John L. Sullivan talks about the many aspects of fandom in his piece, “Media Fandom and Audience Subcultures.” First off, Sullivan talks about the stereotypes associated with fandom and how people are seen as outcasts because of it. I believe there is a logical origin for stereotypes and in some sense I can see how strong fans can be viewed as loners or people that still live in their parents’ basement. Sometimes fans can get so addicted to whatever the media source is and because of that, they have a hard time doing anything but what they are a fan of. In other words, if there is a person who is a fan of World of Warcraft, they may not take a break from that computer game in fear of missing out on a mission or anything involving the game. That could include limited social interaction, which leads to the idea of loners.

On the other hand, I see how fandom creates a community for people, which debunks the stereotype against strong fans being loners. Some forms of media have large fan groups that create a community of fans. For example, Bronies are a fan group of mainly older men that like the show, My Little Pony. There is also a Brony convention where this fan group gets together at a specific location and share their experiences with the fandom.

This idea of a community fandom ties into a concept called poaching. This is when people take something that isn’t necessarily theirs. For example, at these conventions, fans create merchandise or other forms of media by using clips or characters from the show that they don’t own. Some results of poaching include fan fiction or filking. Personally, I think it’s okay for fans to poach and create other works from the
original source of media. In some ways it shows their appreciation for the show and gives fans a way to get involved and become a part of the show and its community. Most shows or other forms of media with large fandoms don’t mind this idea of poaching unless it puts their content in a negative light. I feel as though more people involved in fandom’s create new content to praise the creators of the original content.

Fan fiction is a term used to describe how fans write their own spinoff stories based on the original content. Even fan fiction gains a lot of recognition sometimes and they can become more than just a spinoff. In certain types of fan fiction, authors will include their self as a character within the story. This tactic is called Mary Sue and in my opinion it’s a way to connect the author/fan to the plot and story line more. Another aspect of fan fiction is called canon and not canon. If something is canon, that is to say it’s okay in the story, whereas not canon means the content isn’t okay or what was meant to happen according to the original content. Most forms of fan fiction that show a scenario as not canon would be hero and villain relationships.

A final part of poaching is considered filking. This is when a person makes music for the show or other media content in which they’re a fan of. These people seem to make remixes of theme songs, or create their own altogether. In order to create the songs, sometimes they use character voices or other parts of the show within their music. I think most people do this as a way of expressing who they are and what they love. It’s therapeutic in a way because most people find comfort in music.