

THE IMPACT OF GEOGRAPHY AND/OR CULTURAL IDENTITY ON ANIMATION PRODUCTION | Panel Proposal

(SAS2019-11028) - TOPOLOGIES OF JAPANESE PORNOGRAPHIC ANIMATION AND ITS INTERNATIONAL RECEPTION

Brian Bergstrom (Canada)¹; Edmond (Edo) Ernest Dit Alban (France)²; Aurélie Petit (France)³

1 - McGill University; 2 - Paris Saint-Denis (Paris) and Concordia University (Montréal); 3 - Concordia University

Brian Bergstrom

Brian Bergstrom is a Course Lecturer in the East Asian Studies Department at McGill University in Montréal. He has published articles on Japanese literary, popular and fan cultures in venues including Mechademia, positions and Japan Forum, and is on the Editorial Board of Mechademia: Second Arc. His translation of *We, the Children of Cats: Stories and Novellas* by Tomoyuki Hoshino (PM Press) was longlisted for the 2013 Best Translated Book Award, and his other translations have appeared in *Granta*, *Aperture*, *Asymptote* and *The Penguin Book of Japanese Short Stories*, among other venues.

Edmond (Edo) Ernest Dit Alban

Edmond (Edo) Ernest dit Alban is a Cotutelle PhD Candidate at Concordia University (Montréal) and Paris Saint-Denis (Paris). His dissertation examines the topographic aspects of women's otaku fan cultures in Tokyo, considering the territories, media mix, histories and gender dynamics of this culture since the 1970s. Edmond's publications include a research report for the online journal *gamvironments*, a chapter in Paul Booth's *A Companion to Media Fandom and Fan Studies* co-written with Marc Steinberg, and a blog post for Henry Jenkin's blog. Current projects involve mapping the exchanges between gay fanzines in Paris and Tokyo and exploring the history of women's games in Japan (*OtomeGames*) and the genealogies of these media mix strategies. On a less academic side, Edmond participated to multiple gay fanzine projects in Paris and Tokyo as a translator and a member of Dokkun since 2011.

Aurélie Petit

Aurélie Petit is a PhD Student at Concordia University (Montréal). Her work focuses on the Western reception of Japanese pornographic animation in the digital era. She graduated in Cinema Studies last spring from la Sorbonne Nouvelle (Paris), and her MA thesis examined the French reception of 'hentai' from 1978 to 2008. Outside of academia, she used to talk on multiple radio shows about video games, manga, and comics.

Panel Title and short description | Panel Chair Name and Contact

Topologies of Japanese Pornographic Animation and its International Reception

Ever since its initial reception outside Japan, anime has been known for its "adult" content—including pornographic content. This panel examines pornographic Japanese animation and its international reception, hoping to rethink the textual and paratextual worlds of Japanese pornographic animation to include transnational, transcultural and translocal conditions of production, distribution and reception.

1st Abstract

What We Talk About When We Talk About Tentacle Porn: Reading *Legend of the Overfiend* by Brian Bergstrom (Canada)

Since its first installment in 1987, the animated adaptation of the 1986 *manga* series *Legend of the Overfiend* (*Chōjin densetsu urotsukidōji*) has stood as a kind of origin point, both for the genre now known as "tentacle porn" and for the identification of Japanese animation with pornography outside Japan. The latter aspect of the work's reputation can be

seen in its late 1980s distribution in English-friendly VHS form by Penthouse Video, part of a series of home videos otherwise made up of Western live-action pornographic films. This positioned *Overfiend* as indicative of how *anime* could be consumed as pornography alongside live action films featuring un-simulated sexual acts, as well as aligning the work with an explicitly heterosexual male gaze.

This paper questions this straightening-out of Japanese pornographic animation by reading the initial three installments of the *Overfiend* series (the three chapters also distributed by Penthouse Video) as a potentially queer text, one that capitalizes on animation's formal, representational and narrative elasticity to create a pornographic text that problematizes a phallogocentric or classically heterosexual scopophilic regime. Further, I wish to explore how the dynamics of tentacle porn as it emerges in *Overfiend* demonstrate the potentials of animation itself to stretch, bend and expand these representational regimes, the polysemy of the tentacle symptomatizing this potential at both the representational and formal levels.

2nd Abstract

Queer Desires, Still Images, Local Communities: Exploring the Pornographic Connections between Shōnen Ai and Gay Animation in Tokyo by Edmond (Edo) Ernest Dit Alban (France)

Since the birth of homoerotic manga genres in the 1970s, the proximity of female *mangaka* to LGBTQ communities, spaces and media in Tokyo has generated tense exchanges surrounding the use of sexualized mobile images. Although the legacy of *shōnen ai* "slash" production made by women is still criticized by some queer intellectuals, recent scholarship has emphasized how these communities display numerous similarities in their pornographic comics. Building on this trend, I would like to expand the cartography of women's and queer porn media contact zones to a consideration of animation as well.

The present paper thus explores these common techniques of expression by looking at the animation of homosexual sex in *Ki to Kaze no Uta* (1987) and *Legend of the Blue Wolves* (1996), two pornographic direct-to-video anime produced within the context of Tokyo's moving image subcultures. The goal is to demonstrate how *anime* functions as a mediating space, allowing marginalized local female and queer communities to communicate through the production of animated pornography. To do so, I will compare the use of still image techniques in non-consensual and consensual sex scenes, exploring how both *shōnen ai* and gay pornographic anime rely on the still image to express pleasurable sex and true love. In this way, I argue that these groups share a common sensibility tied to the erotic experience of stillness in *anime*.

3rd Abstract

Japanese Pornographic Animation in France: Reception as Construction by Aurélie Petit (France)

Since its importation in France during the end of the 1980s, and mainly the 1990s, Japanese pornographic animation has been characterized by its collective definition. The result of both fans' collective gaze and the decisions of more traditional actors in the distribution industry (through media such as video, literature, or even cinematic projection, such as when spectators discovered *Legend of the Overfiend* on Le Grand Rex screen in Paris in 1987), *hentai* as a visual object came to be culturally constructed. Basing my argument on this assumption, I plan to explore how the digital reception of Japanese pornographic animation in France qualified as "pornographic" a particular kind of genre, making "hentai" a Western object. By looking at what kinds of cultural content fit under the *hentai* pornotype (as defined by François Perea in his work on the categorization of pornographic media) appellation on French streaming websites of anime (illegal or not), as well as the French version of mainstream pornographic websites, I will try to understand how reception participates in the construction of its object via various discourses.

Palavras-chave : anime, pornography, reception, Japan, France