FANS CONFERENCE

3d Annual FANS Conference

Program Book

5 – 7 June 2015

Friday, 5 June

9:00 - 17:00: Registration

18:00 - 20:00: Socializing, Media Bar Private Room

Saturday, 6 June

9:00: Doors Open

9:15: Opening Remarks, Dr. J. Holder Bennett, FANS Chair

9:30: Cultures in Select Science Fiction, Utopian and Dystopian, Evan Kowalski, Collin College

Cultures in science fiction vary wildly, but most examples can be sorted into the extremes of near-perfect utopias and terrifying dystopias. This paper will look into the aspects of society, transportation, media, government, and military as seen by Frank Herbert, Ray Bradbury, and Robert Heinlein. The selected works are several books in the *Dune* series, *The Illustrated Man* collection of short stories, and *The Past through Tomorrow* collection.

These brilliant and diverse universes propose systems for a better today and a better tomorrow, both for the people and for the oligarchs, some reasonable and some only by way of strong imagination. They speak volumes on any given subject, sometimes in idealized terms, often in dire projections of our circumstances. There is much to be learned from each author, idylls of paradise and warnings of self-destruction disguised as entertainment. As some of these points may be overlooked on the first read, it is worth drawing our attention to them and discussing them for their own merits separate from what novelty value they might hold from a casual glance.

More subtle is the way that the minor points of each criterion affect society as a whole, with some forces balancing each other out and some playing into each other. In some instances, a criterion is completely dominated by one factor; in others, there are many wheels within wheels turning in unison, obfuscating intent and blurring perception of these catalysts.

For one to fully understand the writings of these authors, it takes patience. Everyone stands to benefit. Even the most outlandish cautionary tales have parallels and similarities to our world. These men have proposed changes, projects, and salves for our society, and they are worth considering.

10:00: Latinas Are My Favorite Fruit: The Consumption of Hispanic Women in Hollywood Cinema, Sonya Herridge, University of Houston at Clear Lake

The messages that surround us inform our internal ideas. More specifically, the media we consume and the messages it sends continually shapes and modifies our ideas. The fictional portrayal of Chicana/Xicana/Hispanic/Latina/Raza/Spanish-speaking/Brown women in US entertainment media has been problematic since its inception. This is exaggerated when large, powerful, and rich entities like Hollywood are able to portray this group; its reach becomes global, its lasting power is almost boundless, and its capital makes it difficult to challenge what it represents. "We are dealing with how cultural consumption in our current moment involves the tracking of that which is most dear to us all: our identities, our myths, and our bodies" (Bustamante and Fusco 258). As art imitates life and life imitates art, there is an intersection that takes place over the body of the Hispanic woman: sexual and labor consumption in both the fictional world and in real life. Real life and fictional representation bolster each other. This paper seeks to analyze mainstream US cinema for its representation of Hispanic women as bodies that are exclusively for labor or sexual purposes - consumption. This will serve to inform a critique that such representation bolsters stereotypes that exclude the narratives, experiences, and voices from these bodies. My goal is to challenge and resist these fictional representations – to remove these bodies from the mouth of these movies.

10:30: Unfortunate Son: The Captain America of the 1950s and the Historical Memory of McCarthyism, Dr. Michael A. Davis, Laredo Community College

In 1972, *Captain America* writer Steve Englehart used an accident of publishing history to create a supervillain with a deep American cultural resonance. In Marvel's continuity (as recently shown on film), Captain America the superhero had been trapped in suspended animation in 1945 before being revived in the 1960s, ready to bring a New Dealer's sensibility to the New Frontier. But Captain America the character had been published through 1949, with a brief revival in 1954 allegedly forgotten about even by his sometime-writer Stan Lee. Englehart turned to the 1954 revival, which tried to replace an anti-Nazi conflict with an anti-Communist one, to create "The Captain America of the 1950s" – a McCarthyite patriot and fan of the "original" Captain America who adopted his hero's nom de guerre and costume, only to go mad and be put in suspended animation by his own government when he began to see Communist subversion elsewhere. Revived by a right-wing officer angry at Nixon's recognition of Communist China, the "Captain America of the 1950s" has made a potent dark mirror for Steve Rogers' brand of New Deal patriotism ever since. Recently revived after an apparent death (a common story for characters in the medium), the 1950s Captain America has appeared in the new millennium as leader of an anti-government right wing militia.

In this work, I will look at the Captain America of the 1950s for what he was – first a commercial effort to compare World War II to the Cold War by authors in a dying medium, a commentary on the reflexive patriotism of the 1950s by a Baby Boomer writer working at the height of the social ferment at the beginning of the 1970s, and more broadly as a character that has let Marvel writers depict the dark side of the American experience, a misguided nation with strength, bravery, and even honor – but no soul. Through planned interviews with Englehart and others, I will look at the "secret origins" of the character off the page. Through a broader look at

the popular culture of the 1970s, I will compare the 1950s Cap to other revisionist works of the period that cast a critical eye on the patriotism and conformity of the 1950s, and how superheroes in particular were used to criticize the same values they had once vociferously upheld only a few decades earlier.

