

## **Friday, February 16<sup>th</sup>**

**2:00 pm - 3:15 pm**

Workshop: Navigating Fandom

Hilberry A

**Shelby Cadwell** (Wayne State University), Moderator

**Chera Kee** (Wayne State University), Facilitator

Synopsis: Are you interested in dipping your toe into a new fandom, but you're not sure where or how to start? Do you want to start studying fans and fandoms, but you aren't sure how to go about it? Whether you are a new fan looking for other like-minded people or a researcher interested in studying fandom, navigating online fan spaces for the first time can be tricky. In this workshop, we will explore likely spaces to find and study fans and fandom, translate common fandom terms and tags, and discuss the ethics of studying fans and fandom online. During the workshop, facilitator Prof. Chera Kee will take participants through some of the most popular sites for fan communities, alongside spaces that will help you learn how to "speak" fandom. We will also learn about popular sites for collecting fandom statistics and doing research, as well as spaces where fandom is made explicitly political.

Panel: Stranger Things in Early Modern England: Popular Culture and Resistance Hilberry B

**Jaime Goodrich** (Wayne State University), moderator

**Michael Shumway** (Wayne State University), Stranger Fiction: Rethinking Foreignness in Early Modern Pop Culture

Synopsis: As early as the 1530s, England began to embrace new policies regarding immigration, trade, and social welfare in an attempt to police the nation's increasingly diverse population. A resulting urban/rural divide led to new trends in early modern popular culture that fashion a regional identity defined by points of cultural intersection and shared experience rather than nationality and citizenship. I argue that Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* and Robert Greene's *Disputation Betweene a Hee Conny-Catcher and a Shee Cony-Catcher* establish the foundations

of this urban identity by celebrating the victimization of the country migrant and his incompatibility with urban culture.

**Sean Levenson** (Wayne State University), The Speculative Erotic Economy in *Love's Labour's Lost*

Synopsis: My paper argues that Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* offers a critique of bourgeois early modern relationships and how they relate to material concerns. I argue that the Little Academe is a queer reimagining of how economic and political relationships in a society might work. Instead of having to enter into traditional relationships, the King of Navarre proposes avoidance of women. Yet the play's shifting erotic economies suggest the practical functions of sex and marriage. This fuller understanding of human activity, which is more nuanced than the men of Navarre ever realize, suggests the entire contingency of human relations.

**Sean Renkert** (Wayne State University), "There is a cliff": Object, Terrain, and Vitalism in Shakespeare's *King Lear*

Synopsis: This talk will consider ways in which human and object interact within Shakespeare's *King Lear*. I seek to showcase the strange ability of objects and terrain to effectively "act" upon the characters, triggering actions and thoughts which may not have otherwise occurred. Specifically, I inspect the King's relationship to a bundle of straw and Gloucester's resonance with the Dover cliffs. This decided non-anthropocentric perspective opens up new ways to inspect and understand the world of Shakespeare's tragedy.

\*This panel organized on behalf of the Wayne State Group for Early Modern Studies (GEMS)

## **Saturday, February 17<sup>th</sup>**

**10:30 am – 11:45 am**

Workshop: Queer Inclusivity meets Tabletop RPGs

Hilberry A

**Vytautas Malesh** (Wayne State University), Moderator

**Lauren Corneliussen** (Oakland University), Facilitator

Synopsis: Historically, hetero- and cisnormative representations in tabletop gaming have often excluded LGBTQ+ people. Even under the best circumstances, unlearning normative practices can be a difficult process. Breaking down barriers and experimenting helps facilitate the creation and acceptance of more queer characters and relationships in fantasy and science fiction roleplaying games. This creative workshop aims to provide a welcoming and thoughtful atmosphere to promote inclusivity so that all communities can grow and collaborate together. In order to achieve these goals, the workshop will focus around several concepts: sexuality and gender theory, inclusive table etiquette, existing queer paradigms, and creation of new characters. There will be a brief introduction of sexuality and gender theory, as well as a review of the best practices to keep gaming tables an inclusive space for everyone. Chosen systems, characters, and storylines will be reviewed as a group and discussed in an open format. Expanding upon this new knowledge and group feedback, participants will brainstorm new queer ideas as a group, create new queer characters, and transforming previous characters and storylines. This workshop will primarily focus on fantasy and science fiction settings because of their potential for the development of new conceptual sexualities and genders, but the ideas expressed will be applicable to any cooperative storytelling system.

