



THE FAN STUDIES NETWORK  
CONFERENCE

27-28<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2014

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES, ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
REGENT'S UNIVERSITY LONDON



# DRAFT PROGRAMME – SUBJECT TO CHANGE

## PROGRAMME

### FRIDAY 26<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER

19:30: PRE-CONFERENCE SOCIAL  
[The Metropolitan Bar, 7 Station Road, Marylebone](#) (next to Baker St. Tube station)

### SATURDAY 27<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER

09:00 – 09:30: REGISTRATION

09:30 – 10:30: KEYNOTE

Dr Paul Booth (DePaul University)

ROOM TBA

10:30 – 10:45: BREAK

10:45 – 12:15: PARALLEL PANELS

Panel A: Fandom and Identity (Chair: Nicolle Lamerichs)

ROOM TBA

Panel B: Fan Studies' (Transcultural) Futures (Chair: Alice Chauvel)

ROOM TBA

12:15 – 13:15: LUNCH

13:15 – 14:45: PARALLEL PANELS

Panel C: Fans and Producers (Chair: Bethan Jones)

ROOM TBA

Panel D: Spaces of Fandom (Chair: Rebecca Williams)

ROOM TBA

14:45 – 15:00: BREAK

15:00 – 16:30: PARALLEL PANELS

Panel E: Online Fandom (Chair: Emily Garside)

ROOM TBA

Panel F: Gender (Chair: Sarah Ralph)

ROOM TBA

16:30 – 16:45: BREAK

16:45 – 18:00: SPEED GEEKING (Chair: Richard McCulloch)

ROOM TBA

18:00 – 19:15: WINE RECEPTION

BOOK LAUNCH FOR THE *ASHGATE RESEARCH COMPANION TO FAN CULTURES*  
(SPONSORED IN PART BY ERASMUS UNIVERSITY ROTTERDAM AND ASHGATE PUBLISHING)

20:00: CONFERENCE DINNER

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### SUNDAY 28<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER

09:00 – 09:30: REGISTRATION

09:30 – 10:30: KEYNOTE

Dr Rhiannon Bury (Athabasca University)

ROOM TBA

10:30 – 10:45: BREAK

10:45 – 12:15: PARALLEL PANELS

Panel G: Histories and Generations (Chair: Ruth Deller)

ROOM TBA

Panel H: Hierarchies and Capital (Chair: Bertha Chin)

ROOM TBA

Panel I: Transformative Works (Chair: Lori Morimoto)

ROOM TBA

12:15 – 13:15: LUNCH

13:15 – 14:45: PANEL

*Ashgate Research Companion to Fan Cultures* Panel (Chairs: Linda Duits, Koos Zwan, and Stijn Reijnders)

ROOM TBA

14:45 – 15:00: BREAK

15:00 – 16:00: KEYNOTE

Mr Orlando Jones

Q&A VIA VIRTUAL LINK, SESSION TIME MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

ROOM TBA

16:00 – 16:15: CLOSE

Lucy Bennett & Tom Phillips (Fan Studies Network)

ROOM TBA

FOLLOWED BY DRINKS AT THE METROPOLITAN BAR

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Contact: [fsnconference@gmail.com](mailto:fsnconference@gmail.com) Twitter: [#fanstudies](https://twitter.com/fanstudies)/[#FSN2014](https://twitter.com/FSN2014)

#### Conference Organisers:

Lucy Bennett and Tom Phillips (FSN chairs)

Bertha Chin, Bethan Jones, Richard McCulloch, Rebecca Williams (FSN board)

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## PANELS

### ***Panel A: Fandom and Identity***

***Chair: Nicolle Lamerichs***

Anne Peirson-Smith (City University of Hong Kong): Let's Cosplay: Transcultural Fandom and Textual Appropriation Across South East Asia

Simone Driessen (Erasmus University, Rotterdam): 'As long as you love me': Insights in the long-term fandom of Dutch Backstreet Boys fans

Zoë Shacklock (University of Warwick, England): A Story About You: Racial Representation and the *Welcome to Night Vale* Fandom

Eoin Devereux (University of Limerick, Ireland): "You're Gonna Need Someone On Your Side" – Morrissey's Latino/Chicano Fans

### ***Panel B: Fan Studies' (Transcultural) Futures***

***Chair: Alice Chauvel (waiting to confirm)***

Lori Hitchcock Morimoto (Independent Researcher, USA): Transcultural Fandom In/As Contact Zone

Sophie Charlotte van de Goor (Aberystwyth University, Wales): 'Hi, You Must Be New Here': The Imagined Fan Community

Wikanda Promkhuntong (Aberystwyth University, Wales): Fandom Meets Hong Kong Director at Transcultural Juncture: User-generated YouTube Content on Wong Kar-wai

Nele Noppe (University of Leuven, Belgium): Selling Fanworks Online in the United States and Japan: A Comparison of Kindle Worlds and DLSite.com

### ***Panel C: Fans and Producers***

***Chair: Bethan Jones***

Sarah Ralph (University of East Anglia, England): On being an 'encyclopaedic comedy nerd': Television comedy workers and 'professional' fandom

Eleonora Benecchi (Università della Svizzera, Italy): Real power can't be given. It must be taken. Exploring the interplay of power and control between fans and producers of a cult text through time and space.

Ruth Foulis (Glasgow University, Scotland): Producer-audience interactions: YouTube celebrities and their viewers

William Proctor (Bournemouth University, England): "A Million Voices Cried Out in Terror!": Star Wars Fans, Ontological Security and the Destruction of the Expanded Universe.

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### ***Panel D: Spaces of Fandom***

***Chair: Rebecca Williams***

Ross P. Garner (Cardiff University, Wales): On a (Different) Plain?: Cult Geography, Authenticity and Nirvana Fandom

Katherine Larsen (George Washington University, USA): Pilgrimage and Performance at Platform 9 ¾

Abby Waysdorf (Erasmus University, Rotterdam): My Trip to King's Landing: Fan Tourism as Fan Practice

Emily Garside (Cardiff Metropolitan University, Wales): Immersive theatre and social media: physical and virtual experience of *The Drowned Man*

### ***Panel E: Online Fandom***

***Chair: Emily Garside***

Ruth Deller (Sheffield Hallam University, England): 'They've still not finished the bloody game yet': Fan anticipation and 'unticipation' for *The Sims 4*

Nistasha Perez (Independent researcher, USA): The Creation of Official Tumblr Accounts in Online Fannish Spaces: Examining Integration of Fannish Practices By Media Corporations

Eva Hayles Gledhill (University of Reading, England): Gendered Bricolage: Tumblr, Pinterest, and the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Commonplace Book.

Hannah Ellison (University of East Anglia, England): Lesbian Representation, the Abridged Version: YouTube and the International Lesbian Gift Economy

### ***Panel F: Gender***

***Chair: Sarah Ralph***

John Carter McKnight (Lancaster University, England): "I Think Beauty Will Save The World:" Fandom, Trolloviki, and Reverse Interpellation in the Spread of a Global Meme

Ysabel Gerrard (University of Leeds, England): 'Unworthy' women's fandom and contemporary postfeminist media cultures: Exploring fans' online participation with teen television series *Pretty Little Liars*, *Revenge* and *The Vampire Diaries*

Alex Naylor (University of Greenwich, England): "My skin has turned to porcelain, to ivory, to steel": feminist fan discourses, *Game of Thrones* and the problem of Sansa

Ellen Wright (University of East Anglia, England): 'Good Entertainment Value for a Certain Type of Filmgoer': Cultural Distinctions, National Identity and Betty Grable Fandom in WWII Britain

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### ***Panel G: Histories and Generations***

***Chair: Ruth Deller***

Lincoln Geraghty (University of Portsmouth, England): Culture Con: Forgotten Histories of the Fan Convention, 1939-2014

Amber Hutchins (Kennesaw State University, USA): Media Portrayals of Adult Fans of Disney (AFODs): Geeks, “Gangs” and Dapper Dans in Wonderland

Olympia Kiriakou (King’s College London, England): ‘Ricky, This is Amazing!’: Performative Nostalgia and the Dark Side of Disney Fan Community

Hannah Graves (University of Warwick, England): Fandom in the Archive: Appeals for Heroism in the Gregory Peck Papers and Beyond

### ***Panel H: Hierarchies and Capital***

***Chair: Bertha Chin***

Nicolle Lamerichs (Maastricht University): A Fan Study of Indie Games: Interpreting Gaming Capital in *The Stanley Parable*

Ciaran Ryan (Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, Ireland): Music Fanzine Collecting as Capital Accumulation

Agata Włodarczyk (Gdańsk University, Poland): The differentiated picture of conventions: fanmade, nonprofit conventions in Poland

Catherine Williams (Florida State University, USA): Subcultural Capital and Hierarchy in Wizard Rock

### ***Panel I: Transformative Works***

***Chair: Lori Morimoto***

Jan Švelch and Veronika Veselá (Charles University, Prague): Fan Art in Official Promotion of Video Games

Hannah Priest (Swansea University, Wales): Shades of Grey: Indie Mash-Up Erotica and the Problem of Definition

Joanna Kucharska (Jagiellonian University, Poland): A Vague Disclaimer is Nobody’s Friend – Fanfiction Headers and Tags and Their Changing Role in Fandom

Judith Fathallah (Cardiff University, Wales): South Park Fanfic and the Political Realm

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### **SPEED GEEKING**

James Aston (University of Hull, England): 21st Century US horror

Anna Aupperle (Penn State University, USA): Glee and fan activism

Anastasia Fenald (University of California, USA): Fans want to be outed?

