Fans use the term ‘queerbaiting’ to account for a television tactic whereby producers deliberately insert homoerotic subtext between characters in order to capture a queer viewership, yet never actualise this subtext on screen. It is near exclusively deemed by fans as an exploitative tactic that is harmful to queer viewers; one that teases queer representations, then shuts down opportunities for validation with ‘no homo’ jokes in text and denial of the existence of any subtext in commentary. It has thus attained decidedly negative connotations in its usage by fans and a degree of cultural currency in the popular sphere, the hashtag #Queerbaiting an increasingly popular device on Twitter for shaming such tactics, for example. Cult series such as *Supernatural* and *Sherlock* are among the most frequently named for queerbaiting their audiences, which given the scholarly interest by fan scholars in these texts, raises important questions for our field. Recently, investigation has begun into some of the questions posed by queerbaiting, such as the activist agenda behind the term’s coinage (Nordin, 2015), its statement on fan-producer interactions (Collier, 2015), textual readings of certain texts that queerbait (Fathallah, 2015), and of how this relatively new term bodes for understandings of particular well-canvased fan practices, such as slash (Brennan, 2016).

The recent interest by scholars in the various issues associated with queerbaiting make a collection of essays that situate the tactic in terms of the fan studies field timely. Further, a survey of such issues is important in light of the impassioned calls from many fans for such tactics to cease, and for producers to take account of the harm caused by queerbaiting. A key argument being that in ‘baiting’ their audiences, then denying actual representations, queer viewers face invalidation of their experiences (Sheehan, 2015). This is not to discount alternate readings on the practice, such as of the potential queer readings that ‘queerbaiting’ in fact make possible, even plausible (Brennan, 2016).

This special edition of *Journal of Fandom Studies* aims to take account of why queerbaiting as a concept has gained the appeal it has, and why now. Not only what exactly it means to queerbait, but also the relationship between this term and the current media landscape, in which queer representations are supposedly possible in mainstream texts, yet still denied. Therefore, the issue seeks to take stock of the current state of media representations accused of queerbaiting and of the fannish culture that surrounds the development of this term. Importantly, the edition aims to consider what criticism of certain tactics might mean for longstanding debates within the field, among them: media effects, fan/producer power relations, active/passive consumption, fan production (slash, for example), and identity, to name just a few. As such, submissions are encouraged from across disciplines, with the aim to better understand what queerbaiting means to fans; what harm, if any, it causes them; and how we are to proceed with the study of fandoms that, some argue, are harmful.

**Submission Details**

Submissions of particular interest are not limited to but may address:

- Etymology of the term
- What constitutes queerbaiting?
- Queerbaiting as fan activism
- Good/bad representations of sexuality
- Mainstreaming queer representation
- Queerbaiting vs homoeroticism
- Campaigns to boycott series that queerbait
- Queerbaiting vs queer reading
- Hoyay, fan service, subtext, ‘no homo’ jokes, and other related terms
• Textual readings of particular series that queerbait, such as *Supernatural, Sherlock, Merlin, Rizzoli & Isles, Teen Wolf*
• #Queerbaiting on Twitter, Tumblr
• Fan-producer dynamics
• Methodologies for studying queerbaiting
• Queerbaiting on film (*The Avengers, Victor Frankenstein*, for example)
• Queerbaiting in advertising
• Queerbaiting and slash/femslash, ‘correcting’ queerbaiting
• Queerbaiting as invalidation of identity
• Cast and producer responses to accusations of queerbaiting
• Celebrity queerbaiting (James Franco, Nick Jonas, etc.)
• Capitalising on queerbaiting (the ‘pink dollar’)

This special edition of *Journal of Fandom Studies* will be edited by Dr Joseph Brennan.

Please send abstracts of 300 words and a short biographical note to joseph.brennan@sydney.edu.au by June 1, 2016. Completed articles of 6000–9000 words will be due November 1, 2016.

**Editorial Information**

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