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Eat your favourite TV show: politics and play in fan cooking

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Abstract

This article explores how play can be used to negotiate identity and experiences of the everyday. It examines the cultural work performed by food and fan cultures and what their convergence in a single medium, the fan cookbook, might mean. Such texts and the alternate reading strategies they encourage problematize the boundaries between production and consumption, politics and pleasure. The fan cookbooks, and the multiple ways in which they can be engaged with, facilitate an embodied and immersive experience that extends the source text (such as a television show or novel) beyond its original intended meaning and function. Two case studies will be used as examples: The Unofficial Game of Thrones Cookbook and Dining with the Doctor. As fan food and cookbooks are relatively new types of texts in the fan community, there is a paucity of research in fan studies on this type of work. The article addresses this dearth,

demonstrating how fan cookbooks provide spaces where cultural capital can be created and conferred, and where fan identities are shaped. The cookbooks are sites where dominant meanings and relations of power can be questioned through a playful interaction between actual and fictional worlds.

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