Acafan identity, communities of practice, and vocational poaching

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[0.1] *Abstract*—In a conceptualization and critique of the implications motivating a set of teaching and learning sessions designed to introduce undergraduate students to the professional role of location scouts and managers, two main interventions are offered. First, discussion of acafan identities is advanced by considering how this subject position applies to teaching and learning contexts rather than individual research dispositions, with acafans transferring competencies developed through fan practices that appropriate industry-located forms of knowledge to inform pedagogical design. Second, the concept of vocational poaching is applied as an alternative of fannish appropriation that acafans can engage in when designing teaching and learning sessions. Vocational poaching involves individual acafans performing tactical raids on industrially located forms of knowledge via fan practices such as location visiting and using these to satisfy the requirements of neoliberal teaching policies.

[0.2] *Keywords—Doctor Who;* Media tourism; Textual poaching; UK higher education

1. Introduction: Facing the raven

[1.1] I begin with a reference to the episode "Face the Raven" (2015) from the ninth series of *Doctor Who* (2005–) for two reasons. First, the episode features outside shooting around multiple locations in the city center of Cardiff, Wales, which are in close proximity to the School of Journalism, Media, and Culture where I am based. Consequently, the episode's choice of locations for filming have made it suitable for designing teaching experiences that introduce undergraduate students studying a module about diegetic and extradiegetic spaces and locations in screen media to consider how places they encounter on a routine basis become selected and used for out-of-studio shooting. Secondly, the episode's plot centers

on companion character Clara (Jenna Coleman) being dramatically killed by the titular bird because she attempts to imitate the heroic behavior associated with the show's lead character (Peter Capaldi). "Facing the Raven" therefore thematically covers the risks involved with mimicking the behaviors of a group (or species, in the case of the Doctor) to which you do not belong to. This theme dovetails with this article's aims, which are to reflect upon the design of a particular incarnation of my teaching practice and think through the motivations and consequences underpinning the identity positions of fan and academic that the session mobilizes. The article therefore intervenes in debates concerning acafandom by addressing an alternative way that this "hybrid scholarly identit[y]" (Scott in Scott and Jenkins [1992] 2012, vii) can be theorized, embodied, and performed. This concerns how competencies arising from fannish pastimes, like close textual analysis and location visiting, are fusible with academic expectations to produce learning opportunities that respond to contemporary higher education (HE) policy in the United Kingdom. The article's arguments are thus situated where marketization has given rise to an employability agenda that guides expectations for undergraduate teaching.

[1.2] The article is split into three sections. The first critiques discourses on acafandom for focusing on research contexts at the expense of pedagogy. Building upon observations made by Sangkyun Kim's (2010) study of fan tourists' location-visiting behaviors and combining these with pedagogical theories of communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991), I posit an alternative, teaching-oriented acafan subjectivity. This identity recognizes how the acafan transfers knowledges acquired through fandom to teaching practice (and vice versa). The second section outlines the lesson plan demonstrating the theorized acafan identity in a practical context. The final section brings its two predecessors together to introduce and reflect on the neologism "vocational poaching," which I have coined to capture how an acafan working within the context of HE in the UK raids competencies associated with both professional identities and fan practices. Informed by an autoethnographic methodology, through which the researcher attempts to dislodge the rationality of their arguments by questioning the assumptions upon which these are based (Chin 2007), I reflect upon the claims to status, ideological disposition, and gendering of the vocational poaching acafan. Naturally, I am aware that "through autoethnography we can never entirely 'disprove'" (Hills 2002, 86)—or, in this instance, corroborate—a theory due to the method's perceived lack of representativeness of other acafans' experiences. Nevertheless, I hope that this article initiates further conversations regarding the relationship between academic, fannish, and professional forms of knowledge within individual teaching practices and/or institutional contexts.

2. Acafan identities, communities of practice, and the UK HE sector

[2.1] In the early 90s, Henry Jenkins was not the only scholar using fandom to explore then-prominent issues concerning resistant readers of media texts (Bacon-Smith 1992; Lewis 1992). However, Jenkins's ([1992] 2012a, 5) work introduced the term "acafan" by declaring:

[2.2] When I write about fan culture…I write *both* as an academic (who has access to certain theories of popular culture, certain bodies of critical and ethnographic literature) and as a fan (who has access to the particular knowledge and traditions of that community). My account exists in a constant movement between these two levels of understanding which are not necessarily in conflict but are also not necessarily in perfect alignment.