Emma Hynes (Dublin City University, Ireland): Coronation Street: Fan Engagement and Viewership

Thessa Jensen (Aalborg University, Denmark): Løgstrup's ethics and a fan fiction writer's vulnerability – the unspoken ethical demand

Ashley Morford (Simon Fraser University, Canada): Sherlock Holmes, Fandom, and the Other: Beginning Explorations

Maggie Parke (Independent Researcher, UK): Fans and gaming communities

Kelsey Ridge (University College London, England): Early Shakespeare Fandom

Carla Schriever (University of Oldenburg, Germany): Anti-Symbiosis in music fan culture – Regarding Prince's Purple Army

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### ASHGATE RESEARCH COMPANION TO FAN STUDIES PANEL

Matt Hills (Aberystwyth University, Wales): Re-defining the Fan: Returning to 'becoming-a-fan' stories: theorising transformational objects and the emergence/extension of fandom

Hilde Van den Bulck (University of Antwerp, Belgium): A severe case of disliking bimbo Heidi, scumbag Jesse and bastard Tiger: analysing celebrities' online anti-fans

Ruth Deller (Sheffield Hallam University, England): A decade in the life of online fan communities

Gary Sinclair (University of Stirling, Scotland): Retreating behind the scenes: the 'less'-civilizing impact of virtual spaces on the Irish heavy metal scene

Francesco D'Amato (University of Rome, Italy): Investors and patrons, gatekeepers and social capital: representations and experiences of fans' participation in fan funding

Frederik Dhaenens and Sofie Van Bauwel (Ghent University, Belgium): Fans who cut their soaps queer: a queer theoretical study into online fandom of gay television representation

**Panel organised & chaired by:** Koos Zwaan (Inholland University), Linda Duits (Utrecht University) and Stijn Reijnders (Erasmus University Rotterdam)

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### KEYNOTE ABSTRACTS

#### **Paul Booth: Fandom: The Classroom of the Future**

What is the role of the fan scholar in the age of the fan-scholar? In this talk, I'll explore fandom as the classroom of the future. First, once formal schooling is completed, one's fandom may be one of the last places where people are encouraged to think critically, to write, and to make thoughtful and critical judgments about hegemonic culture. But fandom is the classroom of the future for a second reason: the type of critical thinking that happens in positive fan environments could only benefit our formal educational system as well. We need to demonstrate more positive fandom by voicing our own particular enthusiasms in multiple venues, and integrate more fandom in our classes through the use of fans themselves.

Fandom is expanding and labor issues are all pervasive. We have a responsibility formally, as educators, and informally, as fans, to combat an encroaching neoliberal emphasis in both education and in fandom itself that portends the erosion of key moral and civic mentalities in today's fans. At the same time, fandom itself—outside of the classroom—is an actual space of learning and teaching. Creating a positive fandom environment should be a major focus of fan studies going into the next decade of our media culture. We need to teach students to engage in positive fandom and to be responsible fans

As fan scholars and educators, we need to be more assertive against the encroaching normalization of commercialization, market forces, and neoliberal control over affect, both in education and out of it. We need to teach people how to be civil, how to disagree responsibly, how to debate with fervor and respect through demonstrable fandom. Fandom is a bastion of critical thinking in a world of conformity. In other words, we need to teach not just fan studies, but fandom as well – not just how to study fans, but how to be responsible and thoughtful fans in a world increasingly hostile to affect.

#### **Rhiannon Bury: The End of Fandom as We Know it?: Reflections on Technology, Fans, and the Study of Participatory Culture in a Third Media Age**

In the Introduction to *Cyberspaces of Their Own*, I wrote that in the second half of the 1990s, oral culture that surrounds media texts had migrated online and multiplied, afforded by a complex of information and communications technologies (ICTs) that enabled the World Wide Web to become part of the everyday lives of middle class North Americans and Western Europeans. As a result, participatory fandom became highly visible and in turn accessible to junior fan scholars like myself following in the footsteps of John Fiske (1987), Henry Jenkins (1992) and Constance Penley (1991). Looking back, I realize that I did not fully account for the role of technology in reconfiguring not only pre-Internet fan practices but the study of fandom itself during a period characterized by

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Mark Poster (1995) as a Second Media Age.

Based on research from my Television 2.0 project, I argue that we are on the cusp of a Third Media Age, heralded by the rapid spread and adoption of another cluster of “Web 2.0” ICTs that we now refer to as social media. Drawing on critical social theory and feminist technology studies, I set out to critically examine the ways in which these technologies, and the popular media platforms that deploy them (Twitter; Facebook), have enabled the production of certain discursive formations, practices and knowledges associated with media fandom while disabling others. To this end I will discuss a series of shifts in producer-fan, celebrity-fan and participatory-non participatory fan relations as well as our conceptualizations of these relations. I argue that these shifts have implications for the future of the “second age” fan community. I will also consider empirical research in light of technological change and its role in the reconstitution of both the fan and fan studies.

**FULL PAPER ABSTRACTS**

*Panel A: Fandom and Identity*

**Anne Peirson-Smith (City University of Hong Kong): Let's Cosplay:  
Transcultural Fandom and Textual Appropriation Across South East Asia**

This paper will examine the underlying motivations of Cosplay fans across South East Asia as a means of exploring the underlying reasons for this dress-up activity and the transcultural influences that guide it and act as a creative resource. Cosplay will be examined as a type of collective activity, a form of creative play and as evidence of a participatory fan culture. Cosplay fans pursue a DIY culture of self-display within the boundaries of commodity culture. These fans as textual performers identify for example with Japanese cultural commodities and mediated sources as an escape from the boundaries of their own culture, also revealing a deep transcultural desire to inhabit the characters and costumes of this commodity culture. The “other” here provides a safe and viable refuge and a way of defining an affinity with a like-minded community of fans in the process of self re-affirmation within a collective community. However, tensions remain between terms of individual versus group, commodification versus commercialization, authenticity versus artifice and the agency status of players.

Methodologically, the paper will present findings from ethnographic interviews, focus groups and observational analysis conducted with a selection of Cosplayers in Hong Kong, Japan and China in both private spaces and public or commercial places or at organized themed events. Findings will suggest that this tendency to articulate identity, belonging, difference, gender and sexuality can be found in the Cosplay activity in the form of a creative performance involving a cast of players with various roles. The visible, often mediated adherence to a defined and reassuring style tribe collective seems to fill an affective void and offers solace from the pressures of urban life that takes on a range of localized cultural appropriations and hybridized agendas across geographic spaces and places within the Asian context.

**Simone Driessen (Erasmus University, Rotterdam): ‘As long as you love me’:  
Insights in the long-term fandom of Dutch Backstreet Boys fans**

This study presents how aging fans give meaning to music from their youth in their current life-course stage. It draws on an interview study with twenty-five, long-term Backstreet Boys fans from the Netherlands.

Current studies in cultural sociology consider music as a nostalgic element (Bennett, 2006) or explore the bodily issues of aging for subculture members (Hodkinson & Bennett, 2012). Yet, Bielby & Harrington (2010) identify a hiatus in accounts of aging minds. It is interesting to look for aging minds in fans, because various fandoms can become more or less (ir)relevant to one's cultural identity at specific times (Hills, 2002). Hence, this study illuminates how fan engagement developed over time by exploring the

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Backstreet Boys fandom, fans of a boy band that celebrated their 21st anniversary recently.

The findings indicate that the Boys – and their music – form a constant factor in the fans’ lives that they greatly appreciate. This importance can in-/decrease at times, but the music of the boys stays a safe-haven to which the fans can return when they need a break from current responsibilities and duties. The music and concerts are not just an escape from their current social role (e.g. working full-time or motherhood), it is a moment in which the fans connect with their ‘younger Selves’ again and in which they can engage freely in a community of fellow-fans. Yet, because of their current social and economic position they are also able to engage in practices they hitherto could not engage with (e.g. buying ‘meet & greets’, going on a cruise with the band). So, the changes in meaning and practices they employ now are ways of appropriating their ‘fanship’ into their current narrative biographies and reasons for them to stay with and be able to commit to the ‘Backstreet Army’.

### **Zoë Shacklock (University of Warwick, England): A Story About You: Racial Representation and the *Welcome to Night Vale* Fandom**

In the last twelve months, a dedicated fandom has emerged around cult podcast *Welcome to Night Vale*. *Night Vale* is a wryly existential parody of a smalltown American community radio program, set in a world of Lovecraftian horror. Both podcasts and radio have been almost entirely neglected within fan studies, considered mainly as examples of participatory fan culture, rather than objects for fan devotion in their own right. Consequently, there is a need to interrogate the ways that fans engage with and organise themselves around aural narratives, particularly in the visiotextual online spaces in which fandoms largely operate.

