RHWHYDWAITH
ASTUDIAETHAU FFAN

29TH - 30TH JUNE 2018
FSN Board:
Dr Lucy Bennett & Dr Tom Phillips (Chairs)
Dr Bertha Chin
Bethan Jones
Dr Richard McCulloch
Dr Rebecca Williams

Hosted by:
Cardiff School of Journalism, Media & Culture
Cardiff University

With thanks to:
Sarah Bruford
Henry Morgan
Mark Duffett
University of South Wales/Prifysgol De Cymru
Rachel Phillips
C. Lee Harrington

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#FSN2018
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CONFERENCE INFORMATION

The conference takes place in the School of Journalism, Media & Cultural Studies at Cardiff University, located in the Bute Building. The address for the venue is King Edward VII Avenue, Cardiff, CF10 3NB. You can find directions and a map online at www.cardiff.ac.uk/jomec

For information about accessibility in the Bute Building please visit https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/visit/accessibility/cathays-park-campus/bute-building

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TRAVELLING AROUND CARDIFF

As noted above, Cardiff is a relatively small city and most of the restaurants, bars, shops and facilities are within easy walking distance of the University and the conference venue. Ride-sharing firms such as Uber do operate in the City, and taxi ranks can be found on the major streets such as Greyfriars Road, St Mary’s Street, Mill Lane, and outside the main train station Cardiff Central. Several taxi firms will also accept pre-booking and the main firms are:

Bay Cars 02920 350 350
Capital Cabs 0800 666 666
Dragon Taxis 02920 333 333 (Dragon also have an app you can download & use to book)
Premier Taxis 02920 555 555

PANEL INFORMATION

Each panel runs for 90 minutes. If there are 3 people on your panel, your papers should be 20 minutes long; if there are 4 people on your panel, these should be 15 minutes long to ensure time for questions. Please do keep to time in order to be courteous to all members of your panel and to ensure that the event runs to time.

Each room is equipped with a computer and projector, and there will be volunteers and technical staff on hand in case of any issues.

Please note that many delegates live-tweet the event so if you do not wish to have your paper Tweeted, please say so before you begin your paper. Equally, if you do not wish your slides to be photographed and/or shared on social media, please also make this clear before you begin your presentation.

The official conference hashtag is #FSN2018. For clarity, we would also encourage you to specify the panel you are in (e.g. #A1, #B2 etc).
**FULL CONFERENCE PROGRAMME**  
**THURSDAY 28th JUNE**

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**FRIDAY 29th JUNE**

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### SUNDAY 1ST JULY

**Times TBC**

We will be meeting for brunch at a location to be determined before offering a free location walking tour of Cardiff. Led by Dr. Ross Garner (Cardiff University), the tour will include iconic locations used in television series such as Doctor Who, Torchwood, and Sherlock. Whilst this is free, we will be asking interested delegates to sign up when they register at the conference so that we have a sense of numbers.
Panel A1: Difficulties of the Fan Studies Researcher  
Chair: Lies Lanckman (University of Kent, UK)  

Julia Largent (McPherson College, Kansas, USA) – Dating As A Fan Scholar  

Naomi Jacobs (University of Aberdeen, UK) - Challenges to Cross-disciplinary Collaboration as Applied to Fan Studies  

Katharina Hülsmann (Heinrich-Heine- University of Düsseldorf, Germany) - Researching “Carefully and Politely”: Conducting Field Work on Japanese Fan Communities after the Ritsumeikan Incident  

Bertha Chin (Swinburne University of Technology, Sarawak, Malaysia) - The Displaced Fan Studies Scholar and the Third Space: An Autoethnography  

Panel A2: Game of Thrones Across Borders: Transcultural Voices and Transmedia Experiences of Reception  
Chair: Florencia García-Rapp (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain)  

Florencia García-Rapp (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain) - The Fourth Wall and 'The Wall': A Cross-cultural Reception Analysis of Game of Thrones  

Melanie Bourdaa (University of Bordeaux Montaigne, France) - Female Fans Are Coming: GOT and the Reappropriation of the Show by Female Fans  

María-José Estable (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain), Mar Guerrero-Pico (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain) and María del Mar Grandío (Murcia University, Spain) - Empowered or exploited female characters? An overview of the Spanish speaking audience of Game of Thrones  

Panel A3: Fandom, Technology and Platforms  
Chair: Abby Waysdorff (Erasmus University, Rotterdam, Netherlands)  

Aleena Chia (Indiana University, USA) - Binarism and Hybridism in Participatory Concepts  

Welmoed Wagenaar (Utrecht University, Netherlands) - “This is Something I Must Enjoy”: Making sense of Tumblr Multifandom Practices in Everyday Contexts  

Jessica Crosby (Newcastle University, UK) - Moving Pictures: Tumblr Users and GIF Use in Online Film Reception  

Meredith Dabek (Maynooth University, County Kildare, Ireland) - “Lizzie’s Story Felt Like Home:” Narrative Intimacy in The Lizzie Bennet Diaries Fandom
Panel B1: Events of Fandom: Approaching Sci-Fi Fan Events from the Perspectives of Critical Event, Tourism and Leisure Studies
Chair: Karl Spracklen (Leeds Beckett University, UK)

Benjamin Woo (Carleton University, Canada) - Form/Con-tent: Defining the Con as Cultural and Organizational Form

Monique Franklin (Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia) - Constructing Queer Sci-Fi Fan Identities: the Negotiation of Representation in Online Spaces

Callum Cole (Independent Researcher), Nicole Ferdinand (Bournemouth University, UK) and Nigel Williams (Bournemouth University, UK) - The Twitter Force Awakens: An Exploratory Study of eWOM Around a Sci-fi Movie Release

Karl Spracklen (Leeds Beckett University, UK) - Performing SF Fandom Through Debating Controversy: Communicative Leisure, Collective Memory, and Rogue One: A Star Wars Story Below the Line at The Guardian

Panel B2: Fan Studies Methodologies
Chair: Tom Phillips (University of East Anglia, UK)

Cassie Yishu Lin (University of Westminster, UK) - Performing Authorship: An Exploration of Visual Methodology on Women Writing Slash Fiction

Abby Waysdorf (Erasmus University, Rotterdam, Netherlands) - “Modified Aca-Fandom” and Contemporary Fan Studies

Milena Popova (University of West of England, UK) – Follow the Trope: A Digital (Auto)ethnography for Fan Studies

Chiara Codeca (Independent, Italy) - The Non-academic Contribution to Research

Panel B3: Nostalgia, Ageing and Generational Fandom
Chair: Ross P. Gamer (Cardiff University, UK)

Tracey Mollet (University of Leeds, UK) - “Do You Seriously Want to Fight the Demogorgon with your Wrist Rocket’….: Stranger Things, (Hyper) Postmodernism, Trans-mediality and Geek Fandoms

Simone Driessen (Erasmus University, Rotterdam, Netherlands) - Making Things Whole Again: Reading the Pop-music Reunion in Fans’ Life-courses

Joe Smith (University of Huddersfield, UK) - The Role of Multiple Sports Fandoms in Constructions of the Ageing Self

Pilar Lacasa, Julián de la Fuente, Sara Cortés, María Ruth García-Pernía (University of Alcalá, Spain) - The Fannish Spaces of a Teen Girl around Harry Potter: An Ethnographic Approach

Panel C1: Celebrity, Stardom and Fandom
Chair: Mark Stewart (Universiteit van Amsterdam, Netherlands)

Rebecca Williams (University of South Wales, UK) - Of Mice and Minions: Fandom, ‘Ani-embodiment’, and ‘Metonymic Celebrity’ in the Theme Park Character Encounter

Daisy Pignetti (University of Wisconsin-Stout, USA) - "When Your Fave is Problematic": The Impact of Hiddleswift on Hiddlestoners

Kirsty Worrow (Shrewsbury College, UK) - “He’s a friend from work”: Reimagining celebrity relationships as Real Person Headcanons

Agata Łuksza (University of Warsaw, Poland) - The History of Celebrity Fans: International Theatre Stars in Nineteenth-Century Warsaw and Their Reception

Panel C2: Theatre & Fandom
Chair: Kirsty Sedgman (University of Bristol, UK)

Kirsty Sedgman (University of Bristol, UK) - This Beloved Theatre of Ours: Regional vs. London Ownership in Bristol Old Vic

Megan Vaughan (Royal Holloway, UK) - Fan Theatre Criticism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: The Audacious Olivia Truman

Owen G. Parry (Goldsmiths and Central Saint Martins.) - Slash Performance: Homo- Domestic Fictioning as Queer Myth-odology

Ruth Foulis (Glasgow School of Art, UK) - “I Wanna be in the Room Where it Happens.” Fandom and Celebrity in Popular Contemporary Theatre Productions Hamilton: An American Musical and Harry Potter and the Cursed Child

Panel C3: Fan Activism and Social Engagement
Chair: Simone Driessen (Erasmus University, Rotterdam, Netherlands)

Tom Phillips (University of East Anglia, UK) - “Piledrive a Fascist”: Fan Performance, Activism, and Textual Boundaries

Leandro Augusto Borges Lima (King’s College London, UK) - Videogames and Fan- activism: Why are Gamers Not There Yet?

Joanna Kucharska (Jagiellonian University, Poland) - S(J)W: New Star Wars Canon, Social Engagement, Representation, and the Hashtag Wars

Emily E. Roach (University of York, UK) - This Paper is Problematic: The Impact of Changing Platforms on Fandom Content

Panel D1: Fandom, Place & National Identity
Chair: Rebecca Williams (University of South Wales, UK)
William McCarthy (University of Adelaide, Australia) - Meet Me Down on Main Street: Disneyland as Place Attachment for Southern Californians


Lincoln Geraghty (University of Portsmouth, UK) - Rewards, Raids and Regionals: The Online and Offline Fan Cultures of Pokémon Go

Stephanie Garrison (University of Aberdeen, UK) - Beyond Fandom: Outlander Facebook Fan Groups and the Guardianship of an Imagined Scotland

**Panel D2: Fandom, Distinction and Hierarchy**
*Chair: Milena Popova (University of West of England, UK)*

Simon Hobbs (University of Portsmouth, UK) - From ‘Gore-Object’ to ‘Art-Object’ to… No Object: Exploitation Cinema after DVD

Isabella McNeill (Monash University, Australia) – “These Violent Delights have Violent ends”: Analysing Westworld’s ‘theorising culture'

Maria-José Establés (Pompeu Fabra University, Spain) & Mar Guerrero-Pico (Pompeu Fabra University, Spain) - “Strategic Fandom” and “Fan-personation”: Producers’ Hegemony and Pre-emptive Control Mechanisms Within Fan Spaces

**Panel D3: Global Fandom**
*Chair: James Rendell (Cardiff University, UK)*

Ekky Imanjaya (University of East Anglia, UK) - Si Unyil, Cult Media, and Generation of the 1980s

Yao Zhao (Univesity of Leeds, UK) and Anna Madill (University of Leeds, UK) - What Are the Differences Between Chinese and English-speaking Yaoi fans?

Natalia Samutina (National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia) - Participatory Cultures, Transcultural Flows and Fans as Cultural Agents: A Case of a Fan-produced Manga Publishing House in Russia

Courtney McLaren (Simon Fraser University, Canada) - Hybridized K-Pop in the Age of Social Media: A Case Study of BTS’ Global Popularity

**Panel E1: Fandom, Participatory Culture and Politics**
*Chair: Lucy Bennett (Cardiff University)*

Eleonora Benecchi (Università della Svizzera italiana) and Colin Porlezza (University of Zurich) - How Trump became Voldemort: Harry Potter References in the Coverage of the US Presidential Election
Katherine Larsen (George Washington University, USA) - Whose Wingnuts Are They? Co-opting the Rhetorics of Fandom in the Political Sphere

Megan Genovese (University of Pennsylvania, USA) - Resistance Imitating Art: Popular Culture and Protest Signs at the Women’s March on Washington

Briony Hannell (University of East Anglia, UK) - “I’m a Muslim Girl in a White, Faithless Country. I’m the Biggest Loser of Them All.”: Skam Fandom, Muslim Girlhood, and DIY Citizenship

Panel E2: Fashion and Material Culture
Chair: Bertha Chin (Swinburne University of Technology, Sarawak, Malaysia)

Nicolle Lamerichs (Utrecht University, Netherlands) - Star Wars on the Catwalk: Framing Fan Fashion in the Age of Creative Business

Ekaterina Kulinicheva (Independent Researcher, Moscow, Russia) - Sneakerheads as Fandom (as Fans) and Participatory Culture

Katriina Heljakka (University of Turku, Finland) - The Snow Must Go On: Locating Toys and Territorial Play Practices in Nordic Star Wars Fandom

Lies Lanckman (University of Kent, UK) - “I Hope You Haven’t Many Friends!”: Fan Community and Conflict in the Age of the Movie Magazine

Panel E3: Rethinking Fan Identity
Chair: Richard McCulloch (University of Huddersfield, UK)

Martin Barker (Aberystwyth University, UK) - What’s Wrong with Lurking? What’s Wrong with the Concept of ‘Lurking’?

Marianne Gunderson (University of Oslo, Norway) and Sophie Hansal (University of Vienna, Austria) - Affect as an Asset: Towards a Fannish Methodology

Brittany Kelley (King’s College London, UK) - All in the Family (?): Family, Love, and Emotioned Fannish Literacy

Rob Samuels (University of Huddersfield, UK) - Everyday Fandom, Neoliberalism and the Anxiety of Boredom

Panel F1: Texts, Ownership & Interpretations
Chair: Nicolle Lamerichs (Utrecht University, Netherlands)

Chris Stone (Liverpool Hope University, UK) and Ciarán Ryan (Dundalk Institute of Technology, Ireland) - Fans of Fans: Football Fan Media Shaping and Challenging Collective Opinion at the Global/local Nexus
Ruth Flaherty (University of East Anglia, UK) - A Tale of Two Systems: Fanfiction, Fair Use and Fair Dealing

Andrew Crome (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK) - Exploring Prophecy as Fan Fiction: Richard Brothers, his Female Rivals, and Reclaiming Scripture

Jonathan Rose (University of Passau, Germany) - Trans(ing) Narratives: Transfic as Trans/Fan Practice

**Panel F2: Anti–Fandom, Dislike, and Fantagonism**
*Chair: Bethan Jones (University of Huddersfield)*

Mark Stewart (Universiteit van Amsterdam, Netherlands) - “Read Another Fucking Book”: The Liberal Backlash Against Harry Potter Fandom

Sebastian F. K. Svegaard (Birmigham City University, UK) - Feel My Righteous Anger: Affect as Motivation for Critical Vidding

Beatriz Inzunza-Acedo (Universidad de Monterrey, Mexico) - Fascination with the Evil: Audience’s Emotional Relationships with Villains

**Panel F3: Cultural Politics and Identity**
*Chair: Lincoln Geraghty (University of Portsmouth, UK)*

Cecilia Almeida Rodrigues Lima (Federal University of Pernambuco, Brazil) and Gêsa Karla Cavalcanti (Federal University of Pernambuco, Brazil) – Confronting Hate: Fandom and Controversy Around Lesbian Couples in Brazilian Fictional Television

James Rendell (Cardiff University, UK) - Quotas of Colour: Black (Anti-)Fan’s Intersectional Politicisation of The Walking Dead Franchise

William Proctor (Bournemouth University, UK) - “When I see Slave Leias Wandering the Halls of a Convention, I see Leia Literally Choking the Snot out of her Oppressor”: Testing the Ideology of Female Fans’ Star Wars Cos-Playing Practices

Neta Yodovich (University of Manchester, UK) - "Finally We Get to Play the Doctor": Women Fans’ Reception of the First Woman Doctor Who
SPEED GEEKING

Maria Ivanova (Cardiff University, UK) - Constructing ‘Safe Spaces’: Fan Identities, Mental Health and Media Representations

Sofie Korsgaard Stobberup (University of Southern Denmark) - Being an Insider Fan Researcher

Shanna Gilkeson (Bowling Green State University, USA) and Julia E. Largent (McPherson College, USA) - Fanuality: Establishing a Scale of Gender Identity and Fannish “Gender”

Marianne Damoiseau (Southampton Solent, UK) – “Thanks for the donation!“: Twitch streaming and the new relationship between fans and stars

Rhys James Jones (Swansea University, UK) - Post-digital fans: Enmediating teletext

Annelot Prins (Freie Universität Berlin, Germany) – Pop Feminism and Feminist Feelings: Theorizing the Experience of Empowerment Through Popular Music

Matthais Stephan (Aarhus University, Denmark) - The Pedagogical Use of Fan Conventions and Fan Tourism: A Case-Based Study
KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Mark Duffett (University of Chester, UK) - ‘Things That Go Punk in the Night’

My talk aims to break down the assumption that mainstream music fans were less active media participants before the digital era. It rewinds to the 1970s, a time when dominant notions of mass culture had become so embedded in the social fabric that they acted as shared ontology, shaping music criticism, music performance and fandom alike. In the two decades before 1976, audience excitement became a carefully crafted ingredient of televised music entertainment. Contemporary music genres became located, in effect, as commentaries on the assumed gullibility of young, female pop fans. In this historical context, I offer a different picture by examining the notorious case of the Enfield poltergeist, a media phenomenon that at first appears utterly unconnected with music fandom. Closer analysis reveals that not only were some of its participants pop fans who made their passions visible in the public sphere. What makes the case even more interesting, it could be argued, is that its young victims expressed themselves, literally, in ways that levered stereotypes about a new threat to suburban civility: punk rock music.