[2.3] Where the acafan as an embodied disposition of the researcher differed to the stance adopted by Jenkins's contemporaries was in its complication of deep-rooted systems of scholarly preference. These included binary logics valuing objective detachment over subjective involvement and an intellectual stance above affective participation with the object of study (Cristofari and Guitton 2016, 715–16; Morimoto 2019, 1–4). The acafan position has since gained currency and now broadly refers to methodological choices rooted in ethnography, whereby the researcher speaks as an insider on behalf of the identities and practices under scrutiny. By doing so, the scholar can provide outsider readers with nuanced insights concerning how particular fan groups negotiate a commercial(ized), media(ted) object (Cristofari and Guitton 2016, 722–25).

[2.4] Lori Morimoto (2019, 4) has posited that "the term 'acafan' has accumulated a lot of baggage, and it's still the subject of sometimes-heated debate." I would extend this argument by suggesting that the ongoing terms of debate have overemphasized the cultural position and status of the acafan. Matt Hills's (2002, 5) conceptualization of "scholar-fan" and "fan-scholar" as problematic "imagined subjectivit[ies]" has highlighted the systems of cultural and institutional value that underpin these uneasy identity positions. Hills's discussion brought to light the difficulties that taking up such subjectivities can present for fans, academics, and those in between such poles and set the agenda for understanding acafans and their relationships to the communities that they straddle (Gray in Stein 2011a; Jenkins 2012b; Larsen and Zubernis 2012; Cristofari and Guitton 2016). There have been useful and timely divergences from this line of discussion, such as Louisa Stein's (2011b) intervention that acafan subjectivities permit feminist-indebted critiques of popular culture centered on affect and devalued forms of fan knowledge. However, much of the ensuing discourse has focused upon the status of the acafan within and between the two communities they represent, typically calling for greater integration between these (Jenkins 2008; Booth 2013). In contrast, manifestations of the identity in pedagogical contexts have been overlooked.

[2.5] The absence of alternative exhibitions of acafan identities might partly be because of the methodological place occupied by autoethnography in fan studies.

Issues of fan affect have most often been theorized through questioning and critiquing self-produced accounts of individual acafan attachments (Driessen and Jones 2016; Garner 2018). However, scanning the indexes of recently published fan studies compendiums suggests that continuing a debate of acafan identities is becoming less of a disciplinary priority and that its meanings are now self-evident. The term is not listed in Linda Duits, Koos Zwaan, and Stijn Reijnders's (2014) *Ashgate Research Companion to Fan Cultures* and is only granted six listings in both Paul Booth's (2018a) *Companion to Media Fandom and Fan Studies* and the second version of Jonathan Gray, Cornel Sandvoss, and C. Lee Harrington's (2017) *Fandom: Identities and Communities in a Mediated World* (note 1). If the number of entries for acafandom in each volume is compared with those for transformative works like fan fiction, the difference is notable. The exception to this trend is, at first glance, Melissa A. Click and Suzanne Scott's (2018) *Routledge Companion to Media Fandom,* where the term is discussed at some length (Brooker, Duffett, and Hellekson 2018). Yet the term's primary representation in the volume occurs in the informal, less theoretically rooted context of a roundtable discussion, connoting the term's periphery status.

[2.6] If it is the case that fandom is characterized by multiple practices and knowledges (Kirkpatrick 2015, ¶ 1.1; Cristofari and Guitton 2016, 719; Morimoto 2019, 2) then it is logical to posit that there might be a range of acafan identities. How might the knowledge obtained through fannish practices associated with transmedia tourism, where fans visit affectively significant locations (whether real world or virtual) linked to the fan object and engage with these through the affordances provided by convergent technologies and platforms (Garner 2019), be translated to the design of learning opportunities? Alternatively, if it is accepted that "the aca-fan represents a crucial node where knowledge from the community is passed on into the academic world" (Cristofari and Guitton 2016, 718), how might knowledge obtained through participating in fannish practices be creatively appropriated for teaching purposes? What potential issues and tensions might arise out of such translations? Moreover, if "we must be careful to attend to the…precise historical context [and] the…concrete social and cultural circumstances" (Jenkins [1992] 2012a, 35) that generate fan practices, what contextual circumstances encourage transferring fandom-acquired knowledge into pedagogical practice?

