



Popular Culture Working Group

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Netflix and Over the Top Politics? The Mechanism TV series and the Dynamics of Entertainment Intervention

Authors

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Abstract

Produced and premiered by Netflix, Brazilian Web television thriller *The Mechanism* (O Mecanismo) caused enormous public interest and controversy for its depiction of *Lava Jato* (“Jet Wash”) operation. A criminal investigation led by Brazilian federal police and Judge Sergio Moro, *Lava Jato* operation began as a money laundering investigation and expanded its focus on corruption in semipublic Brazilian oil company Petrobras. Provoking an earthquake in Brazilian political and economic system, *Lava Jato* operation led to the imprisonment of leading entrepreneurs and political figures, being the most prominent of them Luis Inacio “Lula” da Silva, former Brazilian president during two consecutive tenures and one of the most prominent figures in Brazilian politics during the last four decades. Released at a critical moment in Brazilian politics, *The Mechanism* production is considered as being part of a strategy developed by Netflix to reinforce its dominant position in Brazilian and Latin American television streaming market. Progressive politicians and activist perceived the series’ content as an overt intervention aimed to damage left wing Workers Party chances in the elections to be held a few months later and called to boycott Netflix (Nobrega, 2018). In a desperate attempt to alert about the damage the series could cause to its party; the Workers Party (PT from now on); former Brazilian president Dilma Rousseff blamed Netflix for intervening in Brazilian politics and *The Mechanism* creator and director Jose Padilha for spreading fake news. At the same time Rousseff alerted other countries and foreign leaders about a new pattern of what we could call “Over the Top Media Imperialism”, an overt intervention in local politics by an American media streaming contents provider (Laguna, 2018). On the other hand, the series’ creator denied any ideological bias, arguing that the whole Brazilian political system is corrupt, and the series depict corrupt practices among all political parties (Maria, 2018). Analyzing the series contents along with the media coverage in Brazilian mainstream online and printed press the present article examines the complex and troublesome relationship between an ongoing criminal investigation with ramifications into the political system and its fictionalization in a worldwide web television platform.

Submission ID

318

Uncanny City of Hyderabad: Terrorism, Poverty and Alienation in Films

Authors

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Abstract

After the ushering in of Globalisation, Hyderabad as the capital of earlier united Andhra Pradesh and Telangana states went through rapid economic and social changes. Firstly, the rise of terrorism in the world, given rise to already misplaced panic over Islam. Hyderabad was a target of three terrorist bombings in 2007 and 2013. Secondly, the neo-liberal city has failed to include the poor, lower caste and 'undesirable others' and the marginalised minority community of Muslims now live in the fear of being terror suspects. In this background, this paper studied two Telugu films Khadgam (2002) and Vedam (2010) - a regional language cinema from the southern states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. These two movies represent different characters from different social, economic and religious backgrounds in the neo-liberal and terrorised city.

These characters' association with the city and how each of them perceives, conceives and lives in the Hyderabad city is unravelled. The characters are some of metropolis tropes that Georg Simmel discusses – poor, sex-worker, stranger (migrant) and Muslims (other). The paper tried to understand the alienation and belonging in the urban spaces which are constantly under threat of violence (terrorist attacks). The paper concludes that Hyderabad citizens try to rewrite and rearrange the urban spaces ascribing new meanings on these spaces, by fighting and surviving individual battles and collectively the bigger threat of terrorist attacks. This paper tried to explore the alienation in the city which is manifested as the terrorist attack on the city. The effects of advent of globalisation, and the rise of global terrorism on urban experience of different groups in the films is explored.

Submission ID

339

'Jianghu flow': Examining cultural resonance in The Rap of China

Authors

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Abstract

The online reality show *The Rap of China* has become ingrained in Chinese popular culture. However, since January 18, 2018, the hip-hop subculture in China has been censored by the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television. This study aims to analyse the cultural resonance of Chinese hip-hop, and to identify how hip-hop reflects the changing contours

of ideology in Chinese digital youth culture. The study applies critical discourse analysis to lyrics of rap songs performed on *The Rap of China* by the show's co-champions: PG-One and Gai; it conducts 52 semi-structured interviews with audience members to investigate how they interpret these lyrics, and does a comparative analysis of PG-One's and Gai's raps on that basis. The findings suggest that Chinese hip-hop culture has its roots in the hybridized 'real' which is a glocalised hybrid cultural product that modifies the Western genre of hip-hop with distinct Chinese notions of conflicting authenticity, centred around the representations of '*jianghu* flow' with loyalty, struggle, and compromise.

Submission ID

676

Music and Identity in Streams: Spotify's Affordances as a Space for Identity Work

Authors

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Abstract

Music streaming services (e.g. Spotify, Apple Music), typified by their ability to tailor services to the taste and listening behavior of their users (Prey, 2017), are changing how music is consumed, experienced, and shared (Hagen, 2015; Datta et al., 2017). Few studies, however, have focused on the roles music streaming services and the practices they afford (e.g. curating public and private playlists) play within the identity project of the users. This paper fits within a project that examines minority identity-related practices on music streaming services.

The possibility of being presented with, and making, tailored playlists, as well as the accessibility of millions of diverse tracks and artists, might offer opportunities for minority identity politics, for which music has often been used as a vehicle (Leibetseder, 2010; Lipsitz, 1992). At the same time, platforms' affordances and commercial logics have the ability to enact, steer, and constrain the kinds of music users come across and, consequently, the range of identity-related practices. They can do so by favoring and foregrounding certain artists, genres and practices, and leaving out or neglecting those that are non-mainstream or activist.

This study aims to map the affordances of music streaming service Spotify and examine the opportunities and constraints for identity work by its users. How does Spotify enable music listeners to listen to, find, and share music and how can these listeners negotiate and express their (musical) identity? Moreover, which alternative, counterhegemonic practices and uses, unintended by Spotify, are possible? To answer these questions, we will use the app walkthrough method, developed by Light, Burgess & Duguay (2016), who call it 'a way of engaging directly with an app's interface to examine its technological mechanisms and embedded cultural references to understand how it

guides users and shapes their experiences (882).’ The method, grounded in the idea of technology and culture as mutually shaping, combines approaches from science technology studies and cultural studies. By ‘slowing down the mundane actions and interactions that form part of normal app use in order to make them salient and therefore available for critical analysis (882),’ we can explore the history, vision, operating model, and modes of governance of Spotify. Moreover, it allows us to map and analyze the various ways the service can be used in an everyday context (e.g., listening modalities, playlist curation), whether and how users can connect with and textually represent themselves to other users and non-users, and it lays bare the embedded sociocultural representations of the platform. The study provides a starting point for further research, including our own project that aims to understand the identity work by people with minority identities on music streaming services.

Submission ID

707

Panel presentation - All inclusive! – Program Strategies balancing audience diversity, quality expectations and stakeholder demands. A Case Study of the International Film Festival Berlin

Authors

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Abstract

Currently, "a polarization and division of societies ... on a scale hitherto unknown, can be observed virtually worldwide. Hatred, violence, disrespect, mistrust, rejection" (Schumacher & Warnemuende, 2019) shape the daily picture. "Social integration is an essential function of the media" (Hasenbrink, et al., 2019), in particular of the audiovisual media. Therefore, stakeholders like government and advocacy groups (Freeman and McVea, 2001) even justify legitimacy of media organizations—as moderators of social transformation processes based on information, education and entertainment—on the extent to which they actually contribute to social cohesion (Meynhardt & Franzt, 2019).

The scope and quality of such an integrative role—in the sense of inclusion, respect and reciprocity—thereby depend on the selection and presentation of programs that "reflect social reality in all its diversity" (Hasenbrink, et al., 2019). While traditional audiovisual program providers like television and cinema often either rely on mainstream programming in their rivalry to attract a mass audience (Roy, 2016) or succumb to the supremacy of US film productions, film festivals have always positioned themselves as windows on many different worlds. A program that also represents

marginalized and under-represented communities is likewise of key interest to the so-called A-film festivals, such as the Berlin International Film Festival (Berlinale).

The global democratization of production conditions associated with digitization (Krainhöfer, 2018) as the transnational circulation and distribution of films (Bosma, 2015), have encouraged access to productions as well from countries with less developed film infrastructures. However, to this day, the lack of homogeneity still prevents even gender parity in the film industry.

Like other international film festivals of the first-tier level the Berlinale has launched over the years numerous initiatives, including the installation of new business areas, which not only aim to "open arenas for artists to manifest all their unique voices" (Acciari, 2014), but also achieve the long-term goal of transforming an industry built on inequality (IDFA, 2018). At the same time this strategy offers the Berlinale access to emerging talents and outstanding film works across regions, genres, ethnicities, gender and orientation and ensures the Berlinale a competitive advantage in the worldwide festival landscape.