11:00: Fairy Tales Revisited, Nathan Robert Brown, Mythologist

A look at mythology as it applies to various works in pop culture, such as *Origin: Spirits of the Past*, *Bioshock Infinite*, and *Supernatural*.

11:30: A Person, Not a Pin-Up: Subverting the Asian Action Heroine with *Pacific Rim*'s Mako Mori, Megan Fowler, University of Florida

This paper considers the portrayal of Mako Mori's intersectional identity as a Japanese woman in Guillermo del Toro's film *Pacific Rim* . Mako Mori's character is positioned within a unique cultural context, given that *Pacific Rim* is an American film situated within a traditionally Japanese genre. Therefore, Mako both evokes and deconstructs similar female archetypes in the Japanese mecha and martial arts genres and subverts many of the stereotypical portrayals of Japanese women in American media.

In the context of American film, Mako subverts many common stereotypes of the action heroine and women's portrayal in film in general. The film deliberately inverts the male gaze in a sequence in which the camera takes on Mako's point of view explicitly when she looks at the male protagonist Raleigh Becket. Unfortunately, Mako is one of only two speaking female roles in the film, and she is isolated from a female community due to the fact that she never directly interacts with the other female character. Mako's quiet nature offers a variation of the female action heroine, who are typically portrayed as brash and confrontational. However, this character trait has some potentially problematic undertones given the typical portrayal of Asian women as silent in American film. Mako's use of her own language and her lack of sexual and personal passivity counters and complicates this stereotype, forming a more nuanced character trait. Unlike many American depictions of Japanese women, Mako is placed into a position of sexual dominance but never overly sexualized. The film resists common portrayals of American action heroines as both overly sexualized and hypermasculine. Mako's armor, rather than formfitting and overly sexualized, is practical and unisex. However, Mako's androgyny never comes at the sacrifice of the softness of her femininity.

As a woman of color, the film creates a sense of solidarity and community with other people of color through Mako's black father figure, British military commander Stacker Pentecost. Mako and Pentecost display a unified front in the face of insubordinate criticism from the white male lead, and the film justifies this resistance. The film portrays Mako's respect for Pentecost as an honorable component of her Japanese cultural identity without placing her in unfortunate stereotypes of overly obedient and submissive Asian women. In a powerful statement of a transnational community that does not expect assimilation, Mako frequently speaks and is spoken to in her native language of Japanese. Culturally, the character has had larger reaching ramifications for media assessment, including the creation of the "Mako Mori test," a popular assessment of the portrayal of female characters similar to the "Bechdel test." The

characterization of Mako Mori in *Pacific Rim* provides an example of a complex portrayal of an intersectional Japanese female identity and has larger implications for the treatment of women of color in American genre film, evoking a more culturally diverse world view via a transnational context.

12:00: Saibata Puppets: Bamboo Shoots (西畑人形:たけのこ), Dr. Darren Jon Ashmore, Yamanashi Gakuin University

This is one in an irregular series touching on the history and nature of public (fan) participation in the development of culture - in this case, the way in which public negotiation of meaning drives the development of media, in the form of puppet theatre. In this case, we will be examining an example of truly 'common' puppet art, and the struggles which take place in an ongoing folk culture revival which still remains at the heart of a community, and does not simply operate as a tourist attraction.

We focus on the story of a little theatre, built inside half a dozen old Marine Corps shipping units and run by a semi-deranged genii, who have not only preserved the dying puppet arts of their region, but acted, for fifty years as ambassadors of the public nature of performance. Breaking down the glass wall whenever they got the chance, the Ikehara's and their troupe have provided, and still provide a public space for the young to learn, a centre for development and research as well as a root from which all manner of professionals have taken comfort.

At the FANS conference we encourage the intersection between the performer and the observer in the midst of the space itself. Here, I present a case study of what follows when the nature of that relationship is understood properly. We are all inhabitants of that magical space, but to gain from it, we must see it for what it is.

12:30 - 13:30: Lunch

13:30: Keynote: *Cyborg: 009*: An Anime Retrospective, sponsored by FUNimation; Ishikawa Mitsuhisa, Helen McCarthy, Jonathan Tarbox, Justin Rojas, Tara McKinney, and Dr. J. Holder Bennett

14:30: "You Cannot See Yourself Unless There Are Others": *Sekaikei* as Existentialist Exhortation of Societal Participation, Stefanie Thomas, Ohio State University

