



FANDOM AND NEOMEDIA STUDIES ASSOCIATION

7TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

29 JUNE 2019

DALLAS, TEXAS

FAIR PARK

HALL OF STATE LIBRARY

PROGRAM BOOK

## SCHEDULE OF ABSTRACTS

9:00AM: DOORS OPEN

9:15AM: Opening Remarks

J. Holder Bennett, FANS Chair

9:30AM: A Survey of Characteristics of Isekai Manga

Dr. Paul S. Price, US Environmental Protection Agency

New world (isekai) stories are an extremely popular genre that occurs in both Western fantasy and science fiction and in Japanese light novels, manga and anime. While isekai stories include a range of plots, one of the most common has the protagonist involuntarily transported to an isekai to begin a new life with little, or no, chance of returning (new-life stories). A survey of isekai manga was performed by manually reviewing manga at an aggregator site. The purpose of this work was to determine if a quantitative analysis of story characteristics could provide insights into the genre. An initial hypothesis was made that the demographics of the protagonists (prior to entering the Isekai) are an identifier of the target audience (e.g., adult males would be interested in adult male protagonists, teenage females with teenage female protagonists, etc.). As a result, protagonist demographics should predict other characteristics of the stories that reflect the interests of the different types of readers. A database was prepared of the 283 manga tagged by the site as “isekai” as of January 2019. Of these, 238 manga were found to contain “new-life” plots. The following categories of characteristics were determined for each of the 238 manga: 1) demographics of the protagonist, 2) changes in the protagonist upon entering the isekai, 3) behavior of the protagonist in the isekai, and 4) relationships with the opposite gender in the isekai. Multiple characteristics were determined for each category. In addition, tags assigned to manga by the site were scraped. The result is a database of 156 characteristics for 238 manga. The protagonists are 80% male and 20% female. Male protagonists are evenly split between adults and teens and female protagonists are 25% adults and 75% teens. Initial findings include 1) tags at the manga site were not consistently applied and reliance on the tags resulted in some isekai manga being missed, 2) the gender of the protagonist has a strong influence on story characteristics but the impact of age is relatively weak, 3) 90% of male-protagonist stories use a “standard” fantasy world or include elements of such a world, while about one third of female-protagonist stories involve a otome game elements, 4) >95% of male-protagonist stories have a first-female encounter with an attractive individual, 5) >95% of the manga either have the protagonist enter the isekai alone, or if there is a group, the protagonist is immediately separated from the group, and 6) all gender changes are involuntary and are male-to-female. While many of the findings presented are consistent with the

understanding of the isekai genre as being dominated by themes of male wish fulfillment, the work presented here offers a way of generating objective evidence to support these assertions.

10:00AM: If You Give a Monster a Sword: Healing and the Divided Identities in *Inuyasha* and *Blue Exorcist*  
Sarah Hashmi, University of Texas at Dallas

Following the Second World War, Japan entered a transitory period of reconstruction, rebuilding itself politically, environmentally, economically as well as socially. Popular culture in the form of anime and manga illustrates insights into Japan's evolving society and post-war identity construction. The trope of identity crisis occurs in countless anime and manga to this day. Anime films such as *The Rose of Versailles* (1979) and *Akira* (1988) feature protagonists with conflicting or transforming identities whose outward appearances express their internal struggle. By the 2000s, numerous anime series, such as *Bleach* (2004–2012) and *Naruto* (1999–2014), centered around estranged, adolescent males with opposing dual-identities who undergo a metamorphic process to resolve their crises and establish their adult identities. Scholars including Susan Napier have analyzed themes of identity in terms of adolescent psychology, posthuman theory and post-war social issues. However, many series remain largely unexamined. This presentation considers the identity crises of the leading male protagonists of the anime adaptations *Inuyasha* (2002–2014) and *Blue Exorcist* (2011). Both characters possess what Napier calls dual or divided identities, being both half-human and half-demon hybrids whose conflicted identities threaten them with total self-annihilation. Their relationships with their swords and female companions protect them from monstrous transformations. Using the philosophies of *yin* and *yang* and samurai *bushido*, this presentation argues that these relationships serve to harmonize these split-identities, challenging notions of the self in relation to the body as well as the living and non-living world.