This paper considers the discursive output of the *Welcome to Night Vale* fandom. It suggests that the intimate nature of listening to a podcast, emphasised by the direct address of *Night Vale*’s radio format, creates a particularly heightened form of identification with the fan text. Despite the lack of visual signifiers of identity, and a high degree of canon diversity, fan creative works predominantly depict and describe the characters as white. This has led to an intense and often vitriolic debate over the issue of racial representation. While those who identify with minority identities have gladly seized the freedom of the aural narrative, imagining the characters as people of colour, white fans have responded with feelings of persecution and anger over having their ‘default’ status challenged. The racial stratification of fan group identity, which remains largely unquestioned, is thus made visible through fans’ visual interpretation of the aural narrative. For while lead character Cecil Baldwin tells his audience that “this is a story about you”, the *Welcome to Night Vale* fandom demonstrates that only certain identities are allowed to claim the privileged position of “you” within fan spaces.

### **Eoin Devereux (University of Limerick, Ireland): “You’re Gonna Need Someone On Your Side” – Morrissey’s Latino/Chicano Fans**

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The resurgence of interest in Morrissey's musical career has been explained by some commentators by reference to his cult-like following amongst Latino/Chicano immigrants in East Los Angeles. Morrissey's status as a second-generation Irish immigrant in the UK; his sexual ambiguity; his (lapsed) Irish Catholicism; his interest in rockabilly as well as his positioning as the 'outsiders outsider' have all been cited as reasons for explaining his appeal to a growing number of Latino/Chicano fans. While some media commentary about this phenomenon can be accused of exoticizing Latino/Chicano fandom, this development has resulted in the emergence of a new hybrid sub-culture centred on Morrissey and The Smiths. As a tribute to their reluctant icon, Morrissey's Latino/Chicano fans have renamed their hometown 'Moz Angeles.' Based on fieldwork undertaken in Los Angeles, this paper will examine Latino/Chicano fan discourses about Morrissey and will argue that there is a recurring theme of redemption and salvation in evidence within fan discourses about their icon.

### ***Panel B: Fan Studies' (Transcultural) Futures***

#### **Lori Hitchcock Morimoto (Independent Researcher, USA): Transcultural Fandom In/As Contact Zone**

In both scholarly and fannish discourse, online fandoms historically have been conceptualized as communities of the like-minded in which common frames of reference predominate, rules of engagement and interaction are agreed-upon, and interpretative consensus is the ideal. Such forums as Yahoo! Groups and LiveJournal, where fans might apply for membership to groups centered on specific aspects of a given object, fostered a strong sense of communal belonging, particularly amongst those fans closest to the social center. Yet, over the past several years, as fandoms have drifted to a variety of globally accessible social media, there has been a growing sense that 'fandom' is becoming increasingly unwieldy and lacking in this sense of community. Where once there was (perceived, if not actual) community spirit, now there is ceaseless debate between atomized groups of fans, many of who refuse to toe a common line.

Yet, viewed through a transcultural lens, in which fans hailing from a growing diversity of social and cultural contexts congregate online around a common object, it becomes clear that the perceived chaos of social media-centered fandom is less a matter of anarchy than the result of an unprecedented degree of contact between geographically, socially, and culturally localized groups of fans, both with and without communities to call their own. That is, present-day online fandom reflects less the discrete and largely mono-cultural communities of Anglo-American fandom past than the "difference and disjuncture" (Appadurai, 1990) that characterizes globalized interaction in the main. In this paper, I make the case for shifting our conceptualization of present-day online fandom from community to "contact zones," those "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other" (Pratt, 1991), looking at examples of such interactions and what they reveal about the contemporary global 'fanscape' both within and outside an East Asian context.

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### **Sophie Charlotte van de Goor (Aberystwyth University, Wales): ‘Hi, You Must Be New Here’: The Imagined Fan Community**

This paper draws on a current research project that examines the difficulties arising from a monolithic conceptualisation of ‘slash fan culture’ in Anglo-American academia and the difficulties of ‘canonisation’ of fan objects and fan behaviour by both fans and fan studies. Although there has been significant writing on fan culture, most accounts tend to focus on one particular fan practise, fan community or indeed fan culture. There has been little exploration of internal fan-enforced homogenising practises, leading to, for example, gay males being ridiculed for ‘unrealistic’ depictions of male/male sexual acts on online slash platforms. Nor has there been any exploration of the fact that these forces stretch cross-media and cross-fan culture - an occurrence that a comparison to the apparent non-Western equivalent of ‘slash fan culture’ easily reveals – or what this implies about the assumptions Anglo-American fan studies (and fans) make about fandom.

In addition to that, the increased simplicity of information creation software coupled with decreased cost and increased Internet connectivity has lowered the threshold to ‘go online’ enough for an increasing number of people to log on. However, this does not automatically imply that original sub-cultural or ‘cult’ niches have been assimilated, appropriated or incorporated into the mainstream. This is problem arising from fan studies ‘canonisation’. This paper then aims to show that re-evaluating the singular entity of ‘the slash fan’, as well as examining the process of ‘canonisation’ of concepts of ‘fan culture’ and ‘fan community’ and subsequent ‘mainstream’, would aid in understanding the arising conflicts between fans in all kinds of ‘fan cultures and communities’ and allow a re-evaluation of fan studies’ current assumptions that opens up the path to more up-to-date, transcultural and varied accounts of fandom.

### **Wikanda Promkhuntong (Aberystwyth University, Wales): Fandom Meets Hong Kong Director at Transcultural Juncture: User-generated YouTube Content on Wong Kar-wai**

In ‘The New Cinephilia Project’ online roundtable discussion held during the Edinburgh Film Festival in 2011, Frances Morgan remarked on the possibility of using fan culture as ‘a model for a new cinephilia(s)’ which allows ‘more minority voices...to be found, and with that, divergent and interesting readings of film’. Drawing on and expanding from works in fan and cultural studies, this paper explores how user-generated YouTube content on Wong Kar-wai, the Chinese-born, Hong Kong-based director embraced by cinephiles around the world, could reveal some underexplored areas of fandom and cinephilia in the transcultural context.

Video content and comments on Wong such as homage, re-enactment, and user film reviews created by self-described ‘fans’ or ‘cinephiles’ (and neither) reveal interesting discourse and relationship crossovers between fandom and cinephilia, (despite these fields’ differences in terms of object of interest and research methodology). Discourses surrounding different types of videos allow the discussion of authorship beyond film

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director and film texts to highlight contesting cross-media authorships and debates around taste culture, economics and identity politics of different entities. Besides the commonly contesting relationships between the producers of source texts and fans, the majority of videos and comments on Wong also play a part in maintaining his reputation online. The examination of fan/cinephile use of transcultural material not only allows the exploration of divergent readings of film noted by Morgan but also extends existing conceptions of ‘auteur’, ‘fan’ and ‘cinephile’.

### **Nele Noppe (University of Leuven, Belgium): Selling Fanworks Online in the United States and Japan: A Comparison of Kindle Worlds and DLSite.com**

In recent years, studies of fan-industry relations have increasingly turned to the question of how fan activities are being or could be commercialized, and who benefits the most from such commercialization. It is becoming clear that there is no one global strategy being adopted by either fans or media industries. Attitudes, expectations, and levels of cooperation differ across and inside fan communities, sometimes sharply. Copyright holders also take a variety of positions, from tacit tolerance of even direct sales of fanworks to attempts to forbid any commercialization that happens outside of corporate control. Such differences have been able to emerge and persist at least in part because some of these fan-industry relations originally developed in separate geographical environments, influenced by particular historical, legal, and economic factors.

Through a case study, this paper shows how such local-born differences can continue to influence commercialization of fan activities even on the “global” internet. It compares the growth and development of two online platforms for digital fanwork monetization, the new U.S.-based Kindle Worlds and the established Japan-based DLSite.com. An analysis of the two sites' terms of service, available functionality, and audiences reveals that although they technically perform the same function, there are stark differences that seem to be rooted in the locally developed fan-industry relations that lie behind both platforms. These fanwork commercialization arrangements express very different power relations between fans, copyright holders, and distributors. Such localized power relations are now being expressed on globally accessible platforms, and may go on to influence fan-industry relations beyond their original “borders”.

### ***Panel C: Fans and Producers***

#### **Sarah Ralph (University of East Anglia, England): On being an ‘encyclopaedic comedy nerd’: Television comedy workers and ‘professional’ fandom**

“I have a massive passion for comedy, it’s my life. I’ve genuinely been obsessed with it since I was a kid [...] more than any other interest or hobby or topic, it’s just something I was quite a nerdy obsessive over”

Shane Allen, BBC Controller, Comedy Commissioning

“I’m just a fan, and I marvel at people who manage to evoke this strange physical reaction”

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Lucy Lumsden, Sky Head of Comedy

The quotations above point to how, in accounting for their career choice, television comedy has always been a passion for commissioners Shane Allen and Lucy Lumsden; one that is rooted in their childhood or teenage fandom for the genre. Their responses also suggest this fandom has continued into their professional career and that self-identifying as a ‘comedy nerd’ does not necessarily cease because comedy is now your occupation. Indeed, Allen’s advice on making comedy is to recreate the teenage mindset and ‘remember [...] when you were fourteen years old what you loved about comedy’. Inevitably however, the relationship that comedy professionals have with the sitcoms, sketch shows and other kinds of comedy shows that they watch must change. There is an unavoidable shift to a dual viewing position as both comedy fan and professional, perhaps one not dissimilar to the hybridity of the ‘scholar-fan’ as recognized by Alexander Doty.