Relying on a quantitative study on the program diversity of the Berlin International Film Festival from 1980 to 2016 (on the basis of gender and age of the filmmaker as the countries of origin of their film works) and a qualitative analysis based on expert interviews in 2019/2020 the present paper demonstrates the development of the Berlinale over the years towards inclusiveness. In parallel the analysis shows how the Berlinale has gradually transformed itself from its original concept of an important presentation and promotion platform for world cinema, into a highly-diversified media organization. With activities along the entire value chain of film production, today's Berlinale not only makes a decisive contribution to diversity in the film industry, but is, itself, a driving force and important player in film culture

Submission ID

881

Seeking Queerness in the Heteronormative Films of Nicolas

Winding Refn

Authors

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Abstract

The popular, male-packed, action/thriller, gangster, revenge and horror genres to which the films of Nicolas Winding Refn adhere hardly suggest inclusion in a queer cinema canon. Refn's hyper-masculinized films and their self-aggrandizing protagonists instead fulfill a quota that contradicts the sissies, scapegoats, and psychotic, self-loathing villains that have traditionally populated film in queer Hollywood (Russo 1987). With recognition of New Queer Cinema (NQC) (Rich 1992) in the late 1980s and early 90s, film-makers and audiences alike realized alternatives to a 'queer' canon

offered by Hollywood. Yet, the framework of NQC also prompted critique of cooptation by Hollywood itself (Aaron 2004; Juett & Jones 2010; Mennel 2012), its dilution of avant-garde and queer film traditions (Davis 2004), and its disregard of queer global cinema (Schoonover & Galt 2016). Far from completely eviscerated by Hollywood, however, this paper argues that the queer traditions of NQC are mobilized in the mainstream, heteronormative films of Refn. Refn's use of camp (Sontag 1967; Medhurst 1991; Dyer 1992; Doty 2000) in *Bronson*, *Drive*, *Only God Forgives* and *The Neon Demon*; the idea of queer gaze (Evans & Gamman 1995; Drukman 2005; Halberstam 2005) in the *Pusher* trilogy, *Bronson*, *Drive* and *Only God Forgives*; and the idea of homo-heroic masculinity (Brandt 2000; Chan 2000; Fejes 2000; Walsh 2010) in *Pusher's* series, *Valhalla Rising*, *Drive* and *Only God Forgives*, allow for forging common ground between queer and Hollywood traditions in his films. Moreover, this paper reinvigorates Deleuze's (1983; 1989) ideas of the movement-image and time-image vis-à-vis the desiring-image (Davis 2013) to seek greater exchange between queer and heteronormative film traditions at a moment when dialogue of inclusivity, respect and reciprocity between divided groups and cultures becomes increasingly urgent on both national and global levels.

Submission ID

909

How teens are using YouTube? A map of practices, uses, and metaphors

Authors

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Abstract

This research focuses on one part of the outcomes of Transmedia Literacy Research Project (European Union's Horizon 2020) on teens, transmedia skills and informal learning strategies. The project was carried out in eight countries from Europe, Latin America and Oceania between 2015 and 2018. A multi-method approach was used in the study (1633 questionnaires, 58 creative and participatory workshops, 90 media diaries, 311 in-depth interviews, and observation of eight online communities) to explore what teens are doing with media and how they learn to do it. This article focuses on the main outputs related to the uses teens make of YouTube. YouTube occupies a central role in the media life of teens (Ito et al., 2010; Pereira, Moura, & Fillol, 2018). During the data-gathering phase of the research, it was clear that teens could approach YouTube as a key space of their media diet and, in some cases, as their main source of information. YouTube is for many teens the main search engine. It is a platform that offers teens not only entertainment but also generates a sense of community and can be an informal learning space for them.

Therefore, this study aims are:

- To present a map of the most relevant teen YouTube uses and practices;
- To identify, describe and analyse the most relevant metaphors of YouTube detected in teens' discourses

Taking into account the important role YouTube plays for teens, in a time when multiple instances of social life are expressed and conditioned by digital media and platforms, by looking at media practices it is possible to better understand the unique social processes that are enacted through them (Couldry, 2012).

Studying teens' practices and uses within a platform like YouTube offers a universe of possibilities for understanding these social phenomena. Therefore, the article presents a map of the uses and practices teens make of YouTube and the metaphors that emerge when teens put these uses and practices into discourse. Five YouTube uses were detected: radiophonic, televisual, social, productive and educative. These uses vary according to the practices performed by teens and how they are related to the logics of the YouTube platform. Moreover, the identified metaphors show the ways teens' uses are related to their everyday routines and the way they integrate the YouTube platform into various dimensions of their daily life, such as their media practices, and the way they acquire knowledge and skills.

Keywords: YouTube, teenagers, uses, practices, metaphors, platforms, informal learning

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966

Producing Intimacy through Live Streaming: An Investigation on Emotional Labour, Gender, and Platform

Authors

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Abstract

Video streaming and live streaming have become dominant forms of entertainment in China and have even fragmented the television viewership (Lee 2017). Starting from video-gaming related content, live streaming services in China nowadays have contained people's everyday life activities such as singing, dancing, cooking and talking. Live streaming can be perceived as a social practice and a cultural form that allows various user activities and generates certain cultural values.

While the live streaming industry in China has grown explosively and has become a lucrative sector of entertainment, it also "offers opportunities for lower educated, more marginalised people to participate as producers in the Chinese creative economies" (Lin and de Kloet 2019, 2). Over 60% of the live streaming content producers, or say live streamers, are young women coming from rural or lower-tiers cities seeking economic rewards. The wide diffusion of affordable technical devices, along with the booming live-streaming platforms, have offered them opportunities to achieve an upward socio-economic mobility. Zhang and Hjorth (2019) study the female streamers in the context of Douyu, a live streaming platform which mainly provides content related to video games but built its success on the popularity of female streamers (*nǚzhubo*). By looking at "the intricate performative practice of these women live streamers in positioning themselves in attention economy", they argue that the performance of these streamers to some extent is determined by the institutional power such as economic relations, platform regulations and broader social climate of spectatorship (2019, 811). Yet, the questions around subjectivities, temporality, and materiality in live streaming remain unanswered.

This paper aims to explore the nexus of gender, subjectivity, and technology by investigating the affective materiality of the screen, which connects the physically situated bodies of the streamers and the viewers with interface and digital features. The article in particular focuses on its influence on the practice of female streamers' emotional labour (Hochschild, 2003). The importance of addressing the issue of emotional labour in live streaming is that it offers an often-neglected aspect to understanding the role of gender in the digital realm. Data for this paper comes from online observation on 11 female streamers on a social networking and live streaming platform MOMO. I argue that in live streaming these female streamers are in a physical and emotional state in-between performativity and authenticity, and attempt to maintain an affective relationship with their viewers. This relationship is built upon a complex and negotiable process that is influenced by gender expectation and consumerist power, and the contingency of this relationship sheds light on what I term *dialogical intimacy*. To maintain the dialogical intimacy, different patterns of these female streamers' emotional management, which are practised on the affective materiality of the screen: deep acting on the screen; using digital features as emotional signals; using digital features as emotional reminders.

Submission ID

992

The Rise of the Korean Superhero: Rethinking Masculinity in the Age of Globalization

Authors

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Abstract

Dominated by either protective and fatherly figures or ruthless gangsters, the Korean action movie is not an easy place to find superheroes. So when a scattered but consistent flow of movies with characters wielding powers beyond those of a human are released, the portrayal of men deviating from this standard depiction of masculinity is noteworthy. This study is an attempt to understand those characters' transformation from bare life[1] to superheroes in the Korean movies *The Righteous Thief* (2009), *Haunters* (2011), *Psychokinesis* (2018), and *The Witch: Part 1, The Subversion* (2018) in the context of globalization, where technological and economic advancement in areas such as biotechnology, informatics, and genetics create inequality and division among male subjectivities. Our paper argues that the superheroes, and in some cases their arch-enemies, the supervillains, that appear in these films are cases of 'discursive practices'[2] where the masculine subject is contested and constructed around the inexplicable power to re-draw the lines of what men should be like in terms of their work and sexuality. This represents the position in which the male subject is situated, where his struggle at being socially and economically marginalized occurs through both traditional discourses of independent and powerful masculinity and how he positions himself in relation to technology.

The men in these films are outside the system of globalized technological advancement. They lack the agency to become powerful men who control technology. Their superpowers provide them with the agency to undergo the transformation from their worthless lives to become men of power and status; that is, they are afforded the opportunity to become masters of technology. The result of this transformation varies depending on the film, but ultimately none of them are successful in their attempts to become powerful and productive. On the contrary, they become part of technology: mere elements of technological development that increasingly requires men and their masculinity to be its source, as both raw material and resource. This, we claim, is due to the fact that by being given the agency to transform, they do not ever obtain real agency: agency cannot exist if it is provided by an outside force.

[1] Agamben, Giorgio, *Nudities*, translated by David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella, Stanford, Calif. : Stanford University Press, 2011.

