

## Parasocial Relationships and You

- Definition
  - Oxford- a kind of psychological relationship experienced by members of an audience in their mediated encounters with certain performers in the mass media
  - One-sided relationships: one individual will extend their time, energy, and emotional interest while the other individual is usually unaware of the other's existence
- Beginnings
  - Coined in 1956 by social scientists Donald Horton and R. Richard Wohl
  - The main focus was the afternoon talk shows at the time that reinforced audience participation and the acting of the hosts that made the viewers engaged.
  - This created a sense that the performer on stage was connecting directly to the viewer
  - This concept extended out to long running TV shows as well. The viewers at home saw the characters as friends or something close to it.
- Celebrity Worship Syndrome
  - Dating back to the 19th century, celebrity worship has been observed.
  - People wanting to live vicariously through said celebrities
  - Fans holding the celebrities accountable if they don't agree with them
  - The murders: Most known being Selena and John Lennon
- Tabloid Journalism
  - Mostly sensationalized stories about celebrities
  - The start of popularity for celebrity obsession with constant "rumors"
- Stan Culture
  - An obsessive fan/ overly devoted fan

- Eminem song
  - Mainly seen across social media
    - Twitter/Insta specifically
  - Fans having more windows into celebrities lives than ever before
  - Every word from them are put under a microscope by their fans
    - Backlash for not being the person the fans believe they are in their minds
- K-Pop
  - Sasaeng (p. sa-sang) fans are the Korean term for obsessive fans
  - K-Pop stans are seen as one of the most vocal and outrageous ones
    - TVXQ's Yunho w/ OJ poisoning by rival Sasaeng fans
    - EXO's Chanyeol followed by 20 fan cars
    - Seo Taiji house break in by fan
    - EXO's D.O. w/ victim mentality due to sasaeng
    - Many more things (letters in blood, attempted kidnapping, ect)
- Japanese Idol Culture
  - Japan has an extreme obsession with idols and idol culture
  - Idol
    - Young men and women (more women) who are performers that are known for their looks, image and personality
    - Put through constant training to sing, dance and model
    - Can start as junior idols (3-15)
    - Talent agencies put them together to be both profitable and to create parasocial relationships with fans to keep them coming back
    - Meant to be pure in the eyes of the fans w/ no relationships, smoking, and drinking

- Once the idols get too old (W:25, M:30s-40s), they “graduate” from the group and are replaced with a new idol
  - ~\$1 billion a year industry (as of 2019)
- Social Impact
  - Idols are used for commercials and most advertisements
  - They are used for TV dramas, variety shows, and as hosts
  - Used as voice actors and having at least 40 anime series since 2010
    - Some VA can become idols in and of themselves by having several high profile shows or making bands afterward
- Fan Interaction
  - There are plenty of fans, but passionate (mostly male) fans are called Wato
  - The Wato attend shows and create elaborate dances for the show
  - The idols are incentivized to build an emotional connection with these wato
  - Wato willing dumps tons of cash into buying merch and endorsed products to support their Bias/Favorite
  - Some agencies even hold Meet-a-Greets/ handshaking events to even more enhance the “closeness” with the fans to make the parasocial relationship even stronger
  - Wato are willing to quit their jobs and empty their savings to support their Bias
  - One company willing gives paid time off if their Bias graduates
  - This connect causes the fans to feel betrayed/ hurt if their Bias ever breaks their image
- Scary Side of Idols

- The people who follow idols can be very dangerous
- NGT48's Maho Yamaguchi House break in and Assault
- Enoha Girls' Honoka Omoto- 16yo suicide due to over work and power harrassment
  - Assertions of authority to intimidate and control lower rank employees
- Stabbing of Mayu Tomita- Stabbed 27 times and lived
- Idol found through the reflection in her eyes
- Youtubers/Streamers/Influencers as New Celebrities
  - Influencers/Streamer are the modern day celebrities
    - Everyday people as celebrities
    - Social Media being the vehicle to push these celebrities
      - YT, Twitch, Insta, TikTok, Twitter, Onlyfans, ect
    - Idol Streamer called Vtubers who also have concerts
  - Fans have the ability to pay these celebrities directly through donations/viewership
    - Brings a level of entitlement to the people they support
    - Fans believe they have the right to have a say in the lives of the ones they support
    - Get upset if what they care about isn't addressed by the influencers
  - The dangers
    - Doxxing (extra scary for VTubers who don't show their real face)
    - Swatting
      - Viewers who call in threats to police near the streamer in order for SWAT teams to break into the house
    - Using fan bases to attack others

- Online Personalities using fans to attack others that they don't like
- Hatred and Disgusting Comments
  - The faceless mob attacking people they don't like
  - Hana Kimura's suicide and Terrence House
  - Frankie and DOTA 2 Harassment
    - Fans pay into Dota's TI
- Why Is Any of This Important Now?
  - Still getting out of the pandemic
  - People latching onto the things that gave them comfort during the lockdown
  - The massive boom of the digital space
  - Helping young people realize the difference
    - 72% of 13-38 year olds follow influencers (as of 2019)
    - 54% of children would be influencers if given the chance (as of 2019)
  - Be better

## Links

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100305809>

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00332747.1956.11023049?needAccess=true>

<https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199756841/obo-9780199756841-0181.xml>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Celebrity\\_worship\\_syndrome](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Celebrity_worship_syndrome)

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/in-excess/201307/celebrity-worship-syndrome>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tabloid\\_journalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tabloid_journalism)

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stan>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sasaeng\\_fan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sasaeng_fan)

<https://channel-korea.com/tvxqs-yunho-reveals-details-regarding-poisoned-orange-juice-from-an-anti-fan-several-years-ago/>

<https://www.soompi.com/article/810277wpp/exos-chanyeol-calls-out-sasaengs-on-instagram>

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20140625000890>

<https://www.soompi.com/article/519749wpp/exo-members-experience-hardships-over-sasaeng-fans>

<https://www.koreaboo.com/lists/13-disturbing-stories-sasaeng-fans-went-far-1/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese\\_idol](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_idol)

<https://japantoday.com/category/features/lifestyle/japanese-company-offers-paid-leave-to-grieve-if-employee%E2%80%99s-favorite-idol-member-leaves-their-group>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/music/articles/84fd62c3-f5a4-49e6-9e3e-6f5217c1448c>

<https://www.thedailybeast.com/look-but-dont-touch-inside-the-weird-dangerous-world-of-japan-girl-idols>

<https://www.thedailybeast.com/did-japans-seedy-teen-idol-business-drive-this-girl-to-death>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-50000234>

<https://www.businessinsider.com/what-is-swatting>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hana\\_Kimura](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hana_Kimura)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SOLZOR3Amhg>

<https://morningconsult.com/influencer-report-engaging-gen-z-and-millennials/>