The term *sekaikei* (セカイ系, "world-type"), a genre of Japanese subcultural narratives primarily perpetuated via the media of anime, manga, light novels, and video games, whose defining characteristic is an apocalyptic large-scale situation and the omission of a mediating social dimension between individual characters, has come to be used as a tool of cultural criticism pertaining to individuals reaching adulthood (i.e. finishing their education) in the mid-90s to the mid-2000s. Within this critical discourse, the exclusion of society in such works is frequently connected with the rise of problematic phenomena within Japan while the genre was at the height of its popularity (its earliest identified example dates to 1996, and *sekaikei* narratives declined in popularity after 2006). These areas of concern include the increase in *hikikomori* ("shut-ins") and youths not seeking careers or education. Critics such as Uno Tsunehiro claim in this context that

sekaikei narratives affirm social withdrawal and refusal of maturity on the part of the male protagonist, who comes to control the world indirectly without entering into the narrative's external conflict by way of his connection to the "fighting heroine." This presentation will examine the three *sekaikei* narratives named as definitive examples of the genre in Japanese discourse, namely *Saishū heiki kanojo* (最終兵器彼女, *Final Weapon Girlfriend*, known as *SaiKano* in the official English translation), *Iriya no sora, UFO no natsu* (イリヤの空、UFOの夏, *Iriya's Sky, Summer of UFOs*), and *Hoshi no koe* (星の声, *Voice of a Star/Star's Voice*, known as *Voices of a Distant Star* in English-speaking distribution regions), alongside the *sekaikei* prototype *Shin seiki evangerion* (新世紀エヴァンゲリオン, *Gospel of a New Century*, distributed as *Neon Genesis Evangelion* in most territories outside Japan). This inquiry will utilize a Western existentialist hermeneutic approach based on the works of Søren Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger, and Jean-Paul Sartre, since this line of philosophical thought is directly referenced in *Evangelion*, which in turn is thought to have engendered the conventions used in the other three works. In doing so, it will demonstrate that these narratives, in fact, unanimously reject the proposed withdrawal, and ultimately seem to encourage participation in meaningful relationships with others, so long as this remains an option within the narrative framework.

15:00: "Ode to Joy": Beethoven's *Daiku* in Anime, Heike Hoffer, Ohio State University

The name of Beethoven is revered in Japan, where the composer holds the honorary title *Ongaku Gakusei*, or "patron saint" of music. His most beloved work is his familiar Ninth Symphony, known as the *Daiku*, which has become an important part of Japanese New Year's celebrations across the country. Amateur choristers spend months striving to learn Schiller's German text to the "Ode to Joy," believing that participating in a performance of the *Daiku*, combined with the moral support of their fellow singers, will allow them to overcome their personal struggles in the coming year. The prominent position of the "Ode to Joy" in Japanese life has resulted in its frequent use in anime underscores, an area of music that is still remarkably underrepresented in academic literature. When watching anime, Japanese viewers can interpret occurrences of the "Ode to Joy" using both Western and Japanese viewpoints. Its presence in the underscore serves as a symbol of brotherhood and goodwill among mankind, the standard Western reading of the work, while also highlighting the Japanese understanding of the piece as signifying the role of community involvement in prevailing over individual hardships. These ideals are powerfully expressed in the series *Gunslinger Girl* and *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, where the "Ode to Joy" traverses the boundaries of the diegetic and non-diegetic realms to create a compelling musical commentary during scenes where cyborgs convey their deepest emotions as well as accompanying moments of extreme violence perpetrated by futuristic giant robots.

15:30: An Examination of Anime Fan Stereotypes, Dr. Stephen Reysen*, Dr. Courtney N. Plante, Dr. Sharon E. Roberts, Kathleen C. Gerbasi, and Jennifer Shaw; Texas A & M University at Commerce, Renison University College of the University of Waterloo, and Niagara County Community College (* = presenter)

We tested the veracity of existing stereotypes about anime fans. Self-identified anime fans, both convention-going and online, completed a survey which assessed demographic variables and measures of stereotype-consistent behaviors, attitudes, and physical appearance. Furry fans,

fantasy sport fans, and a sample of undergraduate college students served as comparison groups. Of the 24 stereotypes tested in the present study, only nine showed evidence of being consistent with anime fans' self-descriptions. These results reveal a significant discrepancy between non-fan perceptions of anime fans and the actual beliefs and behaviors of anime fans.

16:00: The Joining of Church and State: The Tyranny of the Prophet in *BioShock Infinite*, Daniel Archer, Abilene Christian University

Research in the twenty-first century concerning video games has branched out from initial skepticism concerning the nature of violent video games and their correlation to violent behavior in adolescents. Since then, this particular strain of video game research has proved not only inconclusive, but chiefly irrelevant. Current video game research continues to search for answers regarding the effects of video games on the human psyche, but it now additionally attempts to address even deeper questions. Scholars like Jane McGonigal, for example, set out to explain the "mass exodus" of a striking number of people from reality to a virtual one. Other scholars address how video game theory can affect the designs of real-world businesses and education systems that could use "gamification" to push their productivity by appealing to an undeniable gamer demographic.

Nevertheless, research establishing the credibility of video games as worthy of academic study is lacking. In particular, some literary scholars that engage in film discussion in their academic writing in addition to their literary interests still refuse to recognize video games as worthy of study. The inherent messages transmitted through a powerful new medium that involve an audience more than any of its predecessors are powerfully real, and to ignore them is to fail to do justice to the video game medium. In this field, research has failed to recognize a vastly popular and immersive medium of storytelling. Despite the importance of psychological and sociological research being done in the area of video gaming, to ignore the storytelling aspects of these games is to undermine their inherent and most effective function.