So what kinds of viewing strategies or ‘practical logics’ (Hills, 2002: 2) do comedy professionals employ when watching the comedy programmes they enjoy? How do they negotiate between their professional and fan perspectives? Intersecting the fields of media work, production studies and fan studies, this paper draws on materials gathered from interviews with writers, producers, directors and other television comedy personnel as part of the AHRC-funded research project ‘Make Me Laugh: Creativity in British Television Comedy’ in order to explore what happens when makers of comedy occupy the position of ‘professional-fan’.

**Eleonora Benecchi (Università della Svizzera, Italy): Real power can’t be given. It must be taken. Exploring the interplay of power and control between fans and producers of a cult text through time and space.**

The most recent literature published in the field of fan studies suggests that the line between consumption and production is blurring into a new paradigm, with fans growing up to be creators and creators trying to connect and engage with fan communities when not labeling themselves as fans (Jenkins & Green 2013; Booth, 2010; Jenkins, 2007; Askwith, 2007; et. al.). With special regard to ‘TV shows’ fandom, the Internet is considered the key factor which have altered the power relationship between fans and creators of the original text, giving fans unprecedented access to the production sphere (Cladwell, 2004; Baym, 2008; Hills, 2005). The academic discourses on fandom power swing between the opposite concepts of empowerment and exploitation, respectively portraying fans and producers as potential partners in a relationship built around a common object of affection (Jenkins & Green, 2013; Benecchi & Richeri, 2013; Benecchi & Colapinto, 2011) or as rivals trying to take control of the story they both love and feel entitled to (De Kosnik, 2009).

The aim of this paper is to explore the interplay of power and control between fans and producers through a significative case study, the cult show *Supernatural*, analysed in a longitudinal perspective (from season 1 to 5) and taking into consideration fans based inside and outside the US.

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Using a mixed-method approach that complements textual analysis and netnography of online sources and spaces, this paper will explore: the influence attributed to fans by the creators of the TV show, with special regard the paratext produced to present, market and frame *Supernatural* as a TV show “built for fans and with fans”. The actual incorporation of fans’ desires and practices inside the plot of *Supernatural*, taking also into account the reaction of fans to this incorporation.

The analysis here proposed will help clarify: how the influence of fan practices over *Supernatural* goes well beyond what the producers are marketing; what are the terms of a productive fan-producers collaboration in the construction of a cult text, but also what are its limits; the subtle but crucial difference between fandom practical and credited influence on a TV show.

### **Ruth Foulis (Glasgow University, Scotland): Producer-audience interactions: YouTube celebrities and their viewers**

The wonderful collaborative community of YouTube is losing its shine after recent revelations have surfaced about several male Vloggers and their relationships with young female viewers. This has sparked much discussion with both high and low profile YouTubers sharing their thoughts of unease in the nature of their community. Vlogging has become a lucrative career for many young people, who have now amassed thousands or even millions of viewers. The ‘meet ups’ of days past have now been replaced with thousands strong conventions where barriers literally divide the (often screaming, young and female) viewers from the creators. The balance of power has clearly shifted in the YouTube world and this could be causing serious damage to the community bringing what Lawrence Lessig calls the “commercial” economy into their “sharing” economy. What used to be a relationship between ‘creator and viewer’ has now become ‘celebrity and fan’. As YouTubers sign contracts with ‘social talent management’ companies and endorse products, they find themselves suddenly in positions of wealth, power and influence over their vast young audiences, who in turn can now no longer easily relate to their jet-setting lifestyles.

The nature of YouTube has allowed a very open discussion. The phrase “imagine complexly” has been used by both sides of this with viewers asking to be seen as more than a screaming mob and creators asking to be taken down from pedestals. This ‘us’ and ‘them’ relationship could be problematic. I will explore this growing tension drawing on Lessig’s theories as well as referring to Jenkins, Ford and Green’s work in *Spreadable Media* to understand how damage to the ‘moral economy’ can be repaired. Examining whether the community has truly lost its ‘grassroots’ position I will also ask what lessons can be learned from recent scandals in keeping the community safe and regaining the balance of power in interactions between creators and their audiences.

### **William Proctor (Bournemouth University, England): “A Million Voices Cried Out in Terror!”: Star Wars Fans, Ontological Security and the Destruction of the Expanded Universe.’**

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Since the publication of Timothy Zahn's *Heir to the Empire* in 1990, the Star Wars mega-text has grown to staggering hyperdiegetic proportions by moving beyond the confines of the original film trilogy and cultivating the creation of extra-textual materials, such as novels and comic book series. In April 2014, Lucasfilm (now owned by Disney) issued a statement that proclaimed the demise of the so-called Expanded Universe (EU) and rendered the canonical status of the EU null and void. As McMillan (2014) explains, 'all of the stories told in ancillary material outside of the six core movies [are] no longer part of the larger continuity...more than thirty years worth of stories [are] thrown away.' What this means is that a narrative history encompassing 20,000 years contained within over 1,500 texts is cast into the dustbin of (hyperdiegetic) history. Simply put, they 'do not count' as part of the official Star Wars macro-structure.

What I want to do in this paper is look at the ways in which the Star Wars fan culture reacted and responded to this summary execution order by looking at a sample of those who turned to web 2.0 in order to express ontological anxieties about the fan-object. What does this mean for the fans who have spent a great deal of time, money and energy staying in tune with the vast continuum? Lynn Phillips, to offer a brief example, explains that canon is 'extremely important' and that these texts have 'become canon in fan's minds over the past 30+ years' (canon being an authentic and legitimate feature of the hyperdiegesis, that is, what is 'real' and what is apocryphal). Drawing upon Matt Hills' concept of ontological security (2002/ 2012), I examine the ways in which some fans discussed their thoughts and feelings via discourses of affect in online fora to begin answering the question: how do Star Wars fans feel about Lucasfilm's hyperdiegetic tinkering; and do they obey the command structures of the intellectual property owners?

### *Panel D: Spaces of Fandom*

#### **Ross P. Garner (Cardiff University, Wales): On a (Different) Plain?: Cult Geography, Authenticity and Nirvana Fandom**

This paper will present findings from some empirical research undertaken in relation to debates regarding 'cult geography'. The paper will focus on two sites in Seattle linked to fandom of 90s Grunge band Nirvana – the exhibit 'Nirvana: Taking Punk to the Masses' at the Experience Music Project (EMP) Museum and Viretta Park (a piece of public land adjacent to the house where Kurt Cobain committed suicide in 1994) – and engage with debates concerning authenticity and the fan experience. Building upon Hills' (2002) work in this area, it will argue that splits between 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' locations, which have historically been separated out and mapped on to oppositions between 'non-commodified' and 'commodified' spaces, need to be rejected. Instead, this paper will adopt a discursive approach to ideas concerning 'authenticity' that is rooted in social constructionist theories (Gergen 1999, 2001) and argue that claims to 'authentic' cult geography experiences arise through a combination of the discursive frameworks constructed around specific sites and the subject position(s) occupied by fans as a result of being aligned with pre-established subcultural practices. Rather than viewing

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‘authentic experience’ as something residing within specific spaces, then, the paper will argue that such claims arise from different interpretations of prevailing subcultural discourses regarding authenticity that become activated in different ways through the forms of identity and practice encouraged at these locations. Thus, whilst the EMP constructs what I will call ‘endorsed authenticity’ via its discursive strategies, Viretta Park enables forms of ‘unsanctioned authenticity’ through the practices that fans partake in at this location. Whilst the latter of these may accrue more subcultural value, this paper challenges such distinctions by instead recognising these claims as discursive constructs that are framed by subcultural norms.

### **Katherine Larsen (George Washington University, USA): Pilgrimage and Performance at Platform 9 ¾**

The fan/fantasy space of “Platform 9 ¾” in Kings Cross rail station can be understood as both a site of fan pilgrimage (as one of the only real world spaces a Harry Potter fan can visit) and as a site of performance in which the rituals of both pilgrimage and fandom itself are enacted.

Using Goffman’s concept of front vs back regions along with several formulations of the notion of “authenticity,” I examine the fan experience at Kings Cross and the ways in which that experience has been staged by both station management and, more recently, Warner Brothers. I suggest that Warner Bros strands as both impediment and facilitator of an “authentic” fan experience even as the notion of authenticity shifts. More broadly, this paper looks at the consequences of corporate intervention in fan spaces.

### **Abby Waysdorf (Erasmus University, Rotterdam): My Trip to King’s Landing: Fan Tourism as Fan Practice**

A new round of tourism advertisements for Northern Ireland will feature not murals or Bushmills, but Game of Thrones, the popular HBO high-fantasy drama. Much of the filming of the show is done there, and while Northern Ireland tourism officials are looking to boost the numbers, many fans of the show have already made trips there in order to see the “real” Westeros.

