

2019 Gally Academic Track
Friday, February 15, 2019

3:00-3:15

KEYNOTE

“The Fandom Hierarchy: Women of Color’s Fight For Visibility In Fandom Spaces”

Tai Gooden

Women of Color (WoC) have been fervent *Doctor Who* fans for several decades. However, the fandom often reflects societal hierarchies upheld by White privilege that result in ignoring and diminishing WoC’s opinions, contributions, and legitimate concerns about issues in terms of representation. Additionally, WoC and non-binary (NB) people of color’s voices are not centered as often in journalism, podcasting, and media formats nor convention panels as much as their White counterparts. This noticeable disparity has led to many WoC, even those who are deemed “important” in fandom spaces, to encounter racism, sexism, and, depending on the individual, homophobia and transphobia in a place that is supposed to have open availability to everyone. I can attest to this experience as someone who has a somewhat heightened level of visibility in fandom as a pop culture/entertainment writer who extensively covers *Doctor Who*.

This presentation will examine women of color in the *Doctor Who* fandom in terms of their interactions with non-POC fans and difficulties obtaining opportunities in media, online, and at conventions. The show’s representation of fandom and the necessity for equity versus equality will also be discussed to craft a better understanding of how to tackle this pervasive issue. Other actionable solutions to encourage intersectionality in the fandom will be discussed including privileged people listening to WoC and non-binary people’s concerns/suggestions, respectfully interacting with them online and in person, recognizing and utilizing their privilege to encourage more inclusivity, standing in solidarity with them on critical issues, and lending their support to WoC creatives.

3:15-3:25 Q&A

FANDOM IN/AND *DOCTOR WHO*

3:25-3:40

“Five Weird Data Stories From A Teaspoon And An Open Mind (and One That Isn’t)”

Anna Livingston

A Teaspoon And An Open Mind (whofic.com) is the largest fan fiction archive devoted purely to *Doctor Who* and its related properties (*Torchwood*, *Sarah Jane Adventures*, Big Finish audios, etc.). Although anyone is welcome to post to Teaspoon, the site is unusual relative to other fanfic sites such as Archive of Our Own or Fanfiction.net in that Teaspoon is a moderated archive: authors submit stories to a moderation queue, and a member of the site team reviews the story to ensure it meets basic spelling, grammar, and other formatting standards before it is publicly posted. As lead moderator for Teaspoon since 2011, I have unique visibility into trends in *Doctor Who* fic, particularly in terms of New Who fiction, which currently comprises approximately 60% of the site’s stories. In this talk, I’ll share six data visualizations that explore some of the more unusual trends I’ve seen since I first joined the moderation team in 2010. These trends include the rise of “Teninch” fic (stories with a non-*Doctor Who* character played by David Tennant, but who is presented in a romantic relationship with Rose Tyler); “human names” assigned to the Metacrisis Doctor; usage of the “pink and yellow” cliché; the most common reasons stories are rejected from the archive; statistics related to the prolific work of Unslinky, an author who has produced stories over three million words long; and a visualization exploring the most popular genres and ratings for different show eras.

3:40-3:55

“Doctor Who Magazine, the Role of Journalist-fans, and Intra-franchise Fandom”

Matt Hills

The *Doctor Who Magazine Special Edition #47* notes that “Doctor Who is without doubt one of the most scrutinised... ever” pop cultural texts (Hayes 2017: 54), but what of DWM itself? It may have been celebrated by the Guinness World of Records as “the world’s longest running magazine based on a TV series,” but unlike the ‘parent’ show it has not been subjected to extensive, proliferating analysis, with notable exceptions such as Miles Booy’s work (2012) and the excellent *Vworp Vworp!* fanzine. This presentation draws on a forthcoming chapter in the *Handbook of Magazine Studies*, and considers how DWM has always been open to a multitude of reader demographics, as well as having benefitted from “intra-franchise fandom”, with editors and showrunners sharing a fan perspective, and hence sometimes finding ways to circumvent centralized BBC licensing/publicity practices. DWM has also seen its share of controversies, whether involving The Watcher or the Time Team. I will briefly touch on these events by thinking about professional journalist-fans’ positioning. Editorial teams need to welcome new fans and address old-timers, as well as wanting to satisfy BBC licensing and Panini, all whilst still retaining a degree of fannish independence from corporate brand management.