My paper will examine Irrational Games' *BioShock Infinite* and its simultaneous mirroring and magnification of similar circumstances in the United States around the turn of the twentieth century, the time that serves as the setting for the game as well. In this analysis, I will draw parallels between the game and Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*, a formative work in the creation of the game. I posit that though the events in *BioShock Infinite* amplify the tensions in the United States at the time, that a secondary purpose of the storyline is to warn of the dangers of joining the entities of church and state in the governance of a "utopia." *BioShock Infinite*'s treatment of racial tensions and the cyclical nature of history speaks to the underlying and unattractive parts of humanity that the game forces us to face. Through a comparison to *Atlas Shrugged* and a look at *BioShock Infinite* through the lens of racial theory based on the writings of theorists like Toni Morrison and Henry Louis Gates I would argue that that *BioShock Infinite*'s portrayal of the tyrannical Father Comstock is a direct parallel to the height of current religious and racial tensions in the United States.

16:30: Elvis after Elvis: The Posthumous Career of a Living Legend, Darby Cook, New York University

Elvis Presley is perhaps the most popular entertainer of all time. With eighteen number one hits and a starring role in thirty-one feature films, Elvis's fame cannot be denied. For a number of reasons, research investigating Elvis's career is scarce and meager in volume. His fandom, on the other hand, is much more powerful and visible. To this day, an average of 600,000 fans visit Graceland annually—a number that has remained roughly the same since Graceland first opened for tours in 1982. The examination of various texts, namely Gilbert Rodman's *Elvis After Elvis,* reveals that Elvis has maintained his relevancy throught three primary methods. First, he has served as a point of articulation, which is a point on the cultural terrain where two unrelated topics engage in a meaningful discourse, for subjects like race, gender and sexuality, class, and the American Dream. Secondly, Graceland and the Elvis Presley Birthplace in Tupelo, Mississippi have both fueled his iconic legacy by providing fans with a physical place to congregate. Finally, Elvis is the figure around which the phenomenon of rock 'n' roll initially formed, meaning it is impossible to talk about this cultural phenomenon without mentioning the king of rock 'n' roll himself, Elvis Presley.

However, more than any single event, Elvis's fandom has played an essential role in the success of his posthumous career. Studies show that Elvis fans and Elvis impersonators strongly identify with the entertainer, and in extreme cases, some even change their own lifestyles to more closely emulate his. These fans and impersonators are literal vessels of Elvis's legacy, and most purposefully take on this role. Furthermore, while a deceased Elvis successfully maintained his relevancy prior to the Internet, this technology has re-shaped Elvis's fandom and transformed his posthumous career. While the Internet is too large of a phenomenon to explore as a whole, selectively examining Twitter is especially useful. Namely, the way that Elvis's verified-avatar interacts with his fandom, as well as the way that fans interact with his avatar and other fans on the social media site reveals how Twitter functions as a modern day system of fan mail. Ultimately, Elvis's stardom resembles no other celebrity, and his fandom is equally unique.

17:00: Investigating Queer Revolt in Atsuko Asano's *No. 6*, John Francis, Independent Scholar

In mapping the United States' response to 9/11, Jasbir Puar likened the state identified terrorist as a close cousin to US citizens punished for behaving "too queer." In essence, the failure of queerness, of rejecting the power of state and nation, is a failure to be a citizen and the privileges associated with citizenship. This strand of thought links with Jack Halberstam's theorization of queerness as failure. To fail at belonging is to be queer, and potentially dangerous and a terrorist. In Asano Atsuko's *No. 6*, she unites the transgressive queer, Shion, with the dangerous terrorist, Rat, in a queer alliance that, perhaps (un)intentionally, destroys the physical border demarking the political boundaries of the city. Shion's failure to retain his citizenship to the city is a reflection of his ultimate failure to belong on any terms but his own. Similarly, Rat's aggressive hatred of everything related to No. 6 and his embrace of violence reveal his own failure of never belonging anywhere. Together, they share a tenuous bond built on their own failure to support the power of state, that ultimately results in the metaphysical destruction of No. 6 by destroying the border that separates the city from the outside, citizen from noncitizen. This action is perhaps, also, a result of failure. Utilizing Puar's theories on homonationalism and Halberstam's work on queer theory, I intend to explore *No. 6* as a story of queers revolting/queer revolt, which questions the ethics, privilege, and cost of citizenship as well as the metaphysical existence of state power.

17:30: Afternoon Break

18:00: "Everything Was Anticipated, Every Eventuality Allowed For": Fan Service, Past and Present, in "The Empty Hearse," Maria Alberto, Cleveland State University

While "The Empty Hearse," the seventh episode of the BBC's immensely popular 2010 television series *Sherlock* aired in January 2014, adapts Sir Arthur Conan's story "The Empty House" to provide an explanation for protagonist Sherlock Holmes's continued survival, this episode's narrative also makes use of, and in fact depends on, many elements beyond Doyle's Holmesian canon.Working from Keith Russell's 2008 term "fan service," originally coined to describe "the random and gratuitous display of a series of anticipated gestures" designed to please or "service" consumers of manga and anime (107), I will show how "The Empty Hearse" plays to certain audiences and/or understandings through its incorporation of audience and fandom references.