C. Lee Harrington (Miami University, USA) – ‘Til Death Do Us Part? Fans and Mortality’

In recent years, scholars have sought to understand the experiences of broader fan communities including queer fans, fans of color, fans with disabilities, poor fans, and so on. For the past decade I have been exploring the activities and identities of old(er) fans, situating late-life fandom in the context of gerontological theory. The current project extends this interest in age, aging, and fandom into the end-of-life context, exploring the question of whether (and/or to what extent) fan identities and practices are salient at life’s end. A focus on mortality is not new to fan studies – for example, work on post-object fandom (Williams 2015) and zombie fandom (Whiteman & Metivier 2013) have opened rich new research trajectories in fan studies. My project focuses on potentials associated with the mortality of fans themselves. Situated in media studies, gerontology, and thanatology, I draw on interviews with members of the US death system (Corr 2014) to explore fan-nish possibilities in the context of human transience.
Panel A1: Difficulties of the Fan Studies Researcher

Julia Largent (McPherson College, Kansas, USA) – Dating As A Fan Scholar

In late July of 2017 I moved to a very small town in the middle of Kansas to start a new job at a very, very small private liberal arts institution. I was single and wasn’t familiar with the community. After arriving I jumped on several dating apps hoping to find someone to date, and hopefully some new friends. After a few lacklustre experiences, I realized my dating profiles were very much written like a biography for a chapter submission or for a website: bland, full of what I study, and who I am as a scholar. I realized that I didn’t know how to put myself forward as a non-scholar. Even more complicated, I didn’t know how to put myself forward as just a fan, and not an academic who studies fans.

Scholars in all fields have difficulties finding someone to date outside of academia. In 2015, the hashtag #RuinADateWithAnAcademicIn5Words was started and the resulting responses are responses many of us have heard: “Yes, but, what’s the point?” and “Why would you study that?” There are several think pieces on the topic on The Chronical of Higher Education, BuzzFeed, and Inside Higher Ed, but there is very little scholarship on the issue. Yet, it seems to be an ongoing frustration for academics in all fields.

But the fan scholar has a unique issue: we often study that which we love most. Many of us cannot passively consume media and fannish activity without also looking at them critically. This paper looks at the dichotomy fan scholars have in the dating world: do we put ourselves forward as fans and forget the scholarship, or do we include scholarship in our profiles as we can’t remove academia from our lives? This main question will be answered through responses from other fan scholars, but also from an autoethnographic study of my own approach to dating as a fan scholar.

Naomi Jacobs (University of Aberdeen, UK) - Challenges to Cross-disciplinary Collaboration as Applied to Fan Studies

As an emerging but still-young field, fan studies draws scholars and expertise from a variety of home disciplines, whose broad range includes but is not limited to cultural and media studies, literature, law, economics, information science, anthropology and design. While this may mean complementary research approaching similar topics from different starting points, it also presents excellent opportunities for novel collaborations. Interdisciplinary research such as this is highly valuable, as cutting edge ‘breakthrough’ research often arises from these boundaries (Carayol and Nguyen Thi, 2004). However, undertaking collaborations across disciplines can be difficult, and faces a range of challenges.

Siedlok and Hibbert (2014) identify four categories of factors which can create challenges to interdisciplinary collaboration. This paper will discuss ways in which each of these might be encountered in building fan studies collaborations, and consider recommendations to help overcome them. These challenges include: cultural barriers such as differences in language, epistemology and methodology; personal barriers such as time constraints or geographic and disciplinary separation (making it difficult to identify potential collaborators); Institutional barriers such as funding and publication review structures or processes for reward and promotion; and procedural barriers such as infrastructure and lack of tools for practical collaboration.
Beyond collaborating with scholars from other disciplines, we should also consider the value of knowledge exchange through collaborating with non-scholars including fans. This may entail similar challenges of language and understanding which must be given consideration at the outset. This will ensure that productive collaboration leads not just to one way ‘knowledge transfer’, or two way ‘knowledge exchange’ but productive ‘creative exchange’ to create new knowledge through synergistic partnership.

Katharina Hülsmann (Heinrich-Heine- University of Düsseldorf, Germany) - Researching “Carefully and Politely”: Conducting Field Work on Japanese Fan Communities after the Ritsumeikan Incident

In May 2017, at the 31st Annual Conference of the Japanese Society for Artificial Intelligence, a paper was presented by a group of researchers from Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, who aimed to develop a text filtering software for “harmful” and “obscene” content. To develop their software, the researchers used amateur erotic fiction hosted on the Japanese fannish platform Pixiv and in their paper directly linked to the online works and identified the authors by penname. This lead to an outcry in the Japanese Twittersphere on behalf of the amateur artists, whose works were labelled as “harmful” and exposed to an academic public without their consent.

Meanwhile, in Tokyo, I was conducting my field work at dojinshi exchange events (conventions where artists sell their self-published fannish and original work). Finding interview partners from the dojinshi artist community was especially difficult as the narrative fan works inspired by popular media that they produce are in conflict with copyright and are being bought and sold in what is often described as a “grey zone”. Furthermore, I encountered a reluctance to speak about fannish works, especially if they contain homoerotic material, as the exposure of such materials to non-fans (“ordinary people”) is undesired. Thus, the Ritsumeikan incident lead to more scepticism towards academic research of fannish texts but at the same time allowed me a frame of reference against which I could contrast my research interest in fan cultures and the aims of my research. In my presentation, I will give an overview of the Ritsumeikan incident, how this incident informed my approach and how I navigated around it in my search of interview partners.

Bertha Chin (Swinburne University of Technology, Sarawak, Malaysia) - The Displaced Fan Studies Scholar and the Third Space: An Autoethnography

In the context of East and Southeast Asia, fans are often perceived and depicted along very specific boundaries: as sexualized and exoticised anime cosplayers, or K-pop fans so fascinated by the lives of their favourite celebrities they engage in the practice of – among other activities – serial stalking (Redmond 2016). However, the fan (especially the fan as consumer) is becoming an increasingly important and mainstream figure for the globalised media industry. This is evident in the promotional efforts of major film and TV franchises like Star Wars and Game of Thrones in East/Southeast Asia, where fans are encouraged to consume official merchandise that range from Funko Pop figures to McDonald’s Happy Meals. This does not, however, change the public, media or institutional perception of fans or the field of fan studies in East/Southeast Asian critical media and cultural studies. As much as global franchises legitimise a particular form of fan practice (i.e. consumption), there remains a sense that the study of fandom depoliticises the seriousness of East and/or Southeast Asian cultural studies (Chin and Morimoto 2013).
This restriction can also be extended to the educational institution when the fan studies scholar work within a culturally and politically conservative system, where the fan scholar’s academic identity is constantly negotiated. The fan studies scholar may discover that the performance of their fan and academic identity occurs outside of the traditional higher education institution. As such, their sense of belonging becomes entrenched in what sociologist Ray Oldenburg (1999) called the “third place” – in annual academic conferences and in local cafes – where the fan studies scholar can perform these identities.

This paper proposes to take an autoethnographic approach, in examining the notion of the “third place”, safe spaces whereby fan studies research can be expanded on and performed as an academic discipline without institutional restrictions.

**Panel A2: Game of Thrones Across Borders: Transcultural Voices and Transmedia Experiences of Reception**

**Florencia García-Rapp (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain) - The Fourth Wall and 'The Wall': A Cross-cultural Reception Analysis of Game of Thrones**

HBO’s global success, *Game of Thrones*, is known for having an active international fan base. This is an exploratory study of the show’s reception in Spain, Germany and Argentina. The analysis, based on qualitative interpretive research, examines cross-cultural reception themes emerged from semi-structured interviews with 20 viewers. The paper considers their identification and understanding of characters and narrative, paying special attention to the series’ representation of moral problems, power and gender. In addition, online and offline engagement and reception practices as exchanging views, commenting, sharing and liking memes are compared. Viewers’ choices more explicitly rooted in broader socio-cultural contexts such as choosing subtitles or dubbed version, streaming, downloading illegally or watching on-demand are also thematized. The study identifies common patterns across cultures: varying degrees of analytic and emotional fannish engagement (Zubernis and Larsen, 2012; Chin and Morimoto, 2013) leading to diversified fan subjectivities (Sandvoss, 2005; Hills, 2002) within their 'locality'.

**Melanie Bourdaa (University of Bordeaux Montaigne, France) - Female Fans Are Coming: GOT and the Reappropriation of the Show by Female Fans**

This paper focuses on the reception of *Game of Thrones* by fans, trying to underline what characterizes a fan of a show (Bourdaa, Lozano Delmar, 2016) and what kind of activities and creations they perform in an online environment (Booth, 2010; Baym, 1999; Jenkins, 2006). I look specifically at the productions of feminine fans and their online activities on twitter, tumblr, forums, deviant art and fanfiction websites, in order to understand what draws them to the narrative, what characters they like and what kind of online activities they are doing (fan fiction, arts, and video, live-tweeting). *GOT* is an interesting case study as it is believed to be a show for male fans, often using the male gaze in their narrative and depiction of women. The study highlights how female fans use the narrative of *GOT* and how they acquire specific skills.
María -José Establés (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain), Mar Guerrero-Pico (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain) and María del Mar Grandío (Murcia University, Spain) - Empowered or exploited female characters? An overview of the Spanish speaking audience of Game of Thrones

As a global phenomenon, Game of Thrones counts with an intense following among Spanish speaking audiences that tune in throughout an array of platforms. The aim of this paper is to map the reception and characteristics of Spanish speaking audiences vis-a-vis with some of the reactions and media controversies surrounding the show, often centred on its exhibitions of sheer violence and the cruel and stereotypical treatment of female characters (Ferreday, 2015). Drawing on 1,581 responses from 18 Spanish-speaking countries of the online questionnaire of The Game of Thrones Audience Research Project, a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data presents a more nuanced trend. The results reveal a large female and adult following which keeps up with the debates on the show and displays a complex understanding of its narrative tenets. In this sense, the show is largely deemed as empowering for women while emphasising that the central role of female characters still comes at the expense of gender-based representations of violence and brutality.

Panel A3: Fandom, Technology and Platforms

Aleena Chia (Indiana University, USA) - Binarism and Hybridism in Participatory Concepts

Participatory cultures are reconfiguring boundaries between domains such as leisure and work, logics such as production and consumption, and identities such as professional and amateur. These binaries are not false but ideological, varying across social groups, and shifting over time. Contrary to what some media scholars suggest, distinctions between these categories are not blurring. They remain meaningful to gamers, whose boundary work that structures games as cultural forms also structures media participation as cultural practices. Instead, these boundaries are being reconfigured by companies, fans, and hobbyists in calculated ways to govern customers, manage contributions, and craft identities. This paper argues that the flux and fluidity of industrial dichotomies suggested by hybridizing neologisms such as “prosumption” or “playbour” harbor sociotechnical, cultural, and regulatory ambiguities that have been exploited by media companies at the expense of consumers and workers. The calcification of these ambiguities into an implicit post-Fordist social contract can be resisted and redirected by specifying boundary configurations. This specificity stands a chance of redirecting these ambiguities into more equitable configurations. This specificity is vital to core disciplinary debates about the legitimacy of platform governance, the value of participatory contributions, and the affective politics of avocational passion. This argument is based on 18 months of participant observation with players of two multiplayer games by commercial developer CCP Games: EVE Online and Vampire: the Masquerade.

Welmoed Wagenaar (Utrecht University, Netherlands) - “This is Something I Must Enjoy”: Making sense of Tumblr Multifandom Practices in Everyday Contexts
Over the last years, the microblogging platform Tumblr has become an excellent fit for millennial fan culture. As fans gravitated towards the platform, a specific Tumblr culture developed that has been associated with (visual) transformative practices, the performance of “feels”, and fans’ engagement in “social justice” (Hillman, Procyk and Neustaedter 2014; Stein 2015). Thus far, research on Tumblr has largely focused on practices on the platform, viewed from and placed within a broader context of social networking, transmedia and participatory culture. As important as this is, the immersion generated by modern technology easily makes us forget that people do not only do things with their objects of fandom on Tumblr, Tumblr itself is also an “object” that people “do things with”—stealing a glance on their phone while in class, or settling themselves on the couch with their laptop on a Friday evening.

In this paper, I explore what fans do with Tumblr in their daily lives and examine how they, in everyday contexts, give meaning to what they produce and encounter online. Based on in-depth interviews with Dutch multifandom bloggers, which included home visits and observation of their Tumblr habits, I argue that fans set (sometimes very subtle) rules and boundary markers that frame their experiences on and with regard to Tumblr in specific ways in specific contexts. Amidst discussions about the messy relationships between the on- and offline (e.g. Taylor 2006; Pearce 2009; Turkle 2011; Wagner 2012), it turns out that fans negotiate these relationships in sensitive ways that might best be understood as forms of dynamic ritual framing (Handelman 2008; Utriainen 2016), enabling them to navigate between Tumblr as a liminoid space of freedom, leisure and playful creativity and Tumblr as a space for (often contested) meaning-making rooted in social and political realities.

Jessica Crosby (Newcastle University, UK) - Moving Pictures: Tumblr Users and GIF Use in Online Film Reception

GIFs are a popular mode of expression online, having evolved from a simple file format meant to animate static images to become something of a ‘calling card of modern Internet culture’ (O’Leary, 2013), capable of breathing life into even the briefest instances of media culture. GIF functionalities are now appearing on a growing number of social media platforms for use as ‘reaction’ graphics: similar to emojis, GIFs are used to insert liveliness, humour or personality into otherwise static online interactions. The popular microblogging site Tumblr, which boasts an unusually high degree of user-generated content due to the large number of fan communities operating on the site, demonstrated an early affinity for GIF use in user content and interaction, suggesting that the role of the GIF has become very much integral to understanding of Tumblr culture (Hillman, Procyk and Neustaedter, 2014). In my current doctoral work on film reception practices on Tumblr, I have noted that the use of GIFs in discussion around film serves to fulfil a particular ‘cinematic’ function, wherein moments of aesthetic, narrative or emotive action are made consumable for a uniquely participatory audience base. Film is a way of presenting life 'in motion' and so the use of GIFs works to preserve some of the liveness of the motion picture in the online space. In this paper I breakdown some of the common forms of user GIF use around film with reference to observational and interview data collected during the course of my doctoral work. In doing so I hope to present the case for Tumblr as an engaging site for contemporary audience research and offer some indication of how and why the GIF has become a key communicator of audience reception in the Internet age.
Meredith Dabek (Maynooth University, County Kildare, Ireland) - “Lizzie’s Story Felt Like Home:” Narrative Intimacy in The Lizzie Bennet Diaries Fandom

In 2012, The Lizzie Bennet Diaries began to reimagine Austen’s beloved novel, Pride and Prejudice, for the twenty-first century by conveying the narrative through multiple digital media platforms. The Lizzie Bennet Diaries (hereafter referred to as LBD) centred on a series of YouTube video diaries ostensibly uploaded by Lizzie Bennet, a 20-something graduate student. During its initial release, the LBD narrative eventually expanded to include four complementary YouTube channels, thirteen interconnected Twitter feeds, Tumblr posts, Facebook profiles, and numerous social media interactions and “conversations” between the narrative’s characters and its fans.

