AUTHENTICITY FROM CARTOONS: U. S. JAPANAESE ANIMATION FANDOM AS AN

AGENCY OF INFORMAL CULTURAL EDUCATION

by

BRENT M. ALLISON

(Under the Direction of Judith Preissle)

ABSTRACT

This ethnography explores how North American fans of Japanese animation or anime are engaging in pedagogical practices. Anime increasingly attracts many North American fans that have had little or no previous direct exposure to Japanese culture. Many fans watch and discuss anime with other fans within an interactive subculture called anime fandom. U.S. anime fandom can be interpreted as a site of informal cultural education wherein participants teach and learn about anime and Japanese culture as a means of making sense of them.

Little research has been done on anime fandom as an agency of pedagogy. Therefore, this study focuses on how North American fans of anime learn to become anime fans, and what they learn in this process. It also addresses how fans of anime create, sustain, and change meanings associated with anime and Japan within anime fandom. Finally, it explores how anime fans negotiate traditional sites of sociocultural consensus and conflict found in U.S. social hierarchies. The research uses an ethnography of one anime club, an ethnographic study of a second club, and interviews of participants at anime fan conventions to address these issues. The methods involved are primarily interviews and participant observation.

The findings illustrate that most anime fans are attracted to anime because they admire visuals used in anime, they favor anime series with narrative arcs stretching across several episodes, and they form attachments to anime characters that develop and change. Fans often contrasted this appeal to North American animation which they criticized as mostly episodic, unsophisticated, and visually less appealing than anime. Acquiring a vocabulary to use in discussing anime and anime fandom was found to be a critical component of fandom pedagogy. While many fans were careful to distinguish between anime and Japanese culture, just as many fans used Japanese culture to explain situations in anime that made them uncomfortable. Anime fandom itself appeared to fans to be an authentic subcultural location from which they could legitimate their judgments about North American media, anime, and Japanese culture. The study discusses implications that anime fandom has for educators and researchers of education and subcultures.

INDEX WORDS: Informal education, subculture, anime, Japanese popular culture, fandom, race, media, informal pedagogy, youth culture, gender, identity, agency, hybridity

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CHAPTER 1

A STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM OF JAPANESE ANIMATION FANDOM PEDAGOGY

The pedagogy of popular culture and its influence on what people learn and teach frames this study of teaching and learning in anime fandom. The power of entertainment media to provide its own curriculum is questioned little in social foundations of education. Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren's *Between Borders: Pedagogy and the Politics of Cultural Studies* broke ground in 1994 by attempting to lessen divisions between critical pedagogues and cultural studies scholars. Today both professional areas are recognized for providing complementary perspectives on the role of popular culture in engendering or suppressing regimes of cultural hegemony. Academic journals such as *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies* and *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* examine the connections among television, films, radio, literature and learning. Education conferences such as the American Educational Research Association and American Educational Studies Association sponsor a handful of panels and symposiums on popular culture and pedagogy each year.

Discussions in education of the intersections of media and pedagogy tend to follow two general paths. One critiques the pervasive role of North American media conglomerates like television networks and Hollywood in maintaining imbalances of power by legitimating systems of representation of disenfranchised groups. Educators are called on to combat these influences through presenting alternatives to these representations in pedagogical instruments such as literature, film, and collaborative discussion. The other examines the media activities of those marginalized groups, such as progressive hip-hop, in articulating their historical and

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contemporary experiences as a people. Celebrated as an exercise in creative resistance, scholars urge educators to recognize the practitioners as conducting an empowering pedagogy that speaks to themselves and to others in narratives of disenfranchisement and social change.

While these are both complementary and continuing projects that have much to accomplish, a third phenomenon of media-based pedagogy is left unexplored by the field. This is the study of a growing group of media fans who view and read the media of another culture and make sense of that culture within their own pedagogical practices. The media in question is Japanese animation, or as it is known by its fans worldwide, *anime*. The fans in question make up U.S. anime fandom, defined as a social network of anime fans in which forms of socialization differentiated by types of knowledges (re)articulated – in short, pedagogies (Dewey, 1897) – are practiced to achieve particular personal, social, and cultural goals. In a general sense, this project explores anime fandom as an educational agency of fans teaching and learning about Japanese culture. This chapter discusses anime, the origins of anime fandom in the United States, the growing commercial market for anime in the U.S., and a relevant research problem that anime fandom poses for the social foundations of education. It then states the research problem and the research questions, describes the field settings in which they have been addressed, and identifies what the foreshadowed problems were when the study began. Finally, I give a subjectivity statement and a brief layout of the later dissertation chapters.