10:30AM: Terrorist Video Games and Social Media: How Terrorist Neomedia Strategies Mainstream Society and How Society Counteracts by Sabotaging Back  
Dr. Ronald Lorenzo, Prairie View A & M University  
Dr. Bilal Sert, Prairie View A & M University

Terrorist groups in present times use neomedia messages as a form of propaganda. Drawing on explanations of propaganda by Edward Bernays, we examine the way that terrorist neomedia such as social media, online videos, hip hop music, and video games have become public relations tools by contemporary terrorist groups. Online, Al Qaeda, ISIS and groups like them purposefully shock and terrify the public by posting online videos showing the horrors of suicide bombers or beheadings. Alongside those terrifying

videos are also surreal photos and videos of ISIS terrorists petting kittens or posing with jars of hazelnut cocoa spread, showing the “softer side” of terrorism. Both images of the “harder side” and the “softer side” of terrorism have the intended effect of disrupting the thoughts, emotions, and habits of society. We extend the theoretical framework of sabotage as described by Thorstein Veblen to interpret neomedia propaganda by such groups as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Jabhat al-Nusra, and Boko Haram. According to Veblen, sabotage is the conscientious withdrawal of efficiency in a system. In the case of terrorist neomedia propaganda, it sabotages the functioning of immigrant Muslim communities with the ultimate goal of sabotaging western societies. Western societies react to terrorist neomedia with their own forms of sabotage. We draw from examples of US security services in counter-terrorism efforts in New Jersey. Sabotage is used by both terrorists and by security services who oppose them. Specifically, law enforcement worked with Islamic charities and religious groups in order to sabotage the recruiting efforts in New Jersey by ISIS. We describe both the theory and practice of propaganda as both sabotage and counter-sabotage.

11:00AM: Deviant Fandoms: The Social Character of Terrorism Fandom Production and Consumption

Dr. Ronald Lorenzo, Prairie View A & M University

Dr. Bilal Sert, Prairie View A & M University

In the contemporary world, terrorism has its own fandom in a similar way that pop culture phenomena have their fandoms. Unlike fandom for Star Wars or comic books, terrorist fandom can be characterized as deviant. Terrorist fandom rejects the norms, values, and beliefs of western society while adopting, paradoxically, much of its social character. The sociologist David Riesman in *The Lonely Crowd* (1950) described social character as the social organization of preferences and goals within individuals, as well as their predominant emotional drives. While rejecting the norms and values of society, the terrorist fandom replicates much of society’s cultural patterns, such as preferences for social media or hip hop music. Riesman characterized the predominant form of social character as other-directed, moving away from traditions and individualism and placing preeminent importance on acceptance by one’s group of peers. In present times, terrorist organizations such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Boko Haram, The Islamic Courts Unions, and Jabhat al-Nusra have online propaganda platforms through social media. The consumption of online videos, social media messages, and even pro-terrorism video games have become a major concern for western nations such as the United States and the United Kingdom. Additionally, too, consumers of terrorist propaganda in the west betray the influence of their other-directed social character by engaging in prosumption, blurring the line between production and consumption. Much as consumers at fast food restaurants become their own unpaid workers by serving

themselves drinks or busing their own tables, terrorist propaganda prosumers become their own propagandists by creating pro-terrorism messages on social media. We extend theoretical perspectives by Riesman and other sociologists in order to interpret the subject of terrorist propaganda and its prosumption by its fandom.