[2.7] Fans have been theorized as being "attracted to properties that reward re-reading and offer an abundance of textual resources to inspire their own production" (Scott in Scott and Jenkins [1992] 2012, xii). Sam Ford (2014, 63) reads this as a preference for "drillable" texts that are "densely packed with meaning so as to require repeated analysis" (also Mittell 2015, 288–90). Such preferences for excavating meaning also apply to fans' location visiting habits. Rebecca Williams (2019, 76–8) argues that high levels of familiarity with different audiovisual iterations of the Lecterverse (the fictional transmedia landscape concerning the character of Hannibal Lecter) combined with other fannish behaviors such as online-research-informed preparation for a location-visiting trip

to Florence, Italy. Alternatively, when sites are closer to home, repeated viewings fused with knowledge of one's local surroundings can assist with planning visits to affectively significant locations (Hills 2006). Fan practices like pausing shots or rewatching scenes, enabled by domestic digital playback technologies (Jenkins [1992] 2012a, 72–73), can generate high levels of knowledge concerning the locations used for external shooting purposes.

[2.8] Writing on the transfer of competencies between the cultural sites that acafans straddle, Will Brooker, Mark Duffett, and Karen Hellekson (2018, 71) discuss how knowledge obtained through academic practices of research and critique can lead to forms of "textual productivity" (Fiske 1992, 39) in collaboration with nonacademic fans. Relating to practices of location visiting, Sangkyun Kim (2010) has implied that such fannish behaviors can enhance the visitor's knowledge of audiovisual production techniques such as location use, camera framing, cinematography, and lighting. Writing in relation to a South Korean romantic drama series, Kim (2010, 70) observes that "the visitors…encountered on Nami Island usually asked other visitors to take photographs for them and explained a particular angle and shot in which they wanted to be framed." By seeking out exact recreations of favorite scenes from the fan text, media tourists demonstrate how "previous viewing experiences of a television series and visualized signifiers…provide…a means of preparation, aid, documentation and vicarious participation when visiting screen tourism locations" (Kim 2010, 71). In other words, partaking in location-visiting pursuits can result in fans' boosting their "popular cultural capital" (Fiske 1992, 34) by developing their understanding of how and where the fan object was produced.

[2.9] This type of acafan learning, where knowledge gained through experiences from one imagined subjectivity transfers to the other, recalls constructivist pedagogies concerning communities of practice. For Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991), apprentices learn through observing their more experienced peers and eventually develop specific "regimes of competence" (Wenger 1998, 136) that enable the apprentice to perform tasks independently. Similar approaches to learning are implied by Jenkins, Ford, and Joshua Green (2013, 158) in relation to digital media environments:

[2.10] Educators have long studied how members of communities of practice learn from and sustain each other's participation. Their research suggests that people initially learn through "lurking" or observing from the margins, that certain basic activities may represent stepping-stones toward greater engagement, and that key individuals help to motivate others' advancement.

[2.11] Jenkins, Ford, and Green are not alone in considering how community of practice pedagogies might assist in conceptualizing professional and fan identities within digitizing environments. Hills (2015a) uses the concept to critique sociocultural discourses proclaiming the displacement of expert knowledge in

favor of formations of collective intelligence within convergence culture. For Hills (2015a, 361), "wishing away the cultural power of discourses of expertise—whether at a participatory or pluralist level—fails to illuminate how media fandom iterates forms of expert knowledge" through practices including fan-written histories of the fan object, which draw boundaries around what constitutes canonical knowledge. Hills therefore rightly recognizes the continued presence of established hierarchies and barriers to accessing communities of practice despite digital culture's knowledge flows.

[2.12] However, Hills's critique cannot account for knowledge transfers between production contexts, fan behaviors like location visiting, and the embodied knowledges of acafans. Instead, if Kim's (2010) arguments concerning the competencies acquired through acts of fan tourism are aligned with theories of communities of practice, a new and productive way of understanding acafan identities becomes possible. For example, fans may begin to learn pertinent skills from cultural spheres of media production via their fan behaviors and then use these to inform the design and delivery of teaching tasks. In such instances, knowledge of screen media production roles concerning location selection and cinematography might be informally learned by the acafan partaking in media tourism. This has certainly been my own experience, as the skills I have gained through location visiting, combined with academic competencies such as comprehensive research into media tourism, onscreen space, and filming locations, have enabled me to transfer knowledge between fannish and academic contexts. Consequently, academic research can enhance fannish practices (rewatching favorite episodes, visiting profilmic spaces) and vice versa.

