

Matt Hills

As Kate Lacey has observed, there is "an inescapable collectivity suggested by the word 'audience'" (2013, 13–14). Indeed, Raymond Williams's *Keywords*, despite not including the term, analyzes what might be meant by the audience within an entry on "masses," conveying the cultural and political ambivalences that have historically surrounded the mass audience. The "masses," we are told, can be "a term of contempt in much conservative thought, but a positive term in much socialist thought" (Williams 1976/1983, 192). Where the former has often viewed mass audiences as lacking in good taste, rationality, and expertise, the latter has instead thought of the mass as standing in for "the people" and the "popular," that is, acting as a force for democracy. Sonia Livingstone argues that "in audience research, both meanings of audience retain some purchase" (2005, 23)—sometimes audiences represent a problem to be criticized, and sometimes they are a force to be celebrated. In *New Keywords*, David Morley holds on to the importance of audience as collectivity, contrasting physically copresent audiences with "the mass audience for contemporary forms of broadcasting, which perhaps today supplies us with our primary sense of what an audience is" (2005, 8). However, Morley indicates that the mass audience can no longer be assumed to unify media consumers in space and time. Instead, "cross-border forms of broadcasting often now bring together audiences of people who may be geographically dispersed across

great distances, to constitute diasporic communities of various sorts" (2005, 9).

Thinking about media audiences, then, seems to involve evaluating the cultural-political character of these groupings. At the same time, audiences have been said to fall into different categories on the basis of whether they are copresent in space and time (the physical audience), copresent in time but dispersed across different spaces (the mass audience), or scattered across different temporalities and sites (the fragmented or individualized audience). A tripartite taxonomy of audiences has thus become common (Sullivan 2013, 2), with one of the most influential versions of this to be found in Nicholas Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst's *Audiences* (1998). Abercrombie and Longhurst analyze "the simple, the mass and the diffused" audience (159). While the "simple" audience means that which is copresent at events, and the mass remains emblematic of large-scale TV audiences watching at the same time according to "linear" scheduling models, the "diffused" audience represents something more than simply fragmentation in line with "nonlinear" video-on-demand or time shifting. Rather, Abercrombie and Longhurst are interested in how being an audience member has escaped the spatiotemporal boundaries of the moments in which we consume media. We are now audiences more of the time, whether this involves reading news about TV shows or film franchises we follow via social media, tweeting and blogging about our favored media consumption and fan objects, watching trailers via YouTube, or so on. In a pervasive media culture, audience identities are not simply enacted in the spaces and times in which we encounter specific media texts—they have become performances of identity that stretch out long before and after such encounters, and hence the term "diffused" audience.

Such audiences become altered kinds of producers of meaning in addition to being consumers, and so hybrid terms such as "produsage," blending "production" and "usage," have sprung up to account for new ways of audiencing (Bruns 2008, 215), along with a focus on the "paratexts" that audiences create (Gray 2010). These can include online reviews (Frey 2015) or comments (Reagle 2015), as well as fan fiction, fan vids, or GIFs (Booth 2015). However, we need to avoid exaggerating a sense of media transformation, as if "simple" and "mass" audiences have been displaced by "diffused" audiences incessantly busy shaping user-generated content via Web 2.0. And we should avoid implying that "linear" media have been entirely supplanted by "on-demand cultures" of audience activity linked to the likes of Netflix and Amazon Prime. Some of the time we may choose to "binge watch" or "media marathon" TV shows (Glebatis Perks 2015, ix), but we may combine this with attending live events such as gigs, going out to the cinema, or collectively watching "event" TV when it is initially broadcast, such as a *Dancing with the Stars/Strictly Come Dancing* final. Rather than viewing audience types as a rigid taxonomy or a reductive narrative of media "eras," we need a far more empirical, nuanced, and theorized sense of how and when these modes interact. As Abercrombie and Longhurst caution, it is important to address the processes that connect simple, mass, and diffused audiences.