Such "fan service" references take two primary forms throughout the episode: representational and paratextual. Representational references in "The Empty Hearse" include depictions of fans and fandom practices, and I will examine how these references are further subdivided by the reactions they seem intended to provoke – for example: disgust, humor, empathy – in terms of curative vs. transformative approaches. Paratextual references in "The Empty Hearse" involve cultural, often multi-media, practices and events from the past and present fannish histories of both Doyle's works and the show *Sherlock* specifically. In the case of both representational and paratextual references, though, audiences' understanding of"The Empty Hearse" can easily be changed or limited by their familiarity with the culture surrounding Doyle's original work, with the show's filming process, with participants' social media presence and commentary during the season's filming, and/or with the surrounding fandom community and culture.

Finally, in an additional complication, I will use Karen Hellekson's 2009 examination of fannish gift culture to examine how reactions to "The Empty Hearse" were often changed or determined by particular viewers' familiarity with and understanding of the episode's use of representational and paratextual fan service.

18:30: Different Motivations as Predictors of Psychological Connection to Fan Interest and Fan Groups in Anime, Furry, and Fantasy Sport Fandoms; Catherine Schroy*, Courtney N. Plante, Dr. Stephen Reysen, Dr. Sharon E. Roberts, and Kathleen C. Gerbasi; Texas A & M University at Commerce, Renison University College of the University of Waterloo, and Niagara County Community College (* = presenter)

We examined several plausible motivators of fans in three different fandoms and the association of these motivators with fan group identification. Self-identified anime fans, furries, and fantasy sport fans completed measures of fanship (psychological connection with a fan interest), fandom (psychological connection with others sharing the same interest), and the factors motivating them to engage in fan activities (e.g., escapism, belongingness). The three fan groups differed in both mean ratings of fanship and fandom, and were driven by different motivations. Different motivations, in turn, were found to differently predict fanship and fandom. These results suggest

that fan groups may differ not just in content, but on important psychological variables, including the motivation underlying fan participation.

<u>19:00: Dragons, Dwarves, and Cubes: The Role of Player Agency in Games and its Effects on Modding Communities, Brian McKitrick, University of Texas at Dallas</u>

When examining the ways in which fan communities form around games online, there is a great deal of evidence that the degree to which a game is either authentic or valid influences the communities formed. Player agency, in this way, is seen as a spectrum between authenticity (where the game is more like a simulation and is often more open ended) and validity (where the game presents narratives or worlds that react to the players' actions in meaningful ways). In order to examine this idea, examples will be used that lie at different points in this spectrum. At the most authentic end of the spectrum are games like *Dwarf Fortress*, where the game, in a sense, gives the player community a complex set of tools to create and share their own authentic experiences with each other. Sliding more towards the valid side is *Minecraft*, which gives the player a simpler set of tools while also allowing for different forms of experiencing the game in meaningful, valid ways. These forms can be found in the myriad channels on YouTube that record player experiences in *Minecraft*, such as the Yogscast. Finally, the most valid examples can be found in mission based, sandbox games, such as the *Grand Theft Auto* series, the *Saints Row* series, and the *Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*. Throughout all these games, player agency is further extended or altered by modding communities, and the degree to which the game in question is valid or authentic influences the development of the fan and modding communities.

<u>19:30: Misogyny and Philogyny in the Vampire Mythos, Rachel Head, University of North Texas</u>

Since the beginnings of the modern vampire mythos with Bram Stoker's *Dracula* the stories have harbored an undeniable eroticism aimed at women. Initially a cautionary erotic tale with an implied warning of the dangers of succumbing to untoward temptations, overtime the sexuality has become more blatant, but with a more varied view on female sexuality and femininity. This paper will begin with an overview of modern vampire literature and continue with an analysis of the trends - both progressive and regressive - regarding the role of women and feminine sexuality in the vampire mythos.

In the years since *Dracula*, written in 1897, the vampire mythos adapted to cultural norms. *Dracula* is rife with Victorian morals concerning sexuality, and especially warns against the danger posed to men by women transformed by sexual experimentation. *Dracula* also expounds upon the duty of men to protect "their" women from these temptations they are ill-equipped to resist on their own. Various permutations of this story thrived in Western popular culture until the publication of a transitional tale: *The Vampire Chronicles*, by Anne Rice. *The Vampire Chronicles* showcased vampires as rock stars and those overcome by their charms as groupies more so than degenerates.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer came into being around the same time as the high-water mark of the feminist movement of the 1990s. Intended to throw the stereotype of blondes in horror movies on its head, *Buffy* is the ultimate in philogyny in the vampire mythos. The titular character, Buffy

Summers, is a three-dimensional, self-sufficient female character in a historically misogynistic genre. Expression of her sexuality not only does not change who she is inherently, but in fact is enshrined as a thing so good as to warrant the revocation of Angel's soul and his subsequent reversion to Angelus.