Neither of these developments are all that surprising. In recent years, so-called “film induced” (Beeton 2005) tourism has become an important facet of the tourism industry, a way for regions to differentiate themselves in an increasingly crowded global tourist market. Guides to filming locations are found in newspapers and airline magazines, showcasing them as general sightseeing spots for everyone. The study of this kind of tourism has likewise been increasing (for an overview, see Connell, 2012), yet there is still much to be learned about how this is experienced by tourists as a part of their fandom, rather than as an example of mediated reality or something that needs to be managed by locales.

This paper addresses this lack by analyzing film tourism from a fan studies perspective. Based on fieldwork and 31 interviews conducted on Game of Thrones fan-tourists in Northern Ireland and Dubrovnik, Croatia, it looks at how tourism works as a fan

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practice: how fans interact with locations as fans, how it works (or not) with other fan practices, and what motivates people to visit. As this practice has become somewhat normalized, it also provides a way to examine the ways in which fandom and “being a fan” are seen today, by both “fandom” and the general public. This paper therefore presents new insights into the ways in which fandom now operates, and what that suggests about its future.

### **Emily Garside (Cardiff Metropolitan University, Wales): Immersive theatre and social media: physical and virtual experience of *The Drowned Man***

This paper will explore fan use of social media to engage with live theatre performance, using the example of immersive, site specific work *The Drowned Man*. The live performance is different to traditional theatre, reliant on the physical experience, audiences follow actors around the vast space with a cast of over 30 actors simultaneously performing their story within the ‘world’ of the performance across four floors of intricately created set, from Hollywood studios, to trailer parks and woodland to expansive desert spaces. Once inside people find themselves deliberately separated from their companions, and no two experiences are the same. At *The Drowned Man* audiences experience a truly immersive and individual performance, how then does the collective experience of social media fit with the ‘Punchdrunk experience’?

*The Drowned Man* has an extensive fan following, combining repeat visits with extensive social media use. Fans use Facebook groups to discuss the show, collate information, theorise and speculate about the multi-layered narrative and discuss strategies for the best way to engage with the live performance. This paper will consider the potential dichotomy between individual, live immersive performance and social media interaction. Using examples from Facebook groups, Tumblr blogs and interviews with fans who engage online I will reflect on the relationship between the lived theatrical experience and social media engagement. I will consider how fans engage with the text, pre and post-performance and how, on multiple experiences of the performance, the social media interaction enhances their experience. The paper will then question how this social media engagement for fans might affect their engagement on returning to the live experience.

The physicality of the *Punchdrunk* live show is a unique theatrical experience that relies on physical engagement and creates a highly personal experience. This paper seeks to explore how, for fans, the social media interaction they engage with fits and enhances the live, physical and individual experience of *The Drowned Man*.

### ***Panel E: Online Fandom***

### **Ruth Deller (Sheffield Hallam University, England): ‘They’ve still not finished the bloody game yet’: Fan anticipation and ‘unticipation’ for *The Sims 4***

In May 2013, *The Sims 4* (TS4), the latest in the Electronic Arts (EA)/Maxis PC gaming franchise, was announced for 2014. In this paper, I explore the reaction *Sims* fans have had to the new game’s announcement and the footage and screenshots the developer has so far released.

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As with film and television, game previews and trailers build fan expectations for a product. Before launch, fans' 'hopes, expectations, worries, concerns and desires coalesce' (Gray 2010: 25) as they try to interpret what the final version will be. However, Sims fans awaiting the new game have expressed anxiety about the lack of content in official promotional footage. This, coupled with persistent rumours about chaos behind the scenes, led several commenters to suspect the game was still in development (as of summer 2014).

Whilst some excitedly anticipate TS4, negative sentiment dominates many sites of fan activity. Most criticism centres on EA – Consumerist's 'worst company in America' in 2012 and 2013 (Morran 2013) – which gamers criticise for pursuing profit at the expense of user experience (Dyer-Witheford and de Peuter, 2009). Much like Star Wars fans' disappointment with the prequels (Brooker 2002) clouding expectations for Episode VII, or football fans skeptical about their team's chances (McCulloch, forthcoming), fans cite previous experiences with EA as grounds for their reverse anticipation, or 'unticipation'. Even positive comments are framed cautiously – acknowledging that 'EA is money-grabbing' or that the game's aesthetic and playability will, like its predecessors, be improved when fans generate their own custom content and mods. Fan labour is often seen as superior – an act of 'fixing' what the professionals got wrong (see Jenkins 2006, Sihvonen 2011, Deller 2013) – and, even before TS4's release, many fans seem confident it will go wrong.

### **Nistasha Perez (Independent researcher, USA): The Creation of Official Tumblr Accounts in Online Fannish Spaces: Examining Integration of Fannish Practices By Media Corporations**

With the ability to easily spread fannish content such as meta, gif fics, and videos, Tumblr has become a social media platform for online fandom. Like Facebook and Twitter before it, as Tumblr's user base expanded the site began to interest corporate accounts. This interest increased when Yahoo bought Tumblr in May 2013 for \$1.1 billion dollars. Along with corporate entities like Denny's restaurant, Discover credit card, and Gap clothing, media properties created official Tumblr accounts heralded by employees or social media contractors.

Representing a range of genres and networks, this presentation will focus on analyzing the official Tumblr accounts for NBC's crime thriller *Hannibal*, MTV's teen supernatural drama *Teen Wolf* and BBC's science fiction show *Doctor Who*. Each account participates in fannish activities like the reblogging of fan art, reaction gifs, expressive tags, and fan interaction. Using a combination of social media best practices and fan theory, this presentation will examine how official media Tumblrs exist within a fannish social media space.

### **Eva Hayles Gledhill (University of Reading, England): Gendered Bricolage: Tumblr, Pinterest, and the 19th century Commonplace Book.**

The practice of compiling excerpts from texts and visual art related to an object of fan affection has been consistently employed in Anglo-American fandom since the

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eighteenth century. Tumblr and Pinterest enable fans to collate and share content in much the same manner as commonplace books and scrapbooks of the past two hundred years. Interestingly, both digital and paper-based modes have become loaded with the cultural associations of femininity.

Commonplace books circulated within domestic spaces, in an era in which women's participation in public life was severely curtailed and the majority of cultural producers were male. The public nature of Tumblr dashboards enables fans to find each other readily, and join networks of like-minded others not limited by geography, however, it leaves fans open to public interpretation of highly specific group practice. Though the public sphere is no longer as exclusively male as it was at the turn of the nineteenth century, the majority of cultural producers are still male. Spaces dominated by fan practices, such as Tumblr and Pinterest are, by contrast, culturally becoming coded as feminine.

Drawing particularly on feminist critiques and developments of Habermas' work on the public sphere, this paper explores the cultural constructions of binary pairs producer/consumer, active/passive, private/public, and male/female as applied to the study of fan practices. Are these inherently female modes of consumption and engagement with cultural productions? Or, are the practices of the disenfranchised within patriarchal power dynamics of production coded as feminine by a misunderstanding of their 'passive' consumer positioning? Changes in cultural and technological mores have radically changed the spaces available to women, and audiences in general, but a continuity of practice remains. Simply, this paper asks why?

### **Hannah Ellison (University of East Anglia, England): Lesbian Representation, the Abridged Version: Youtube and the International Lesbian Gift Economy**

Vidding has long been a topic of discussion in within fan studies as one of the cornerstones of the producer/consumer notion of fandom. However, there is another aspect of YouTube television fandom that has been discussed less regularly, 'abridging'. Abridging is the practice of creating edited versions of TV shows which only feature particular relationships or characters, leaving out any part of the text which does not feature them. This differs from vidding in that the story is not re-edited for aesthetic reasons but rather repackaged, scenes left in tact, to include only that which the abridger and the viewer are interested in. Interestingly, this practice is most popular with soaps as it fits their segmented narrative.

While not exclusively used by gay fandoms, they are most prevalent there as they allow gay fans the chance to consume a text that caters specifically to them. Rather than waiting each week to see if a show features its gay characters, sitting through heterosexual storylines that offer little, they can wait for the abridged version. Additionally, this process creates access internationally, allowing fans from around the world to consume the rare gay representation there is in television. This aspect has become so popular that there are communities of translators who provide multi-language subtitles for abridged videos.

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This paper explores how a desperate need for increased representation has created a huge gift economy and an international community of lesbian fans. A community so strong that German channel Sat1 put videos featuring the lesbian couple from *Hand aufs Herz* back online so that abridgers would stop getting takedown notices. This paper asks further questions about the purpose of the abridged videos, why they are popular and the impact they have had on television consumption.

### *Panel F: Gender*

#### **John Carter McKnight (Lancaster University, England): “I Think Beauty Will Save The World:” Fandom, Trolloviki, and Reverse Interpellation in the Spread of a Global Meme**

Early in the 2013-2014 Ukrainian crisis, a Russian-language press conference by the newly-appointed Prosecutor of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Natalia Poklonskaya, went viral, spawning fanart on the Japanese image-sharing site Pixiv.net. The prosecutor’s uniform and facial features proved easy to adapt into a manga style, and renderings spread across English-language sites, particularly DeviantArt and KnowYourMeme. News outlets from Kotaku to the BBC picked up the story of the prosecutor’s sudden popularity in fan art communities, leading to an apparently fake Twitter account and a Facebook fan page. At this point, the content of Poklonskaya imagery changed from an emphasis on a manga aesthetic to pro-Russian propaganda themes.

