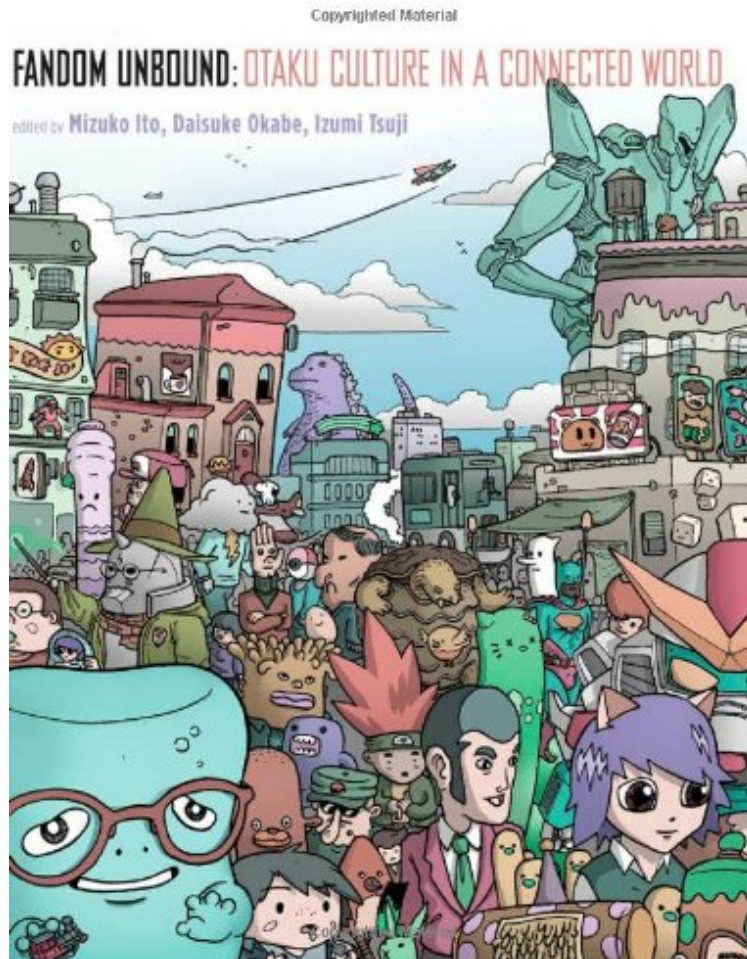


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Fandom Unbound: Otaku Culture in a Connected World

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In recent years, otaku culture has emerged as one of Japan's major cultural exports and as a genuinely transnational phenomenon. This timely volume investigates how this once marginalized popular culture has come to play a major role in Japan's identity at home and abroad. In the American context, the word otaku is best translated as geekan ardent fan with highly specialized knowledge and interests. But it is associated especially with fans of specific Japan-based cultural genres, including anime, manga, and video games. Most important of all, as this collection shows, is the way otaku culture represents a newly participatory fan culture in which fans not only organize around niche interests but produce and distribute their own media content. In this collection of essays, Japanese and American scholars offer richly detailed descriptions of how this once stigmatized Japanese youth culture created its own alternative markets and cultural products such as fan fiction, comics, costumes, and remixes, becoming a major international force that can challenge the dominance of commercial media. By exploring the rich variety of otaku culture from multiple perspectives, this groundbreaking collection provides fascinating insights into the present and future of cultural production and distribution in the digital age.

"This is the first comprehensive book to examine the full range of practices we associate with Otaku culture. The range of material covered here - from train watchers to cosplayers, from model builders to fansubbers - is really spectacular, helping us to move beyond encrusted stereotypes of the isolated Otaku to a much more nuanced understanding of the Otaku subculture." Henry Jenkins, author of *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (Henry Jenkins) This strongly original book, organized by a scholar of international stature, brings together a fascinating range of experts in a highly productive dialogue about one of the most interesting popular culture phenomena of the last fifty years. Ellen Seiter, Stephen K. Nennesio Chair of Television Studies and Professor of Critical Studies, USC School of Cinematic Arts (Ellen Seiter) About the Author Mizuko Ito is Professor in Residence and John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Chair in Digital Media and Learning, Department of Anthropology and Department of Informatics, University of California, Irvine. Daisuke Okabe is lecturer in psychology, Tokyo City University, Japan. Izumi Tsuji is associate professor of sociology at Chuo University, Japan.