[2] Barad, Karen. "Posthumanist performativity: Toward an understanding of how matter comes to matter." *Signs: Journal of women in culture and society* 28.3, 2003

Submission ID

1084

A Study of the Text Creations of Chinese K-pop Fandom

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Abstract

In the fan events, fans are active, creative, and intelligent. The strategies they use or embezzle and the art of their work are worthy of our discussion. 'Fandom' is a popular cultural feature since industrial society. Fiske believes that fan culture is an enhanced form of popular culture in industrialized society, and fans are some "excessive readers." Fans have created a fan culture that has its own form of production and distribution. Some texts produced and circulated in fan groups often have the high production value of official cultural texts. However, fans' text production drive is not for making money. In fact, they often pay for their output. And as fans have invested more and more resources in practical activities, some of the texts they created have also entered the public vision other than internal members, and have produced a huge response. This study intends to select the Chinese fan base of the K-pop idol boy group BTS, which has swept the world in recent years, as the research object, because this fan group in China has rich achievements in text creation and has aroused a warm response at home and abroad. This research combines qualitative research methods such as in-depth interviews and online ethnography to try to explore how Chinese K-pop fans in the media consumption process exert their positive text productivity and the changes and impacts they bring. The research will explore the current status of text production in China's K-pop fans, and combine the Spectacle/Performance Paradigm from 'Front' and 'Backstage', 'Text Creation and Self-image Realization', 'The Interaction of the other and the Construction of Self-identity' and 'The Presentation of Collective Consciousness' to study. The meaning practice of Chinese K-pop fans during the consumption process provides a huge "extra" market for the cultural industry. Not only do fans often buy large quantities of popular cultural products, but their re-creation provides a lot of valuable information for the cultural industry sector.

Submission ID

1135

National Identity as Reflected in the Hanfu Craze in China

Authors

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Abstract

The accelerated process of globalization and digitalization has posed both global homogenization and internal fragmentation challenges to national identity. Thus, national identity is expected to be rearticulated to cultivate a local resilience towards these trends. Since the formation of national identity requires a cultural construction and imagination (Anderson, 1983), it's necessary to recognize cultural indicators for national identity construction and communication (Skinner & Kubacki, 2007). Cultural indicators as identity markers of national identity carry symbolic importance either as its signals, or can be mobilized by individuals for a self-identity claim (Bechhofer et al., 1999). Traditional cultural symbols are crucial identity markers. It's not a new phenomenon that these symbols being branded as modern products' cultural added values, or reproduced as cultural products, especially in the booming cultural industries to strengthen audiences' sense of nationalist pride (Crawford, 2010).

However, this trend has brought up concerns about whether the national identity implications traditional cultural symbols carry have been reconceptualized in its reproduction and consumption, considering the cultural hybridity and cultural democratization facilitated by globalization and participatory internet. To respond to those concerns, this research focuses on China's recent Hanfu (Han Chinese's traditional daily attire embodying Chinese etiquette culture, whose history can date back to 11th BC) Craze.

The Hanfu revitalization initially emerged in the early 21st century in the fear that Chinese national culture would dissolve in modernization. However, it's not until recent years that Hanfu becomes so popular that initiates a booming industry. The growth of Hanfu Craze is greatly contributed by its popularity on Chinese social media and video-sharing websites. Take Bilibili (a Chinese video-sharing website themed around animation, comic and game) for instance, there are thousands of Hanfu-related videos posted by its users covering various themes. The most welcoming video has been viewed about 5.17 million times and attracted over 18 thousand comments. To deconstruct the national identity reconceptualized during Hanfu Craze, following questions are answered:

1. Who are the key actors in the reconceptualization of national identity in the Hanfu Craze?
2. What kind of identities have these actors attached to Hanfu?
3. How do differential identities interact with the national identity carried by Hanfu?

This paper begins with an overview of Hanfu Craze's formation to grasp a wider context. Then based on content analysis of comments of Top 10 most viewed Hanfu videos and interpretation of video contents, ordinary fans' and social media influencers' respective identification of Hanfu have been explored. Moreover, expert interviews are conducted with 10 interviewees, including two Hanfu designers, three managers in Hanfu industry, and five scholars in culture and media studies. By deconstructing the reconceptualization of national identity during Hanfu Craze, further thinking has been given to how to incorporate traditional cultural symbols into a daily discourse and hybridize national identity with both the globalizing identities and individual's self-representations. To conclude, strategic suggestions are proposed on the effective popularization of traditional culture and its mobilization for national identity demonstration in the globalizing and participatory society.

Key Words: national identity, Hanfu, cultural symbols, hybrid identity

Submission ID

1265

The Fandom of “Inferior” Diva: Gay Men’s Identity Politics through the Engagement with Non-mainstream Popular Texts in the Aesthetic Public Sphere of China

Authors

Haibin ZHANG - the

Abstract

This study explores how the Chinese gay community re-articulate non-mainstream entertainment texts through fandom engagement to perform identity politics. Past studies on *diva worshiping* indicate that, in Western society, gay males’ veneration for public-reputable female celebrities empowers them to challenge heteronormativity (Babuscio, 1993). Surprisingly, the indigenous Chinese “diva” worshipped by gay men in China is poles apart from that in the Western context, which is confident, talented, and successful. For instance, the Chinese “diva” named Cindy was once the target of public mockery for her obese figure and poor showmanship. Nevertheless, she enjoys great popularity in the gay community. Thus, this study explores the logic behind gay men’s fandom engagement with non-mainstream divas, and its cultural-political meanings.

My study is based on the framework of the *aesthetic public sphere* (APS), which emphasizes the political significance of entertainment media. Traditionally, ideal citizens are expected to rationally and critically participate in public deliberation (Habermas, 1968). Hence, entertainment media are seen as the opposite side of politics and democracy. On the contrary, APS emphasizes the semiotic and intertextual convergence of popular culture and political discourses, as well as the political significance of affection, media representation, and aesthetic experiences (Jacobs, 2007). Specifically, APS provides inspiring routes to investigate how popular texts enable audiences to construct their identities and reproduce symbolic discourses that have political implications (Buckingham, 2000). Besides, this study tries to broaden the current framework of APS by incorporating the *queer theory* and the *subculture theory* (Jagoes, 1996; Hall & Jefferson, 1993).

With a qualitative but triangulate research design, I have conducted a 6-month digital ethnography guided by Hine’s (2015) multi-sited approach in the Chinese fandom of several gay icons, utilized Fairclough’s (1995) model of critical discourse analysis to dissect gender representations and power struggles rooted in typical fan art collected in ethnography, and interviewed so far 15 self-identified gay men with diverse backgrounds to understand their interpretations on non-mainstream texts and their engagement with them.

Preliminarily, a four-stage process of gay males’ engagement with marginalized diva is showed: *affective empathy*, *collective engagement*, *discourse reconfiguration*, and *alternative mobility*.

Firstly, gay men’s affective empathy on the marginalized identity of non-mainstream diva lays the

foundation for the fandom. In this process, fans superimpose attributes and struggles of themselves on the object of fandom (Sandvoss, 2005). Secondly, through collective engagement like voting and canvassing, gay male fans help their idols to win attention and acceptance from the social majority, through which gay men envision a future with collected mobility and gender equality. It also confirms that the meanings of fandom are located, not only in the objects of fandom, but also in fans' proactive interaction with them (Peraino, 2006). Thirdly, such engagements rearticulate the symbolic meaning of popular texts and produce *counter-discourses* against the current homophobic culture (Fraser, 1992). Lastly, when the ideal public sphere is unavailable in a society of authoritarianism and patriarchy, entertainment-oriented texts provide sexual minorities an alternative and safe path to overcome identity inferiority, encourage cultural-political engagement, and facilitate social equality.

Submission ID

1452

The Power of Space: The Images of "Factory" and "Youth" in Kuaishou

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Abstract

This article focuses on the process that factory young workers use video clips to present themselves by combing spaces of factories. The contents created by factory youth in Kuaishou have been chosen as the research object. Kuaishou, a short video social media platform in China, has attracted many young users (87% of Kuaishou's users are from post-Nineties generation(su,2017)) who are from China's third-and fourth-tier cities (previously rural area). Among them, young workers working in factories is a representative group. They use filters and other functions of the platform to make short videos about their lives and work against the background of factory spaces, which are different from those images based on mass media. Therefore, we see more vivid images presented in mobile social media about new workers working in situations that are not tied just with rural land or soil, but with modern equipments under new spaces. Studies on them can reveal how social change effect individual people and how mobile social media provide new stage for people to present the changes.

Studies concerning practices of self-presentation and impression management on social networking sites (SNS) have increased significantly. Goffman's theories regarding identity and self-

presentation, “front stage” and “back stage” presentations have been incredibly prevalent in social media literature (Hogan, 2010). The conclusion drawn from these studies is that through some methods, social media participants present a highly curated version of themselves (Mendelson and Papacharissi, 2010). With the popularity of location-based social media, the concept of "presentation of place" (Sutko and De Souza, 2011) has contributed to form homophily, bonding, and trust among those who share certain locations and participate in location-based social media. Furthermore, Schwartz and Halegoua (2015) put forward the concept of "spatial self", which puts emphasis on the mobile practice and individual aggregation of self-presentation in location-based media. “Place” is a type of constructed space, and the practice in it gives new meaning to space. This research will analyze how youth represent or perform aspects of their identity to others via displaying their experience and/or mobility within space and place.