[2.13] It should be noted that I am not arguing that skills acquired through acafan practices can or should substitute for the expertise of industry professionals that has been acquired through years of performing such tasks. While I may have acquired knowledge about how locations are transformed to their onscreen equivalents through reading publications, attending (trans)media tourism experiences providing behind-the-scenes knowledge, and visiting profilmic spaces as leisure activities, I have no hands-on experience of performing location work in a professional setting. Instead, I am arguing that the forms of knowledge generated through embodying a particular version of the acafan identity can enable the transfer of acquired competencies between the fannish and academic spheres and can be used to introduce new learners to these topics. While performing such tasks arguably violates student expectations that their lecturers are "provider[s] of expert knowledge" (Bates and Kaye 2014, 663) rather than knowledge obtained through secondhand appropriations of skills from nonprofessional hobbies, the last section of this article complicates this assertion by returning to ideas concerning communities of practice.

[2.14] The pressure to design learning opportunities that creatively mobilize the spatially orientated acafan's knowledge partly arise from contemporary

expectations in UK HE. The Browne Report of 2011 recommended that public funding for UK HE be removed in favor of transferring the full costs directly to students (Tomlinson 2016, 149–50); these suggestions were passed by the Conservative–Liberal Democrat coalition government as part of their austerity measures. A consequence of this turn has been that discourses of employability now emphasize institutional, parental, and student expectations of the design and delivery of both individual modules and undergraduate courses:

[2.15] Students are placing greater emphasis on graduate employment, and hold greater expectations of better job prospects as a result of investing more in Higher Education. This presents a strong justification for HEIs to critically consider the extent to which they are preparing their students for employment following graduation, and to enhance the way in which employability is integrated as a core component of Higher Education curricula. (Bates and Kaye 2014, 672)

[2.16] This agenda has consequences for pedagogical approaches within HE, as "the language of 'employability' reinforces a narrow concept of education and encourages students to focus on narrow individual outcomes rather than broader, transformational experiences" (Millican 2014, 637). Subsequently, students afford higher levels of value to "practical and project-based elements" over critical pedagogies and theoretically informed approaches. Such policies and preferences are indicative of "the continuation of neo-liberalistic policies in higher education" (Millican 2014, 635) being adopted at the level of individual institutional practice. This agenda results in staff being structurally positioned as expected to factor in industry-focused learning opportunities when designing modules—even if they hold low skill levels in these areas.

[2.17] The acafan is therefore structurally encouraged to transfer industrially focused competencies from one part of their identity to another. In the context of this article, this means that fannish skills developed through identifying sites of filming, understanding how those spaces were dressed and shot by professionals, and reflecting on why specific combinations of shots and sequences may utilize specific streets and areas are applied to teaching. The next section details the deployment of these skills for a week of lectures and seminars.

3. The lesson plan

[3.1] The teaching session, which included a three-hour lecture and screening session for approximately forty third-year undergraduate learners, a location-visiting tour, and a one-hour seminar (run once each for two groups of eighteen students), was designed to fulfil the following learning outcomes:

- [3.2] To better understand the role and responsibilities of location scouting and management within television production.

- To identify and recognize how real-world spaces within Cardiff were used for shooting purposes in line with multiple contextual factors (e.g., logistics, economics, etc.).
- To compare different scenes within a preselected television episode to understand how specific geographical locations are reused in production.
- To demonstrate applied understanding of taught material by working in small groups and responding to a hypothetical brief requiring the selection of a suitable filming location.
- To defend the chosen location by evaluating its strengths and weaknesses in line with the requirements of the brief and other contextual factors.

[3.3] The learning outcomes are indebted to Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy of learning (1956), as students are expected to build upon the knowledge to which they are first introduced by gradually developing their analytical, critical, and creative skills. Additionally, the teaching sessions are structured by the constructivist spiral curriculum model, whereby each learning opportunity advances an individual learner's skills. In this instance, the lecture and screening session provide a foundational understanding and application of core concepts pertaining to location work. In contrast, the tour applies the information introduced to specific geographical areas in Cardiff with which the students would likely be familiar. The seminar sessions then allow for students' creative application and the lecturer's and students' own self-reflective evaluation of what they have learned.

[3.4] The lecture begins by providing students with information concerning what the role of location scouting and management involves, referencing professional-facing resources offering entry points to the screen media industries (*My First Job in Film* 2016; *Creative SkillSet* 2020). This material is supplemented by an academic paper by Chris Luckinbeal (2012), which is the set reading that students are required to complete between attending the lecture and participating in the seminar. Key arguments from the set reading are introduced at the start of the lecture to provide points of recognition for students with the intention of allowing them to move from understanding the article's content during the lecture to instead thinking critically and evaluating the implications of what is being argued during the seminar (Bloom 1956).