3:55-4:10

“Advanced Fandom: Love, Loss, Twitter and Trolldom”

Heather Berberet

Long-time fans can become bitter and/or highly critical about their beloved shows, expressing anger and disappointment via social media. While that response can be disheartening enough, for some people it progresses into negative, anti-social “trolling.” I will explore how three psychological theories can explain this behavior. These theories are Margaret Mahler’s Developmental Attachment Theory, evolutionary psychology theory, and trauma theory. I will also explore how these normal psychological processes interact with social media to make permissible (and even encourage) mean, unkind, disconnected, and anti-social behavior. Finally, I will discuss the ways in which *Doctor Who* fandom provides opportunities to both foster trolling and overcome it. I will provide suggestions for how attendees can avoid the pitfalls of advanced fandom and continue to stay positive about their shows long after discovering them. I will do this via a PowerPoint presentation made-up almost entirely of photographs that illustrate the points I am making.

4:10-4:25

“Asexuality, Aromanticism and *Doctor Who*”

Mikayla Micomonaco

Asexuality comes up frequently in *Doctor Who* fandom, usually in the context of describing the Doctor. Unfortunately, the way it is used is often divorced from the actual definition of asexuality and as a result inadvertently dehumanizes asexual and aromantic people. This can make existing as an aromantic asexual *Doctor Who* fan a difficult experience. There are two main topics to consider in this situation. The messages that are present in the show, and the discussions that happen in fandom.

In *New Who*, the message that romantic love is something the Doctor is too alien to understand, or at least that the people around him believe that, is an ongoing theme, although not necessarily a consistent one. It is used to emphasize how he’s different from the humans surrounding him, how he’s alien, how he’s beyond us. Parts of fandom also push these ideas, treating any indication of the Doctor having romantic relationships as making him seem more normal, more human, and arguing over an “asexual Doctor.” In these discussions, the actual definition of asexuality is ignored, the word twisted to fit whatever the debater believes. This talk will consist of discussing the reality of asexuality and aromanticism, and the way that conversations within fandom can dehumanize and erase asexual and aromantic fans. It will also look at specific examples in *New Who*, to examine the Doctor as a potentially asexual and/or aromantic character, and the way other characters in the show discuss the Doctor's relationship to sex and romance. It will also discuss paths forward from the current situation, to improve how asexuality and aromanticism is discussed, both on and off the show.

4:25-4:40 Panel Q&A

4:40-4:50 10 minute Break

NARRATIVE AND GENRE ELEMENTS OF *DOCTOR WHO*

4:50-5:05

“Doctor Who and the Canon of Evil”

Dave Ringo

Back in the early 1990s, when *The New Adventures of Doctor Who* initially appeared in print, fans of the show began having their first in-depth discussions of which *Doctor Who* stories were to be accepted as “canon,” and which were not. The expression “canon,” which has been employed among other fandoms, including *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*, usually carries with it the idea of “authority” or “truth.” It implies that there is, for everyone, a “true” or “real” *Doctor Who* and a “fake” or “imaginary” *Doctor Who*. Today you can hear the word on the lips of just about every *Doctor Who* fan in some conversation or other. Have you ever been asked, “Is this canon?” or been told “That’s isn’t canon”? On the other hand, there has been a growing backlash against the concept of canon, especially since it appears to dismiss the value of alternative (i.e., non-televised) stories. I’d like to address the subject and its foundations, after which I hope to demonstrate that, generally speaking, there are three common approaches to canon: monocanonism—the belief that there is only one true canon, acanonism—the lack of belief in canon, and polycanonism—the belief in the existence of many canons. Through an analysis of each, I wish to make the case that the first two belief systems are logically untenable and the third is the only reasonable approach to *Doctor Who*. Also addressed will be the question of whether canon is determined by the creator or the consumer. Is there such thing as a “personal canon,” and how does it differ from a “head canon”?

5:05-5:20

“Time Can Be Rewritten: Meddling and Morals”

Tom Dickinson

Time can be rewritten,” says the Eleventh Doctor. “Not one line,” chides the First. Setting aside the metaphysical question, whether it is possible to change history, this talk will consider how *Doctor Who* approaches the ethical question, whether it is right to change history. Numerous contradictory approaches have been taken in the show’s 55-year history. I will survey these approaches through the lenses of three major theories of normative ethics: consequentialism (which attributes moral value by the merits of an action’s consequences), deontology (which attributes moral value by adherence to universal rules), and virtue ethics (which attributes moral value by the merits of a person’s character traits). I will pay particular attention to how two recent showrunners have modeled the moral duties of the responsible time traveler, namely Russell T. Davies’ deontological approach to the laws of time and Steven Moffat’s concept of the Doctor’s name as a pledge of virtue. I will also examine Series Eleven and the 2019 New Years’ Day special for early signs of how Chris Chibnall approaches the ethics of changing history. Finally, I will consider the apparent double standard in *Doctor Who*’s treatment of real-world history (as generally sacrosanct) as opposed to its own fictional mythology (as generally malleable). For this question, my focus will broaden to examine not only the fictional morality of the time traveler, but also the production team’s real-world ethical and social duties in portraying history.