Objectives:

- Basic understanding of different sexualities
- Basic understanding of gender theory
- Best practices for keep an inclusive gaming group
- Brainstorm new queer characters ideas
- Feedback from peers on character design

Panel: "Who the hell do you think we are?": Expressing Resistance with K-Pop and Anime  
Hilberry B

**Steven Proudfoot** (Wayne State University), moderator

**Erick Raven** (University of Texas), K-Pop as a Voice for the Oppressed

Synopsis: I intend to read from a prepared script supported with visuals of K-pop performers and related subjects as well as quotes via powerpoint presentation. I also plan to include short clips of various K-pop music videos featuring the artists mentioned in my presentation to support some of the key points.

**Nina Teal** (Wayne State University), Fantasy or Fetishism: Fan-Fiction Trends among International K-Pop Fans

Synopsis: In this paper, I will argue that international fans of K-Pop use fan fiction to explore the fluidity of gender implied within K-Pop music and music videos. By looking explicitly at K-Pop males portrayal of masculinity it is apparent how this idea of fluidity has resulted in current trends in fanfiction. While these works allow fans to explore Korean male sexual identity, they also exhibit fetishistic tendencies in regards to race and culture which complicate their expressions of gender.

**Sean Hill** (Lewis & Clark Community College), "Reject Common Sense to Make the Impossible Possible": *Gurren Lagann* as Resistance to Structural Oppression and a Rejection of Accepted Boundaries of Science

Synopsis: The presenter argues *Gurren Lagann* can be viewed as a fictional treatise on resistance to structural oppression and a rejection of accepted boundaries of science. Structural oppression within *Gurren Lagann* is demonstrated via exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural dominance, and violence. Additionally, although seemingly based solely on a fantastical storyline featuring an intergalactic battle with incomprehensibly large robots influenced by masculine arrogance, hope, and despair, *Gurren Lagann*'s usage of technology beyond the perceived limitations of accepted scientific boundaries is hypothetically validated through Chris Hardy's Infinite Spiral Staircase Theory (ISST).

**12:45 pm – 2:00 pm**

Workshop: Feminist Making: Techne and Episteme examined through Hand-spinning

**Stine Eckert** (Wayne State University), moderator

**Radhika Gajjala** (Bowling Green State University), facilitator

Synopsis: Exploring the relationship between Techne and Episteme through the hand spinning of wool, this workshop considers issues at the intersection of technology and the body, including such topics as gender, politics of aesthetics, domestic labor, global north and global south, and digitality, among others. From a practice-based and feminist perspective we will contemplate how the body merges with old and new technology in the production of material artifacts.

Participants will be asked to discuss and journal about their experiences in connection with the key conceptual frames that the workshop leader suggests. No familiarity with hand-spinning is necessary to participate, and those with prior experience are encouraged to come with spindle in hand.

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Panel: Wrestling with the "Real"

Hilberry B

**Steve Latawiec** (Oakland University), moderator

**Amy Latawiec** (Wayne State University), Wrestling is real – but not for the reason you (might) think

Synopsis: Pro-wrestling is rarely seen as a space where critical inquiry takes place. But what happens when critique not only occurs but is introduced by female fans in a male-dominated fandom? This talk addresses whether and how pro-wrestling being written-off as “fake” allows it to perpetuate problematic social norms (especially those involving women) and what might be gained by raising these questions in online fan spaces.

**Brian Jansen** (University of Calgary/Red Deer College), Piledrivers and Performativity: Resistance and the ‘Real’ in Professional Wrestling

Synopsis: This paper argues that a recent shift in professional wrestling storytelling conventions—away from kayfabe, the illusion that professional wrestling is a genuine athletic contest, and toward “meta” storylines that winkingly acknowledge the sport’s fakery—might be

read instructively in light of contemporary social, cultural, and political issues. I suggest that the way audiences make sense of the unreality of the “real” in professional wrestling might shape how audiences understand—and potentially resist—the unreality of the real in the world beyond wrestling.

**2:15 pm – 3:30 pm**

Panel: Enacting Power: Fans, Fiction, and Piracy

Hilberry B

**Diana Rosenberger** (Wayne State University), moderator

**Diana De Pasquale** (Bowling Green State University), *The Politics of Piracy*

Synopsis: I use political resistance as an entry point to examine the reasons individuals steal their television content rather than pay for it. This project also looks at issues surrounding net neutrality, digital democracy and examines the ways in which participants in file sharing communities of pirated digital television content consume media outside the established parameters of media distribution. Circumventing established modes of consumption can be understood as political activism and resistance. Using ethnographic interviews, I examine the ways in which people understand their experiences downloading TV shows.