Dongqu Mine, a mining factory in Shanxi Province, China's major coal-producing province, is selected as the research space for the study. The video clips we selected are shot in this area. We analyze visual, audio and content of the those videos. More detailed characteristics are chosen from: (i) types of short video content, (ii) the characteristics of youth and factory, (iii) the purpose and process of creators and (iv) creators relationships with viewers. In addition, the research conducts in-depth interviews with the creators of the short videos to understand how young workers own image interact with factory space and the meanings attributed to those practices. Meanwhile, it also reveals how networked individuals can mobilize new media to make self-presentation with social and cultural meaning that surpasses a standardized mass media image building.

Submission ID

1661

Deliberating fandom with introverted tendency: An ethnographic study of transnational waves of Korean culture in contemporary China

Authors

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Abstract

In terms of transnational cultural flows, hallyu has been characterised as one of the most successful cases all over the world. This article examines this phenomenon through the prism of the K-pop fan communities in contemporary China, which originated from fans interested in K-pop celebrities and other cultural productions. Drawing on evidence collected through ethnography together with 27 in-depth interviews with the Chinese fan community of the Korean boy band, BTS, one of the most successful K-pop groups hit on the international fandom since the year 2017, this study maps out how K-pop fandom works as an online carnival despite the national anti-hallyu sentiments, how

social media works as its context and the structural layout of the community.

Putting aside the overly discussed Korean culture proximity underlying the K-pop's popularity within Asia, this paper focuses on the context of hallyu by tracing the fan activities of K-pop star in contemporary China and how the fandom community evolves into an introverted carnival despite the pressures from the outside. The tracing of fan behaviour online confirms centralisation, self-isolation and internal development of the whole K-pop fan community. Specifically, BTS fandom interactions have witnessed introversive elaborations of details, while debates with other social groups or over larger social issues are nearly muted.

Social media platforms, especially Weibo, are considered as a carnivalesque playground for all fans to get together, on which there are productive user-generated contents with rapid speed of information circulation. Due to the polyphonic nature of online carnival, in which it is flooded with conflicting perspectives and emotive outbursts, the traditional knowledge on fandom which predicts a transition from participatory media culture to participatory civic culture is not easy to confirm in this study. However, nationalistic discourses, as one major manifestation of anti-hallyu sentiments, constitute the biggest threat that undermines the integrity and legitimacy of K-pop fandom community. Although some Chinese youth fans would proactively reject the official patriotic discourses in some cases, most respondents in this study have chosen to stay in silence especially when there were trade or other social and political disputes between the two countries.

The current case of hallyu development in contemporary China brings contradictory voices to existing academic discussions on fandom studies, which have taken place on how active fans can propel the flourishing of creative industry and participatory media and civic culture. This can be partially explained by the fact that the Internet, instead of helping to pluralising public discourse, can also be an efficient tool by authoritarian regimes to facilitate the state's propaganda and handicap spaces for public opinion and civic participation. Also, loose structures within the fandom community can also be one factor, since distinctive personal preference with a polyphony of ideas also causes inexorably conflicts among fans.

Keywords: hallyu, BTS, fandom, online carnival

Submission ID

1995

Soap opera in European television: Scheduling strategies and production policies of a popular genre

Authors

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Abstract

Soap operas are a very popular content (Ross & Nightingale, 2003; Geraghty, 1991; Kilborn, 1992) and a relevant genre for the television industry (Hobson, 2003, Wittebols, 2004). These programs have been very important for the dynamization of the local audiovisual production systems and a key element in the loyalty scheduling strategies. In this research, our main objective is to analyze the presence of soap operas in the daily schedules of channels from the five biggest European markets: France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom. This allows us to explain the uniqueness of the soap opera genre based on the analysis of the origin, the broadcast time slot and the differences and similarities among local markets and ownership.

This study has been carried out within the framework project “From Hegemony to Competition: Transformations of European Public Channels’ Programming Strategies Over the Last 30 Years (EU5)” of the Spanish National R&D Plan, funded by MICIU-FEDER (reference PGC2018-094863-B-100) developed by GRISS (Research Group on Image, Sound and Synthesis) of the Department of Audiovisual Communication and Advertising at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain). The focus of this project is to explore and explain the evolution of European television schedules during the last 30 years of the DTT general-interest television channels from the main European television markets (France, Germany, Italy, Spain and United Kingdom) which represent 25 channels: 11 public (Das Erste, ZDF, BBC One, BBC Two, France 2, France 3, Rai Uno, Rai Due, Rai Tre, La1 and La2) and 14 commercial (ProSieben, Sat.1, RTL, Channel 4, ITV1, TF1, M6, Canale 5, Italia 1, Rete 4, Antena 3, Cuatro, La Sexta and Telecinco).

In this paper, we have used content analysis to explore and describe the role of soap operas during the last three television seasons. Among other variables, we analyse the type of production (in-house, co-production, acquired), the topics (adventures, thrillers, drama, comedy...) and the broadcast time slot. Among the preliminary results of the research we have found significant differences between the countries analysed in terms of scheduling strategies, but prioritizing in all cases the domestic production.

Submission ID

2040

Creating the Popular: framing creativity

Authors

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Sabrina Sauer - University of Groningen

Abstract

Over the last decade, research into the production of popular culture, or rather the media industries in general, has taken flight. With the introduction of Caldwell's *Production Cultures* (2008) as a starting point, many academics have dedicated their attention to material organization of the creative industries. How are media industries spatially organized? How do they cluster into creative hubs, and why? What are the working conditions in the creative industries (precarious labor)? And many more questions were and are under scrutiny (see for example, Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011; Gill, 2014; Mayer, Banks and Caldwell 2011). Interestingly enough, after Caldwell's inside perspective on the media industries there have not been many studies offering a similar one. Most studies highlight one aspect of media organizations (mostly management level or the 'writing room'). A more in-depth perspective on what the everyday practices within the media industries is still largely absent. Such a perspective is important to understand how the power configurations laid bare in studies on content and consumption of popular culture comes into existence.

This study aims to add an insider perspective to the current status quo on the production of the popular. The project forms a small part of a larger project revolving around big data and creative production. The study at hand deals with a qualitative exploration of creativity 'pur sang'. How is creating popular culture understood by the ones who create it? What does each team member contribute? What kind of boundaries are experienced? To answer these (and other) questions, we interviewed all 15 members of the 'creative unit' at Talpa Network early January 2020. The interviews were open and qualitative of character, meaning that we used a topic list but no preformulated list of questions. Using an active interview approach, each interview was co-created by interviewee and interviewer (Holstein & Gubrium, 1999). All interviews were transcribed ad verbum after which they were subjected to a Foucauldian discourse analysis. This analysis was guided by three questions: 1) what is creativity? 2) which strategies are employed to maintain creativity? 3) who defines creativity and its boundaries?.

Results indicate a classic alignment between the concepts of 'creativity' and 'making things'. Working as a team, everyone's contribution to the creative process is acknowledged, but there is distinct hierarchy between the ideators and the more practical 'production' team members. The mystique around creativity of ideators is highly valued and the team is organized around those 4 team members who could be said to be the source of all creativity. Additionally, discourses on inspiration, and how even the smallest inspirational particles can be found everywhere, are geared to maintain the positions of ideators. However, the ideators do not take up subject positions in these discourses: it is other team members that articulate creativity and set boundaries for this articulation

of creativity to flourish. In our conclusion we will discuss these findings in the light of production culture, its power configurations and its consequences for the end products.

Submission ID

2083

New Path for Traditional Chinese Culture Inheritance: A Method for Analysis of Visual Narratives in Peking Opera Communication via Douyin

Authors

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Abstract

Peking Opera is a national treasure with a history of over 200 years, which has been declared World Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2001. Suffering the same fate as traditional Chinese culture, Peking Opera has to confronted with the communication dilemma of a narrow audience and a lack of inheritor. With a large explosion of micro-video social platforms, such as Douyin/Tik Tok, Kuaishou/Kwai, it is unexpected that the traditional Chinese culture find the way out in micro-video platforms delivering through the network audience.

Douyin (globally known as Tik Tok), a micro-video platform is popular among China's young social media users. According to the usage statistics of Douyin recently, 400 million daily active users were on Douyin, becoming the largest platform of culture and arts due to more than 93% traditional Chinese culture on it receiving 3.33 billion "like". Moreover, Peking Opera is the most popular. The challenge of "#Who says Peking Opera doesn't DOU", has been streamed 1.08 billion times and also 5.8 million micro-videos uploaded by users.