One of the key features of LBD was how the narrative actively invited fans and readers to participate and interact with the characters through its multiple media platforms, providing fans with the sense that their contributions to the narrative mattered and creating what Sara Day (2013) has termed “narrative intimacy.” According to Day, texts with narrative intimacy “reflect, model, and reimagine intimate interpersonal relationships through the disclosure of information and the experience of the story as a space that the narrator invites the reader to share” (2013, pp.3).

This paper will explore how LBD’s use of diary-style “confessional” YouTube videos, as well as various interactive and participatory media platforms, helped create a sense of narrative intimacy among its fans. Drawing on results from the author’s mixed methods survey of LBD fans and one-on-one follow-up interviews, the paper will also highlight how the narrative elicited affective responses from its fans, thereby deepening their overall attachment to and engagement with the text.

Panel B1: Events of Fandom: Approaching Sci-Fi Fan Events from the Perspectives of Critical Event, Tourism and Leisure Studies

Benjamin Woo (Carleton University, Canada) - Form/Con-tent: Defining the Con as Cultural and Organizational Form

When comics fandom emerged as a distinct media-oriented community in the 1960s, one of the things it brought with it from SF fandom was the cultural and organizational form of the convention. Over the last 15 to 20 years, comic cons have enjoyed enhanced prestige, attention, and attendance as they have become central to the film, television, and video game industries’ promotional apparatus. In doing so, they have also brought large cohorts of new fans into these spaces, enlivened their host cities, and provided a livelihood to artists and artisans. But convention organizing does not merely facilitate interactions on behalf of other stakeholders; it is increasingly a media industry in its own right – one that (in North America, at least) is typically overlooked by policymakers and arts councils.

I am director of the recently launched Comic Cons Research Project, a Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada–funded partnership that brings academics and convention organizations together to study convention organizing as a social practice. We theorize the con as a cultural form that is fundamentally about circulation: goods, money, information, and cultural capital circulate within the con; creators and fans circulate between cons; and the con form itself circulates, as multinationals like Reed and Informa export North American–style cons to global markets, at times displacing local event forms. In my presentation, I will discuss our in-progress cultural mapping survey.
of comic cons, comic art festivals, and related media fandom events in North America. The
survey instrument was designed with our convention partners, and I hope to be able to
share some early results and develop a comparative framework with colleagues studying SF
cons.

Monique Franklin (Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia) - Constructing Queer Sci-Fi Fan Identities: the Negotiation of Representation in Online Spaces

There has recently been a great emphasis and increase in discussion on the need for
diversity in media, particularly for visible queer/LGBT+ representation. This is due in part to
fan-driven social media campaigns and calls against ‘queerbaiting’, the perceived
deliberate placement of queer subtext as a denial of ‘real’ overt representation. In
discussions regarding representation the sci-fi genre’s stance toward queerness is rather
ambivalently characterised, appearing either as infamously lacking in queer characters or as
uniquely suited to disrupting normative conceptions of gender and sexuality due to an
imaginative potential and flexibility unavailable to more ‘realistic’ genres. However, within
these discussions the opinions of queer sci-fi fans on the subject and its effect on what
being a fan means to them have been largely absent, despite that a sizeable community of
them has been noted way back in Jenkins and Tulloch’s (1995) seminal study on Science
Fiction Audiences.

Using online spaces like social media sites to communicate with each other, queer
fans are tackling the subject of visibility in a genre that appears to be representationally
fluid, prone to allegory and non-human Others to present queer identities and experiences.
These fans’ evaluations on whether the genre’s tropes and conventions serve to enhance
queerness or diminish and contain it articulate a negotiation of identity and community
boundaries; the sci-fi tropes providing a framework to express their understandings of
gender and sexual fluidity while evaluations of visibility inform their perception of
themselves as fans including their position within the sci-fi fandom as a whole. Through
their interactions with the text and with each other, a queer science-fiction fan identity and
community space is being constructed and articulated; demonstrating a specifically queer
cultural interpretation that incorporates and utilises sci-fi thinking into its perspective, while
providing a critical position to examine the genre itself.

Callum Cole (Independent Researcher), Nicole Ferdinand (Bournemouth University, UK) and Nigel Williams (Bournemouth University, UK) - The Twitter Force Awakens: An Exploratory Study of eWOM Around a Sci-fi Movie Release

The purpose of this paper is to explore the structure and content of the electronic word-of-
mouth (eWOM) of a sci-fi movie release. eWOM, which can be described as statements
made by customers about a product, service or experience, shared using online forms of
communication, has become a ubiquitous and extremely powerful promotional tool.
However, it is still misunderstood by marketers and under researched by academics.
Research on eWOM within the leisure industries have tended to focus on tourism and
hospitality phenomenon. Despite the enduring importance of cinema-going for adult
leisure time, it has not been an area that has attracted eWOM research. The popularity of
science fiction movies coupled with the high usage of social media and Twitter, in
particular, amongst cinema’s core audience made the release of Star Wars: The Force
Awakens an ideal case study for exploratory research of eWOM generated by cinema goers. Data was collected from Twitter using #StarWars from 6/12/2015 to 30/12/2015, roughly 2 weeks prior and after the December 14th opening date. Tweets from the UK were archived using Tweet Archivist and analysed using NodeXL and Voyant Tools to capture insights into both the structure and content of the data. Findings revealed that eWOM around the film was dominated by organisations with a commercial interest in the release and fans of the movie franchise. There was a noticeable change in structure of the eWOM before and after the release, with organisations becoming more prominent after the film opened. Before and after the release, competitions were the primary topics of conversation. The content of other popular topics, like the structure of the eWOM, varied before and after release, with the premiere being more important before the release date and emotional reactions increasing in prominence afterwards. These variances have important implications for social media marketers.

Karl Spracklen (Leeds Beckett University, UK) - Performing SF Fandom Through Debating Controversy: Communicative Leisure, Collective Memory, and Rogue One: A Star Wars Story Below the Line at The Guardian

Star Wars has become one of a handful of SF franchises that have defined and shaped what Adorno calls the modern culture industries. The original trilogy challenged the way Hollywood financed and marketed its movies, and made George Lucas incredibly rich. Star Wars fans bought tickets for re-releases, special editions and the notoriously egregious prequels, as well as a seemingly endless range of merchandise. When Lucas sold the franchise to Disney new movies were promised, including what became the stand-alone prequel Rogue One: A Star Wars Story. In this paper, I am interested in exploring how people reacted in publicly accessible online spaces, as these are key spaces for the performance of what Spracklen (2015) has identified as digital communicative leisure. Specifically, I am interested in how fans of the original trilogy and the Star Wars franchise critiqued or defended the film and Star Wars more broadly through a detailed analysis online comments below the line reacting to review by film critic Mark Kermode published in a middle-class, liberal newspaper: the UK-based The Guardian. This review and its comments below the line represent a snapshot of what middle-class liberals might feel able to write about the film and their own Star Wars fandom. This analysis will also be extended to critiques made by people seeking to distance themselves from Star Wars, and all that Star Wars fandom may entail, as a performativity of anti-fandom. I will show that for fans collective memory is used to try to construct authenticity and ownership of Star Wars, but that collective memory is only ever temporarily negotiated.

Panel B2: Fan Studies Methodologies

Cassie Yishu Lin (University of Westminster, UK) - Performing Authorship: An Exploration of Visual Methodology on Women Writing Slash Fiction

Fandom, and fannish experience have an inevitable relationship with the concept of “performance”. This paper will demonstrate the usage of performance in a visual methodology I am utilising in researching women’s role in slash fan fiction – which is to create a performance documentary film on the subject. In this documentary, I am inviting women slash fiction writers to adapt their stories into a theatre play, having them to re-
create the written text into a physical performance and interact with real life male actors. Performance is an illusion, as well as a re-enactment of reality.

Triggering the research subject to re-enact their fannish experience through a theatrical form, allow the opportunity to reveal their unconscious actions that might not occur in conventional social science research methods. Letting these women to become directors and visualise their own slash fiction plays, will make their perception of male character/actor’ bodies and movements more visible. Through the performance in this documentary, it might provide an alternative perspective in understanding the reflection of women’s identity in slash fandom, which are more real and truthful than ordinary experience.

This paper will offer a reflexive demonstration on the process of this documentary practice, such as my role as the researcher/producer and my contributor’s role as the author/director; the layers of narratives and the combination of fiction and non-fiction aspects; the difficulties we have encountered, all form the experience of working with two women slash fiction writers - Kat and Muffy, and the process of visualising their own slash fiction stories (We Are Blinding by Kat – a romantic modern day slash fiction based on Narnia; and Heartbeats by Muffy – a bloody love story originated from the Hannibal TV series). Through the making of this documentary, I am hoping to explore the possibility of applying an art practice research method into studying women and slash fiction, as well as making women’s voice more visible, without the restriction of conventional gender perspectives

Abby Waysdorf (Erasmus Unversity, Rotterdam, Netherlands) - “Modified Aca-Fandom” and Contemporary Fan Studies

For nearly three decades, the field of fan studies has helped to shift the conversation on fandom, from a study of pathological individuals to exploring how groups make use of and transform the contemporary media landscape. Instrumental to this shift has been the use of auto-ethnographic methodology, especially in the form of the “aca-fan,” an academic who considers themselves part of the fan community. By foregrounding the researcher’s own fandom the field has benefited from an insider’s perspective, creating an empathetic understanding of fandom. However, this perspective, while useful, can also be limiting, frequently restricting the study of fandom to the fans that researchers are familiar with. As the concept and structures of fandom expand, it is essential for fandom researchers to bring our analysis to fans that aren’t “like us,” while also keeping the empathetic understanding of fandom that has made the field what it is.

In this paper, I discuss one attempt to do so, the “modified aca-fandom” approach I developed throughout the course of the Locating Imagination project (www.locatingimagination.com). In researching film tourism, something I had little interest in personally participating in, it was necessary to develop my skills as a social science researcher. However, it was important to me to foreground the approach of fan studies as a field throughout the project. The result, which I detail in this paper, shows how the “modified aca-fandom” approach can be useful to both qualitative media research and fan studies. I discuss how using the traditions of the social sciences can broaden the field of fandom research, in branching out into less-studied forms of fandom and fan groups, but also what the fan studies approach can bring to social science research. In doing so, I point to a possible direction for fan studies in the next decades.
Milena Popova (University of West of England, UK) – Follow the Trope: A Digital (Auto)ethnography for Fan Studies

In this paper I examine the challenges a digital environment and a scholar’s prior membership of the community they are studying pose to their positionality and the process of field site construction. I theorise and propose a particular approach of digital (auto)ethnography especially suited to the study of fan fiction and the communities around it.

Groups of fans, particularly those whose fannish activity is centred on fan fiction, have been congregating in online environments since the advent of the Internet, migrating from Bulletin Boards to Usenet, to mailing lists and LiveJournal, to modern social networking platforms like Tumblr and fan-run archives such as the AO3. At the same time, Fan Studies scholars have traditionally also ourselves been members of the communities we study. Both of these factors present methodological challenges to Fan Studies, which are frequently hinted at but rarely discussed explicitly (Evans & Stasi, 2014).

In this paper therefore I build on methodological developments in ethnography to theorise how these two aspects - our digital setting and our personal embeddedness in fannish communities - complicate the positionality of the ethnographer as well as the process of ethnographic field site construction. I examine three key factors in the positionality of the ethnographer: the openness of the setting, their level of participation in the community, and their visibility as a researcher. Additionally, I consider how an (auto)ethnographic approach can mitigate the challenges posed by a boundless, networked online environment to the concept of the traditional field site. I propose an approach I call “follow the trope”, which integrates the fan scholar’s own experiential knowledge of both fannish community practices and digital spaces, to produce not so much a field site as an ethnographic journey through fannish spaces, shaped by the theoretical concerns of the research questions and informed by an insider point of view.

Chiara Codeca (Independent, Italy) - The Non-academic Contribution to Research

Scholars and independent researchers in the fan studies field bring to the table perspectives from a variety of different disciplines and areas. But we should also add to these researchers the non-academic professionals who can contribute to research in ways peculiar to their areas of expertise and work experiences. My personal experience is defined by the continued cross-pollination of academic studies, non-academic work and fan practices, and by the importance of a common ground for research across these categories as a fan studies scholar. A lifelong fan, after academic studies I became a professional in two fields that have been deeply touched by fandom and that today cannot ignore fan practices and fanworks: 1) Translating; a profession that has had to acknowledge fan practices and ethics and that today often relies on the interaction with fans. 2) Journalism; a profession that constantly interrogates itself on topics such as rigor, ethics and the selection of contributions. I propose that fans-who-happen-to-be-professionals can add to fan studies independently from academic norms, while recognizing the importance of a common ground for doing research. I also argue that the generalized framework of fan/industry as opposed forces doesn’t take into consideration how these professionals (“profans”?) operating within the entertainment industry are influencing it. I’d like to share my experiences and methods through a selection of case studies on topics including: negotiating professional requirements with fannish ethics; the socio-cultural effects of the
Panel B3: Nostalgia, Ageing and Generational Fandom

Tracey Mollet (University of Leeds, UK) - “Do You Seriously Want to Fight the Demogorgon with your Wrist Rocket’….: Stranger Things, (Hyper)
Postmodernism, Trans-mediality and Geek Fandoms

On 22 July 2017, Netflix launched the trailer for the second series of their original release, Stranger Things 2. Set to Michael Jackson’s ‘Thriller,’ the clip went viral within hours, with fans dissecting its content, eager for clues on the upcoming season, evidence of the show’s appeal to its trans medial audience (Marshall, 2009). However, the hype behind the trailer’s release highlights a deeper phenomenon behind the series. Stranger Things not only engages in a nostalg ic postmodern dialogue with the 1980s – it also takes on qualities of what Valerie Wee has labelled a ‘hyper-postmodernism’ (2005:11). Kaveney has argued that ‘what is mocked as geek culture is art that people not only love, but think about and through’ (2005: 6). This idea is intrinsic to a study of Stranger Things for two reasons and works to the two levels of the show’s ‘hyper-postmodern’ dialogue.

Firstly, the show is itself an example of ‘geek’ culture, with its heightened referencing of popular media and its cult following. It often ‘ignores the boundaries’ of its medium of television with self-reflection and utilization of the narrative conventions of trans medial ‘geek’ culture, including music, literature, gaming, 1990s cult teen drama and twenty-first century cult blockbusters (Wee, 2005:11) . It thus offers its ‘fullest reading and pleasures only to those willing to watch and listen closely’ (Dunleavy, 2017: 3).

More importantly, the show’s main characters are shown to be a part of this ‘geek’ culture, as members of the Hawkins AV Club, fans of Star Wars, avid players of the game ‘Dungeons and Dragons’ and readers of Lord of the Rings. I would like to suggest that Stranger Things and Stranger Things 2 are distinctive in their application and discussion of the narrative codes and conventions of ‘geek’ culture. The characters harness their knowledge to help solve the show’s principal mysteries. They consume popular culture in an ‘active way’, much like the fandoms of Stranger Things (Kaveney, 2005: 7).

Simone Driessen (Erasmus University, Rotterdam, Netherlands) - Making Things Whole Again: Reading the Pop-music Reunion in Fans’ Life-courses

In February 2018, the Spice Girls appeared together in an Instagram-photo. This was the first time that the women appeared as a five-piece since their get-together at the premier of Viva Forever, a Spice Girl themed musical, in 2012. The photo led to great excitement, but most of all to the question: is the group reuniting?

This study examines the role and affordances of such mainstream pop music reunions in music fans’ lives, and how this relates to their current life-course position. By exploring the online reactions to the reunion of (formerly famous) 90s- and 00s acts (such as 5ive, Atomic Kitten and B*Witched), it aims to contribute to a) the emerging field of work on (aging) music fandoms, and b) sketching how music might play an important role in
one’s life over time. Both of these domains are still somewhat overlooked in the current scope of media studies (cf. Harrington and Bielby, 2010; Duffett, 2013).