If Buffy is the high water mark in female characters, Bella Swan of *Twilight* is a nearly complete reversal of Buffy's progress. Bella is a creature at complete mercy to her carnal whims, and must rely upon the moral guidance of the men around her. Hailed as a "strong female character," for saving herself until marriage and refusing to abort a child that endangered her life makes her quite clearly a return to the Victorian ideal of womanhood described in Dracula.

20:00: The Tropes that Time Forgot, Melissa Frennea and Lisa Bonanni, BL Garden of DFW (18+ only panel)

Yaoi is a formulaic, pornographic genre of anime and manga that depicts male homoerotic relationships, but is written by and for women. The genre grew out of *shojo* (girl's comics) in the early 1970s, became popular in the gay boom of the early 1990s, and gained an international fandom in the 2000s.

This popularity derives in part from the overwhelming sexual content, to the extent that the genre may be defined as *"yama nashi, ochi nashi, imi nashi"* (no climax, no point, no meaning); i.e. there is no plot other than romance and sex. The genre is defined not only by this lack of plot, but by these essential plot tropes:

1. *Bishounen*, good-looking, youthful males seemingly or actually underage
2. Rigid gender roles and depictions found in the *seme* (top) and *uke* (bottom) sexual positions
3. Rape or some form of dubiously-consensual sex
4. Lack of identification and labeling with a gay identity

Throughout *yaoi'*s history, the genre has sought to maintain these plot tropes with few variations, which may include character ethnicity, occupation, and/or the circumstances that lead to sex. Many of the above plot tropes were established in the early formative works of the genre, such as *Kaze to Ki no Uta.* However, while the above themes were always present in the genre, other early themes include a heavy emphasis on tragedy, fantastical settings, and racial dominance, were much more prevalent. These early themes were once hallmarks of the genre, yet have almost entirely disappeared from *yaoi*.

This presentation aims to explore how these *yaoi* plot tropes arose, why some remain popular why others died out, and to discuss each tropes function within the genre. Yaoi is a constantly evolving genre that perpetuates tropes as often as it appropriates and distorts them. Retrospectively analyzing these early tropes sheds light on the genre's formations and can postulate its possible future, but importantly provides a window to view larger changes in Japanese attitudes towards homosexuality in general.

Yaoi, *bara*, and slash are all popular forms of media that depict homoerotic relationships between two men. *Yaoi* is a formulaic, pornographic genre of Japanese anime and manga that depicts male homoerotic relationships, but is written by and for women. *Bara*, contrastingly, is a pornographic genre of Japanese manga that depicts male homoerotic relationships, but is written by and for gay men. Slash is a Western term that originally referred to fan works featuring male homoerotic relationships, but has now become a catch-all term for any Western homoerotic works (generally written by and/or for women).

While *yaoi* and *bara* both emerged as genres of Japanese manga in the 1970s, concurrently slash began as male/male Star Trek fan fiction in the West. *Yaoi* and *bara* have evolved together and often in reaction to the other, and for a long time, slash remained isolated. However, with the popularity of the internet and the global popularity of *yaoi*, *bara*, and slash, there has been an influx of cross-pollination between genres and a general adoption and amalgamation of their tropes and characteristics.

This presentation serves as an introduction to the worlds of *yaoi*, *bara*, and slash by examining the current body of academic literature as well as the historical and contemporary fan bases for these genres. While this panel will primarily be looking at *yaoi*, *bara*, and slash literature, the discussion will also analyze the cultures from which these genres originate and the surrounding attitudes towards homosexuality and contemporary portrayals of gay characters in other media.

21:00: End of Day

Sunday, 7 June

10:00: Real Money in Gaming Economies, Jonathan Davis, FANS Committee

Over the last decade, many companies have attempted to operate massively multiplayer online (MMO) games in which the economies can be tied to real world currency (RWC). This development has generated vast interest in the amounts of money that can be obtained or lost in both a real and virtual since, but little public attention has been paid to the economic construction behind such systems. This paper will consider three games: *Eve Online*, *Entropia Universe*, and *Diablo III*. These three hold particular interest as *Eve Online* allows users to use in-game currency to purchase play time that would otherwise require a subscription fee, but does not allow conversion to RWC. *Entropia Universe* keeps the internal currency fixed to a ratio of 10/1 to the US dollar and does allow for conversion to RWC. *Diablo III* hosted a pair of online auction houses with one exclusively for in-game currency and another for RWC transactions.

The control systems for the economies of all MMO style games will first be analyzed in comparison to a central bank by using macroeconomics (Tim Howard). This analysis will then be used to compare the three games and how their systems relate and differ from one another in considering four aspects:

1. Ability to regulate inflation/deflation
2. Effect high paying users can influence gameplay
3. Systems to "tax" players in order to generate revenue
4. Results of "black market" transactions

Finally the paper will consider the validity of digital ownership as a value proposition in general, and specifically the potential for digital currencies to be effective or detrimental to global economics.