Therefore, taken the Top 10 liked micro-videos of the "#Who says Peking Opera doesn't DOU" as visual image texts, this paper will analyze the visual narratives present in the them on the perspective of visual narratology, revealing the reasons why the old style seems to revive on the popular media. The "visual turn" in cultural studies(Evans and Hall, 1999; Kress, 2009; Mitchell,2005), which points to the relevance of visual images for the understanding of culture. Focused on the visual grammar, this paper will further identify and form a visual structure for the communication of micro-videos, providing a good model for traditional Chinese culture in practical.

Moreover, based on the content analysis, it observed in terms of number of "Likes", "Comments" and "Repost" and coded from three major aspects: quantified impact, video content, and video form on the perspective of visual narratology. Data mining is also utilized to comments of the Top 10 most viewed Peking Opera micro-videos, evaluating the attitudinal orientation of network audience. Finally, it tries to answer the following questions: (1) What are the characteristics of Peking Opera

on Douyin? (2) Why Peking Opera is the most popular? (3) Who is its primary audience? (4) How to inherit traditional Chinese culture well based on the Peking Opera case? Through the above, this research intends to contribute to a visual narrative model, giving suggestions on how to deal with the micro-video texts in cultural communication and to aid in the inheritance of traditional Chinese culture in a digital future.

Keywords

Peking Opera, Douyin, micro-video, visual narratives, traditional Chinese culture

Submission ID

2089

Ludic Prognostication: Games as sites for simulating the future

Authors

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Abstract

In her iconic manifesto for cyborgs Donna Haraway lays the path for a life and politics replete with augmentation of the human body and mind. While the narrative foundations of games like *Deus Ex* have stemmed from the work of scholars like Haraway and Bill Nichols; this paper argues that games as media today have become an ideal site for showcasing possible future incidents.

By close-reading and analysing specific ludic experiences from three games namely *Deus Ex Mankind Divided*, *Detroit: Become Human* and *Cyberpunk 2077* this paper looks at how these games simulate possible trajectories of future. By using the narrative and ludic possibilities of the *Deus Ex* franchise, this paper critically examines how inequalities and the politics of the human body continue to not only exist but manifest in newfound ways in a universe where augmentation of the human body is widespread.

Similarly, *Detroit: Become Human*'s narrative centres around the price of freedom as androids built for different functionalities trace their own paths towards finding humanity. However, scattered throughout the composite experiential text that is *Detroit: Become Human* are news articles and feeds that talk about climate change disasters, and the geographical reorganization of the world. Lastly, by analysing *Cyberpunk 2077* and the detailed world it is set in the paper will examine how the boundaries between the physical and the digital blur akin to the prediction in Haraway's iconic piece.

An homage to Haraway's work, this paper will look at the three prognostication trajectories from the games and argue that games with their ergodic nature, ability to offer layered narratives and offer inherently engaging experiences have incredible potential as platforms to begin conversation on key issues. Issues that are likely to have manifold consequences in the future but are not part of mainstream conversations today. Leaving us to wonder if games channelled right, could spur innovation and development the same way books did for Verne, Asimov and Clarke.

Submission ID

2216

Ideology Expression in Games: The Construction of "Imagination Community" in the Incremental Online Mobile Game "Homeland Dream"

Authors

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Abstract

The game culture has developed rapidly and become popular in the first two decades of the 21st century in China. This phenomenon has made gamification a great marketing strategy for Chinese investors especially for the media industry. However, Chinese media companies are all "state-owned". Thus, conflicts are created by gamification in these companies between the state's interests and private capital. On the one hand, they take the task as the mouthpiece of the highly integrated central government and directly "upload" patriotism and spread "mainstream" value in their news stories. But on the other hand, they are tired of the little effect that this method produced in the process of communication.

In order to overcome this predicament, the Chinese media industry and Game companies worked together and co-produced the first all-free Smart-Phone "ideological education" game called "Homeland Dream" in September 2019 before the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. Co-produced by Chinese decisive news organization "People's Daily" and Chinese biggest Game maker Tencent Games, it adopted "building your own socialist country" as its basic logic and encourages the users to unlock more ideological government management strategies like "one country, two systems" and "reform and opening-up". However, wrapped by gamification, young people get familiar with and even try to understand the policies. The game received 2.4 million downloads in a week and ranked No. 1 in the iOS App Store for five consecutive days. Graded 4.6, it is even more popular than Tencent's phenomenal MOBA game on the smartphone, "Glory of the King" (4.3 points).

This article will combine the long-term participatory observation and in-depth interviews, and adopt "Imagined Communities" by Benedict Anderson as the core concept to analyze this game from the following three aspects: First, compare the differences between "Homeland Dream" and "Sim City" (a typical case of the similar type) and explore how it creates an "imagined state entity" in reality by inserting interactive gaming element. Secondly, conduct in-depth interviews with the senior player selected from an age spectrum to show how this game utilizes gamers' carnival emotion as a tool to consolidate imagined "national community" in the context of the 70th anniversary of PRC. Finally,

discuss the multiple purposes of creating the "Imagined Community" in/out of the game "Homeland Dream".

For the news media, this game uses gamification to help to change audience's stereotype towards Chinese mainstream media and to amplify its communicative effect. For game makers, this game helps to attract investment from the state capital. And with an "official seal", it helps to rebrand the game company and promote the recognition of commercial games in China. However, the shortcomings of the "Homeland Dream" are also obvious. Co-produced by a media company, it is less a game and more a tool. Low persistency and no increase in additional income cause the game falling down from the altar soon after the anniversary. But it still providing a new way for the government to promote certain ideology patriotism and spread mainstream values.

Submission ID

2324

Love the State as an Idol: The Perplexity of Nationalism and Fandom Culture on Chinese Social Media Platform

Authors

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Yanhui Zhang - Tsinghua University

Abstract

By the end of 2018, Chinese social media platform, Sina Weibo, has attracted over 462 million monthly active users and continues to be one of the most influential platforms in China and the world. The political potential of Sina Weibo, especially its role in mobilizing online activism (Gleiss, 2015) and the emergence of public spheres (cf. Rauchfleisch & Schäfer, 2015 and Bolsover, 2018) has always been the academic focus in understanding the social impacts of social media in the Chinese context. However, with a six-month online ethnography, this study investigates that Chinese younger generations' political participation on Sina Weibo has been simultaneously transformed by the rising nationalist sentiments as well as their engagements in the fandom culture. On the one hand, the platform is both shaping and shaped by the dynamic online participation of fandom culture, significant in its efforts in "manipulating the data" and the users' autonomy in organizing and structuring fandom groups. That is to say, the fandom communities on Sina Weibo are no longer connected by weak ties or casual participation but evolve into hierarchical structures where members' positions are directly determined by their digital abilities and devoted economic, cultural, and social capital. At the same time, these fandom practices originally aiming at producing the fan-based idols or increasing the social impacts of specific celebrities have also been incorporated into the young netizens' political participation, especially in expressing their national pride during news events from responding to the Hong Kong protest to resisting the US National Basketball Association. In disentangling the network of the use of social media, nationalism, and

fandom communities, this on-going study hopes to contribute to understanding how one specific element of popular culture, the fandom culture, transforms the political participation and its own online mediation in contemporary China. The authors hope to present their analysis in a video format, in which personal stories from interviews, news reports, snapshots and clips of online discussions will be integrated with academic analysis.

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Submission ID

2554

Negating Nationalism Discourse in Public Health Crisis: A Case Study of a National Virtual Anchor in Chinese Social Media

Authors

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Abstract

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak has become a globally concerned public health crisis since it first identified in Wuhan, China. The novel coronavirus, which has no specific antiviral treatment to cure, causes pandemic and public fear across the globe. In this time of crisis, a female virtual anchor figure Jiangshanjiao (Beauty Land) was launched on social media platform Weibo by the Communist Youth League of China in its official account as a way of inspiring public emotions. However, unlike the previously launched nationalist idols, Jiangshanjiao was soon strongly criticized by the public in social media for its inappropriate launching time during a public health crisis, for its idolizing the national figure, and for its ignorance of gender discrimination. The virtual anchor was taken down after five hours.

This paper sees social media platforms as expansions of people's gathering in physical spaces and a virtual space where the public discussion has taken place. Social media integrate immediacy, simultaneity, and interactivity into one media platform, and thus has become a powerful stage to present public opinions and to proliferate civic participation in the public domain.

This paper aims to examine the meanings and background of launching the nationalist virtual anchor by the CYLC, and the reactions and criticism occurred in the digital public sphere, intersecting theoretical frameworks of nationalism, feminism and popular culture. This paper elaborately interprets the media texts, including the launching post and the comments it receives from the public, using discourse analysis. This paper seeks to answer how the public perceive Jiangshanjiao, why the virtual anchor figure failed at this specific time of crisis, how the public reacts and challenges the status quo when nationalism encounters gender inequality, what role social media platform plays during this process, and draw conclusions on how popular culture reflects the dynamics among social, political and cultural facets.