11:30AM: Anime and Global Citizenship Identification

Andrew Tague, FANS, Texas A & M University at Commerce

Dr. Stephen Reysen, Texas A & M University at Commerce

Dr. Iva Katzarska-Miller, Transylvania University

Dr. Courtney N. Plante, MacEwan University

Dr. Sharon E. Roberts, Renison University College, University of Waterloo

Dr. Kathleen C. Gerbasi, Niagara County Community College

Thomas R. Brooks, Texas A & M University at Commerce

In the present study, we examined the associations between sources of influence (anime content, anime creators, voice actors, other fans) within the anime fandom on a model of the antecedents and outcomes of global citizenship identification. Anime fans completed measures assessing sources of influence within the anime fandom and antecedents and outcomes of global citizenship identification. The results showed that perceiving the content of anime as encouraging global citizenship and believing that other fans prescribe a global citizen identity are both related to antecedents and outcomes of global citizenship identification. Moreover, the perception that voice actors prescribe a global citizen identity predicted global citizenship through fans' perception that valued others view global citizenship as a desirable identity. Finally, the perception that anime creators prescribe the identity did not significantly predict the antecedents, or show indirect effects on identification or prosocial values. Together, the results point to multiple sources of influence within a fandom to encourage global citizenship identification with indirect effects on fans' endorsement of prosocial values.

12:00PM: LUNCH

1:00PM: KEYNOTE: Eulogy for Monkey Punch

Dr. Darren Ashmore, FANS, Yamanashi Gakuin University

This year marks the passing of one of the last of the titans of the animation and manga Golden Age, Kato Kazuhiko - AKA Monkey Punch, the creator of the immortal Lupin III. This address will not only serve as eulogy for the departed creator, but allow me to present one of the final interviews he gave, on his views about his creations, the industry and his fans (young and old).

2:00PM: My Next Book: Leiji Matsumoto  
Helen McCarthy, FANS

There is no book about Leiji Matsumoto in English. Think about that for a minute. This is one of the creators of Star Blazers, the show that kickstarted US anime fandom back in the day. He's 81 years old and he's been a hugely successful working mangaka and anime designer since he was fifteen. It's long past time he had a book devoted to his life and work in English, and in 2020 McFarland will publish one, edited by me and written by an international band of scholars, artists and fans. Find out how I came to be involved in the project, and what you can expect from our merry band of Matsumoto maniacs.

3:00PM: BREAK

3:30PM: ESRB and You: A Fandom Parent's Guide to Video Game Ratings (Workshop)  
Andrew Tague, FANS, Texas A & M University at Commerce

Anyone who has walked into a brick and mortar store or browsed an online marketplace has noticed at least one truth: There are a lot of options. How is a person to judge what kind of content they want to view or allow their children to view? This workshop is aimed at guiding parents or relatives interested in making sure that they are making wise choices when selecting games and/or media for others to view. There is a second consideration though, one especially relevant to parents: What if the choices you make to restrict access to certain types of content are met with a lack of enthusiasm or outright hostility? This workshop will focus on how to discern what kind of content a game includes, how to decide what kind of content is acceptable, and how to stand by those decisions.

4:30PM: Grimdark-ian Man: The Sublime and Grotesque in *Warhammer 40,000*  
Ryan Johnson, University of Texas at Dallas

The monstrous savior, a figure of beautiful soul and horrendous appearance, the demon that fights on the side of angels, is by no means a new character type. It is, in fact, a common trope across not only literature, but human society; seen in the gargoyles of Europe, the demonic figures and lion dogs in East Asia, or even the terrifying mask of indigenous shaman in Africa, Australia, and the Americas, all of which differ in socio-cultural context, but are united in being used to scare away evil spirits. Yet while Victor Hugo and Edgar Allan Poe recognized the sublime and grotesque as two parts of a greater whole, in modern times such horrifying marvels are more commonly relegated to mass-market media and other forms of popular literature. Given their aristocrat heritage, then, it is no surprise that creators of similar "low-brow" fiction seek to elevate their work