Preliminary findings of analyses of entertainment web-forums PopJustice and DigitalSpy, illustrate how fans use three discourses to give meaning to a pop music reunion in their (now) adult lives: First, the event is considered a nostalgic experience. Second, it is ‘read’ in an ironic (distancing) fashion; mocking and comparing the performers progress with the fans’ own life-course development. Third, the fans ‘question’ the reunion-formula: should these bands wish to repeat the past or try to find progress (cf. Löbert, 2012)?

These different discursive modes then offer useful frameworks to further understand media’s role and meaning across one’s life course. This might also help to get a deeper insight into the current trend of remakes and revivals in other media domains, like film and TV.

Joe Smith (University of Huddersfield, UK) - The Role of Multiple Sports Fandoms in Constructions of the Ageing Self

Fan studies is just beginning to realise an ‘angle’ of research which situates the individual as a fan, not of a singular object, but of many objects, all intertwined and interrelated. Whilst there has been a start in this direction (Stein, 2015; Booth, 2016; Hills, 2016), the overwhelming majority of fan studies work – recent and, especially, historically – focus on singular, case study-style fan object research. My paper explores how individual fans use their favourite fan objects in self construction during their post-(full-time) employment years and argues that the self is amalgamated through multiple (sometimes barely relatable) objects, out of necessity.

Drawing on in-depth interviews with thirty retired or semi-retired participants aged between fifty-six and eighty-eight, this paper explores how fans use their fan objects to structure their day-to-day life, post-full-time employment. It explores how older fans interact with and experience their fan objects during the increase in social isolation that often occurs symbiotically with ageing, and in interacting with their fan object(s), I outline whether fans renegotiate new relationships or ‘recycle’ their younger ‘selves’ during interaction with their fan object(s). I use theory grounded in Winnicottian psychoanalysis (Winnicott, 1971) – building on the growing number of psychoanalytically-flavoured works within fan studies (Harrington & Bielby, 1995; Hills, 2002; Sandvoss, 2005) – and the social psychological approach of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969), whilst also adding to the growing body of age-related research – both gerontological (Harper, 2013) and cultural (Harrington, Bielby, & Bardo, 2014).

We are living in an age of sky-rocketing life expectancy. In the eighteenth century there were about ten centenarians in Europe; by the end of this century there are expected to be 1.5 million in the United Kingdom alone (Brown, 2017). Given that life is so intimately linked with one’s passions, significant developments in this area are long overdue.

Pilar Lacasa, Julián de la Fuente, Sara Cortés, María Ruth García-Pernía (University of Alcalá, Spain) - The Fannish Spaces of a Teen Girl around Harry Potter: An Ethnographic Approach

This presentation approaches Harry Potter teen and pre-adolescent fan practices (Duffett, 2013; Jenkins, 2014). We explore the fans’ mediated activities to rebuild both Harry Potter spaces, physical and virtual, and their experiences when interacting with objects and people in virtual and physical spaces.
The empirical data comes from a one-year long ethnographic study which aims to analyse the online and offline practices of a 11-year-old girl who we will refer to as Nadia. She is a fan of Harry Potter who has read all the books, watched all the movies and uses mobile devices to share and collect information. She thinks of herself as a wizard and those people who do not follow the saga as ‘muggles’. We tracked her public and private online presence when storing digital materials about Harry Potter on social networks and iCloud and held informal interviews with her.

Our analysis focuses on two kinds of data supported by several theoretical perspectives: 1. First, our data relate to Nadia’s activities around digital spaces. She is situated in environments, as suggested by de Kosnik (2015), related to new media. This author uses the metaphor of a global theatre where an infinite number of participants can generate new content. From this perspective, we looked at Nadia’s practices by exploring her participation in Twitter and Instagram and using remixes (Kuhn, 2012). Moreover, we can see the way she uses iCloud, a place that allows people to store countless images and videos related to Harry Potter. 2. Nadia’s visit to the Harry Potter exhibition in Madrid allowed us to understand her practices around the physical world. According to Ndalianis (2004), these scenarios allow fans to approach forms of entertainment, creating imaginary worlds that focus on spectacle, reflexivity and immersion. There, Nadia could access a world that involved touching, smelling, collecting and controlling. Moreover, by using the concept of everyday social performance (Goffman, 1990), Nadia’s visit to the Harry Potter exhibition can be interpreted by focusing on her as an actor interpreting the text during the visit. Our discussion will focus on how social networks and exhibitions are starting points to relive stories in virtual and physical worlds. If several years ago physical objects and traditional books were the main priority in young girls’ activities, nowadays teen fans’ experiences are inseparable from interactions between virtual and physical spaces.

**Panel C1: Celebrity, Stardom and Fandom**

Rebecca Williams (University of South Wales, UK) - Of Mice and Minions: Fandom, ‘Ani-embodiment’, and ‘Metonymic Celebrity’ in the Theme Park Character Encounter

This paper challenges conventional understandings of contemporary fan/celebrity relationships by focusing on theme park fans’ meetings with characters, which offer the opportunity to meet recognisable “stars” from Disney (e.g. the Princesses, Mickey Mouse) or Universal Studios (e.g. The Simpsons, Shrek, and the Minions). Such interactions challenge the notion of what celebrity itself means; since the characters are costumed actors it is not they who are objects of adoration but the fictional figures they stand in for. Unlike children, adults are well aware that there is no one ‘real’ Mickey, or that the Han Solo they are encountering is not Harrison Ford, and that the character they are meeting is a theme park employee in a costume.

Extending existing work on celebrity cultures and forms of stardom, I argue for the concept of the ‘metonymic celebrity’ to understand the enduring allure of the theme park character for adult fans, and to explore how the existence of such a form of celebrity works to challenge existing boundaries and ‘previous dichotomies such as realism/formalism as well as star/character and live-action/animation’ (Hills 2003, p. 84). Furthermore, I argue that figures such as Mickey Mouse become incarnated as forms of ‘ani-embodied characters’, those whose origins are in animation and who do not exist outside of the
animated world but who have become ‘alive’ via their personification through costumes, mannerisms, behaviours, and the literal body of the theme park cast member. In such moments, ‘The translation of an animated image onto a corporeal body is a deviation that transfers an object from one medium of expression and reinterprets the image onto a drastically different format’ (Amon 2014, para: 4.2).

Much as ordinary people can become famous by crossing media thresholds (Couldry 2002) normal theme park employees can assume the trappings of celebrity, albeit temporarily, by stepping into the costume of Mickey Mouse or the dresses of Disney Princesses, thus threatening dichotomies of ordinary/celebrity, ordinary/extraordinary and live-action/animation (see Barker 2003). The paper thus argues that we consider these meetings as celebrity encounters where fans negotiate the excitement about interacting with this type of ‘famous’ figure alongside their knowledge of the artificiality of that persona, and their acceptance of the roles that both celebrity and fan must play.

**Daisy Pignetti (University of Wisconsin-Stout, USA) - “When Your Fave is Problematic”: The Impact of Hiddleswift on Hiddlestoners**

Since his 2011 cinematic turn as Loki in *Thor*, British actor Tom Hiddleston has held the title of Internet Boyfriend, with fans and journalists alike considering him “a paragon of enlightened masculinity” and “someone surrounded by an aura of authenticity” (Misra 2016). Then in June of 2016 *The Sun* published fifteen “World Exclusive” photos of Tom Hiddleston kissing Taylor Swift on the rocky beach outside of her Rhode Island home. Overnight, the coupling became every entertainment media site’s trending topic and the subject of multiple daytime and late-night talk show segments.

Reactions from the actor’s fandom ranged from confused to disappointed to vehemently ruthless, e.g. the hashtags #famewhoreTom, #hiddlestunt, and #tiddlebanging. Indeed, a number of his fans (known as Hiddlestoners) quickly became “anti-fans,” with Swift being the “cause for their dislike” of Hiddleston (Gray 2003). “Turning points” for these anti-fans included 1) photos of Tom and Taylor walking on an English beach alongside his mother, sister, and young niece, 2) his wearing an “I <3 TS” tank top at Taylor’s 4th of July party, and 3) his cringe worthy post-breakup *GQ* interview published in February of 2017.

This paper will offer an in-depth analysis of the fan performativity and *intrafandom* hate (Hills 2012; Jones 2016; Stanfill 2013; Stein forthcoming 2018) that manifested on various Facebook groups and Tumblr blogs dedicated to the actor. While there are fans who have used their social media to distinguish themselves from the anti-fans, stating they will remain loyal to his work no matter who he dates, I will argue that nearly two years later, particularly since the release of Swift’s latest album, *Reputation*, Hiddleston’s name remains pejoratively linked to hers, thereby proving the impact this short-lived romance had upon both his fandom and status as an Internet Boyfriend.

**Kirsty Worrow (Shrewsbury College, UK) - “He’s a friend from work”: Reimagining celebrity relationships as Real Person Headcanons**

In *Thor* (Branagh, 2011) Chris Hemsworth and Tom Hiddleston took on the iconic Marvel roles of Thor and Loki, resulting in much fan adoration. Their subsequent outings together in *Avengers Assemble* (Whedon, 2012) and *Thor: The Dark World* (Taylor, 2013) were supplemented by paired media appearances. Given the accessibility of such content across social media, fans have engaged in the re-reading of this homosocial friendship as a slash ship. Using content isolated from promotional media paratexts, fans have engaged in
reimagining reality to support and illustrate headcanon RP narratives, extending into fan art and fan fiction. In 2017, the Hiddlesworth ship was disrupted by the introduction of another RP character: Taika Waititi, the director of Thor Ragnarok.

The paratextual narrative of this instalment of the MCU was anchored on the need to reinvigorate the franchise, and both the film’s lead and its director were often together in press. Some of the fan responses to their apparent bromance has been to designate it as a new ship, effectively recasting Hiddleston as a jilted lover, using isolated elements of their real-world interactions as evidence of disharmony. With reference to the works of Richard Dyer (1987, 2006), Graeme Turner (2014), Melanie Piper (2015) and Milena Popova (2017) and drawing on small-scale qualitative digital ethnographic research, this paper will seek to interrogate the re-interpretation of celebrity relationships consistent with existing fan-generated narratives and will ask what pleasure such practices hold.

**Agata Łuksza (University of Warsaw, Poland) - The History of Celebrity Fans: International Theatre Stars in Nineteenth-Century Warsaw and Their Reception**

Travelling – both within one’s country and abroad – was one of the most crucial aspects of the acting career in the nineteenth century. In my paper I will focus on guest performances of “transnational” theatre superstars of that time. In order to see famous thespians on the stage, spectators – like today – overpaid for tickets and suffered standing in long lines to the box office. Even though Warsaw was considered a peripheral city comparing to London, Vienna or Paris, it did attract multiple international theatre celebrities including such big stars as Ira Aldridge (1863), a black American who made a tremendous career in Europe by playing in Shakespearean works, especially in Otello (e.g. Kujawińska-Courteney 2009, Lindfors 2007), and Sarah Bernhardt (1882, 1892, 1909), the “Divine Sarah”, a French scandalous actress who embodied the anxieties of fin-de-siècle by creating the image of neurotic and emancipated femininity (e.g. Salmon 1984; Ślawińska and Stykowa 1983). What were the political and economic dimensions of Aldridge’s and Bernhardt’s performances in Warsaw? How did Warsaw audience receive both stars, especially regarding gender and race issues: did they have their own fans in Warsaw? If so, how can we describe their fan practices?

The research is part of a broader project concerning practices, experiences and representations of nineteenth-century theatre audiences in Polish lands, with a special emphasis on the most engaged spectators, whom I propose to call ‘theatre fans’. The idea of the project is to bring closer together the perspectives of theatre history studies and fan studies in order to reconstruct fans history and revise our understanding of nineteenth-century theatre culture.

**Panel C2: Theatre & Fandom**

**Kirsty Sedgman (University of Bristol, UK) - This Beloved Theatre of Ours: Regional vs. London Ownership in Bristol Old Vic**

What does it mean to be a fan of a theatre building? This presentation addresses that question by drawing on a research project into Bristol’s Theatre Royal, which in 2016 celebrated its 250th anniversary as the longest-running theatre in Europe. The theatre was
saved from the brink of closure in the 1940s by Herbert Farjeon, a London playwright who stumbled on the theatre by chance on a trip to Bristol. Farjeon’s decade-long national campaign aimed to ‘awaken’ Bristol citizens to their ‘responsibility’ as the keepers of this historically-significant theatre. And awaken responsibility he did. When the theatre finally reopened in 1946 it was as Bristol Old Vic, a joint venture between the London Old Vic and the newly-formed Arts Council of Great Britain. This London-based involvement was balanced by the investment of a number of local businessmen, as well as by the fervent support of a newly-constituted Theatre Club. Having at its peak enrolled over 1,300 members – double the capacity of the theatre itself – the Bristol Old Vic Theatre Club was one of the most significant arts engagement schemes of its time. And yet relationships between the Club and the theatre did not always run smoothly.

My British Academy-funded research project has explored the evolution of these relationships between the theatre and its most deeply-invested audiences over the past seventy years. Combining archival research into past theatregoers with an empirical study of audiences today, I have identified ongoing tensions between the ‘local interests’ of Bristol theatregoers and the aesthetic preferences of London producers. This presentation explores what it means to ‘support’ a theatre as part of a fan club. Who gets to decide what kinds of experience are valid? And how are power dynamics navigated between audiences and producers when the object of fandom is a beloved local building? This presentation concludes by considering what the study of theatre fans can add to our understanding of ‘ownership’.

Megan Vaughan (Royal Holloway, UK) - Fan Theatre Criticism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: The Audacious Olivia Truman

When Olivia Truman first saw Herbert Beerbohm Tree perform, playing the role of Mark Antony in *Julius Caesar*, it was 1900, she was twelve years old, and she had, as she would later write to her idol, ‘never loved so passionately before’. Quickly becoming a Tree ‘fanatic’, Olivia began a correspondence with the prominent actor and theatre manager that would last until his death, 17 years later. She met him many times (properly chaperoned on his insistence), and they grew to be good friends, even as he gently counselled her to transfer her ‘great-hearted devotion’ to someone more appropriate. Olivia demonstrated many of the practices and behaviours we now recognise as present in fan culture, such as a keen wish to befriend those who knew Tree, a sense that injustices he suffered affected her too, and a voracious energy for speculative storytelling and cultural critique. In cataloguing her responses to Tree’s shows, Olivia’s letters and critical essays balance fanish fawning with astute critique, and she often agonised about whether sending these to Tree might risk breaking their ‘subtle bond of sympathy’. She was, however, much less worried about challenging the professional critics of the day, with Clement Scott facing a barrage of angry letters after he dared suggest that Tree’s 1902 production of *The Eternal City* was ‘not well acted’.

This paper contrasts the fannish criticisms of Olivia Truman with ‘official’ newspaper reviews and contemporary blog posts, presenting criticisms like Olivia’s as a form of fan activity that can destabilise the discourses of dominant ‘highbrow’ culture. It draws upon my wider research into the ‘outsider’ voices of theatre criticism, from anonymous pamphleteers in the seventeenth century to the theatre bloggers of the last fifteen years, which asks what current understandings of participatory culture can tell us about the past.
Owen G. Parry (Goldsmiths and Central Saint Martins.) - Slash Performance: Homo-Domestic Fictioning as Queer Myth-odology

This article develops the concept of Slash Performance following slash fiction – a genre of fanfiction based around the speculative or yet-to-be-proven romantic or domestic relationship between usually same-sex characters in a source text or between celebrities in real person fiction (RPF). Using examples of my own performance art practice – including my Fan Riot project, work with the Larry Stylinson Fandom, and examples of intimate artistic collaborations I will stage Slash as a viable method for queering relations across theatre and performance histories and practices.

By shifting the focus beyond neoliberal participations including the potentially contrived and opposing concepts of ‘conviviality’ (Nicholas Bourriaud) or ‘antagonism’ (Claire Bishop) to account instead for the romantic/erotic relations across performance histories, or rather the possibility of such relations when imagined (or proven to be real) by the adoring fan. As a predominantly female authored fan genre based on the construction of domestic boy-on-boy narratives, I will argue that while much Slash Performance appears to uphold norms a la homonormativity, it nevertheless opens opportunities to contest the homonormative gay agenda and categories of queerness “by resignifying the terms of violation against their violating aims” (Judith Butler). This paper will then open out into a Slash Performance Fiction in order to demonstrate how Slash Performance can be applied by others in the field.