Submission ID

2712

Deriding Turkish TV Series, Performing Bulgarian Nationalism

Authors

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Abstract

Socialist Bulgarian state-sanctioned cultural production about the barbaric, primitive, Oriental Turks abounded until 1989, to reaffirm Bulgaria's national identity as a European country with modern European potential that was crippled by the Ottomans. These media texts constructed the predominating images of Turks and Turkey until 2008, when the importation of Turkish television series for Bulgarian consumption began, met with an unprecedented popularity that carried them to prime time. Turkish television series continue to dominate ratings in Bulgaria (24 Chasa, 2020) and their unprecedented popularity showcases multiple Bulgarian anxieties. YouTube and Google.bg searches abound with results for the most popular, most romantic, must-watch Turkish series, however, hidden among the wild popularity of Turkish series are YouTube video parodies of Turkish series and zealous articles against them. Twitter houses the most anti-Turkish series commentary castigating the government and broadcasters for distributing the series, while bemoaning the deterioration of Bulgarian intellect, culture, and productivity ostensibly caused by the series. What does the Bulgarian experience of deriding Turkish series look like? More generally, what is the relationship of banal nationalism (Billig, 1995) to transnational popular culture? Through a phenomenological thematic analysis (Van Manen, 1990), I analyze op-eds, video parodies and tweets that castigate the series. According to preliminary findings, I argue that deriding the Turkish series is a performance of Bulgarian nationalism. Clenching narratives of Bulgaria's Turkish "other" constructed during socialist nation-building shelters a primordial Bulgarian national identity while Bulgarian social, political, and economic hurdles are imputed to the Turkish series.

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Submission ID

2791

“The Force brought us together:” A textual analysis of characters with marginalized identities in the Disney Star Wars films

Authors

Abigail Reed - Florida State University

Abstract

In *Staying with the Trouble*, Donna Haraway writes that “It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories.” The *Star Wars* universe is one of the most popular franchises in the contemporary popular Western canon. As a fifty-year-old franchise, it has thousands of original characters, stories, creatures, and worlds. In 2012, Disney purchased Lucasfilm, and the *Star Wars* franchise with it. This paper will examine the five *Star Wars* films created and released by Disney between 2015 and 2019 to determine if the narratives support a Posthuman ethic.

Posthuman theory is a theoretical model which proposes an alternative way of conceptualizing what it means to be human in the interest of putting aside Enlightenment qualifications of humanness that were created to exclude minorities and women. In reconceptualizing our definition of humanity, we can thus rethink our relationship with the natural world, technology, and each other. The goal of Posthumanism, as Rosi Braidotti applies it in *The Posthuman*, is to open up the conception of human to include more kinds of beings so that we can create a more equitable and inclusive living environment for all.

The narratives of *The Force Awakens*, *Rogue One*, *The Last Jedi*, *Solo*, and *The Rise of Skywalker* will be analyzed from the perspective of Posthumanism. The analysis will focus on characters within the films who are identified with marginalized characteristics (e.g. characters who are non-white, women, non-human species, non-heterosexual, and non-organic, such as droids). The stories of these characters, their importance to the narrative, their interactions with other marginalized characters, and their development will all be analyzed to determine if they are representative of a

Posthuman ethic that serves to highlight to the audience what a future world would look like in which beings of diverse characteristics and backgrounds successfully lived and worked together.

Ultimately, this paper will determine that the Disney-produced *Star Wars* films began with characters and narratives that embodied a Posthuman ethic, but because of production and audience concerns that occurred over the course of this series of films, the narrative focus was shifted away from these characters. Textually, this is especially apparent in the final three of the five films. Characters of color are sidelined in the interest of showcasing white characters' stories, and when characters of color are present in the narrative, their struggles are in service of the white characters. This same dynamic is also found in the narratives of queer characters whose arcs are pushed to the side in favor of (often toxic) heteronormative romances. Similarly, the droid characters are relegated to supporting roles in later films with little character development of their own. Non-human characters, when present at all, receive dramatically less screen time after the first film and their importance to the narrative also decreases along with their autonomy. Thus, while the films have radical Posthuman potential, specifically to paint a picture of a Posthuman world for the audience, the Disney films fall short and privilege a conservative, whitewashed narrative.

Submission ID

2928

Staging ugliness: Reclaiming extraordinary bodies through celebritization of abjection

Authors

David Katiambo - Technical University of Kenya

Abstract

This presentation marries Bakhtin's notion of carnivalesque and Kristeva's concept of abjection to develop a grammar for reading an unusual micro-celebrity utilising his extraordinary facial features to render the body a site of resistance. Stevo Simple Boy, an unusual micro-celebrity leaving in Nairobi, became popular in a disgusting way: his extraordinary looks. After bullies in social media likened him to a monkey, the artist composed the song '*inauma but itabidi uzoe*', literally translated to 'it is painful but you have to get used to it', a song that maintained the tempo of his popularity. Stevo is an archetype of people marginalised, but at the same popular, thanks to their socially constructed formal ugliness. The presentation attempts to deconstruct abjection brought out by the contradictory celebrification of people with bad looks. It uses Stevo's 'ugly looks' to analyse a rarely studied body resistance discourse: the staging of ugliness. Although disability rights movements have succeeded in transforming institutionalisation of unusual bodies, the Eurocentric gaze still perpetuates stereotypes of primitivism in the representation of beauty, with whiteness acting as the epitome of purity. Throughout the world, visual injustice is directed at unsightly people. It is this visual injustice that acts as the foundation for racist and class hierarchies, with the white, able-bodied, and heterosexual male at the top and the impoverished working-class black woman at the

bottom. The popularity of Stevo Simple Boy is taken not only as mediatisation of abject bodies, the epitome of poor art, but also a transgression of dominant discourses: a performance alternating between a farce and a critique of normativity. The staging of ugliness undermines the binaries between beauty and ugliness, putting the performer in a liminal space between two opposing categories that can be defined by both and neither at the same time. Through the display of his disliked body, Stevo celebrates the uncelebrated, ugliness. Such abjection collapses the meaning of extraordinary bodies, enabling the ugly to reclaim ugliness that has been relieved of its power to marginalise. Thus abjection and self-negation are utilised as tools for depriving marginalisation of its ability to demean those socially constructed as ugly. Through creating fun about his marginality, the ugly artist collapses the power of domination, enabling him to question the hegemonic forces of beauty and in the process regaining control over his extraordinary body. In this case, rather than glorifying domination, abjection deprives it of its ability to demean. The presentation utilizes ethnographic data gathered online from Stevo Simple Boy's Facebook page, twitter account and newspaper reports, to read resistance in the staging of ugliness as a dis-enfreakment spectacle. The data is used to identify emancipatory self-subjugation tactics, the provisional giving up of the body to an exploitive system employed to reclaim non-beautiful bodies through a carnivalesque against the regime of beauty.

Submission ID

2979

“The dark in me is all that will remain”: Mainstreamed nerds and radicalized incels

Authors

Shannan Palma - Agnes Scott College

Abstract

Drawing on theories of myth, collective intelligence, and convergence culture, as well as on masculinities studies, this paper draws a line from the rhetoric of the incel movement and the broader online community known as the “Manosphere” backwards and forwards through portrayals of nerd and geek masculinities in US film and television. More than 40 films and 15 television series are considered in constructing this narrative genealogy.

Incel, short for *involuntary celibate*, signifies one’s inability to find a sexual partner despite the desire for one. This paper argues that as traditionally geek- or nerd-identified traits such as facility with technology, subcultural obsession, and extreme intelligence have become more mainstream, those on the edge of these subgroups have constructed a more extreme identity centered on frustrated masculine entitlement. Incels locate their involuntary celibacy in their status as beta or omega males, doomed by their undesirable physical features. Women, biased by lookism, deny these men sexual access to their bodies.

The death toll exacted by radicalized incels has made them a popular topic of media speculation, but the group is still relatively underexamined by academics. The community has been linked to at least 27 deaths in the last 5 years, including 6 in Isla Vista, CA in 2014 and 10 in Toronto, Canada in 2018. In summer 2019, researchers at Georgia State University received \$250,000 from the US Department of Homeland Security to study the role of the internet in members' radicalization.

The role of the internet must be understood within the larger cultural context that undergirds and naturalizes incel rhetoric. This project traces incels' core beliefs about gender, power, and entitlement. What narrative resources already exist for young men in their first encounters with incel rhetoric that make that rhetoric believable, that give the incel worldview the explanatory power and ontological authority of myth? Only by addressing the presumptions undergirding incel rhetoric can we formulate effective interventions in its spread online.

The format of this video presentation includes a combination of slides and film clips intercut with footage of the presenter.