This work examines the effect of the transmedia spread of the Poklonskaya imagery on its content, particularly on the role played by media fandom sites in transmitting it from its original status as official propaganda when broadcast by the so-called Autonomous Republic to its later use by trolloviki, or pro-Russian-government social media activists. It argues that a process of reverse interpellation – of the stripping of a statement of its ideological context – was essential to the remediation of Poklonskaya imagery for use as a propaganda meme.

While much academic work has emphasized the role of fandom in politicizing entertainment texts, arguably by calling attention to the unavoidable interpellation of dominant ideologies of race, gender, and sexual orientation; another story can be found in fandom’s aestheticization of problematic imagery, from Poklonskaya’s militaristic uniform to the physical attractiveness of Tom Hiddleston as the villain Loki in the Marvel Cinematic Universe. The title quote above comes from a comment by Poklonskaya herself in an interview about her sudden online popularity, suggesting a particularly canny understanding of the interplay between aesthetics and propaganda, one that fan studies should further address.

#### **Ysabel Gerrard (University of Leeds, England): ‘Unworthy’ women’s fandom and contemporary postfeminist media cultures: Exploring fans’ online participation with teen television series *Pretty Little Liars*, *Revenge* and *The Vampire Diaries***

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Not all fandoms, or fans, are equal. Fandom has recently been conceptualised as a binary, with worthy fandoms ('film and TV cult fandom, cultural productivity, text-based and literary interests, real world political activism') positioned against unworthy fandoms ('celebrity following, pop music, distraction, obsession, consumption') (Duffett in Jenkins, 2014). Structured gender relations underpin this binary, with unworthy fandoms typically being associated with women's popular cultures. This inequality contradicts what has come to be known as postfeminism, the prefix 'post' implying that the feminist gains of the 1970s and 1980s have now been largely achieved. Yet this is problematic because fans, especially female fans, continue to face contradictory and at times harsh messages about which media texts they should or should not engage with.

Although a wealth of literature theorising women's pleasures with derided media texts exists, for example Radway (1984), Bacon-Smith (1992), Baym (2000) and Zubernis and Larsen (2013), little has been done to position unworthy fandoms within the contemporary postfeminist media context. More specifically, little is known about how the fans themselves negotiate this complex terrain.

This paper reports on findings from my PhD thesis, which explores fans' online participation with three derided women's popular cultures: teen television series *Pretty Little Liars* (2010-present), *Revenge* (2011-present) and *The Vampire Diaries* (2009-present). Using narrative methods, the research will tell the story of fans' participation with derided popular media. One aim of my research is to identify how hierarchies of 'worthiness' are articulated within, between and outside of fandoms and how, in addition to gender, these inequalities also relate to age, class, and sexuality. In my presentation, I will reflect on how findings from the empirical research might help me to identify some tentative answers to this question.

### **Alex Naylor (University of Greenwich, England): "My skin has turned to porcelain, to ivory, to steel": feminist fan discourses, *Game of Thrones* and the problem of Sansa**

Henry Jenkins famously commented that a potent "balance between fascination and frustration" with the text drives fan labour, sparking critical and creative activities which seek to unpick and refashion as much as celebrate. The activist turn within social media-based fandom has tended to politicize this critical/creative process, especially in female-majority fandom spaces on Livejournal and its successor Tumblr. The networked culture of social media also brings discourses of fandom, feminist activism and consumption into contact with each other. Progressive politics and activism are increasingly a prominent part of fandom spaces on platforms like Tumblr and Twitter.

HBO's *Game of Thrones* is a lively locus of fan activity in these spaces. Much *Game of Thrones* fan labour on Tumblr — critical commentary, art, graphics, and fiction — has focused upon the show's treatment of its more controversial female characters. Debate particularly coalesces around two young female characters surviving extreme situations, whom fan discussion often opposes: sisters Arya, child outlaw stranded in lawless wilderness, and Sansa, child bride stranded in a hostile medieval court.

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The discourse of Sansa's fans ranges from affectively intense appreciations; to reflections on how her narrative refracts issues of young women's victimization and survival, and "defenses" of Sansa which address some fans' vocal dislike of her. These often unpack and challenge the sexism and misogyny in "Sansa hate", and in discourse treating Sansa and Arya as competitors for fan affection. For many fans in their teens and early twenties, this kind of pop culture critique is their first introduction to feminist ideas. Such fan critical labour thus feeds into wider debate and praxis in feminist and fandom social media spaces regarding the feminist ethics of media consumption.

### **Ellen Wright (University of East Anglia, England): 'Good Entertainment Value for a Certain Type of Filmgoer': Cultural Distinctions, National Identity and Betty Grable Fandom in WWII Britain**

Betty Grable might have been America's top box-office draw and Hollywood's number one wartime pin-up, but in austerity Britain her ostentatious, all-American, song and dance, glamour girl image was particularly contentious and provoked polarised, and, at times emphatic, responses: from Sight and Sound critic Elspeth Grant's 1942 summary of Grable as 'a pin-up charmer [whose films were] coma-inducing pap, [and who] may not be able to act but can pull enthusiastic morons into the movie houses', to Picturegoer reviewer Lionel Collier's belief in her 'undoubted talent.'

Using Bourdieu's work on taste distinctions and cultural capital, Rachel Moseley's work on resonance and Richard Dyer's work on total star text, as well as a range of contemporaneous resources including; industry, film fan and other popular publications; Mass Observation studies of British wartime and immediately post-war experience; audience research and critical responses from the period, this paper will demonstrate how popular discourse surrounding the merits and deficiencies of Grable (understood, in Britain at least, to be a low brow, working class star with a lowbrow, working class appeal), the Technicolor musical extravaganzas in which she appeared and the audience to whom she and her films appealed, provide a compelling snapshot of the fraught and vigorously contested taste debates of the period; revealing considerable class antagonism, as well as an awkward, frequently ambivalent attitude to America and Americans and a deeply insecure sense of British national identity projected onto the challenging and supposedly intellectually-challenged figure of the Grable fan.

### ***Panel G: Histories and Generations***

#### **Lincoln Geraghty (University of Portsmouth, England): Culture Con: Forgotten Histories of the Fan Convention, 1939-2014**

The convention has been the primary location for mass fan gatherings for over 80 years. From the first World Science Fiction Convention (WorldCon) held in New York in 1939 to the most recent San Diego Comic-Con in 2014, fans of all ages, nationalities and races, men and women, have enjoyed the unity of coming together and celebrating their favourite media or popular culture texts: whether literature, comics, films, TV, animation,

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sport, games, collectibles or memorabilia. The convention has provided a familiar and safe place for fans to meet, exchange, and communicate while perhaps not enjoying positive press or similarly appealing spaces during the daily routine of life outside the world of what they like most. While the convention allowed for emotional connections between fans and actors, fans and fans, it also served as a space where commodities such as toys, props and autographs could be bought and sold.

Previous studies of the fan convention have largely centred on the economic and cultural significance of the phenomenon, often focussing on the particular convention activities of specific fan communities: the likes of Star Trek, Star Wars and more recent franchises such as Twilight. Camille Bacon-Smith (1992), in her study of female fan fiction writers, views the fan convention as a space for sharing and creativity as fans gather to read and write fiction amongst a familiar and friendly audience. Alternatively, Robert V. Kozinets (2001) and Henry Jenkins (2012) view fan conventions as being more about mass consumption and economic exchange where fans are targeted by large franchises and media producers. In my own recent work (Geraghty, 2014) I have argued that while large conventions such as the San Diego Comic-Con might provide Hollywood ample opportunity to use fans in their promotional campaigns, those who attend are still able to connect with and share stories very much in the vein of smaller cons. Analysing how geographic sites such as cities and hotels are manipulated through fan creativity and interaction I maintained that fan conventions are about experiencing a geography of the popular which becomes a safe and familiar space for fans to celebrate who they are and interact with their favourite media texts. So while conventions are big business they still represent a very personal and private meeting space for fans, not much changed from the first conventions held in the early twentieth century.

This paper uses primary material held in the Zine Collection in the Special Collections Archive at the University of Iowa to reappraise the history of the fan convention. I argue that while some critics have seemingly written off the contemporary con as a commercial enterprise they in fact remain very close to those early conventions which were organised by fans and for fans. The physical locations might have grown bigger and promotional emphasis may have changed according to contemporary marketing strategies but conventions are still about fans who organise events and programs aimed at fans – the core activities of any con. Historical documents (including programs and posters) suggest that the blueprint of the convention remains very much fan driven, despite the marketing hype that surrounds such events at Comic-Con.