With the mainstreaming of social media/Web 2.0, we can argue that such interactions between simple, mass, and diffused audiences have become more intense. Take the UK television premiere of BBC TV's flagship drama *Sherlock* and its special episode "The Abominable Bride," which aired on New Year's Day 2016. Audiences could watch this as part of a mass audience, or they could catch up with the show via the BBC iPlayer, forming

part of a diffused audience. The episode attracted ratings of over eleven million people, making it the most-watched TV program in the United Kingdom across the festive period. But fans also had the option to shift from a mass audience position and enter "simple" audiences by choosing to view "The Abominable Bride" at cinemas.

By choosing to share *Sherlock* in-person with an anticipated audience of like-minded viewers—as well as treating its cinema release as an elevation and validation of the show's brand—fans could move between "mass" and "simple" audiences, with this consumer-oriented choice effectively acting as a badge of fan distinction, and separating fans out from the mass of *Sherlock*'s viewers. But as well as shifting between "mass" and "simple" audiences as a way of performing their dedication to *Sherlock*—the cinema that I attended included a number of cosplaying fans dressed up in Victorian costumes—audiences could also migrate from a "diffused" to a "mass" audience position. This movement was possible via the sharing of online reviews and tweets within a "zone of liveness" (Crisell 2012, 45, 93) following transmission.

Such a "massification" of *Sherlock*'s fragmented audience is not strictly unified in time, however, as these viewers can watch the episode at different and individualized points after initial broadcast. Yet UK TV ratings now factor in this partial erosion of the "linear" schedule by counting viewers who watch time-shifted recordings up to a week after transmission; this results in a "consolidated" Broadcasters' Audience Research Board (BARB) rating as opposed to the initial "overnight" count of those who watched at the time of broadcast (the US Nielsen ratings system likewise includes "live plus 7" figures). These quantifications of the "mass" audience therefore stretch the concept to include those encountering a media text within seven days, assuming a weekly schedule or cutoff of TV viewing that rolls on to following episodes.

Audiences can also use social media to migrate from "simple" audience modes to those with "mass" or "diffused" currency, for example tweeting photographs taken at a red-carpet film premiere or a preview screening. In some cases, audience tweets can be picked up by the mass media and recirculated within entertainment news stories (this happened in media responses to awkward representations of feminism in "The Abominable Bride"); in other cases, tweets and videos can circulate as "spreadable media" within the "networked audience" (Jenkins, Ford, and Green 2013; Marwick 2013, 213).

But if so-called simple, mass, and diffused audiences have increasingly become modes that audience members can move across by using social media or making specific consumption decisions, then Web 2.0's diffused audience—where viewers continue to perform their audience identities over time—has also made audiences increasingly visible to one another. Media studies typically conceptualizes audiences as collectivities for particular texts, such as studying *The Lord of the Rings* audiences (Barker and Mathijs 2008) or reality TV audiences (Skeggs and Wood 2012). But there is a notable paradigm shift associated with the rise of social media and "diffused" audiences: audience communities can (and do) now encounter and confront one another far more readily.

I am no longer simply an audience for media texts; I also consume other audience members' consumption of other media, and as part of fan communities I engage with other fan communities: reading reviews, blogs, Facebook groups, and forums, for example. It is striking, then, that although media studies has deployed a concept of intertextuality for many years as part of its

understanding of media culture, there has been little development of any comparable sense of interaudiences whereby audiences are analyzed as relating to other audiences. It is commonplace to consider texts in dialogue with other texts (adaptation, genre, satire), yet still seems unusual to analyze audiences not only in relation to texts but also transversally, if you like.