Submission ID

3021

Locating Fans in Fictitious Worlds: Understanding Tourist

Experiences at Bollywood Parks Dubai

Authors

Apoorva Nanjangud - Erasmus University Rotterdam

Stijn Reijnders - Erasmus University Rotterdam

Abstract

This paper attempts to assess the visitor experience of the 'Bollywood Parks Dubai' theme park at the Dubai Parks and Resorts. Bollywood Parks Dubai claims to be the first theme park in the world dedicated to Bollywood, which is a commonly used moniker for popular Hindi cinema. Upon interviewing management personnel and visiting the Theme park as a participant observer, it is indicated that the theme park invites tourism from majorly Indian tourists visiting Dubai who are fans of the popular Hindi cinema narrative. A theme park in itself is an interesting media text that is a creative visualisation of popular culture, with most focus on experiential set-ups and an attempt to create an immersive atmosphere. However, most research done previously on Theme Parks, concern themselves with a western lens, or franchises of the western popular culture established in the non-west- Such as Disneyland in Tokyo or Hong Kong; Wizarding World of Harry Potter, Orlando and so forth. These studies address the postmodern simulacrum displayed in theme park set-ups, also often criticizing the authenticity of these created, (over) simulated spaces that are copies of already fictitious popular culture. However, these studies do not lay much emphasis on the manner in which the tourists themselves experience and get immersed in the theme park. Moreover, it has further been neglected with regards to a globally popular cinema industry like Bollywood that has a wide

audience-base also due to the presence of a global diaspora. Furthermore, geo-politically one may question the presence of a Bollywood Theme Park outside of India and what this means for Indians (re)visiting their 'home' when abroad. In this paper, we seek to understand how tourists-primarily Indian-experience the Bollywood Parks Dubai, and what makes them revisit the Indianness. Furthermore, we indicate if and whether Bollywood Parks Dubai, is an attempt to weave 'Indianness' into the Bollywoodized narrative, and whether that risks Indianness being stereotyped by the way of conducting a site-analysis of the theme park. The methods employed- Participant Observation, Site analysis and interviews lends this paper with thorough and rich qualitative perspective. Therefore, with this study, an attempt is made to understand and assess the authenticity of immersive experience of tourists while being in the theme park dedicated to popular Hindi cinema.

Submission ID

3094

"Mirror mirror on the wall..". Ambivalent attitudes in the narratives of Italian Instagram users on female beauty, photo-editing, and the role of influencers.

Authors

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore how Italian digital media users negotiate representations of female beauty when faced with the representational forms they regard as hegemonic on Instagram.

We carried out 13 semi-structured interviews with Italian Instagram users (10 females, three males) aged 21-31, recruited through the snowball technique. Interviews were transcribed and underwent thematic analysis.

Compared to other Western countries, Italy shows a higher persistence of gender stereotypes in popular culture, and the Italian media foster a representation of women as sexualized objects (GMMP, 2015). Instagram constitutes the dominant platform among Italian adolescents and young adults. It provides an ideal opportunity for observing visual representations of women's bodies and self-objectification processes, especially given the importance of women influencers and the controversy around authenticity (Reade, 2020).

Among the main results, respondents show an ambivalent attitude towards image-editing practices and toward the representations of female beauty found in influencers' Instagram accounts. More specifically, a majority of respondents claim they reject image-editing practices in favour of authenticity. Moreover, they express concerns about the potential harm caused by 'exaggerated' forms of image-editing because of their contribution to spreading stereotyped representations of women's beauty. On the other hand, respondents also 'admit' that they exert some control over the photos they post in their profiles, and so conform to familiar online impression management tactics, which sometimes include photo-editing. In this, they elaborate on what can be defined as 'legitimate' forms of editing, while refusing more intrusive forms: in some cases, they find it legitimate to eliminate 'flaws', especially on their faces (e.g., dark circles), whilst apparently rejecting what they define as 'frauds' (especially perpetrated by influencers, mainly involving their bodies).

Respondents also tend to be skeptical about those Italian influencers who are well-known in the public debate for non-authentic self-representations and for promoting potentially harmful behaviors (sometimes even bordering on anorexia). Alongside critical remarks, some respondents also recognize that these influencers are examples of beauty or models to be aspired to, thus demonstrating how cultural standards of beauty are internalized (Feltman & Szymanski, 2018). Further discourses address the legitimacy of showing body parts and the efficacy of doing so from a business perspective; negotiating the pursuit of a mainstream model of beauty and the health-related issues of being too slim; the extent to which influencers actually exert influence, both from a marketing perspective and in proposing models of female beauty.

In general, these discourses illuminate the negotiations women engage in when reflecting on their self-presentation online and, more broadly, on their status as 'beautiful' women.

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Submission ID

3105

Have to Watch?! Provocative TV Production as a Form of Today's Popular Culture

Authors

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Abstract

Today's media landscape is becoming increasingly appealing. It often evokes controversial feelings and reactions. The consumer gets irritated, shocked, furious, hyped, and confused on a daily basis. Different media notions that arouse feelings of disgust, even hatred gather huge attention among their audiences. It also seems that today's linear television needs to be somewhat shocking in order to attract viewers. Television and the ways to enjoy it and to take part in it have been changing during the last years. Multiplatform phenomena have spread television consumption to several different devices and environments. However, instead of looking into the technological developments, it is intriguing to study the actual television content delivered via broadcast television. Television content has changed over the years more and more activating - especially with the premise that viewers need to be "attracted". The phenomenon of provocative television production simply refers to content that is in some way disturbing the common values, norms, and even morality. Provocative content can operate for example on exaggerated sexuality and promiscuity (e.g. Love Island, Temptation Island), morbidity (e.g. true crime formats), shaking of social institutions – marriage and family (e.g. Married at First Sight, Teen mom) and exploitation of abnormality, otherness (e.g. Body bizarre, Too ugly for love) and morbidity (e.g. true crime genre). The provocative television content is understood as diverse, culturally-driven phenomenon that describes the current state of popular culture in Finland. However, the phenomenon is global and not only limited to Finland, since the majority of the TV-contents are transnational formats.

The approach of the study is both multidisciplinary and intermedial. The study then focuses on the interfaces and interrelationships between different media in their social and cultural contexts. Due to this, the study also investigates the interactions between the different media, rather than focusing on just one medium. For this reason, also in addition to TV programs, also their websites/ social media and the material channel uses for marketing are being analyzed. As well as the media visibility of provocative TV-content in afternoon magazines etc. How the press deal with these controversial topics through the notion of advertising, especially when bearing in mind that there is indirect corporate influence when the newspapers and TV channels are from the same media corporation.

The presentation concentrates on the qualitative content analysis and close reading of provocative nature of reality TV-based TV programs (both national and transnational formats) aired on Finnish television, approx. within the last 5 years. It for example reflects with the theories of TV-documentary, affect, disgust, productional ecology and audio-visual storytelling. The material constitutes of selected television formats & multiplatform material and media observation from the press. The presentation will present how today's linear television content (including the paratexts

online + media visibility) invites its audience to watch through the notion of provocativeness: what are the main tendencies of TV programs and what are the productional characteristics, conventions and premises TV programs operate on?

Submission ID

3145

How Mom Influencers “play” on Weibo: investigating networked identity of Chinese Moms

Authors

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Abstract

Since the elimination of the ‘one-child policy’ at the end of 2015, China is expected to welcome more babies, and the maternal-and child-related industry is also anticipated to experience a surge in the next decade. Under the curtain of this enormous market, mom influencers are the ‘invisible hand’ that unlocks buying potential for parents. As a result, mom influencers will exert significant impact not only on their social media followers but also on the ever-changing business world.

Historically, mommy blogging as the product of the blogosphere has seen its initial prototype of mom influencers in challenging the power discourse around topics of motherhood and dominant masculinity in the online public space.

As users start to transfer their online interactions from the blogosphere to social media platforms, mom influencers require an ever-larger follower base, more diverse narrative strategies, and more engagement tactics to keep themselves visible and attractive on these more fluid new stages.

Previous studies have discussed how mommy bloggers present their children and families on the blogosphere to challenge the traditional understanding of motherhood. However, few emphasized how the mom influencers, as the new genre, achieve their popularity through presenting themselves and navigating their identities in the new social media context. This study aims to fill in the gap and provide more empirical evidence to complement the narrative community of online motherhood.

The theoretical framework of this research is underpinned by Goffman's self-presentation theory. Previous research has suggested that the self-presentation theory is vital in explaining individuals' information sharing and exploring identities on leading social media platforms. Through intentional performance strategy, identities can be sculpted with a vivid persona. Being non-actors as performers, influencers tell narratives in a natural way, which are perceived as more real for online users than famous stars. The new media circumstance offers more opportunities for this kind of performance since mass self-communication on interactive media offers essential tools to build a networked identity online.

Using textual analysis method, this study explores the pattern of how Chinese mom influencers perform on Weibo. By studying the most influential posts of mom influencers posts on Weibo (timeframe of posts was from January 1, 2018 to October 23, 2019), this study concludes that mom influencers actively apply various performance strategies such as showing the cuteness of their babies, using expert tones and designing involving situations. All of these performance strategies enable the mystification of their performance online. Through building myths of being a noble class who always choose 'the best', mom influencers secure their goal of helping their offspring win at the starting line.

As a result, mom influencers construct their networked identities through their gifting and @ing labor, as well as using emotional and dependent self to connect with followers. Last but not least, they bring the calibrated identities through their constant confessions online.