Ruth Foulis (Glasgow School of Art, UK) - “I Wanna be in the Room Where it Happens.” Fandom and Celebrity in Popular Contemporary Theatre Productions Hamilton: An American Musical and Harry Potter and the Cursed Child

With thriving internet fandom, media texts live many lives beyond their initial release as books, films, TV shows, comics, etc. Access to these texts is usually fairly universal, especially with the ease of downloading content legally/illegally online. Theatre however poses a more difficult question of access. To be “in the room where it happened” and see the immensely popular Lin-Manuel Miranda musical Hamilton required proximity to New York City’s Broadway, the funds for a ticket and some serious patience in the year-long waiting list. Potterheads keen to see The Cursed Child had to be able to get to London’s West End, if they had managed to get an expensive ticket in the extremely long online queue. Complications in access to a text bring about issues of class, but also give fans a wider opportunity for interpretation when the access they do have is to a companion text like an original cast soundtrack or a bound edition of the script.

Theatre is an ephemeral experience. A performance can be argued to be a reproduction of an original text, but in the fandom of theatre texts like Hamilton and The Cursed Child a great amount of value is placed on ‘the original.’ Celebrity and fandom intersect here as original Broadway or West End casts are seen as not just the original but the best. Theatre is a visual experience: we talk about going to ‘see’ a play. However much of a fan’s access to popular theatre texts will be through a companion text. When taking out the visual and being left with the aural or written form, fans fill in the gaps with their creativity. The opportunity to be “in the room” becomes a kind of fan pilgrimage. This excitement is made all the more electric if the fan gets to experience the performance by the original and ‘best’ cast. I will examine the complexities of theatre fandom looking at access to texts, the celebrity of original casts, and fan pilgrimages.
Panel C3: Fan Activism and Social Engagement

Tom Phillips (University of East Anglia, UK) - “Piledrive a Fascist”: Fan Performance, Activism, and Textual Boundaries

Pro-Wrestling: EVE is a British wrestling organization that features only women’s matches on its shows, and in 2017 experienced a surge of popularity in part due to its (apparent) similarity with popular Netflix series GLOW (2017-). Yet the abundant mainstream press attention given to EVE, while making reference to GLOW, largely seemed to focus on the organization’s feminist politics and anti-right wing activist discourses. Latching onto EVE’s mantras of “Fight like a girl” and “Piledrive a fascist”, media coverage highlighted the way that, in keeping with the ‘feminist zeitgeist’ (Valenti 2014) of contemporary culture, the company uses wrestling as a platform and training ground for activist practice for wrestlers and fans alike.

The world of wrestling, and its inherent tensions between concepts of “real” and “fake”, naturally lends itself to a discussion of fan performativity, something that Sam Ford adeptly captures in his essay in 2016’s Seeing Fans. Yet wrestling’s traditional co-performance between fan and wrestler is complicated by EVE’s dual address: textually as wrestling show with all the prerequisite heroes and villains, and extra-textually as feminist rhetoric. For EVE fans, there is an expectation to cheer, boo, and chant as typically required of a wrestling audience, while also understanding that EVE frames women’s wrestling as just one part of a broader political agenda concerned with social justice and tackling inequality.

This paper begins to explore this complicated relationship between fan and text, reality and fakery, in an ethnographic account of EVE’s performance space. The role of fans in contributing to the wrestling show is discussed, in an attempt to understand the boundaries placed between moments of knowing fan performance, and (and appreciation of) EVE’s extra-textual political potential.

Leandro Augusto Borges Lima (King’s College London, UK) - Videogames and Fan-activism: Why are Gamers Not There Yet?

Fans use of their object of fannish desire to spread political messages or carry on activist activities is a topic widely studied by academia (Jenkins et al. 2016; Hinck 2011; Kligler-Vilenchik 2016; Sandvoss 2013). However, videogames, despite its popularity and penetration is curiously absent of most analysis of “fannish civics” (Kligler-Vilenchik, 2016). Surely, there are many studies within videogame’s scholarship dealing with other aspects of the political, such as queer politics (Shaw 2014) and identity/race (Leonard 2006). In comparison with fan studies, few videogame studies scholars tackle activist practices stemming from videogames (Goullart et al 2015, Lima 2017). It does not seem, however, to be a problem of academic interest but rather a lack of cases to study. Unlike fans and fandoms, gamers and videogames seem distant from the realm of activism with the same vigour as Harry Potter Alliance’s (HPA) campaigns (Hincke 2012, Kligler-Vilenchik 2016).

This paper discusses this near-absence of “gamers activism” in the current scenario of a highly politicized popular culture. Taking into account Jenkins et al (2016) comprehensive study of fan-activism among youth, I hypothesize two main reasons as to why gamers, despite most of them also being fans, are not yet on par with initiatives like HPA: 1) the difficulty in videogames to be perceived as a “serious” medium while retaining its entertainment character; 2) the comfortable dominant, hegemonic position of “the gamer” stereotype – white, male, young and heterosexual players -, unwilling to question
social injustice as they often challenge their own privilege. The paper concludes discussing why both sex, sexuality and gender, are the likeliest candidates for an activist revolution within videogames culture, having GamerGate as an important context where a germ of videogame-activism rose.

**Joanna Kucharska (Jagiellonian University, Poland) - S(J)W: New Star Wars Canon, Social Engagement, Representation, and the Hashtag Wars**

The purpose of the paper is to examine the social engagement between producers and content creators of the Star Wars franchise with fans and fan-content creators and prosumers actively participating in Twitter hashtag spaces. Since the acquisition of Star Wars by Disney, Lucasfilm and its partners’ official communication promotes representation (especially female empowerment), transmediality, and coherent storytelling. The Star Wars story group is put forward to oversee the interconnectedness of the official content across media. New stories are promoted as not only exploring new corners of the universe, but also as bringing previously unseen representation to the forefront, with films and books headlined by women and characters of colour.

At the same time, a vocal audience of prosumers have been actively engaged in campaigns for representation and intersectionality. Engaged fans creating own content, like Star Wars-oriented podcasts and blogs, some of whom have professional relationships with Lucasfilm and Disney, have been holding the companies accountable for their promises regarding storytelling and representation. Hashtags like #Where’sRey, #GayTheFourth, #MynockMonday, #SWisAGirlThingToo, and #SWRepMatters have been both examining the strides made by the saga’s producers, and criticising the missteps.

This paper sets out to examine the relationship between the producers and active fans and fan content producers and how the grassroots hashtags interact with the official promotional narrative. In particular, which of fandom’s initiatives are embraced by the official accounts and which are silently ignored, and how it functions against the larger narrative of intersectionality and representation in the new era of Star Wars expanded universe.

**Emily E. Roach (University of York, UK) - This Paper is Problematic: The Impact of Changing Platforms on Fandom Content**

This paper explores the challenges of changing internet platforms, the fall of the journals (LiveJournal, InsaneJournal and Dreamwidth) and the rise of newer fandom platforms such as Wattpad, Twitter, and Tumblr. The paper considers a ‘new wave’ of discourse around ‘problematic’ fanfiction and fanart, the toxicity of a vitriolic fandom culture and the problems with linking shipping to activism. Exploring tinhats and antis, ship wars, charitable drives linked with popular ships, the impact of new platforms on old fandoms and the tensions which arise when shipping is couched as activism. I seek to suggest that the impact of an inextricable linkage between social justice activism and fandom content actually sanitisises works produced within those spaces, and question the extent to which the ‘new wave’ of ‘your fave is problematic’ discourse and a trend towards socially conscious fanworks is really ‘new’ at all.

*Panel D1: Fandom, Place & National Identity*
William McCarthy (University of Adelaide, Australia) - Meet Me Down on Main Street: Disneyland as Place Attachment for Southern Californians

A place is a construct with social and cultural meanings for individuals and groups (Gieryn, 2000; Lefebvre, 1991) that can create subjective and emotional attachment (Creswell, 2015). Tuan (1974) refers to this attachment as topophilia, or love of place. Disneyland is often described as inauthentic placelessness (Cresswell, 2015; Relph, 1976), a non-place (Augé, 1995) and hyperreal simulacrum (Baudrillard, 1993; Eco, 1986).

However, places of attachment can range from planets, continents, countries, islands, towns, neighborhoods, streets, buildings and specific rooms to spiritual and imaginary locations (Scannell & Gifford, 2014). Place-making can be constructed through the association of social activities to a place (Wilken & Goggin, 2012) with length of residency often a predictor of place attachment (Lewicka, 2014). When daily routines become focused on a particular location, a “place-ballet” (Seamon, 1980) evokes a sense of belonging in that place within the rhythm of everyday life. With over one million Disneyland annual passholders, weekly fan events (Gay Days, Bats Day, Lolita Day, Gumball Rally, swing dancing, etc.), and meets (MiceChat, social clubs, etc.), and a continuous operating history since 1955, this paper explores Disneyland as place attachment for Southern Californians. Applying Scannell and Gifford’s (2010) three psychological processes of place attachment, Disneyland fans as individuals and groups are analyzed for affect (emotional bond), cognition (identity) and behavior (action and participation) within the park’s social and physical features. Disneyland fans display practices different from other media fandoms because their affective object is a physical place imbued and intertwined with 95 years of popular Disney texts.

Mixed methods are used with an emphasis on qualitative tools including interviews with event and meet organizers, and two months of participant observation fieldwork at Disneyland. An online survey of over 700 Disneyland fans in Southern California provides quantitative data to nest within the qualitative framework for statistical and demographic analysis.


This paper focuses on the “mnemonic imagination” (Keightley and Pickering 2012) within fan practices, responding to the question of whether it is “possible to be a fan of a destination?” (Linden and Linden 2017:110). As Rebecca Williams has argued, we need a greater understanding of “what places can do to visitors who may… respond strongly to a particular place… What confluence of affective, emotional and experiential elements may cause them to become fans of that site…?” (2018: 104). How, then, might people become fans of specific locations, via the operations of “mnemonic imagination”? Innovative work has begun to explore the participatory cultures that form around architectural icons (Garduno Freeman 2018), and I will focus on the National Theatre, London: an icon of brutalist architecture which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2013.

Emergent work on theatre fandom (Heim 2016; Sedgman 2017) has begun to explore how “fandom studies requires exploration of cycles of engagement and critique over time, at multiple levels. This, for theatre professionals-as-fans [and fan audiences – MH], should include theatrical and historical place” (Tulloch 2018: 426). And an iconic venue such as the National Theatre represents one such place, despite critic Matt Trueman
arguing that it’s “very hard to be a fan of a building …You can get to know an artist or a company, in a way you can’t a venue” (2016). Yet iconic buildings have mediated histories comprising “multiple layers” of fan engagement (Linden and Linden 2017: 113). Exploring fan audiences’ mnemonic imaginations via published and social media accounts, this paper will address how fans of an iconic theatrical building/venue traverse multiple productions and fan objects in their gradual construction of repertoires of ‘theatre fandom’.

Lincoln Geraghty (Univesity of Portsmouth, UK) - Rewards, Raids and Regionals: The Online and Offline Fan Cultures of Pokémon Go

The mobile gaming app Pokémon Go made worldwide headlines in the press during the summer of 2016; journalists and academics alike discussed the phenomenal impact the game had on fans, video gaming, augmented reality technology and local communities around the world. As the one year anniversary came and went this past summer news reports still doubted the game’s resilience; critics suggested that game developer Niantic did little to capitalise on its initial popularity or develop the game in any meaningful way. This is despite the game continuing to reap daily income and new downloads: in February 2018 it became the fastest game to reach $1billion in profits. To celebrate the game’s first birthday and reward loyal fans Niantic introduced the missing “legendary” pokémon, developed new methods of gym battling and created a dynamic weather system so the game respond to real time weather patterns. All of this was to encourage players to get out, get walking and catch more pokémon. There is still a devoted fan community who continue to play Pokémon Go every day and it is those fans who are expecting much from recent additions to the game metadata.

This paper will focus on those fans that have stuck with the game despite press reports to the contrary, discuss how anticipation and trepidation have come to epitomise Pokémon Go fandom and examine the ways in which online and offline talk about potential and future updates have fuelled shared enthusiasm as fans wait for Niantic to catch up with increasingly high expectations. Drawing from research on fan tourism, gaming culture and fan communities I argue that what constitutes the game now has changed dramatically since its first and phenomenal release: it is characterised more by what happens between fans as they play than it is by what occurs in game. The fan culture that quickly evolved alongside but separate to the game’s development is an example of how social media and mobile technology have transformed traditional modes and practices of fandom.

Stephanie Garrison (University of Aberdeen, UK) - Beyond Fandom: Outlander Facebook Fan Groups and the Guardianship of an Imagined Scotland

With the release of the novel Outlander (1991) by American author Diana Gabaldon and the subsequent television series in 2014, Scotland has experienced an upsurge in fan tourism which is being dubbed the Outlander-effect. With this exponential rise in tourism, media outlets and heritage agencies have reported damages to Scottish heritage sites which they attribute to the influx of Outlander fans. This recent development is a troubling aspect of Outlander fan reputation in the media.

While fan communities have been studied at length (Jenkins, 2012; Sullivan, 2012), especially in regard to fan/media relationships (Couldry, 2012), little research has been conducted pertaining to the role of Facebook fan groups and tourism. This gap prevents us from fully engaging with the multi-faceted role of fan groups online, especially as fan/media relationships have progressively improved in the 21st century. This paper
examines the relationship between an online Outlander Facebook fan community (OutlandishUK) and tourism to Scotland. Drawing from ongoing ethnographic and netnographic research methods, I examine how this Outlander fan community uses social media platforms to promote proper care of sites by fellow Outlander fans. It is from this ongoing research that I suggest my particular online community goes beyond the role of being a passively consuming Outlander fan group and instead, embraces the role of being a proactive online imagined community that engages fluidly with members of the media. Through the fandom community, Outlandish UK not only advocates Outlander and their own fan base but, also act as guardians of Scottish heritage, patrons of Scottish arts, and facilitates tourism to Scotland.

Panel D2: Fandom, Distinction and Hierarchy

Simon Hobbs (University of Portsmouth, UK) - From ‘Gore-Object’ to ‘Art-Object’ to… No Object: Exploitation Cinema after DVD

In 2005, Railford Guins noted that the remediation of lowbrow horror films onto DVD repaired their reputations, changing them from ‘gore-objects’ to ‘art-objects’ (2005, p.17). This process of renewal – whereby supplementary content “provides an opportunity to elevate film to the status of high art” (Klinger, 2006, p.66) – has continued to govern the ways these films accumulate cultural value. This paper will examine this trend by looking at the practices of Arrow Video – a widely celebrated exploitation film distributor operating in both the UK and America. Through detailed paratextual analysis of their often elaborate DVD and Blu-ray releases, the paper discusses how the strategies of Arrow Video have successfully appeased their content-hungry demographic while refashioning the reputation of their ‘trashy’ properties.

After outlining how disc-based formats can prompt an ‘artifaction’ of these lowbrow products, this paper will examine the significant impact streaming has had on these important processes of restoration. As will be noted, it is the paratextual additions – rather than the primary text itself – that affords these films an elevated status. Of course, streamable content is stripped of these embellishments, as bespoke packaging and exclusive documentaries are jettisoned in favour of easy, seamless access. It is this lack of materiality coupled with the deletion of key sources of sub-cultural knowledge that suggests significant changes will occur to the relationship these products share with their fanbase, and the ways they acquire cultural value. By paratextually examining Arrow Video’s properties on streaming service Shudder, this paper begins to explore how the digitalisation of home video is potentially removing the channels in which lowbrow cinema has achieved some measure of cultural legitimacy.