Fun fact: everybody feels ripped off by their cable company.

**Mary Karcher** (Wayne State University), *Power, Participatory Culture and Social Media: What Happens When Fans Fight Back*

Synopsis: This presentation explores how the appropriation of texts opens the way to challenge the traditional power relationships between authors and their audiences. Through social media and participatory culture, the Internet has provided a space where fans can challenge the authorial power and autonomy the authors have the fans’ idolized texts, Because of this new space and these new literacy practices, the Internet has become a gateway for a fundamental shift in the power relationship between author/creator and audience/fan, a shift that not only allows the fan to exert power over their favorite text and (re)shape it’s past, present and future.

**Kelly Polasek** (Wayne State University), *The Political Power of the Speculative in American War* by Omar el Akkad

Synopsis: This paper critically engages Omar El Akkad's *American War* (2017) to consider speculative fiction's function as a tool for antiwar resistance. What does the novel's speculative setting allow the reader to imagine about modern war and how the capitalist system that perpetuates it might be challenged or changed?

## **Sunday, February 18<sup>th</sup>**

**12:30 pm – 1:45 pm**

Workshop: Revamp your ENG 101! How to Generate Critical Thinking Through Speculative Texts Hilberry A

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**Matt Linton** (Wayne State University), moderator

**Rachelle Cruz** (Orange Coast College/UC Riverside), facilitator

**Ching-In Chen** (Sam Houston State University), facilitator

Synopsis: Are you looking for ways to re-energize your English curriculum? Tired of the same readings on your syllabus? Interested in how to incorporate speculative texts into your course, while still meeting core departmental requirements? This workshop will offer participants strategies to hook students into the course (especially those who aren't too keen on speculative and science fiction); techniques for close reading, analysis and class discussion; tools for connecting literary theories, such as Queer Theory, Feminism, Critical Race Theory, etc., to classroom texts; and a variety of reading/viewing recommendations that are adaptable for any English-level classroom. Workshop facilitator and English instructor, Rachelle Cruz, has used *Binti*, a series of novellas by Nnedi Okorafor to discuss race, Afrofuturism, colonialism, otherness and home; *Private Eye* (a webcomic) by Brian K. Vaughn to unpack issues of privacy, futurity and identity; the Netflix series, *Black Mirror*, to analyze privacy, labor and gender; and more. Poet, hybrid writer and English professor Ching-In Chen has used Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower* and micha cárdenas' online, interactive game, *Redshift & Portalmetal*, in conjunction with a world-building project where students collectively imagine a speculative future world and critically engage in class discussions around class, gender, race, religion and environment through individual and collaborative writing.

**Hillary Weiss** (Wayne State University), moderator

**Courtney Bliss** (Bowling Green State University), *Bitch, Please!: Flipping (Off) Tradition (and Patriarchy)*

Synopsis: *Bitch Planet* is a science fiction dystopia comic book series set in the not-too-distant future where patriarchy is literally ruling the planet and “terminally non-compliant” women are sent to a prison known as *Bitch Planet*. In this setting, Kelly Sue deConnick and Valentine De Landro uses familiar film tropes and flip them. Using Laura Mulvey’s work, I show how her critiques of cinema are flipped, creating a unique critique of today’s society. *Bitch Planet* does not make people comfortable with its content or their lives. It makes them uncomfortable and aware of the discrimination happening all around them.

**Sarah Urdiales** (University of Houston), *Red Lips, Big Hair, Downtown Flair: The Development of America Chavez and Sexualization of Latinx Superheroes*

Synopsis: An exploration of the development of America Chavez, from original creation to her title role in America, with an emphasis on the pervasive need for the sexualization of female characters, especially POC. Discussed will be the Teen Brigade version of America, the original depiction of the character by creator Joe Kelly, as well as the current iteration written by Gabby Rivera and drawn by Joe Quinones.

**Hector Kilgore** (University of Pennsylvania), *Race Beyond the Stars: Time Travel and Prophetic Preaching in Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*

Synopsis: This close reading of “Far Beyond the Stars” challenges the idea of utopia in *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* by examining competing constructions of Blackness in the series. Using prophetic preaching and black theology, the writers of the episode employ a pragmatic approach to the construction of Blackness, which creates within the context of the show a chain of allyship that includes Jews assisting African Americans during the Civil Rights

Movement and Sisko assisting the Bajorans in their struggle against domination by two alien empires, in the end justifying the expansion of another empire, the human-centered United Federations of Planets.