

A Change in Vantage Points

Harmony Lowe

Picture this: lots of rowdy people dressing up as other people and painting their faces with odd colors. They go to bars to eat and scream at TV's with other fans when something supposedly important happens, or when they gather in giant stadiums to scream at the players live with thousands of others. Bosses let these people off work early so that they can go to the bars and shout, they understand the excitement of grown men tossing a ball back and forth intricately and sometimes using their feet. This is completely normal here in America, when you think about football.

Now picture people watching a TV show or movie, reading books, and wanting to know more about this other universe, the fictional world. They go to meetups and conventions (which are like football games for geeks but with less screaming and more excited talking about intricate details). They will dress up as characters they love, choosing based on interest and love for the person (exactly like wearing the jersey of your favorite football star).

But for this love of complex fictional worlds these people are name-called: dorks, geeks, nerds, crazy-obsessed fans. They are laughed at when they dress up as fictional people, mocked when they go to meetups and cons, bullied for their love of wonderful worlds where they escape to, and god forbid they ask their boss for time off of work without a humorous laugh and a shake of the head, as if it were a joke. In America it is more natural to be over-invested in a glorified version of catch than it is to be over-invested in a fictional universe with story arcs and plot or character development.

Fans of sports are accepted, it is manly, macho, real. Fans of TV shows and those sorts of things are not accepted, it is wimpy, dorky, fake. In football a ball only goes back and forth on a field, moved by various muscled men. In fiction, in fantasy, people go on adventures, overcome evil, save people, deal with the problems of morally grey conflicts, sometimes they fall in love, learning and changing, maybe becoming the villain. So why is it that the society we live in worships the macho men playing catch while it scorns those who fall in love with the complexities created by others?