Isabella McNeill (Monash University, Australia) – “These Violent Delights have Violent ends”: Analysing Westworld’s ‘theorising culture'

Is there a right and a wrong way to watch television? This was the question at the forefront of a 2016 online debate between various television critics and viewers of the HBO series Westworld (2016–present). The series became one of the most talked about shows of the year for the way so many viewers enjoyed picking it a part, trying on new ways to explain its mazes and mysteries, and sometimes solving those mysteries before the show could reveal its own answers. But as Westworld deconstruction became more and more of a presence
within regular weekly recaps and reviews (in print and podcast form) and on social media platforms like Reddit, some television critics expressed a personal disenchantment with the way fans and fellow critics were choosing to engage. This paper considers the value in such an approach to television watching. Labelling it theorising culture, I describe the phenomenon as the emergence as a wide-spread community of television viewers and critics who cultivate a level of engagement with a televisual text where they analytically consider the content presented thus far on a week-by-week basis. In doing so, these avid viewers consider where the series may go – narratively and tonally – and most importantly, what the series stands to represent. It is not merely about promoting a ‘guessing game’ of what will happen next in a series, but rather about using the evidence at hand to further delve into the worlds put forward. This paper explores how this theorising culture reimagines a type of post-viewing engagement by creating new platforms for and models of what contemporary television criticism looks like. In doing so, this transformation of an activity previously reserved for dedicated fandoms – the prophesising of future plotlines (as was commonly seen for Twin Peaks and Lost) – is becoming the norm in professional TV reviews illustrating a dramatic change in larger television culture.

María-José Establés (Pompeu Fabra University, Spain) & Mar Guerrero-Pico (Pompeu Fabra University, Spain) - “Strategic Fandom” and “Fan-personation”: Producers’ Hegemony and Pre-emptive Control Mechanisms Within Fan Spaces

Relations between fans and media producers are often complex and, at times, controversial (Zubernis & Larsen, 2012). The "free" and official ancillary contents of the transmedia storytelling systems (Jenkins, 2006, Scott, 2009, 2010) offer fans an assortment of canonical media texts that encourage their engagement while at the same time work as a control tool for producers to weigh up the commercial performance of said content. Specifically, there are two ways of address the transmedia expansion of narrative world according to its design: whether it is planned from the beginning (strategic transmedia expansion), or if it unfolds as a reaction to diverse industry inputs (tactic transmedia expansion) (Scolari, Jiménez & Guerrero, 2012, Scolari, Guerrero-Pico & Establés, forthcoming). In this sense, there is a increasing amount of narrative worlds being developed with a strategic vision in which the management of hypothetical fans arises as one of the key questions to be addressed by producers. As part of this growing trend of strategic transmedia expansions, we present the idea of "strategic fandom", as an emerging phenomenon of pre-emptive organisation and control of fan activity around transmedia narrative worlds.

Thus, drawing on the Gramscian theory of cultural hegemony (Martín-Barbero, 1987), media producers are seen as elite groups that build alliances to keep the upper-hand of production processes within cultural industries. In this way, ordinary people, or in this case, fan communities, receive what they want, that is, their objects of fandom in exchange of a certain interaction with that elite. Particularly, if the interaction is driven by the elite it will be top-bottom through brandon strategies (Guchwan, 2012) or if, conversely, it comes from fan content that promote the narrative world, it will be bottom-up through fanadvertising (Lozano-Delmar, Ramos-Serrano & Hernández-Santaolalla, 2013).

Anchored in this commercial framework, we suggest that “strategic fandom” pre-emptively enables producers’ fanagement (Hills, 2012) beyond co-optation up to the point of “fanpersonating” fan activity (e.g., pretending to be a fan account with no visible links to producers’ ownership). Therefore, fandom is appropriated by producers, who effectively create a fandom before fans do, in order to monitor future fan response and production
and so “not losing control of the narrative world” (El Cañonazo Transmedia, n.d.) . For this, we propose an analysis of the control strategies and mechanisms developed by some production companies exemplary of both "strategic fandom" and "fan-personation" practices.

Panel D3: Global Fandom

Ekky Imanjaya (University of East Anglia, UK) - Si Unyil, Cult Media, and Generation of the 1980s

In Indonesia, during the dictatorship of New Order, there was no TV show more popular than Panggung Boneka Si Unyil (Si Unyil, the Puppet Show) (1981-1993) (Kitley 1999, 153). Back then, every Sunday morning, most of the children in Indonesia sat in their own houses, or in neighbors’ houses and district offices, to watch the show on TVRI, and later memorized the songs, imitated the dialogs, and discussed the stories. It became a weekly ritual for kids (Imanda 2004, 51). The show, in the context of Indonesian fandom, can be considered as “Mass Cult” (Grant 1991, 123) or “Cult Blockbusters” (Mathijs & Sexton 2011, 63-66). It is important to note that, more than just a puppet show, Si Unyil became a propaganda vehicle for Indonesia’s New Order to maintain Suharto’s power by inserting messages of developmentalism of New Order, from birth control to “the Armed Force goes to villages” project (Kitley 99, 129, 141).

However, Si Unyil fans—children of the 1980s turned adults in the 1990s and 2000s—as Fiske puts it, “fiercely discriminate” how Si Unyil is actively remembered and celebrated. Even after 25 years since the last episode was on air, the fans still produced their own texts. For examples, the show’s title and its characters become brand’s names of various products (from bread to toothpastes) and even symbol of national identity. Paradoxically, instead of being influenced by New Order’s propaganda, the fans became one of the significant factors that successfully made President Suharto to stepdown in 1998.

The paper will look at the interplay of childhood nostalgia, collective memory shared within the 1980s generation, and fans productivity.

Yao Zhao (University of Leeds, UK) and Anna Madill (University of Leeds, UK) - What Are the Differences Between Chinese and English-speaking Yaoi fans?

Yaoi or BL (Boys’ Love) is a genre of Japanese subculture presenting in comics, videogames, novels and fan arts which describe the fantasy erotic and romantic relationships between males. This is a female-oriented subculture which originated in the early 1970s spread globally, especially during the 1990s. In contemporary China there is a huge population of Yaoi consumers and producers with an inestimable number of Yaoi novels serialized online and many other kinds of Yaoi material uploaded to the internet. However, Yaoi culture and fans face much prejudice in China, even compared to Yaoi as it has been received and produced in the West. An aim of our study of Yaoi culture in China, was to determine the demographics of the Chinese fan-base and to compare this to the demographics of the Anglophone fan-base. Hence, this presentation will report the comparisons of demographic information from our BL Fandom survey data of Sinophone and Anglophone Yaoi fans. We collected 1527 Chinese and 1700 Anglophone survey responses from almost identical surveys in Chinese and in English over a 3 year period from 2014-2017. Demographic data included gender (male, female, other), age, sexual
orientation, occupation, strength of fandom identification, acceptance of male/male and female/female relationships in real life, and consumption of non-BL pornographic materials. Results suggested that compared to Anglophone fans, Chinese fans identified less strongly as a BL fan, were less accepting of non-heterosexual relationships in real life, and consumed less non-BL pornography. These finding are commensurate with the relative social conservativism of Chinese culture, including the greater regulation and criticism of Yaoi culture and self-uploaded on-line material. We are still exploring our data and expect to report additional findings during the presentation.

Natalia Samutina (National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia) - Participatory Cultures, Transcultural Flows and Fans as Cultural Agents: A Case of a Fan-produced Manga Publishing House in Russia

The general perspective of the presentation and of this research is heavily influenced by Matt Hills’ work on transcultural fandoms, especially by his article on anime fandoms as economic agents (Matt Hills. Transnational cult and/as neoliberalism: the liminal economies of anime fansubbers. Journal of Transnational Cinemas. Volume 8, 2017 - Issue 1.). I also draw upon a contemporary tradition of “transcultural fandom” research (M.Ito, B.Chin, L.Morimoto, etc.) that highlights the ability of fan cultures and participatory cultures to cross national and cultural borders on their own terms and to influence the development of global popular culture within local contexts. The last thing is especially significant in such local contexts as Russia, where participatory cultures and “official” cultures are still separated by a well-guarded border of elite tastes, cultural closure and neoconservative values, provoking cross-generational conflicts and alienation. I would argue that in such cultural landscapes, where even commercial values for many reasons are not sufficient for the promotion of such zones of popular culture as, for example, Japanese anime and manga, participatory cultures can become the main force of local transcultural development, and fan cultures subsequently become its core and driving force.

The example for the presentation comes from my research on the reading activities of the Russian manga readers and on the general landscape of manga in the Russian context – which landscape is mostly created and defined by manga and anime fans and their prolific transcultural activities. Thanks to them manga has found ways into the reading of much broader young generations in Russia – into the informed active reading with some help from participatory communities. In the current situation manga fans became to a significant extent (trans)cultural experts, mediators between cultural contexts, passionate acting forces on a (comparatively small) Russian legal manga publishing market. I will demonstrate this role of fans on the example of the work of one successful manga publishing house originated in fan culture and driven by fan values. It can boast with a vivid supportive fan community and a secret club of nearly 5 thousand fans, who directly influence the publishers’ choices and serve as a “think tank” for the publishers’ decision-making process. I think this example can broad our understanding of fan practices, their role in local economies and transcultural activities, and it is also very important for the understanding of cultural roles and conflicts fans can be involved with in the local subdivisions of global transcultural flows.

Courtney McLaren (Simon Fraser University, Canada) - Hybridized K-Pop in the Age of Social Media: A Case Study of BTS’ Global Popularity
K-Pop is seeing a new moment of history making as chanting fans could be heard through
television and computer screens last November, cheering on seven-member boy group
BTS as they performed their recent megahit DNA live at the 2017 American Music Awards.
BTS’ appearance in America evokes past attempts by first wave K-Pop idols in entering the
U.S. market, and raises many questions about transnational flows of culture and fandom in
an age of social media. Current theory surrounding K-Pop and the Korean wave argues the
concept of hybridization, or a mix of global-local-global that borrows heavily from dominant
Western/American popular culture while infusing stylistic local Korean culture packaged for
global consumption. BTS’ popularity on the global stage, particularly in the U.S., has been a
coveted goal of the K-Pop industry since the mid-2000s and presents a unique opportunity
to explore the intersection of industry, social media, and fandom in an age of hybridization.
This paper first undertakes a historical exploration of early attempts of the K-Pop industry to
break into the American music market, with particular focus on first-generation idols BoA,
Rain, Girl’s Generation, and Wonder Girls. Through a case study, this paper then looks at
how BTS compares and diverges from these attempts and discusses how social media has
been adopted by both fandom and industry to create a contested, unequal relationship in
the promotion and circulation of BTS’ music and content. Through this contested dynamic
of globalized production processes and fan affect and devotion, it is argued that while BTS
is a continuing example of hybridized K-Pop, they represent a moment of authenticity that
departs from current trends and resonates with millions of fans, appropriately named
ARMY, across the globe.

Panel E1: Fandom, Participatory Culture and Politics

Eleonora Benecchi (Università della Svizzera italiana) and Colin Porlezza
(University of Zurich) - How Trump became Voldemort: Harry Potter References
in the Coverage of the US Presidential Election

This study explores how journalists and political fandoms (Parik, 2012; Sandvoss, 2013,
2014) used the contents and characters from Harry Potter in connection to the US
presidential election, focusing on the comparison of Trump to Lord Voldemort. We analyze
the discursive structure (Van Dijk, 1980) of both tweets and news reporting that took up on
this specific pop-cultural representation, which helped to “make sense of Trump’s world”
(Nicholson, 2017). Our analysis of the fan-induced Harry Potter narrative in a political
context supports the theory that “our relationships to popular culture shapes our political
identities in profound ways” (Jenkins, 2012) and that pop-culture is “one of the sites where
the struggle for and against a culture of the powerful is engaged” (Hall, 1981, p. 239),
particularly as journalism itself is also “a part of popular culture” (Dahlgren, 1992, p. 18).

We collected 17'000 tweets through social scraping (Marres & Weltwrede, 2013),
choosing Twitter because the Trump/Voldemort comparison developed on this platform.
Besides establishing a Twitter-timeline we also performed a discourse analysis of the tweets
in order to identify main themes and actors. We discovered that, although the
Trump/Voldemort comparison was first mentioned on TV, celebrities and fans drove the
pop-culturally enriched discourse back into the election reporting. To substantiate these
findings, we analyzed the discursive structure of articles published by news media such as
The New York Times, Washington Post, The Guardian, and by two online pure players,
This study shows how boundaries between political journalism, fan communities and celebrities are becoming porous in a networked media ecosystem (Carlson & Lewis, 2015), and how, in turn, a narrative universe like Harry Potter can become politicized during a Presidential Campaign (Brough & Shresthova, 2012). In this context, fantasy can become a tool for reporting as well as a trigger for political activism.

Katherine Larsen (George Washington University, USA) - Whose Wingnuts Are They?: Co-Opting the Rhetorics of Fandom in the Political Sphere

On January 2, 2016, armed militants led by Ammon Bundy (son of Cliven Bundy who had previously been involved in a standoff with federal authorities over a dispute over grazing rights in Nevada) occupied the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Harney County Oregon to protest the prison sentences of Dwight and Steven Hammond, ranchers convicted of arson for torching more than 100 acres of federal land, allegedly to cover up poaching. The occupation lasted for approximately six weeks, with the media depicting the occupiers as alt-right adherents and “Woodstock Wingnuts” (Bird, 2016). On January 5, 2016 Colin Meloy, the lead singer of the Oregon based band The Decemberists posted on Twitter: “Can’t wait to see all the erotic fanfic inspired by the #bundymilitia #MalheurWildlifeRefuge occupation...” That call to arms was answered by a torrent of 140 character fics that, at first blush, seemed to participate in familiar fan fiction tropes. However, a closer look at the posts would seem to indicate that those posting (as well as Meloy himself) understood “fan fiction” only through media accounts of the genre and were parodying/stereotyping fans as much as they were the right wing, flannel clad, gun-toting, conspiracy theorists occupying the wildlife refuge. What initially appeared as a convergence of fan culture with political commentary soon became an invitation to mock right wing extremists, fans, and gay men. While the intersections of fandom and politics have been considered from many angles (Burwell & Boler, 2008); (Sandvoss, 2013); (PBS Idea Channel, 2012); (Jenkins & Carpentier, 2013); (Jenkins, 2014); (Dean, 2017), and the overlaps between the practices of fan culture and political support are tempting to theorize, is it useful to remember that what initially appears as convergence may easily devolve into just another form of fan shaming.

Megan Genovese (University of Pennsylvania, USA) - Resistance Imitating Art: Popular Culture and Protest Signs at the Women’s March on Washington

In articles about the Women’s March of Washington of January 21, 2017, images of the protesters’ signs were regularly used to represent their cause and motives for marching. These signs often referenced popular culture, including memes, music, books, movies, television, and celebrities, but the motives for and outcomes of grassroots invocation of popular culture in political public opinion are undertheorized. Though fans instinctively recognize and exploit the fact that pop culture is fertile with opportunities for political appropriation, this phenomenon has not yet been adequately documented in academic literature. To examine why protesters use the voices of others to declare their opinions and what pop culture says on their behalf, this project surveys nineteen listicles of the ‘best’ signs at the Women’s March on Washington published within a week of the January 21 demonstration. Drawing from both social science and collective memory studies, I theorize public opinion as a collective phenomenon intertwined with the collective experience of entertainment media. I analyze the specific uses of popular culture in protesters’ signs, using a broad definition of popular culture that includes everything from national
iconography to the Cyndi Lauper song “Girls Just Wanna Have Fun.” In addition to an overview of the corpus and the various ways in which protesters remix traditional political discourses with pop culture references, I do a close analysis of the various uses of two specific cultural texts: Harry Potter and Star Wars. These cases show that a single pop culture text is more likely to circulate in political speech when it is employable in multiple ways that are intelligible individually and conjointly. This study suggests how pop culture shapes personal political thought and expression through the translation of fannish affiliation and interpretive practices to politicians, policies, and political ideologies.

Briony Hannell (University of East Anglia, UK) - “I’m a Muslim Girl in a White, Faithless Country. I’m the Biggest Loser of Them All.”: Skam Fandom, Muslim Girlhood, and DIY Citizenship

On April 7th 2017, Norwegian youth broadcaster NRK3 released the trailer for the highly anticipated fourth season of the teen web-drama series Skam (2015 – 2017), revealing that the show’s fourth season would focus on a hijabi Muslim character named Sana Bakkoush (portrayed by practicing Muslim Iman Meskini). After developing an international cult following during its third season and receiving critical acclaim for its progressive examination of issues surrounding youth culture, relationships and sexuality, religion, mental health, and sexual violence, fans’ expectations for the fourth and final season of Skam were particularly high. Set against a broader political backdrop of rising Islamophobia in the West, Sana’s storyline dealt with issues surrounding her faith, Islamophobia, friendships, isolation, and cyberbullying. While Sana’s season was met with mixed reviews by the fandom, it nevertheless provided an outlet for fans to engage in dialogue about what season four revealed about the stakes of Muslim girlhood in this current political moment.