through the inclusion of truly high-brow concepts. And in the grim darkness of the far future, where there is only war, the comingling of high- and low-literature has made such a combinatory, liminal figure as the Space Marines, the Emperor's Angels of Death, truly rarified. This paper asserts that the protagonists of the Warhammer 40,000 (or simply "40K") universe comprise a new and unique form of the grotesque. Starting from Isstvan Ciscery-Ronay's discussion of the grotesque and sublime in science fiction as a theoretical framework, I will demonstrate that the Space Marines form a hybridized, liminal other made from disparate elements of what was once human, genetically and scientifically modified into something wholly alien. These subhuman grotesques represent the same danger to the reader's conception of wholeness and stability as do more traditional cyborgs, while simultaneously acting as wish-fulfilling, sublime supermen, becoming at once sub- and super-human, and creating a new realm of the monstrous hybrid for fiction to explore. It is important to note that this phenomenon can be seen just as easily in certain incarnations of classic movie-monsters such as Frankenstein, vampires, werewolves, and especially in the work of China Mieville, which he terms "wyrd fiction." Nevertheless, I will show that the immersive/interactive qualities inherent in the 40K universe—due to its origin and continued success as a miniatures and/or role-playing game—make the Space Marines, as well as the universe in general, the greatest extant example of the phenomenon, and thus the most impactful.

5:00PM: Sex Differences in Parasocial Connection to Favorite Anime Characters: A Multi-Factor Approach

Andrew Tague, FANS, Texas A & M University at Commerce

Dr. Stephen Reysen, Texas A & M University at Commerce

Dr. Courtney N. Plante, MacEwan University

Dr. Sharon E. Roberts, Renison University College, University of Waterloo

Dr. Kathleen C. Gerbasi, Niagara County Community College

In the present study, we explored the associations between dimensions of parasocial connection and sex differences in connection of anime fans' favorite character. Anime fans listed their favorite anime character and rated dimensions of parasocial connection. Male and female fans did not differ in their choice of either male or female favorite characters. A factor analysis of the dimensions of parasocial connection showed three factors representing identification (identification, wishful identification, self-expansion), romance (romance, sexual attraction), and similarity (background, attitude, identification). In general, fans tended to feel more similar to same-sex (vs. opposite sex) characters. Male fans were more identified with a same-sex (vs. opposite sex) character. Both male and female fans felt greater sexual attraction toward opposite (vs. same-sex) characters. Additionally, female (vs. male) anime fans reported identification and similarity with their favorite character. The results are largely consistent with prior

research examining parasocial connections with non-anime media figures. The practical and theoretical implications of these findings, as well as the limitations of the present study, are discussed.

5:30PM: Ambivalence and Belonging: Expressions of German Nationalism in Rammstein's "Deutschland" and Their Reception  
Stefanie Thomas, Ohio State University

On 28 March 2019, the German industrial metal band Rammstein released a music video for their single "Deutschland," the first release of new material since their album *Liebe Ist Für Alle Da* in 2009. This video has caused a lot of controversy by depicting the band members as inmates of a concentration camp about to be hanged, a scene which was also used in their announcement of the video on social media a few days beforehand. No strangers to controversy, Rammstein have been censored by the German government office for the protection of minors, causing in a prohibition of the free display of *Liebe Ist Für Alle Da* in stores and leading to the band releasing a slightly revised album less than two weeks later. Even before that, in June of 1999, singer Till Lindemann and keyboardist Christian "Flake" Lorenz were arrested in Worcester, MA for using a liquid-ejaculating dildo on stage during a concert. However, although they court controversy with their use of taboo subjects and imagery in their song lyrics and videos, the band have repeatedly stated that, if they are to be seen as political, they see themselves as leftist on the German political spectrum. This study seeks to explore the inter- and metatextual level of the "Deutschland" video, which clocks in at over nine minutes and is perhaps more correctly viewed as a short film than a mere clip. It will put the Holocaust scene into the larger context of all provided visuals alongside the lyrics of the song. Thereafter, it will discuss the video's reception by Rammstein fans as well as the international community. Finally, it will make a case for why including the controversial scene not only cannot be described as "in bad taste," but is an essential part of the message of "Deutschland," namely an articulation of why citizens of Germany, if *not* of a right-wing political persuasion and informed about historic matters, remain and will continue to be ambivalent about their nationality and their relationship to "their" country.

6:00PM: End of Day



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