[3.5] The students watch "Face the Raven" following the lecture. In the episode's early sequences, different angles up and down Westgate Street are used, taking in the diverse range of building fronts which this area offers. Additionally, outdoor spaces within one of Cardiff's main retail areas (The Hayes) as well as the city's Victorian indoor arcades (specifically, the Morgan Arcade and Royal Arcade) feature. Cardiff's doubling for London within the episode warps the city's geography (e.g., different locations on Westgate Street are shot looking up and down the street to function as a broader place), offering a distorted understanding of space similar to that discussed by Lincoln Geraghty (2011) in relation to touring Vancouver, Canada. Geraghty (2011, 146) argues that fan tourists engage in

practices of "reordering the physical space according to their desires" such as by recognizing how locations that appear in close diegetic proximity to each other may, in actuality, not be physically close (and vice versa). Since the external locations in "Face the Raven" are all within proximity of Cardiff University's School of Journalism, Media, and Culture, it is hoped that some of the students would recognize how spaces that they traverse on a day-to-day basis can be transformed through location filming.

[3.6] The guided tour takes the cohort on a journey around the city center to see which locations were used and how they were filmed. Throughout the tour, I refer to screenshots captured via VLC Player and uploaded to an iPod Mini. The screenshots mediate between the fictional diegesis and the geography of Cardiff and assist the students' understanding of how external locations were used throughout the episode. The aforementioned places on Westgate Street are visited to demonstrate how shooting both up and down this road produces different shots that indicate an expansive urban environment by positioning the camera at separate points and using the variations of architecture that are closely located to each other. This stop on the tour invites students to think about the environments that they inhabit and gain an appreciation of how locations are used in filming. My commentary also tackles practical issues such as how costs and time can be saved by having one location double for many across multiple shots.

[3.7] The group then visits the Morgan and Royal Arcades to show how these spaces—which are a matter of meters from each other—are also used to suggest a vaster geography within the episode. The information given concerning how and why these locations have been selected also provides an entry point for discussing production techniques. Each filmed sequence within these spaces is of one character walking, framed in medium shot. Disclosing this point and asking if any of the students know why this might be the case introduces the role of assistant directors as it is outlined that, following location scouts and managers' suggestions of suitable external spaces for shooting, assistant directors can shoot short sequences simultaneously and in close proximity to each other to save time and avoid closing off areas for extended periods.

[3.8] The small group seminars take place at a later date. This separation allows students to think about the learning experiences, complete the set reading, and correlate points put forward by Luckinbeal (2012) with content from the lecture. Within the seminar, attendees are split into small groups (maximum five members) and asked to put what they have learned about locations into a simulated exercise by responding to one of the briefs in Table 1.

Table 1. Group prompts for student response

Group	Prompt

A	You're producing a new, gritty medical drama for Sky Atlantic that will be high-budget "quality" television, and you need to film a car crash sequence set in a densely populated urban area.
B	MTV is bringing back *The Valleys* but wants to do this in a more sensitive manner than in previous seasons. The producers are looking for a public location with a sophisticated feel where a confrontation between the two male leads can take place. This should be outside but *not* near a bar or a nightclub.
C	You're working to produce a new police drama that focuses on "bobbies on the beat" for BBC One. You need to find a suitable location or locations where a chase sequence between one of the leads and a local drug dealer can be filmed.
D	E4 wants to make a new teen drama that is similar in tone to *Skins* but that focuses on more LGBTQI+ issues. The sequence you're shooting involves two of the lead characters hooking up for the first time. The director requests that this scene be shot close to water.

[3.9] The seminar attendees are required to discuss and defend their chosen location using the following questions:

- [3.10] Why have you chosen your specific street/streets?
- What other areas did you consider? Why did you reject these?
- How important is your local knowledge of specific areas? How does this structure your decision making?
- How does this respond to the demands of the genre that you are working in?
- What practical constraints will you encounter in securing your chosen location? How will you handle this?

[3.11] Students are given access to a laptop computer. They are asked to use Google Earth to identify suitable locations and to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their choices. Their evaluations should include elements such as accessibility for crews, roads closures, necessary permissions to obtain, potential social and environmental impacts (e.g., loss of trade for businesses), and how the architecture and aesthetic of the chosen location (e.g., surrounding buildings, monuments, etc.) addresses the brief. Each group must present their choice of location to the other attendees and myself, detailing why that location was deemed suitable in comparison to other places considered and how they would negotiate any constraints. By participating in the task, students can simulate how the skills discussed in the lecture can combine with their own knowledge as residents of Cardiff to provide practical filing locations. Feedback is provided to each group by me.