Drawing upon a range of ethnographic data and fan works, this paper explores the reception of Sana by Muslim fans of Skam. This paper examines how fans of the series utilised the skills they have developed as fans to ‘express civic values and perform citizenship’ (van Zoonen 2005) through their fannish responses to Sana’s storyline. Combining the insights of recent research within girls’ studies on cultural production and DIY citizenship (Chidgey 2014; Harris 2004, 2012) with broader debates within fan studies surrounding the relationship between fandom and civic engagement (Jenkins et al. 2016; Kligler-Vilenchik 2015; Stein 2017), I explore how fannish cultural practices may function not only as personal expressions of cultural creativity for Muslim youth, but as ways of engaging other young people in exchange about social issues, expressing civic values, and developing new forms of solidarity and community (Harris and Roose 2013).

Panel E2: Fashion and Material Culture

Nicolle Lamerichs (Utrecht University, Netherlands) - Star Wars on the Catwalk: Framing Fan Fashion in the Age of Creative Business

The emerging phenomenon of fan fashion is a difficult phenomenon to pin down, since it can take on many forms, from character impersonation to fannish T-shirts. Clothing lines inspired by popular culture are becoming ever more popular and professional, as demonstrated by the designs of Suckers Apparel, or Black Milk, or Primark’s in-house Harry Potter stores. Practices such as cosplay also gradually entered the creative industries as a
form of precarious, fan-driven labor. Today, official cosplays are even launched at a high level in Japan, and increasingly in Western countries.

In general, fan fashion is a sliding-scale between official businesses, and design by and for fans. Within the creative industries, fan fashion is a niche, but one that is steadily growing and in need of attention. By analyzing initiatives such as a haute couture fashion show at San Diego Comic Con (2014), and different Star Wars clothing lines, I combine fan studies and fashion theory, which has not been done before.

Theoretically, I frame fan fashion as an example of how bodies, art and fan identity interlace. The value of this study thus lies in its investigation of practices of self-fashioning (and the enunciative identity as Fiske would say) by fans, and how these are increasingly facilitated by creative business itself, as well as fan entrepreneurs. In this paper, I will draw out a framework to study different forms of fan fashion, ranging from professional clothing lines that brand pop-culture to haute couture produced by designers and fans. I argue that we need to examine the space of the creative business in more detail, where fans and professionals increasingly exchange and create value in a platform economy. Fan fashion serves as one example, but I shall show that the trend towards fan-driven business models and a fan-centric economy is a much larger one.

Ekaterina Kulinicheva (Independent Researcher, Moscow, Russia) - Sneakerheads as Fandom (as Fans) and Participatory Culture

This paper focuses on sneakerheads. I define them as people who collect sneakers and/or knowledge about sport shoes and all the fields connected with them (such as music, sports, subcultures, streetwear culture, counterculture, etc). Fandom of that kind now rests on the periphery of fandom studies, participatory culture studies and even fashion studies. Sneakerheads are very rarely described as fans. But very often they are described simply as conspicuous consumers. This paper will present in-progress research project which aims to develop a new way to see sneakerhead culture. I offer to use a framework of fan studies and participatory culture for exploring and understanding practices of sneaker enthusiasts. I will argue that it helps to understand better what is going on inside this specific culture without stigmatizing it.

In this paper I move between empirical and conceptual approaches to the topic. The main source for the material were interviews with Russian sneakerheads taken by me and other interviews from media dedicated to sneaker culture. This paper review its history, explore culture of sneakers collectors in its fluidity and diversity with all contradiction of its modern state. Practices of sneaker enthusiasts include affective attitude to the object of their fandom and knowledge acquisition. More profound knowledge leads to greater cultural capital within communities as much as size and content of collection. The value of the community’s practices and activities is high. Sneakers itself may be defined as object of fandom (or part of it) and as its material culture.

I will argue that sneakerheads culture could be interpreted as fandom and participatory culture. Or at least as culture which have many attribute of it. It offers us a chance to expand borders of fan studies and in the same time to use productively this frame in the field of fashion studies.

Katriina Heljakka (University of Turku, Finland) - The Snow Must Go On: Locating Toys and Territorial Play Practices in Nordic Star Wars Fandom
In the press release materials related to the first Star Wars film, the motion picture medium is referred to as ‘the most magnificent toy ever invented for grown men’. Again, “something can be played with, if it is toyetic” (Dave Okada in Netflix’s The Toys that Made Us series) and this is what Star Wars has been since its beginning. In this presentation I point out to how adult toy enthusiasts as fans of the Star Wars universe engage actively in various object play practices. Special focus is given to Nordic fans of the epic saga. The main goal of the study is to demonstrate the role of physical playthings such as action figures and the nature of the terrains of play in which adult interaction with these toys takes place. One of the most central object play patterns demonstrated by adult players of Star Wars toys is toy photography. What Godwin refers to as ‘photostories’ and categorises as ‘fannish fiction’ (Godwin, 2015), I have from the beginning of my explorations in adult toy play named as photoplay (e.g. Heljakka, 2012).

Through in-depth interviews, analysis of photoplay shared online, participatory observation at Helsinki-based, Star Wars event Hothcon, and an online survey with Nordic Star Wars fans, the aim is on the one hand, to clarify the role of toys and location-based play in current Star Wars fandom. On the other hand, the goal is to demonstrate how the object interaction of fans of Star Wars may be affected by their physical surroundings with specific weather conditions, such as winter-time snow. The multimethod approach allows the researcher to carry out a thorough analysis of Star Wars fans’ object interactions both online and offline. The results of the study show how it is possible to claim that fandoms may become regionally and culturally nuanced not only in terms of how they are perceived in a specific place, but depending on how they are played with in terms of interaction with toys and based on what the terrains of their playscapes offer e.g. through natural elements, seasonal weather conditions and regional ‘snow-how’.

Lies Lanckman (University of Kent, UK) - “I Hope You Haven’t Many Friends!”: Fan Community and Conflict in the Age of the Movie Magazine

This paper is part of a larger, ongoing research project – called “In Search of Lost Fans” – which started when I examined three months’ worth of fan letters from 1930 movie magazines, and then verified the existence of particular letter writers through census research. Currently, I am working to expand this project to incorporate a sample of such letters published in a range of US movie magazines between 1910 and 1940; this paper, then, aims to present some preliminary conclusions drawn from this wider project.

Unlike the previous case study, which focused heavily on demographic information derived from the census data, this paper is interested primarily in the content of the magazine letters – particularly those letters which do not explicitly discuss the fan object, be that a star or a particular movie. Instead, these remaining letters discuss, firstly, the ways the fans related to the movie magazine itself and, secondly, the ways they related to one another as members of the same, international fan community – whose connections were facilitated (and sometimes complicated) by the material object that is the movie magazine.

This two-fold emphasis enables me to examine a number of different facets of this early, predigital fan community, including the ways in which fans interacted and used the magazine as a physical object – for example through scrapbooking – but also the ways in which they used the magazine to negotiate the nascent internationalism of movie fandom, and the ways in which they managed communication and conflict in a situation where each response was automatically impacted by a delay of at least a month. An examination of these different elements, then, will also enable me to further research particular differences
and similarities between the practices of these early movie fans and those of movie fans online today.

**Panel E3: Rethinking Fan Identity**

**Martin Barker (Aberystwyth University, UK) - What’s Wrong with Lurking?**

What’s Wrong with the Concept of ‘Lurking’?

A great deal has been written, from many different perspectives, about the concept of ‘lurking’ – that is, watching and following other people’s productive fan work around films, TV series, or the like, without contributing. Regularly, lurking is perceived as a lesser activity, or as a halfway point, somehow either inadequate or incomplete. In this presentation I want to query this notion, and thereby the theories which have driven it, drawing on a set of results that have emerged from the 2016-7 International Game of Thrones Audience Project. Using a complex quali-quantitative online questionnaire (quite closely following but evolving from those used in a number of projects, in particular in the Lord of the Rings and Hobbit projects), more than 10,000 responses were gathered from across the world by a team of 41 researchers. Analysis of the responses has allowed me to isolate a quite large group of people who tell us that they do not themselves create fan works of any kinds but who do attend to other people’s productions. Isolating these was part of a process of separating out for comparison 7 distinct kinds of viewers, including of course those who would classically be regarded as ‘fans’. Careful comparison of the wider responses of this group to the other groups of respondents reveals some very surprising differences. This presentation will focus on some of these differentiating features, and what they suggest, theoretically.

**Marianne Gunderson (University of Oslo, Norway) and Sophie Hansal (University of Vienna, Austria) - Affect as an Asset: Towards a Fannish Methodology**

Fan studies is a multifaceted (sub)discipline that developed from widely different fields of research, resulting in a great variety of methodological approaches. A recurring issue in discussions on methodology in fan studies is the tension between the researchers’ attachment to the phenomenon they are studying and the more detached, critical role of a researcher. The double position as both a participant in and observer of the communities that they are researching, has lead to valuable discussions about reflexivity and positionality in fan studies methodologies. Still, there seems to be a common ground for many fan studies researchers that is rarely explicitly stated: a ‘fannish’ approach to the research. This paper asks how the double position as fan and researcher can inform and enrich research by bringing ‘fannish’ practices and sensibilities into research projects. We will discuss how this tension between attachment and detachment to the field influences the research process and examine ethical challenges so-called ‘aca-fans’ face due to their dual positionality. Drawing on affect theory by Sara Ahmed, and reflecting on our own research experiences from an auto-ethnographic perspective, our aim is to show how fannish attachment to the subject(s)-object(s) of study can, in fact, be a driving force, and a resource rather than an impediment to good research.

We are critical of the norms that devalue affect in academia, which we argue are rooted in the association of ‘valuable’ knowledge with rationality (traditionally coded as
Brittany Kelley (King’s College London, UK) - All in the Family (?): Family, Love, and Emotioend Fannish Literacy

As aca-fans, we are intimately familiar with the emotional lifeworlds that are bound up in fan activities—discovering fandom, interacting with like-minded fans, and certainly in creating fan works. Yet, while we know that fan practices are shaped by and shape complex emotional experiences and responses, only more recent scholarship has began to theorize the roles emotions play in the development of fan identities (see Larsen and Zubernis 2013; Williams 2015, 2018). Furthermore, we have learned from literacy studies scholars (Heath 1983; Sternglass 1997; Brandt 2001), that family plays a central role in literacy development, particularly in the experiences of working class students (Rose 1989; Anzaldúa 1987; hooks 1994; Peckham 2010). But while we have theorized the role of family in terms of literacy development, much of this work has focused on childhood literacy. Moreover, while there are frequent references to family in fan studies, these references are typically limited to highlighting the tension between the family obligations of married women and mothers and their fannish desires (see especially Larsen and Zubernis 2013). Otherwise, family has been largely undertheorized in fan studies. Finally, affect and emotion theories have also tended to avoid deeply engaging with the question of family. In this talk, I bring these fields together to begin better theorizing the role of family within fan practices. In this talk, I focus on the roles of family for one fanwriter, lilo’s fannish experiences. I explore how lilo’s familial relationships affected her chosen fandom affiliations and continue to shape and be shaped by her enthusiastic engagement in online WWE fanfiction. Ultimately, I argue that theorizing the role(s) of family in fan practices can help us to better understand the complex intersections of literacy, emotion, and fan engagement.

Rob Samuels (University of Huddersfield, UK) - Everyday Fandom, Neoliberalism and the Anxiety of Boredom

Within existing literature, fans’ wider engagement with digital media platforms is often conceptualised as inherently participatory and productive (Fiske, 1992; Jenkins, 2006; Bruns, 2008; Carpentier, 2011). Such a focus, however, does not reflect the significance of boredom as a reason for regular digital media engagement, which occurs in addition to participation, but is rooted instead within habit and the everyday. By presenting my original concept of everyday ‘routinised engagement’, I aim to develop this existing work, by demonstrating the value of unproductive, habitual digital media use in tackling boredom. Using in-depth interviews, I spoke to 34 digital media users aged 20-30, outside of specific fandoms or communities, to understand how they engaged with their favoured digital media platforms and networks. Even for the most participatory fans within my data, much day-to-day engagement with their chosen platforms was not in any way productive. Instead, regular routinised engagement was habitual and impulsive, occurring during micro-moments of empty time within daily routines (such as waiting in a queue). The regularity of this practice suggests a wider cultural anxiety towards boredom, with my participants
choosing to fill even the smallest period of empty time with recursive, unproductive digital media use to avoid boredom.

Through assessing my participants’ discourses, I align productive and participatory fan-like engagement with neoliberalism. The cultural anxiety my participants experience towards boredom, I suggest, occurs within a neoliberal digital media marketplace that promotes constant self-improvement through ‘buying’ into new and exciting lifestyles (Rose, 1999; Moran, 2007). In this paper, I argue that unproductive routinised engagement offers relief from the neoliberal anxiety towards boredom, with the regularity of this differing type of engagement demonstrating the significance of exploring fandom beyond notions of participation and productivity.

**Panel F1: Texts, Ownership & Interpretations**

**Chris Stone (Liverpool Hope University, UK) and Ciarán Ryan (Dundalk Institute of Technology, Ireland) - Fans of Fans: Football Fan Media Shaping and Challenging Collective Opinion at the Global/local Nexus**

While globalised football fandom of English league football emerged as a by-product of decisions made by the BBC to broadcast matches as part of its post-war World Service radio schedule (Wylie et al, 2011) followed by cheaply imported television coverage in the 1960s (Nash, 2000), it has more recently become part of a more targeted global marketing push by the English Premier League and now forms a key component in how football clubs actively generate revenue. Packaged match day experiences, events featuring former star players, and a host of official media content all cater specifically for an international fanbase.

However, fans – both local and global – are navigating towards alternative content providers that challenge certain discourses within their club’s fan culture. They are increasingly served by fan media outlets such as Arseblog (Arsenal FC) and The Anfield Wrap (Liverpool FC), both of which started as quasi-fan labour operations before developing into professional businesses. Drawing on field work with both content creators and their audiences, we question whether these sources elicit distinct culturally and geographically informed responses in different parts of the world to their uncensored and subjective content.

Any criticism of globalised football fan culture inevitably brings up tropes of authenticity, where localised participation and resistance is placed in symbolic opposition to passive consumerism (Crawford, 2004). What this ongoing research investigates is the potential for online fan media to provide a sense of place to audiences with no tangible links to the UK cities (London and Liverpool respectively in our two case studies) in which these clubs are based. At a time when football fandom is being increasingly delocalised, blogs and podcasts now have the ability to both develop virtual communities as well as foster a heightened awareness of place through language and culture.

Finally, this work demonstrates how sports fans themselves can accumulate (sub)cultural capital through fan media, where we now need to consider fan media producers themselves as objects of fandom (i.e. those identifying as fans of The Anfield Wrap or Arseblog).

**Ruth Flaherty (University of East Anglia, UK) - A Tale of Two Systems: Fanfiction, Fair Use and Fair Dealing**
The problem of originality, creativity and the hard lines of copyright law as relating to fanfiction has been addressed in detail in many US academic papers (Tushnet, 1997; McCardle, 2003) focusing on the US market, due to primacy in TV/film production and novels that underlie much fan work, and the location of the websites that hosted fan archives. Despite the importance of British underlying works such as Sherlock Holmes and Dr Who, the reaction of UK copyright law to these types of work has been relatively underexplored. Using a comparative doctrinal framework to compare the standing of fanfiction legally in the two markets, this paper addresses that research gap. It investigates the current spaces in copyright law that may permit some forms of fanfiction to be published, especially in Europe in the light of new European rulings on fair dealing and parody (Deckmyn, C-201/13).

Copyright has historically struggled to approach these types of derivative work as it treats all fanfiction as homogenous. Under my novel analysis each of Jenkin’s ten types of fanfiction (2013) are examined specifically to show that following the wording of current copyright legislation in the UK/US, several of these may be considered original enough to avoid infringement claims.