5:20-5:35

“Listen!: The Sound of Doctor Who”

Derek Kompare

From its opening moments in 1963, *Doctor Who* has taken us on its adventures largely through the power of sound. Delia Derbyshire’s spooky electronic arrangement of Ron Grainer’s theme tune; the unearthly sound effects conjured up by Brian Hodgson, Dick Mills, and others in the BBC Radiophonic Workshop; the evocative music of Dudley Simpson, Murray Gold, Segun Akinola, and others; and the voices of the Doctors and their friends and enemies: the sound of *Doctor Who* has sent us to alien realms, and reassured us with the comfort of home. Indeed, sound on *Doctor Who* is so powerful that it has fueled hundreds of stories on Big Finish audio dramas. This presentation will explore how *Doctor Who* has used the three avenues of its sound design--sound effects, music, and dialogue--to greatly enhance its visuals, and make its stories more compelling. Comparing examples from across the series’ 55-year history, I will argue that while the series’ use of sound has changed a lot over the years (except for the important exception of a handful of sounds associated with the TARDIS), its sonic signature is still unmistakable. *Doctor Who* offers up a soundscape that is alien and extraordinary, but at the same time comfortable and domestic. In its blend of the mysterious and reassuring, it still exemplifies the very spirit of “behind the sofa.” In conjunction with this presentation, please enjoy the Spotify playlist [The Sound of Doctor Who](https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3od2tePbHILywHghvJUmkU) (Gallifrey One 2019).
Link to: <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3od2tePbHILywHghvJUmkU>

5:35-5:50 Panel Q&A

5:50-6:00 10 minute Break

MEMORY, HISTORY, AND CULTURE IN DOCTOR WHO

6:00-6:15

“The Laws of Rassilon”

Lizbeth Myles

The Laws of Rassilon would discuss the Gallifreyan legal system as presented in the classic series, and what this suggests about the values of the Time Lords, the development of jurisprudence on Gallifrey, and the influence of real world legal systems on the narrative. The discussion would focus on the criminal and constitutional laws governing Time Lords. In criminal law, I would be looking at the two trial procedures we see the Doctor participate in as defender (in “The War Games” and “The Trial of a Time Lord”), their format, rules of evidence, and the court’s powers of sentencing and clemency. And the shift from the civil law inquisitorial format of the first trial, to the common law adversarial format of the second. In terms of constitutional law, I’d cover how Gallifrey adheres to the separation of powers i.e. the make-up of the Gallifreyan executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government, the limits of their powers, and the check and balances between them. I’d also look at their use of customary law, tradition, and the influence of the Roman Senate and the British House of Lords on their presentation.

6:15-6:30

“Memory and Identity in the Moffat Era”

Jack Arnal

Memory played a significant role in shaping the identity of the Doctor and his associates throughout Steven Moffat’s tenure on the show. Starting with Captain Jack’s admission of memory loss in “The Doctor Dances” and ending with the return of the Doctor’s memories of Clara in “Twice upon a Time,” Moffat has used memory and memory loss to drive many stories and provide motivation for the characters. Moffat presented connections between memory and identity in a similar manner to the ship of Theseus thought experiment, seeming to ultimately suggest that memory makes us who we are. In this talk I will discuss a number of concepts related to human memory, identity, and personality, and how these concepts were displayed during the Moffat Era.

6:30-6:45

“Your Mechanical Life: Cybermen vs. Steampunk”

Nicole Carlson

Doctor Who and steampunk are extraordinarily compatible, probably because both ultimately derive from the Victorian traditions of the gentleman inventor and gentleman adventurer. Nowhere is this more visible than in “The Next Doctor”: all is burnished, riveted, steampunk par excellence, up to and including its culmination in a grand battle over Victorian London between an airship and a giant mecha. Interesting, then, that this most steampunky of stories should have as its villains the Cybermen. If *Doctor Who* is steampunk, then the Cybermen serve as its own built-in critique of steampunk: its horrible end case, the perversion of all its goals. Equality and peace are achieved through technological progress, but at the cost of humanity. If steampunk’s message is that, ultimately, humanity can save itself, the Cybermen’s

message is that it cannot. The Cybermen offer equality, world peace, an end to poverty, hunger, sickness, and all other forms of human suffering, but the price is always humanity itself, and the implication of Cyberman stories is that that can only ever be the case. Humanity cannot be “fixed”: human flaws cannot be removed from humanity without thereby destroying humanity.

6:45-7:00 Panel Q&A