4. Vocational poaching: Theory and critique

[4.1] The two sections above suggest a hitherto overlooked form of (aca)fan appropriation that I name "vocational poaching." Vocational poaching is, in this instance, indicative of my fannish interests and, like other forms of fan

productivity, is enabled through intersecting historical, institutional, social, cultural, and technological structures that generate fan subjectivities. The term refers to how an acafan working in HE may perform tactical raids on forms of knowledge associated with professional identities with which fan specialisms and practices overlap and to how an acafan can translate these competencies into teaching practice. Vocational poaching is conceptually indebted to Jenkins's ([1992] 2012a) metaphor of fans as textual poachers, and it is worth revisiting his arguments to tease out the similarities and differences between vocational poaching and textual poaching.

[4.2] For Jenkins ([1992] 2012a, 18), fans "raid mass culture, claiming its materials for their own use, reworking them as the basis for their own cultural creations." Indebted to Michel de Certeau's ([1984] 2002) understanding of everyday sociocultural power relations, Jenkins's perspective accentuates fans' shared interpretive cultures alongside their creation of transformative works like fan fiction. In terms of understanding interactions between fans and those occupying sociocultural sites of power, Jenkins ([1992] 2012a, 24–33) prioritizes two points: negotiations of discourses of authorial intent and fans' (in)ability to influence production decisions.

[4.3] Vocational poaching, as evidenced through the previous lesson plan, intersects with these understandings but demonstrates enough divergences to sanction its status as an alternative mode of fan appropriation. Vocational poaching involves the acafan performing tactical raids on professional fields within which they do not typically take up subject positions and transferring the knowledge obtained to the academic field(s) they occupy. Vocational poaching still represents "a type of cultural bricolage through which readers fragment texts and reassemble the broken shards according to their own blueprints" (Jenkins [1992] 2012a, 26) but the processes of reassembly are guided by the requirements of a professional academic lecturer rather than fandom's shared reading strategies. In the lesson plan, production-orientated information concerning how the crew filming "Face the Raven" selected, framed, and used Cardiff locations is first gained through both textual analysis and site visits and then used to design teaching sessions. However, this practice "does not provide an adequate substitute for access to the means of cultural production and distribution" (Jenkins [1992] 2012a, 27), as the vocational poaching acafan has (at best) minimal and distanced interaction with media production contexts.

[4.4] Acafan vocational poaching arguably demonstrates greater ambiguity to media production contexts than textual poaching or other transformative fan practices. This is especially the case when contrasted with spatially oriented fan practices such as reporting on filming while the text is still in production. Hills (2010, 72) views these habits as a version of "pre-textual poach[ing]," which positions itself as "opposing the publicity plans of media organizations by breaking production (and textual) news ahead of official schedules and promotional

strategies" (Hills 2015b, 166). Rather than resisting either dominant meanings within the narrative (Jenkins [1992] 2012a) or official temporal rhythms (Hills 2010, 2015b), vocational poaching focuses on practical and aesthetic textual readings and uses fannish habits of close visual analysis and image manipulation via digital platforms to (re)produce the intended meanings of these textual elements' production. In contrast, however, the relationship of vocational poaching to discourses of authorship is less clear than in Jenkins's ([1992] 2012a) examples. On the one hand, foregrounding the practical-aesthetic level of location use within *Doctor Who* dislodges the romantic figure of the executive producer. Instead, the agency of less-celebrated creative personnel—location scouts and managers—are foregrounded. This case of vocational poaching therefore forwards a collaborative understanding of television production that recognizes the importance of creative personnel like location-oriented workers within the production process (Creeber 2007). Nonetheless, the lesson plan's altered focus does not dislodge the symbolic status of television professionals, as these remain distant to the embodied acafan. Rather than replicating textual poaching's opposition to authorially sanctioned meanings, this example of vocational poaching simultaneously demonstrates deference to the broadcast text as the primary site of meaning while also recognizing the contributions of creative personnel beyond the executive producer.