### **Olympia Kiriakou (King's College London, England): 'Ricky, This is Amazing!': Performative Nostalgia and the Dark Side of Disney Fan Community**

Since opening in October 1971, a trip to Walt Disney World has become a rite of passage for many American children. Accordingly, it is considered a vacation destination that caters to primarily to families. However, there is a large demographic of avid Disney fans that do not fit the stereotypical park guest mould. This paper focuses on one particular group called the Dark Side of Disney community, and offers a fan studies analysis of their relationship to Walt Disney World. Named after a book by fan-turned-

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Disney-publisher Leonard Kinsey, the Dark Siders may be an extreme example of Disney fandom, as their anarchistic and openly-critical attitude towards the company sets them apart from other Disney fan communities. Key to this group's collective experience is their nostalgic attachment to the parks of their youth, namely the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s. Around this time the resort underwent an evolution, resulting in (among other things) a push towards in-park synergy, a loss of corporate sponsorship of many attractions, and an extensive overhaul of EPCOT Center. One of the ways the Dark Side fans responded to these corporate decisions was through photo and video documentation, which I argue speaks to the extent of their nostalgic resonance with the iteration of the park from the past. Their visual records of the resort offers them a physical link to spaces in the parks that are no longer accessible to guests. In the process, these documents become fetishized objects in their own right, filling the emotional void caused by the extensive makeover of the resort's landscape. Their avid documentarian impulses enables them to reconcile with the inevitability of progress that comes with dealing with an unstable object of fandom.

### **Hannah Graves (University of Warwick, England): Fandom in the Archive: Appeals for Heroism in the Gregory Peck Papers and Beyond**

In April 1948 a young woman of Long Beach, California wrote a letter to actor Gregory Peck. "Dear Mr Peck," she began, "I am fighting mad and I know that you as an American will hear me out and help advise me." She was writing to Peck to ask for his help; an allegedly anti-Semitic employer had recently fired her. Having just seen Peck in *Gentleman's Agreement* (Elia Kazan, 1947), where he played a crusading journalist for a liberal magazine who writes an expose of American anti-Semitism, this earnest petition for help clearly reflects a conflation of actor with character; a conflation partly dictated by Twentieth Century-Fox's promotion of the film.

The young woman was not the only audience member compelled to write after seeing *Gentleman's Agreement*, assured Peck might be of assistance beyond the fictional world of Minify's Smith's Weekly, several other similar appeals are contained within the Gregory Peck papers at the Margaret Herrick Library. While no copies of replies exist, the letters, in themselves, are telling; they are among the only personal ephemera relating to *Gentleman's Agreement*. Preserved for posterity alongside, most notably, the voluminous collection of letters Peck received for his definitive role as Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Robert Mulligan, 1962) these fan letters are both characteristic of and serve the archive's wider narrative: the legacy of Peck as a committed liberal, a serious actor of conscience and conviction.

Using the case study of the Gregory Peck papers to speak more broadly about the presence of fan letters within the film archives of classical Hollywood, this paper questions the role that fan letters have in archives and the narrative purposes their preservation serves in framing responses to their recipients.

### ***Panel H: Hierarchies and Capital***

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### **Nicolle Lamerichs (Maastricht University): A Fan Study of Indie Games: Interpreting Gaming Capital in *The Stanley Parable***

In this paper I aim to explore the genre of independent (“indie”) games through a fan studies framework. The history and development of digital games is intimately connected to enthusiast and fan practices. Indie games are small-scaled productions made by young professionals, fans or small studios. These media are increasingly becoming mainstream, as evidenced by their distribution through service platforms, such as Steam or Playstation Network. Though indie games are increasingly part of the game industry, they also act against it. Today, independent game have become almost synonymous with quality games, cult and avant garde, pointing towards the maturization of games as a medium. The rise of independent games echoes the development of other media, ranging from film to music (Martin & Deuze, 2009; Westecott, 2013).

I capture this genre through a case-study of *The Stanley Parable* (2013). This first-person game tells the story of “Stanley”, an office worker, who one day awakens to find his office empty. The game was originally a modification or “mod” built in the Source Engine of Valve. After its initial success in 2011, the game was developed further and released on Steam. *The Stanley Parable* became an instant indie classic, as evident by its nominations for prizes and its praise by critics. *The Stanley Parable* can be read as a fan creation – a derivative work that both affirms and transforms tropes of digital games. The game, for instance, relies heavily on gaming capital (Consalvo, 2007). Its references include levels from other games such as Portal and Minecraft. I pay specific attention to the narration of the game, which is self-conscious and ironic. An external narrator voices the actions of ‘Stanley’, and criticizes the player that does not comply to his story. By criticizing interaction and storytelling, *The Stanley Parable* is exemplary of the counterculture of independent games that emerge partly in compliance with the game industry and partly as a response against it.

### **Ciaran Ryan (Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, Ireland): Music Fanzine Collecting As Capital Accumulation**

Fiske (1992) argues that amongst fans, accumulating knowledge is central to garnering cultural capital within the community. This paper examines the relationship between fans and music-makers within underground music communities in Ireland, and the role played by amateurishly produced fanzines in facilitating that relationship, and how that role changes as technology evolves. With particular emphasis on these do-it-yourself (DIY) independent scenes over the last twenty years, it explores how capital and knowledge accumulation has elevated keen collectors to gatekeepers within their own communities of taste. Predominantly producers of fanzine texts themselves, these collectors feel they have a sense of curatorial responsibility in keeping their individual collections as an archive that will be culturally valuable in the future.

There is a dual-paradox here: the lust for and preservation of one’s collection and eagerness for cultural accumulation is at odds with the somewhat anti-capitalist ethos integral to many punk/hardcore publications. The process of collecting transforms the

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meaning of publications, almost reversing Walter Benjamin's theories on mass production, with something that is reproduced, such as a fanzine, gaining aura with its scarcity. Secondly, collecting and preserving A4 homemade and photocopied fanzines designed to be throwaway and disposable is in itself a contradictory act. In a sense, it is a fetishisation of commodities, which rallies against the anti-mainstream ideology portrayed within the pages. This work, based on field research with Irish fanzine writers and collectors, musicians and fans, teases out those contradictions and the motivations of Irish collectors.

### **Agata Włodarczyk (Gdańsk University, Poland): The differentiated picture of conventions: fanmade, nonprofit conventions in Poland**

In the countries that are the core for mainstream popular culture conventions are big events gathering approximately 10 000 people at ease. There are companies dedicated solely to organizing such events, securing guest stars, maintaining order and smooth workings of the conventions. However, in countries that exist on the outskirts of those core countries conventions are different. They are organized by non-profit societies made up by fans and as a rule they are solely non-profit. The lack of founding is one of the main factors that shape the whole events, making them less commercial and more community-oriented.

The paper will examine the differences between the USA/UK professional big event conventions and their domestic equivalents in Poland in terms of attendance, organization, guest appearances and character. It will also look closer at fan needs and possible frustrations with the domestic kind of conventions and their knowledge how the mainstream countries are organizing their own conventions.

### **Catherine Williams (Florida State University, USA): Subcultural Capital and Hierarchy in Wizard Rock**

The Harry Potter fandom is a phenomenon that continues to thrive although the books and films were completed in 2007 and 2011, respectively. "Wizard rock," popular music based on the Harry Potter series, has been an active genre since its inception in 2002. The subject matter initially focused on plot published in the books, or became a space for musical fan fiction. Eventually, wizard rock moved beyond the content of the books to include meta-observations of the Harry Potter fandom itself. Over seven hundred and fifty bands in fifteen countries are listed on the wizard rock news site *Wizrocklopedia*. The site lists bands that have formed as recently as January 2014.

In this paper, I use Sarah Thornton's notions of subculture and subcultural capital as a theoretical framework to analyze the wizard rock community. Various subcultural signifiers are found throughout the wizard rock community in musical creation, audience participation, costumes, and intimate knowledge of both the music and literature associated with the fandom. Members of the fandom find connection in absorbing the principles and morals propagated by the Harry Potter books. The first wizard rock band, Harry and the Potters, will serve as a case study. For the band, Harry is both a character they play on stage and a manifestation of their own morals. Harry and the Potters

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functions in a leadership role for embracement of the “meanings and values” of the Harry Potter series. Band member Paul DeGeorge co-founded the Harry Potter Alliance, a nonprofit that strives to “empower our members to act like the heroes that they love by acting for a better world.” This paper explores wizard rock musicians’ use of the series’ messages on morality to avoid construction of hierarchies within the community, while participating in a fandom fueled by subcultural capital.

### ***Panel I: Transformative Works***

#### **Jan Švelch and Veronika Veselá (Charles University, Prague): Fan Art in Official Promotion of Video Games**

The rise of the Internet, Web and social media increased opportunities for audiences to transform media content and influence its flow across different media platforms. The fan as a demanding yet enthusiastic consumer has become a centerpiece of media industries’ marketing strategies. On the one hand, this qualitative change, often described as participatory culture, means a giant leap forward for fans, who can now serve new roles within the media industry. On the other hand, it brings about potential exploitation of media users, as unpaid volunteers do the labor professionals are paid for.

This paper investigates this tension in the context of video game fandom. On their official websites and social media profiles, video game developers encourage fans to contribute their fan art, harnessing the fan creativity for their advertising purposes. Convergence culture leads to conflicts and compromises between fan artists and the owners of the copyrighted works which they appropriate and transform. This paper addresses three main issues: (1) how game companies display fan art on their official websites, (2) how fans understand the tensions between empowerment and exploitation, (3) how fans view issues concerning intellectual property rights considering the derivative nature of fan art.