This study is one of the first to provide empirical evidence of mom influencers' self-presentation in the Chinese social media context.

Keywords: social media, influencer, mom influencer, self-presentation, identity

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3346

Hollywood in the making? Experiencing cinema and tourism in a small town of Brazil

Authors

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Abstract

Usually associated with urban metropolises, the creative cities model – the investment in the so-called creative industries as a means to revitalize stagnant economies – recently started to be adopted in different socio-economic contexts, such as rural areas and small towns. One example is Cabaceiras, a city of about five thousand inhabitants in the Northeast of Brazil that, in 2007, became the target of the project Roliúde Nordestina (Northeastern Hollywood, in free translation). The initiative promised to harness the existing potential of Cabaceiras as a filming location. Filmmakers are seemingly drawn to Cabaceiras because of its climate: the city has the lowest rainfall levels in Brazil and offers ideal light conditions for filming – conditions comparable to the ones that attracted filmmakers to Hollywood in the 1920s. The same characteristics that are beneficial for the cinema industry, however, are also signs of the hardship that Cabaceiras faces. The dry weather results in difficult drought periods and, on top of that, the local economy is fragile, with the main sources of income being agriculture, cattle farming and government jobs. In light of this scenario, the project Roliúde Nordestina attempted to offer Cabaceiras new paths for economic growth. The idea was to develop an adequate infrastructure for the city to sustainably attract film productions, and consequently generate job opportunities for the local population. Another goal was

to promote tourism through the city's cinematic vocation, engaging in the growing trend of film-induced tourism. Besides proposing a new policy orientation towards the investment in the creative industries, the project Roliúde Nordestina also represented a much-welcomed change in the popular imaginary about Cabaceiras. Until being rebranded as the Northeastern Hollywood, Cabaceiras was infamously known as 'the driest city of Brazil' and associated with extreme poverty. After more than ten years of the project Roliúde Nordestina, however, it is the question to what extent it has really improved the socio-economic status of Cabaceiras. How do locals experience and evaluate the legacy and impacts of this initiative? Based on document analysis and twenty-five in-depth interviews with policymakers and residents of Cabaceiras, this paper shows that many of the local stakeholders are critical about the implementation and long-term effects of the project. Although the respondents overall recognize that rebranding Cabaceiras as the film and tourism hub Roliúde Nordestina might have inspired a new sense of self-esteem and belonging in the local population, its concrete objectives have not yet been entirely accomplished due to several challenges that Cabaceiras faces, remarkably a scarcity of financial resources and its geographical and infrastructural characteristics. With this, we critically assess the celebratory discourse about the creative industries (particularly media and tourism), and analyse the possibilities and challenges of developing them in small and rural areas of the Global South.

Submission ID

3429

The self-representation of Taiwanese indigenous musicians on social media

Authors

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Abstract

Since most of the indigenous singer-songwriters with cultural intentions perform themselves through social media, they communicate culture to other people. As an online community platform, social media has a function of interpersonal communication to the contemporary indigenous music community. Moreover, the indigenous music became a dialogue field between musicians and listeners, from which it could be heard that the consultations between indigenous peoples and other groups in Taiwan during each period.

For the Internet surfer, social media are a way to link the content with indigenous music randomly. However, for indigenous musicians and their fans, they are a necessary tool for communicating their culture and identity with each other. This paper discusses the social media use of indigenous musicians in Taiwan. To address the issue of the process through which the Taiwanese indigenous musicians communicate culture, music, and identity with and to their audiences, this research is eager to escape the framework of the "pan-indigenous ethnic group" to explore the ways in which

contemporary Taiwanese musicians communicate their identities through music and to represent themselves online.

The Internet provides a space for indigenous self-representation. For the movements, social media may improve their visibility in society in order to articulate the world in which to reshape their self-positioning. However, in my research, the perspective is transferred to exploring the more comprehensive debates on the complicated interaction among those in the Taiwanese indigenous musical network, indigenous culture, and the networking on social media. This is for investigating the nature of indigeneity in contemporary Taiwan through observation of the communication process of indigenous musicians on social media and the fieldwork in their life experiences, including local life, music festivals and performance in different countries.

Submission ID

3438

Researching gaming practices with teenagers: ethics and challenges

Authors

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Abstract

This article discusses the ethical challenges and concerns that should be considered while studying the teenager's gaming practices. The innovative approach combines the use of focus groups and gaming interviews, which is especially relevant for studying how young people perceive and construct their own identities through video games, considering the intersectionality between gender and social class. A gaming interview consists in interviewing the teenagers while they are playing video games in their natural and everyday environment, that is to say at home, in the manner and at the time that they usually play (Shaw, 2015). The use of gaming interviews allows studying the practices of teenagers in an environment that is as day-to-day as possible, avoiding the drawbacks of observation in a laboratory.

The identity formation is especially important during adolescence when teenagers are most motivated to forge new social groupings and to negotiate alternatives to given cultural meanings (Livingstone, 2002). Besides, the youth market is one of the key target markets for video games (Newzoo, 2020). The current study scrutinizes how teenagers between the ages of 14 and 18 construct a gamer identity through their daily gaming practices.

The research is done in Barcelona because it is a socially stratified city (Blanco&Nel, 2018). So far, eight focus groups have been carried out in four schools, located in two districts with different sociodemographic characteristics and different funding sources (public versus semi-private). From

48 participants, eight were selected to be interviewed while playing. The entire process was done after obtaining the informed consent of the schools, the minors and their families.

Through this research, we can observe in first person the teenager's environment: the distribution of gaming devices in the home, as well as the participation, involvement and intervention of the family, all of which are shaping the gaming *habitus* of the teenager. This research takes *habitus* to refer to thought structures, style and interpretation of class (Bourdieu, 1979) that are involved in the construction of the gamer identity and the gaming culture.

The potentiality of this research is that it uses both a collective methodology (focus groups) and an individual one (gaming interviews), and also implies two crucial institutions: school and family. These are relevant to understand identity construction through the leading entertainment industry in Spain since 2015.

Owing to these implications, the researcher has to have in mind the possible harm and social issues that can emerge. This is because harm can be contextual, even more, when axes, such as gender, social class, and family setting, are explored in conjunction. Furthermore, it is necessary to be aware of the potential unexpected participants who could intervene during the gaming interviews at the teens' homes but who are not included initially in the research. Therefore, the research requires an ongoing process of revision and adaptation.

To conclude, this article sheds light on the ethical decision-making concerning the collection of participants' data, the use of that data, and the participants' viewpoints that must be considered throughout the whole process of the study.

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3634

Assembling the Triforce: Theorizing Power, Culture, and The Legend of Zelda

Authors

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Abstract

This paper critically explores the player-and-videogame assemblage through a cultural critique of representation in *The Legend of Zelda* to develop a theoretical understanding of the various forces of power brought to the couch. The player-and-videogame assemblage was proposed by Brendan Keogh to theorize video games as a collective experience between game, technology, and player. Through the player-and-videogame assemblage, video games come to be understood explicitly as an embodied and interactive performance that differentiates games from other forms of mass-market media. This paper focuses on the psychic and cultural dimensions that the player contributes to the assemblage based on identity representation and fan cultures. Furthermore, by treating the

video game as a material object of production, a developer-and-videogame assemblage forms corresponding to the role of market and production that allow the player-and-videogame assemblage to exist in the first place.

The video game as a “fixed” material object links player and developer in an optional relationship; each has the power to ignore or include the other within the gaming practice. However, this relationship is not conducted on equal footing as the reality of neoliberal capitalism subordinate the player to the role of the consumer. Developers and corporate backers as producers of capital can enact a trickle-down experience of exploitative actions, manipulating the player into offering up their hard-earned capital in exchange for entertainment. While there is a tenuous allowance for fan-based interference of capitalist hegemony as part of convergence culture/media mix, these labors are always mediated by the threat of legal action by the intellectual property holder and wider cultural legibility.

This structure of subordination extends down to the player-and-videogame assemblage where immersion privileges identities more easily interpolated into the gaming experience. As a result, the power of visual and narrative inclusion is held by the developer rather than the player. Players have the opportunity to play the game, play with the game, and play with narrative and presentation outside the game, as theorized by various scholars in queer theory, game studies, and fandom studies. However, these forms of play occur on the boundaries of cultural awareness rather in the center where a game is produced and advertised. As a result, the player is forced to do the labor of adapting to make any claim to cultural literacy.

While queer theory, aesthetics, and sensibilities often suggest the value of the critical positioning of counterpoints in culture, and the queer appreciation of *Zelda* is well documented, this paper seeks to tread further than simply queering a narrative or reception. Using queer theoretical approaches in affect studies and phenomenology, it examines gaming as a political action rather than value-free entertainment, where ideologies clash, absorb, and interpolate player subjectivities. The ability to immerse oneself in *Zelda*'s Hyrule is to answer the hailing of the code that is programmed, designed, and controlled by a corporation. At the end of the day, the corporation, represented by developers, balances the scales in favor of capital, not the players.

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3779