[4.5] Having defined vocational poaching, it is useful to address how this neologism and the acafan identity that enables it intersects with ongoing debates within fan studies so that its value to the discipline can be demonstrated. Firstly, the practice and identity that I have outlined suggest an alternative example of how insecurity characterizes hybridized professional identities. I have elsewhere argued that performed tour guide identities for the (now closed) *Doctor Who* Experience Walking Tour in Cardiff demonstrate insecure appeals to status due to the guides' position between a consecrated media affiliation (the BBC) and the culturally devalued meanings of tourism as a service-based industry (Garner 2017, 435). The claims to status that the vocational poaching acafan embodies naturally differ from those of tour guides. Whereas a tour guide's performed identity brings "connotations of formulaic, standardized and (financially) unrewarding labor" (Garner 2017, 430), acafan identities instead accrue consecrated forms of educational and cultural capital in the form of institutionally bestowed doctorates, professional positions, and titles. However, alternative inflections of insecurity are identifiable for the vocational poaching acafan because they appropriate competencies from the distinct fields of fandom, media production, and academia. Revealing to students that your expertise is drawn from secondhand appropriations—where knowledge of media production is appropriated via fannish practices and then transferred to an academic setting—risks undermining the authority and respect of those you are educating. In a historical moment where UK HE is becoming more market-driven and focused on employability, acafans are tasked with either creatively appropriating their embodied forms of capital while

risking reputational damage in making these explicit or failing to meet student expectations to provide employment-focused learning.

[4.6] However, I would argue that disclosing the nonindustrial origins of the competencies being taught need not necessarily lead to an undermining of the acafan's status. Instead, engaging in discussions with students can indicate how skills learned through participating in one of fandom's communities of practice can be creatively appropriated to serve an employability agenda (Booth 2018b). By demonstrating the skills learned from fannish pursuits like rewatching episodes, utilizing technology to better understand how and where scenes were shot, and visiting filming locations, an acafan can invite students to think about how they may be able to translate their (fannish) interests in to career opportunities. Writing on employability discourses in UK HE, Michael Tomlinson (2016, 162) shows that undergraduates understand the concept of employability "mainly in terms of presenting and performing an employable self, including appropriate marketable resources and capabilities that transcended the prepackaged mass HE graduate profiles based largely on formal achievements." Employability is here associated with gaining advantages over one's peers through foregrounding particular skills that generate distinction. Disclosing to students where forms of vocational poaching inform the teaching and learning opportunities presented to them might therefore encourage their own reflection on how they can perform tactical raids on production-orientated forms of knowledge acquired through their own interests. In other words, the acafan can demonstrate how being part of a particular community of practice can make one more employable. This can potentially inspire individual learners by inviting reflection on equivalent knowledges that may service their future employment interests.

[4.7] I am also aware that the concept of vocational poaching can be critiqued for supporting neoliberal ideologies. The tactics I am advocating are obviously motivated by encouraging undergraduates' access to media production jobs. Jenkins ([1992] 2012a, 34) recognizes that "readers are not *always* resistant; *all* resistant readings are not necessarily progressive readings." He argues that this demonstrates the contradictory nature of popular culture engagements. Similarly, my status as a left-leaning media academic working within a HE institution whose educational policies favor a neoliberal agenda produces an irreconcilable contradiction between my subjective political allegiances and having to bend to alternative governmental and organizational policies.

[4.8] Further accusations of conservatism could also be directed at vocational poaching because it can be seen to support affirmational fandom. Following the influential arguments made by fan writer obsession_inc (2009, ¶ 5), affirmational fandom is "all about nailing down the details" of the source material, such as the "rules established on how the characters are and how the universe works." Affirmational forms of fan engagement, which are assumed to demonstrate

deference to authors or producers and to generate greater forms of industrial approval, contrast with transformational equivalents, which "spin outward into nutty chaos at the least provocation" (obsession_inc 2009, ¶ 7) by offering radical reworkings of the source material, including mining queer subtexts. According to this binary logic, using close textual analysis to identify external Cardiff locations, considering the production motivations underpinning those choices, and comprehending their aesthetic framing demonstrates deference to the series' producers and thus a conservative disposition toward the show's producing institutions.

[4.9] Closer interrogation of how the above lesson plan negotiates affirmational fandom and its transformative equivalent nevertheless complicates rigid separations of these terms. Lincoln Geraghty (2014, 53–72), Matt Hills (2014), and Louisa Stein (2015) have each individually demonstrated the artifice of separating out different modes of fan engagement based around the levels of deference they demonstrate toward the originating text, and I would argue that my example of vocational poaching further supports these assertions. While rewatching episodes of *Doctor Who* and using domestic digital technologies to freeze the text and better understand how and where it was shot may not ideologically transform the text, these practices certainly go against the purposes of the BBC when making the program. The BBC does not make episodes of *Doctor Who* with the expectation that fans will forensically rewatch episodes (Mittell 2015, 288) and educate themselves about television production. While the relationship to the text that I am outlining might be affirmational due to the respect it demonstrates toward the broadcast episode, the reading practices that it gives rise to are arguably transformational in that they involve creatively reworking the text for purposes for which it was not initially designed. Moreover, the hope that undergraduate students might start to think about their own fannish interests and consider how they can use these creatively in their future vocations arguably encourages them to think critically. Although the overall goal of vocational poaching may align with the neoliberal expectations of HE to produce future employees for the creative industries, the tactics being encouraged demonstrate creative transformation by seeking to inspire individual reflection on how we consume and engage with media texts.