10:30: Fans' Parasocial Connections to Dystopian Literary Characters: A Conceptual Typology, Dr. Jacki Fitzpatrick and Felix Morgan, Texas Tech University

This theoretical presentation will summarize a conceptual typology of parasocial relationships with characters in dystopian literature. Parasocialism has been defined as individuals' degree of interest and investment in fictional characters, celebrities, or other media figures (Cole & Leets, 1999; Derrick, Gabriel & Tippin, 2008; Horton & Wohl, 1956). Individuals make investments via the emotional, cognitive and behavioral energy dedicated to fictional characters (Gunnels, 2009; Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes, 2006). These investments parallel relationships with other people, and prior research has shown that parasocial processes are meaningful to fans (Cohen, 2004). Parasocialism is not inherently positive; there can be a range of fan-character connections (Fitzpatrick & Phillips, 2012; Stever, 2009). Dystopian fiction, such as The Hunger Games (THG) trilogy, provides an environment in which diverse connections might be considered.

There has been a recent trend in science fiction/fantasy books published specifically for young adults (Cooperative Children's Book Center, 2011), including THG trilogy. More than 50 million copies of the novels have been sold, and the top 50 top fansites (created entirely by readers) have over 30 million page views (Curwood, 2013). Fans report deep relationships to characters, and a sense of connection between their own life experiences and THG environment (Magee, Sebastian, Novak, Mascaro, Black, & Goggins, 2013). Indeed, Simmons (2012) has argued that this trilogy can be a means to spur social justice actions in 'real' life. Given the persistence and breadth of THG popularity, it seems worthwhile to consider possible parasocial linkages in greater depth.

Based on social-psychological principles, the authors developed a five-part typology to describe a range of parasocial connections (affiliated kin, admiration, differentness, downward social comparison, schadenfreude). Affiliated kin represents a high familiarity and bond to characters, as if they were close family/friends (e.g., Sood & Rogers, 2000). This sense of kin can apply to single characters or members of a THG district. Admiration refers to respect for individuals' qualities or abilities (Stever, 2009). Admiration would align with arguments that dystopian fiction can highlight female characters' strengths when faced with adversity (e.g., Baccolini, 2004; Lukes, 2014). Differentness represents a perception that celebrities/fictional characters are a distinct class or group of people (e.g., Phelps, 2007). Dystopian fiction can rely upon its distinctiveness/contrast from the typical lives of its readers (e.g., Merskin, 2011; Sar & Murni, 2012). Differentness would also fit with a reliance on dystopian fiction after disastrous events (e.g., Sicher & Skradol, 2006). Downward social comparison refers to psychological relief after learning that others suffer more difficult circumstances (e.g., greater poverty, more peer

conflicts). This comparison can give individuals a renewed gratitude for the positive elements of their own existence (Hamilton, 2009). Thus, some individuals might actively seek dystopian fiction in an effort to feel better (rather than worse) in their daily lives. Schadenfreude refers to pleasure derived from others' problems/unhappiness (Leach, Spears, Branscombe & Doosje, 2003), which would fit individuals' intense interest in characters whom they love to hate. Parallel to hate-watching tv/films (Borrelli, 2013) schadenfreude might explain a hate-reading process for some THG fans.

11:00: Sacred Time and Ritualistic Behavior at *Harry Potter* Book Releases and Film Premieres, Tyler Jean Dukes, Texas State University

Mircea Eliade suggests that the value of a man's life is measured by its participation with, and adherence to, the mythical age. This mythical age, or archaic time, as Eliade refers to it, is constituted by groups of humans living together with mythocentric values and norms, where "myth happens to be the very foundation" of their "social life and culture" (Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries 1967; 23). The *Harry Potter* books and films, with their pervasive international appeal and domination of contemporary culture for more than a decade (1997-2011), generated a modern mythical age obsessed with heroes, symbols, quests, and hermeneutical images. *Harry Potter* cultivated a fandom who detected, acquiesced, and constructed new hermeneutic models. According to Eliade, by assembling creative hermeneutics, people "[modify] the[ir] quality of existence" (The Quest 62), and that by further combining religiosity and creativeness, humans become meaning-makers themselves, through the use of images, myths, rites, and symbols (Paraschivescu 60). Fans of *Harry Potter* became these humans: creative and religious in their interactions with their texts, the books and films. By attending and participating in the "release events" centered around the *Harry Potter* books and films, they created a space of neoarchaic time, in which followers/fans of *Harry Potter* could transcend "profane time," and enter in to a space of "sacred time" (The Myth of the Eternal Return 1991; 35).