We have analyzed these issues in the cases of three hit video games with huge fan followings: World of Warcraft, Mass Effect 3 and The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. We have explored the transparency of policies of video game publishers regarding the use of fan art and found different approaches among three analyzed companies. Qualitative analysis of online comments under Facebook posts on the official video game profiles containing fan art showed that while the tension between voluntarism and exploitation is rarely addressed in the discussions, copyright issues have much bigger attention despite widespread misconceptions about legal aspects of fan art.

#### **Hannah Priest (Swansea University, Wales): Shades of Grey: Indie Mash-Up Erotica and the Problem of Definition**

This paper examines a recent trend in independent publishing: mash-up erotica. Specifically, it will explore a series of eBooks (mostly self-published, but some published by small presses) that combine public domain material with erotic content and themes, for example Melissa DuChamp’s Fifty Shades of Alice in Wonderland and Jessie Z

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Hatcher's *Fifty Shades of Oz*. At first glance, these books are marketed as 'mash-ups': a creative combination of (according to their titles) *Fifty Shades of Grey* and an older text. However, closer reading of the text reveals a more complex problem of definition, relating to issues of authorship, marketing and genre.

Indie mash-up erotica texts sit in an uneasy relationship to their (public domain) source texts. On the one hand, they are fan productions that draw on characters and plot from the original novels/fairy tales. On the other, they are not fan fiction in the strict sense, as they offer revision of pre-existent plot rather than original creative departures. Moreover, the use of the source text is often sporadic and tenuous: for example, Hatcher's 'Oz' is based loosely on the 1939 MGM *Wizard of Oz* and sits at some distance from this adaptation. In addition to this, the texts' use of *Fifty Shades of Grey* – itself a novel with its roots in fan fiction – is complicated. In some cases, it appears that this bestseller is evoked in the title, but not in the content (i.e. not all the books under examination feature BDSM relationships with female submissives).

This paper will look at some of the ways we might understand the interplay of fan fiction, mash-up, indie publishing and parody in works using the 'Fifty Shades of...' title. It will also look at some of the complexities that arise from the relationship of *Fifty Shades of Grey* to the *Twilight* series, and consider this through the lens of the anonymous *Fifty Shades of Twilight*. The paper will argue that current indie publishing phenomena such as this strain definitions of 'text' and 'fan fiction', causing us to re-examine questions of authorship and authoritative text.

### **Joanna Kucharska (Jagiellonian University, Poland): A Vague Disclaimer is Nobody's Friend – Fanfiction Headers and Tags and Their Changing Role in Fandom**

Fanfiction, and fanworks on the whole, have always been a unique genre in terms of information offered to prospective audiences. In the case of the literary works, readers usually know what to expect when they choose a particular genre. When it comes to films and television, warnings are given pertaining to violence, sexual content, and profanity. Most readers and viewers, however, dread spoilers revealing the specifics of the story and its ending. In fanfiction, however, authors warn for character death, assure the readers of happy ending, and offer direct notes on whether the story's general mood is going to be angsty or fluffy. Sexual content is not only given a general warning, but also described in detail in the very tags attached to the fic - what positions, what toys, who is the dominant partner. Specific warnings have been designed for all possible triggers as well as known fannish tropes. Fanfic readers know exactly what they're getting when they click on a given story. The whole process started in the headers of the works, but with the development of tagging systems across the social media and fanfic archives, it has quickly adapted the practice as most efficient for both labelling and bookmarking. The recent years and the development of new fandom spaces on Twitter or Tumblr, however, have brought on a shift in the tagging practices, with the informative side of the system being supplemented, and in some cases replaced, by emotional expressions of fannish feelings and meta commentary on the canon texts and on fanworks. Tumblr in

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particular has elevated the tagging system into a form of fanwork itself, with semi-fics being written within the tags or inspired by them. The aim of this presentation is to analyse the development of fannish meta-language and tagging systems, from their first descriptive and informative functions to the current tendencies, migrating from the emotional spaces of tumblr into previously mostly utilitarian tags of fanfic archives like AO3.

### **Judith Fathallah (Cardiff University, Wales): South Park Fanfic and the Political Realm**

Comedy Central's long-running animation South Park has proved a great bone of contention for traditional guardians of youth culture. From the banning of South Park t-shirts from schools, to the denunciations of the Parents' Television Council on one hand and the academics and cultural critics attempting to claim South Park for libertarianism, conservatism, or a range of other political and ethical positions on the other, it is ironic that a show whose primary theme might be the failure of official forms of pedagogy has had so little attention paid to its young fans. Academics and critics have spent much ink arguing over the 'message' of South Park, in an ethical or small-p political sense, or denouncing it for an irresponsible embrace of the post-political carnivale in line with the supposedly apolitical cynicism of young people. This paper will use discourse analysis to code the top-rated South Park fanfics from Fanfiction.net, a site whose primary demographic is teenagers, in pursuit of the political and ethical messages young people both perceive and make of the show. This project has the advantage of concrete data over the impressionistic views of 'young people' or 'fans' still too often taken uncritically in formal adult discourse, and attends to what teenage fans make of and do with the text, rather than imagining them as passive consumers silently absorbing its supposed messages.

**ASHGATE RESEARCH COMPANION TO FAN STUDIES PANEL**

**Koos Zwaan, Linda Duits & Stijn Reijnders**

**(Editors & panel organizers)**

General introduction by Koos Zwaan, Linda Duits & Stijn Reijnders

Abstract for the book:

Fans constitute a very special kind of audience. They have been marginalized, ridiculed and stigmatized, yet at the same time they seem to represent the vanguard of new relationships with and within the media. ‘Participatory culture’ has become the new normative standard. Concepts derived from early fan studies, such as transmedial storytelling and co-creation, are now the standard fare of journalism and marketing text books alike. Indeed, usage of the word fan has become ubiquitous. The Ashgate Research Companion to Fan Cultures problematizes this exaltation of fans and offers a comprehensive examination of the current state of the field. Bringing together the latest international research, it explores the conceptualization of ‘the fan’ and the significance of relationships between fans and producers, with particular attention to the intersection between online spaces and offline places.

Presenting authors and brief outline of their chapter contributions:

**Matt Hills**

...studies the transformative event of ‘becoming a fan’. Hills discusses how fandom can change and how individuals may move back and forth between fandoms. He addresses the use of self-narratives of individual media consumers as a research method for understanding these processes.

**Frederik Dhaenens & Sofie van Bauwel**

...focus on the role of fan participation and fan production. They conduct a theoretical inquiry into heteronormativity and online fan practices that tackle same-sex desires by analysing re-edited videos of gay characters in soap operas and the online fan discussions

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they elicit. Dhaenens and Van Bauwel argue that these fan practices may challenge heteronormativity and operate as a form of queer resistance.

### **Ruth Deller**

Rather than taking a snapshot of how online communities function in one point in time, in Chapter 17 Ruth Deller takes a longitudinal approach to fan communities. Deller revisits the same online fan communities she studied ten years ago. Fans of Cliff Richard and Belle & Sebastian have responded in different ways to a decade of changes in both the careers of the artists as well as the Internet and related technologies.

### **Hilde Van den Bulck (& Nathalie Claessens, co-author, will not attend)**

...explore the notion of anti-fandom by analysing how characteristics of anti-fans relate to those of fans and non-fans. They investigate how the online communities of three celebrity websites are used to express very personal negative feelings towards celebrities and how, through this expression, these communities offer a platform to deal with social issues that are considered sensitive or taboo.

### **Gary Sinclair**

...discusses the conflicts that take place in the Irish online heavy metal scene. His data consist of in-depth interviews, participant observation and an analysis of online forums. Fan communities interact both online and offline. Sinclair observes how the online scene has had a less civilizing effect on the offline behaviour of fans.

### **Francesco D'Amato**

...examines fan funding and other types of fan participation that are made possible by online networks and new technologies. His analysis of fan funding websites shows different types of relationships that can be established between fans and artists based on these new technologies. Not only the relationships between fans and artists or producers are changing, these new technologies also affect the type or roles that fans play.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

The Regent's Conference team recommend *Melia White House* which is within walking distance of the conference venue. Central London offers a range of accommodation choices to suit all budgets, including bed and breakfasts, hotels, shared apartments, or hostels. The website Hotel Map (<http://www.hotelmap.com/hotelmap/?pro=M9UYJ>) offers a good overview of available choices in the immediate area, including locations and prices.

### **Budget Accomodation**

The following website offers some cheaper options for staying in London, at University halls of residence – B&B is about £45 a night. For Regent's the closest is Carr-Sanders Hall (about 20 min walk), where a few conference attendees will be staying:

<http://www.universityrooms.com/en/city/london/home>

Airbnb also has some options in the area:

<http://www.airbnb.co.uk>

The University of London also has some halls options nearby:

<http://hallstest.housing.london.ac.uk/visitor-accommodation>

### **Travel**

Regent's University London is located just 7 minutes walk from Baker Street tube station.

- Information on finding the venue: <http://regents.ac.uk/about/contact-us/how-to-find-us.aspx>
- Campus map: <http://regents.ac.uk/about/contact-us/campus-map.aspx>

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You may find the Transport for London website (<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/>) useful for planning your journey to the conference.