Scholarship has begun to focus on "anti-fandom" (Gray 2003), where diffused audiences—sometimes known as "haters"—perform their visceral dislike of particular media texts online via hate sites or commentaries. Such dislike often spills over into an othering of the audience for the disliked text, which is assumed to lack taste, knowledge, or even rationality: young women's culture from *Twilight* to One Direction has been patriarchally and problematically dismissed in this fashion. And work has also considered "inter-fandom" (Hills 2012), where fans of one media text denigrate fans of another, such as older, male *Doctor Who* fans being dismayed by the allegedly hysterical "squeeing" of younger female *Sherlock* fans. But despite such developments in audience studies, there has yet to be a systematic theorization of interaudiences and viewers' meaning-making relationships to other (imagined and mediated) audiences, across media and even across national boundaries.

Audiences should no longer be defined only in relation to the media texts they read, but should also be approached as a matter of interaudience interactions, coalitions, and otherings. This is one crucial lesson of the tripartite division into simple, mass, and diffused audiences—the more we carry particular audience identities with us through mediatized culture and via user-generated content, the more we engage with other people's audiencing alongside "official" media content. As a result of this everyday textualization of other people's views, we find ourselves watching "in common" more routinely than ever before, attending "to television's intersubjective viewing practices . . . [and] watch[ing] in conversation—direct and variously mediated—with other viewers" (Shimpach 2010, 58). Media audiences are not silos of interpretation cut apart from one another, emerging around isolated media texts. However, reading many prior audience studies, one might be forgiven for thinking that was the case. But studying interaudiences "distances us . . . from the normal media studies assumption that what audiences do . . . is already a distinctive set of media-focused practices rather than an artificially chosen 'slice' through daily life that cuts across how people actually understand the practices in which they are engaged" (Couldry 2014, 217).

At the same time, we need to be aware that many claims are made on behalf of and in relation to audiences; ratings and box office figures are presented as evidence of brand value or popularity. And some interaudience interactions can mean projecting what other viewer groups are like in order to dismiss them, for example assuming that soap audiences think the actors are the characters, or presuming that horror audiences straightforwardly enjoy representations of gore and immorality. Audiences may seem ever more visible to us within the world of social media, but this visibility masks the fact that "no representation of 'television [or other media] audience,' empirical or otherwise, gives us direct access to any actual audience. Instead, it evokes 'fictive' pictures of 'audience,' fictive not in the sense of false or untrue, but of fabricated, both made and made up" (Ang 1991, 34–35). We can never gain access—either as scholars or social media users—to the entirety of an audience. It isn't even clear what this would mean: what boundaries or parameters would we have to posit to contain this "full audience"? Instead, audiences are always a kind of fiction or construct, as Ien Ang (1991, 35) has argued.

But this does not mean that the study of audiences is futile. Quite the reverse, it means precisely that we need to analyze and challenge how representations of audiences are used by media industries, as well as how audience discourses are deployed in interaudience interactions, or by authorities and pundits. How are audiences characterized or gendered; how are their behaviors culturally valued or denigrated? Theorizing the audience thus means, among other things, critiquing forms of cultural power that can seek to naturalize constructed images of specific audiences.

7
Author

Cynthia Chris

By some measures, media studies has not had a strong tradition of foregrounding authorship, in comparison to literary and film studies' robust and even contentious traditions. At times, those traditions have influenced media scholarship. But in analyses of television, video games, social media, transmedia, and other forms, some media scholars have set aside the preoccupation with singular authors that is commonplace throughout literary and film studies. In doing so, we have regularly instead made visible the interplay of corporate imprimatur, creative and technical personnel, and active audiences. And yet other media scholars have engaged with author theories in a limited manner, adapting them to television's mode of production, and focusing on a small set of individual *auteurs*. Why is the author so categorically emphasized in regard to some media texts and products—and not others? That is, *why is an author*? Why has media studies taken approaches that differ from those of our apparent disciplinary cousin, film studies, or what has been at stake in our limited engagements with those approaches? What is gained, and what may be lost, in each approach? The answers to each of these questions are quite entangled.

In the postwar period, French film critics embraced both the resurgence of European filmmaking and an influx of Hollywood films that had been in short supply during World War II. In the magazine *Cahiers du Cinéma*, Francois Truffaut and other critics championed