By clarifying the law as it stands, this work reduces the potential barriers to entry onto this market for self-publishers who may wish to publish, explaining just how far they need to go to ‘scratch off the serial numbers’ before publication. Further, by addressing the distinct incentives behind fan creation in comparison to commercial creativity (Busse, 2017, Sandvoss, 2005, Hills, 2002), it is possible to update copyright to enable users to take advantage of the digital era (Benkluer, 2006).

Andrew Crome (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK) - Exploring Prophecy as Fan Fiction: Richard Brothers, his Female Rivals, and Reclaiming Scripture

Historians and biblical studies scholars have increasingly explored the utility of using fan fiction studies to explore historical texts. Although this has generally been applied to the classical period, recent work has attempted to extend this to medieval and early modern texts (e.g. Basu 2016, Nielsen 2017). This paper aims to develop this through a comparative study of late-eighteenth-century prophetic texts as a form of fan fiction. From 1793-1814, a series of prophets received visions which reworked key biblical texts (particularly the books of Daniel and Revelation) in imaginative and controversial ways. The media storm generated by the 1794/5 prophecies of Richard Brothers, which resulted in his trial before the Privy Council, created a nascent fan culture including the printing of pictures of the prophet in magazines and widespread reworkings of his key text A Revealed Knowledge of the Prophecies and Times (1794). This paper explores the way in which Brothers reworked Daniel and Revelation, and how his predictions were subsequently imaginatively transformed in the prophecies of Sarah Flaxmer and Joanna Southcott, with the latter superseding Brothers as the most well-known prophetic figure in England in the early nineteenth century. Their texts reveal not only a reclamatory reading of biblical apocalypse, but also an imaginative engagement with Brothers’s claims through the imaginative landscape he created in his works. This allowed creative exploration of important religious issues surrounding gender, the role of the contemporary Church of England, and social welfare. This paper therefore considers prophecy as an area with a number of intersections with fan fiction, with the latter a fruitful medium through which to explore the complex theological issues raised by apocalyptic texts. The paper ends with a brief comparison of
the historical work to recent fannish reimaginings of Revelation through the worlds of *Doctor Who* and *My Little Pony*.

Jonathan Rose (University of Passau, Germany) - Trans(ing) Narratives: Transfic as Trans/Fan Practice

This paper takes a look at the emerging fanfiction genre transfic, which focusses on transgender characters, usually by rewriting canonically cisgender characters as trans. Approaching transfic from two different angles – one highlighting the fan(fiction) part, the other foregrounding the trans(gender) aspect, I position transfic both as a response to or development of other fan practices and as a form of trans (self-)narration which has developed due to the participation opportunities of the Web 2.0. Transfic describes a form of fan practice while simultaneously representing an expression of digital trans culture.

There are various ways in which fanfiction plays with gender, e.g. by imagining a character as always having been another gender or by focussing on the consequences of a sudden and involuntary gender change. While all gender-bending fan practices may draw attention to the workings of a binary gender system, it is transfic’s focus on the lived experiences of transgender people that sets it apart from the majority of other gender-bending fanfiction. Furthermore, through its inherently intertextual and palimpsestic nature, transfic not only provides an opportunity to add trans narratives to the possible readings and reworkings of a text, but also becomes a means of ‘transing’ narratives, strengthening the position of trans readings as valid creative engagements and as a form of trans agency.

Looking beyond the relationship between fanfiction and source text and focusing on the connection between transfic and its readers and writers, transfic as a practice is (for the most part) rooted in trans experiences: Transfic’s paratexts, like authors’ notes or comments, show that many authors and readers are trans themselves and highlight that these stories are written with a trans readership in mind. This allows for a connection to other, non-fandom forms and genres of trans self-narration in digital cultures, which, in turn, points towards fruitful intersections between ‘digital trans’ and digital fandom.

Panel F2: Anti–Fandom, Dislike, and Fantagonism

Mark Stewart (Universiteit van Amsterdam, Netherlands) - “Read Another Fucking Book”: The Liberal Backlash Against Harry Potter Fandom

A significant quantity of extant fan studies scholarship has focused on the affordances of the *Harry Potter* franchise, and the ways that fans have utilised the text for their own uses and gratifications. Multiple of these have included the ways in which the texts might be used by fans for exploring representation, identity, and engagement with the socio-political frameworks with our world. Themes such as genocide, slavery, racism, systemic oppression and social justice have been read through and over the books and films, and the series has been described as an entry point for young people into political activism and a broader awareness of the social and political issues facing the world.

However, the desire that many people feel to connect the fictional world of *Harry Potter* to the real world struggles they face has met with a backlash from some sectors. In response to placards at protest marches, twitter allegories, blog posts, and other connections made to the fictional sphere, there has been a growing meme suggesting that commenters “read another fucking book”. I argue that this response stems from multiple
impulses: a high culture/low culture divide which views *Harry Potter* as simplistic and childish; a frustration from some activists in what they see as a trivialisation of their issues through a connection to the series; a pushback against the continued problematic figure of the series author, JK Rowling; and finally, a form of ‘appropriate fandom’ which seeks to qualify the texts that are seen as culturally relevant and important.

Sebastian F. K. Svegaard (Birmingham City University, UK) - *Feel My Righteous Anger: Affect as Motivation for Critical Vidding*

This paper explores the complex affective quality of vids produced by fans, who wish to critique a canon along axes of social justice issues. According to Gray (2010), a vid shows the vidder’s path through the text, which forms the source for the vid. Likewise, a vid can show a vidder’s critical engagement with the source/s she is critiquing with her work. As fandom is an affective relationship between fan and text, this critical engagement is also one born out of affect. Fans can be said to be critiquing with love - a response to being let down by a text they are invested in. Furthermore, a vid is in itself a labour of love and a product of and part of the larger culture of media fandom, adding another layer of affective engagement. A vid is an argument (Coppa 2018) and this argument is made and received within fandom, and a vid thus becomes part of the ongoing negotiation of fannishness and critique within media fandom.

Through examples of critical vids, I will explore how affect, particularly anger/offence/outrage, might be considered a motivator for fannish critique, and how this emotion is expressed in these vids. Via vid analysis, including the metatext surrounding the vids, this paper will explore the affects expressed through the example vids. Overall, this paper aims to complicate and expand the idea of fannish critique by illustrating how many feelings mix in the expression of fannish critique, and how this an example of fans sharing their emotional responses and engagement with each other; not just through the written medium, but through fanworks in general and vids in specific.

Beatriz Inzunza-Acedo (Universidad de Monterrey, Mexico) - *Fascination with the Evil: Audience’s Emotional Relationships with Villains*

Throughout several reception research projects, the idea of audiences relating positively to heroes and admirable characters has been persistent. Less has been explored about the emotions around villains, even when they have fascinated audiences. The main objective of this study was to identify four emotions (love, hate, fear, empathy) that audiences associated to villain characters in fictional narratives in the city of Monterrey, Mexico. We collected 390 surveys and did four focus groups, with participants of ages 17-25.

41.6% identified him/herself as a fan of a certain villain, and 58.2% preferred villains over hero characters. Fear and hate were the emotions that were more consistent amongst the participants. Specifically for fear, the most mentioned characters were The Joker, It, Voldemort, Chucky, and Freddy Krueger. For hate they indicated Voldemort, Joffrey Baratheon, Dolores Umbridge, Scar, Cruella Devil, Cinderella’s Stepmother and The Joker. The villains that were mentioned related to empathetic feelings were Maleficent, Gru, Darth Vader, The Joker and The Grinch; while for attraction was The Joker, Loki, Catwoman, and Harley Quinn.

It is particularly interesting to see how both animated and live-action characters were mentioned. Also, that the majority of the villains that were mentioned are not from
recent releases, which speaks for the transcendence of certain characters in the audience’s memory. The case of The Joker was further analyzed because of two reasons: it appeared in the top five villains mentioned of all four feelings, and participants of the survey constantly specified “which” Joker they were referring to: Jack Nicholson, Heath Ledger or Jared Leto. There was a clear preference for Ledger, although the three were appreciated in some way. This study was able to analyze emotional relationships of young audiences with evil characters, as well as their consumption habits as “fans”.

Panel F3: Cultural Politics and Identity

Cecilia Almeida Rodrigues Lima (Federal University of Pernambuco, Brazil) and Gêsa Karla Cavalcanti (Federal University of Pernambuco, Brazil) – Confronting Hate: Fandom and Controversy Around Lesbian Couples in Brazilian Fictional Television

This paper analyzes how gender and sexual identities, political activism and social network platforms play important roles in fandom, both for community building and for producing controversies, when it comes to LGBT representation on network television. The research investigates the matter using as a case study the fandom formed around lesbian couples portrayed in three recent TV shows and telenovelas produced by Globo, the most watched television channel in Brazil. It examines how Globo is handling a controversial subject in a conservative and religious-oriented country, nourishing the engagement of shipper audiences on social media and deliberately stimulating fan activism (Zoonen, 2004) against conservative groups.

For that, the paper first explains how Brazilian television is responding to the shifts imposed by media convergence, cultivating fandom with the support of social media platforms (Cavalcanti, 2016). The paper goes on to discuss the country’s rugged political context and the role played by Globo’s telenovelas in proposing social controversies (Lopes, 2003; Lima, 2018) and in the making of a progressive change in the depiction of LGBT characters in television.

The research proceeds to analyze more thoroughly how lesbian fans were captivated by three different shows produced by Globo: primetime telenovela Em Família (Helena’s Shadow - 2014), late night miniseries Felizes Para Sempre? (Happily Ever-After? – 2015) and 25th season of the TV Show Malhação (Young Hearts: Embrace Diversity – 2017/2018), aired in the afternoon. Each of these shows featured a charismatic lesbian couple that was able to build a powerful fandom (Clarina in Em Família; Marise in Felizes Para Sempre?; Limantha in Malhação). The research then focuses on how Brazilian fans used social networks to build a strong creative community, engaging on a number of tactics to defend LGBT representation from their critics.

James Rendell (Cardiff University, UK) - Quotas of Colour: Black (Anti-)Fan’s Intersectional Politicisation of The Walking Dead Franchise

This paper situates itself within debates around (anti-)fan positions intersecting with wider identity markers (Brown 2001, Johnson 2016, Carrington 2016), by analysing black audiences’ reading of The Walking Dead (TWD) (2010- ) that evidences ‘discursive prioritisation’ (Hills 2015) of race as a reading schema. Utilising netnographic analysis of online posts, the paper explores how black audiences, a much neglected demographic in
Fan Studies (Wanzo 2015), critique TWD’s representations of black masculinity against wider US socio-racial relations and the lived experiences of race (Bobo 1997). Consequently, the paper questions TWD’s quality TV status perpetuated in axiomatic discourses by both industry and academia alike.

The paper begins by analysing how black audiences challenge TWD’s TV iteration by re-centring focus onto secondary black male characters. This sees a counter-public form (Steele 2018:115) around TWD’s (mis)representations of race and its propensity for systematically killing-off black male survivors described by anti-fans as its ‘black male quota’. Moreover, with TWD being a successful transmedia franchise, the paper then addresses how racial discourse shifts and changes depending on which texts are consumed. Black anti-fan rhetoric aimed at the spin-off series Fear the Walking Dead centres on the zombification of black men endemic of the Othering of young black Males by US police forces. Comparatively, TellTale’s The Walking Dead video game offers character development of its black male lead that black fans praise against wider cultural representations, in relation to the franchise’s hyperdiegesis, and video games in general. Building on Sicarts’s argument that affect originates from ‘the dual domain of the semiotic and the procedural’ (2013:47) and Aarseth’s ergodic pathway model (1997), this paper accounts for how TWD is read as both racially reductive and radical for black audiences. Resultantly, the paper evidences how aspects of self-identity, such as race, can inform (anti-)fan positions through intersectional politicisation.

**William Proctor (Bournemouth University, UK) - “When I see Slave Leias Wandering the Halls of a Convention, I see Leia Literally Choking the Snot out of her Oppressor”: Testing the Ideology of Female Fans’ Star Wars Cos-Playing Practices**

In *Return of the Jedi* (1983), Princess Leia is captured by the vile Jabba the Hutt, bound in chains and forcibly dressed in the now-famous, if not infamous, gold bikini and birthday suit. For some, the scene represents nothing less than the most damning instantiation of ‘sexualization’ and objectification in the franchise, a common enough complaint regarding the ideology of Star Wars as a whole (Ellis, 2003; Wilson, 2007). For others, Leia’s capture and emancipation is less objective and more attuned with feminist values — that is, when Leia murders Jabba with the same chains that imprison her, she does so “with the literal chains of patriarchy” (Robbins 2010).

In 2014, Disney announced that they would no longer be producing merchandise based on the so-called ‘Slave Leia’ iteration primarily to address fannish complaints about institutional and structural misogyny; although Carrie Fisher herself said such a maneuver was “asinine” (Woener, 2015). In the academy, feminist scholars have not agreed on a consensus either: Jennifer Ellis (2003) claims that Leia is a ‘traditional damsel-in-distress,’ while Diana Dominguez argues that the character actively ‘shatters the damsel-in-distress trope’ (2007), to offer just two contradictory examples. Much academic criticism pivots on the ideological ‘messages’ embedded in ‘the text,’ with particular concern about ‘impressionable young women in the most vulnerable stages of their lives’ to which ‘negative and damaging messages’ may be transmitted like a viral infection (Dominguez, 2007: 111). However, in order for criticisms such as this to be an ‘accurate’ account of cultural and ideological processes, of ‘messages’ sledgehammered into vulnerable audiences, depends firstly upon the trained scholar being able to ‘spot’ ideology (Buckingham, 1997) and its ‘effects’ without ever attempting to speak directly to female fans. In lieu of empirical testimony, then, scholars have constructed what Martin Barker
terms ‘figures of the audience,’ or, in other words, by marshaling ‘imputations’ not substantiated beyond reading directly off-of-the-text.

In this presentation, I want to return to the concept of ideology, using the way in which female fans dress in the ‘Slave Leia’ gold bikini costume as perhaps a symbol of female empowerment and solidarity, on the one hand, or as evincing a kind of ideological ‘brainwashing,’ on the other. As prologue to research in this area, I aim for a robust and frank discussion about the operations of ideology and whether or not ‘Slave Leia’ fans become embroiled within ‘dominant’ ideological frameworks or stand as resistant subjects. In so doing, it is clear that the political meaning of Star Wars is not “something essential, inscribed or guaranteed” (Storey, 2010: 50), but a multiaccentual signifier that ‘can be “spoken” with different “accents” by different people in different social contexts for different politics’ (ibid). As one Slave Leia cos-player remarks: ‘So for me, wearing that gold bikini does not mean “here I am, a sexy toy for your amusement and gratification”; to me, that gold bikini says, “if you fuck with me, I will end you.”

Neta Yodovich (University of Manchester, UK) - "Finally We Get to Play the Doctor": Women Fans' Reception of the First Woman Doctor Who

Doctor Who, one of the longest-running series in British television, has been attracting fans for 54 years. The show, led by a male Doctor since its inception, recently raised a tempestuous debate among fans when a woman Doctor was announced to take over for the first time. This paper delves into women fans’ reception of the new woman Doctor and their responses to the massive backlash the casting incited. The study focused on female fans, from varied ages (19 to 55), some are lifelong fans since 1960s, while others are younger fans who joined the fandom after its reboot. Deriving from semi-structured, in-depth interviews, the research’s findings focus on fans’ reception of the Woman Doctor, their attitudes towards the backlash and expectations for the new Doctor. Reactions toward the woman Doctor were mostly positive, but accompanied by hesitation (for instance, if rating drops, the woman will be blamed). Backlash was contested by intellectual arguments (cannon determines the Doctor can regenerate into a woman), and less by emotional justifications (having a woman role-model for young girls, for instance). Despite supporting a woman Doctor, most fans did not express wishes for the Doctor’s femininity to be explicitly addressed on the show, or for the new Doctor to have traditional "feminine" traits. This paper’s findings contribute to the understanding of women fans’ perception of the representation of women in popular culture, by probing into a critical shift of a historically significant program with a cult following of over 50 years.

NOTES