This socio-historic and ethnographic study will explore the special sacrality afforded to these premiere/release events, and the pseudo-religious effects they had on fans of *Harry Potter*. These fans, as a product of popular culture, shared an identity category linked to rituals (Kidd 78). They tried to re-create neomythic archetypes (i.e. the Boy Who Lived, the Cleverest Witch) "through repetition or participation" – the only avenues, according to Eliade, that lead to the "real," and the sacred (The Myth of the Eternal Return 1991; 34). Particularly, this paper will focus on the rituals of preparation a fan underwent for such events (i.e. re-reading books, preparing cosplays), and the community initiation process that occurred once at the "release" (i.e. costume contests, trivia games, letter writing stations, film watching). It is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted at movie premiers and release parties, book release events, and an online Q&A with self-proclaimed *Harry Potter* "fans." Like Matthew Hale, I will assume a more folkloric, phenomenological, and religious attitude towards the study of fandom and participatory culture, and through Eliade's concept of the Eternal Return, I will argue that these premieres/releases were not only rituals for engagement for the Harry Potter fandom, but also "essential periods" where each individual fan could be "truly himself" (Hale 5; The Myth of the Eternal Return 1991; 35).

11:30: Viewers, Users, Fans: Brazilian *Telenovelas* and Cross-Media Usage, Júnia Cristina Ortiz Matos, Fulbright Visiting Scholar at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

The way of watching TV has always been linked to the development of technologies. The appearance and the popularity of the remote control, the VCR and the video game, for example, changed in some the way of watching TV, bringing the discovery of zapping, the possibility of video recording and the loss of a captive audience for setting up a more buoyant audience. Particularly with the emergence of pay TV and later the internet, there is much discussion about the dispersion and fragmentation of the audience and individualization of watching TV habit. With the internet and mobile devices, sociability around the TV was potentiated, with a conversational sphere more accessible and constant, fundamentally different than it was possible before. These spheres are especially noticeable on social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook.

In this paper, I analyze the use of Twitter by Brazilian viewers during the broadcast of *telenovela Avenida Brasil* (2012), wondering how the audience relates with each other and with the narrative through the new communication technologies. This is an empirical and exploratory study, which is based on the content analysis generated by Twitter users. Data collection was performed using a social media monitoring software. 30.685 messages were collected during the broadcast of twenty chapters of *Avenida Brasil*, between May 21 and June 15, 2012 (only chapters from Monday to Friday). After capture, the data were analyzed based on variables and categories of analysis. Analyses were processed and statistically detailed using the SPSS - Statistical Package for Social Science.

Having the data already organized, a theoretical reflection was necessary in order to understand more broadly the links established between reception and product. Three main points were taken into account: the TV story in Brazil in general; the characteristics of the *telenovelas* as a specific format; and historical features of *telenovelas* consumption.

Briefly, these are some of research results: all the days of the monitoring the telenovela appeared in the Trending Topics of Twitter Brazil; most talked about the villain (Carminha) and the protagonist (Nina), there is a strong bond with these characters who, despite not being built from a fully Manichean vision, reproduce narrative pattern is widely used in the literature and *telenovelas*; Carminha, the villain, is the character most commented. Though much discussed, Nina is not well beloved among viewers commenting on Twitter - who declared themselves Carminha's fans. In our database, 2,170 tweets talk about Nina, 48.4% are negative and only 7.2% are positive - the rest is neutral.

Another important result concerns the spoilers, users are not much concerned about spoilers, on the contrary, they seek to be informed about what's going on if they can not attend. People want to watch together. The main intention is to share the moment, the television experience.

12:00: Authoring Bronies, Meta Henty, Texas Christian University

One fandom that has garnered quite a bit of exposure in the media in recent years is that of the Bronies. Brony, a term that originated for the older male fans of *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic*, has come to encompass anyone that falls outside of the target audience for the show (young girls). The Brony community is a fascinating fandom to explore, not least of which because of their stance against bullying, their support of one another, and their wholly inclusive nature. They are also a fandom that exists, in large part, on online spaces: forums and other sites where they come to role play, chat, or even organize face to face meetups. As such, the Bronies, through these online spaces, are able to participate in "authoring" themselves as a fandom. Bronies, then, are not only a fandom, but also a discourse community, as outlined by linguist John Swales' criteria. Between online spaces and various interviews, Bronies have played an integral role in how they are presented to the world.

However, Bronies, like all fandoms, have not had the freedom to author themselves freely. Rather, outsiders, primarily media, have also participated in authoring the identity of the Brony fandom. It is this "outside" authorship that I wish to focus on and analyze here. This paper explores the various methods of authoring the Brony fandom, examining authorship from media and scholars through news articles, the Brony documentary, and the online blog Research is Magic, which chronicled one person's dissertation on Bronies.

As ethnographer Norman Denzin, notes, ethnography has traditionally been plagued by critiques leveled from identity politics and feminist theory, which asked, most notably, "who had the right to speak for whom and how." The authoring of the Brony fandom raises many questions: How does the media author an identity, and what are the ethical implications of this? How do we, as scholars, participate in the authoring of a fandom through ethnography, and what are the ethical implications involved in such an act? Employing feminist scholars such as Gayatri Spivak and Linda Martín Alcoff, I ask, who is allowed to speak for a fandom such as the Bronies? Moving beyond a simple chronicling of the various portrayals of Bronies by outsiders, this paper seeks to examine the rhetorical act of authorship and identity creation that takes place in the producing of these various portrayals, and what these acts of authorship can teach us about ethnography, ethics, and representation of a fandom.

12:30: Closing Remarks, TBA