[4.10] Finally, it should be recognized that my arguments concerning vocational poaching are reflective of the subject position occupied by its author—that is, those of a white, heterosexual, cisgender male. Existing literature within fan studies has identified that understanding fandom as a developmental arena for industry-focused skills is a masculinized attitude. Jenkins ([1992] 2012a, xxx) reflects that "male fans have often profited from fandom (seeing it as a stepping stone into a professional career) while female fans have refused to 'exploit' their friends" (see also De Kosnik 2009). This gendered fandom-as-career trajectory is well established in academic understandings of fandom (Cross 2008; Ford 2014, 56). As the position of the vocationally poaching acafan discussed in this article is rooted

in demonstrating expertise over specific technical elements of the fan object, the theorized identity is also one rooted in culturally masculinized engagement modes and so may be excluding either to students who adopt more feminized subject positions or to those who engage in less professionally oriented fan practices.

[4.11] Such a critique is valid. I worry that attempting to diffuse it would reinstate patriarchal positions. However, while I am aware that by making this discursive maneuver, I am shifting the focus from individual agency to institutional structures, my acafan practice may well demonstrate how forces such as the marketization of HE in the UK place greater value upon the professionalization of patriarchal acafan identities over more feminized equivalents. More work is therefore required—work considering both individual and institutional practice—to recognize these forms of gender bias with a view to better challenging the inequalities that they create and maintain.

5. Conclusions

[5.1] This article has intervened in academic debates concerning acafan identities by suggesting an alternative conception of acafandom focusing on teaching and learning rather than individual researcher status and positioning. The article has argued that the knowledge acquired through practices associated with one side of this hybrid identity can flow to the other (and back again) and assist in the design of teaching and learning sessions within HE. This fluid knowledge transfer may arise from the neoliberal policies adopted for university teaching and learning, as in the above case. The article introduces the concept of vocational poaching through my theorizing the teaching-focused acafan. Vocational poaching involves performing tactical raids on knowledge associated with media industry workers; this knowledge, gained secondhand through fannish practice, is integrated into pedagogical design. Vocational poaching demonstrates different ideological stances toward discourses of resistance celebrated in the concept of textual poaching by, on the one hand, imitating forms of industry-sanctioned knowledge and using this to prepare learners to take up positions in a neoliberal labor market. On the other, it demonstrates resistance to authorial discourses by highlighting the roles and agency of frequently overlooked creative personnel and reframing the intended use of popular entertainment texts like *Doctor Who* as potential conduits for learning about specific industry roles. Vocational poaching is therefore an ambiguous and inherently contradictory form of fannish appropriation that sits between the entertainment industry, fandom, and HE.

[5.2] I have developed the arguments put forward concerning learning-oriented acafan practice and vocational poaching in relation to a specific fan practice (transmedia tourism) and a particular national educational context. Further discussion of these ideas is required by acafans who hold alternative fannish knowledges and operate in alternative national (and institutional) contexts. For

example, how might the experiences of a fan fiction writer working as a lecturer in English literature respond to the arguments presented in this article? I hope that reflecting on an example of my own teaching practice and using this to initiate a discussion concerning how—or indeed whether—the adaptation of fan-acquired knowledges can feed into the design and delivery of employability-focused teaching for students motivates others to offer similar insights. By adding to the conversation that this article has initiated we, as a community of scholars, can better understand how fan behaviors become appropriated for teaching purposes and the broader conditions that make such raids a felt necessity.

[5.3] Vocational poaching is also a significant term for further debate because it suggests hitherto overlooked ways of engaging with established disciplinary concepts. Further discussion of the relationship between acafandom and teaching and learning could be aligned with debates concerning relationships between professionals and amateurs within convergence culture or with those regarding the neoliberalization of labor more broadly. Alternatively, reflecting on manifestations of the acafan identity in different contexts could shed further light on other ways that (aca)fans engage in transformative work shaped by the contexts within which they operate. Engaging in this form of discussion could further highlight the contradictory nature of individual instances of (aca)fan agency with a view to better understanding the different forms of transformative action and the contexts within which appropriative tactics are employed.

6. Notes

1. In Gray, Sandvoss, and Harrington's (2017) edited collection, many of these references are located within Hills's chapter.

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