<center>Definition of Anime and a Brief History</center>

"Anime" is commonly understood by fans to refer to all animation produced by Japan. Despite and because of the wide acknowledgment of this definition, it is not without its problems. The word "anime" itself was incorporated into the Japanese language only in the 20th Century from a European language. More experienced fans have taught others that "anime" is

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originally a French term, purportedly from the French *animér*, "to animate", but why the original

Japanese framers chose it from French has never been adequately explained. Even scholars who

have studied anime subculture either do not explain the origins of the term (Newitz, 1994;

Pointon 1997) or rely on the assumption of its French origin (Leonard, 2004).

In contrast, according to some nonacademic anime experts who contribute to widely read

anime-related websites, "anime" is not a French term at all. They explain that contemporary

Japanese heavily borrows and contracts words from English such as *pasokon* (personal

computer) and *sekuhara* (sexual harassment); anime may be a contraction of the English word

"animation" ("Ask John," 2001). Also, Japanese usage of "anime" can be traced to a decade

before the earliest French translations of Japanese animation titles can be found ("Ask John,"

2001). Others have pointed out that the full word "animation" in Japanese follows the English

pronunciation rather than the French one (Anime News Network, 2006: February 29). This lends

credence to the notion that "anime" is a Japanese term that was self-consciously adopted as a

contraction of an English word rather than borrowed wholesale from French. Given that the

origins of contemporary anime drew on postwar influences from North American animation,

then the word "anime" as a Japanese transformation of English makes sense.

Only in 2005 was it discovered that the first anime produced in Japan was a three-second

short of a boy wearing a sailor suit writing the Japanese word "katsudoushashin", or "movie" on

a blackboard, turning around, and saluting the audience (Anime News Network, 2005). The

uncredited short, possibly produced as early as 1907, may have been shown as an introduction for

a larger live-action film showing at the time. Given this and limited communication between

Japanese and western filmmakers at the time, it is likely that the first anime was produced

independently of any influence from western animation. Despite the alleged 1907 work, the

documentation indicates that animation first made its way to Japan publicly as a western import around 1914 (Dewey, 1990; Sharp, 2004). Experts had long cited an amateur artist with a daytime job as an associate at the newsmagazine *Tokyo Puck* as making the first anime in Japan in 1917. That same year saw the first anime export when Seitaro Kitayama's *Momotaro* ran in France three months before Tokyo saw it (Anime News Network, 2006: July 19).

The medium remained the province of small-scale production companies and hobbyists, a handful of which engaged in overseas export, until the middle of Japan's imperialist era when anime was used as tool of prewar and wartime propaganda (Clements, 2003). These films featured Disney-like characters easily defeating U.S. icons such as Popeye and Bluto, as well as the Allied navies (Clements, 2003).

After the war and during the U.S. occupation, the techniques of postwar anime stylistics again were influenced by Disney-style animation. Among postwar Japanese comic, or manga, pioneers such as Osama Tezuka, the Disney influence was combined with Japan's rich artistic storytelling heritage reflected in woodblock prints from centuries prior (Napier, 2001). In the wake of the immediate postwar economic devastation that ravaged the country, high production costs for live-action filmmaking paralyzed that segment of Japan's entertainment industry. Manga was far cheaper to produce, and it filled a vacuum in the market as a widely popular alternative, especially as Japan's rebuilt mass transit infrastructure allowed riders to spend travel time reading these comic serials (Drazen, 2003). To this day the manga industry has taken a more powerful place in Japanese entertainment than U.S. comics have comparatively enjoyed. It was, and continues to be, from manga that most anime movies and series are inspired.

The anime industry was reborn with the first postwar anime film, studio Toei Doga's *Tale of the White Serpent,* inspired more from Chinese folklore than Japanese manga, which won

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the Grand Prix at the Venice Children's Film Festival (Arnold, 2004). The first anime series,

Otagin Manga Calendar, premiered in 1961 alongside another Toei Doga production, *Shonen*

Sarutobi Sasuke. This was another Venice winner that MGM Studios found attractive enough to

buy later that year (Arnold, 2004). Not to be outdone, Tezuka opened the rival Mushi

Productions, which produced *Tetsuwan Atomu*, or Astro Boy, based on one of his best-known

manga series of the same name (Arnold, 2004).

This early history of postwar Japanese animation points to a significant aspect of the

medium commonly ignored or denied—that anime is a medium generated by multiple cultural

influences. It is not a purely Japanese creation. Since those early years, non-Japanese artists and

businesspeople have influenced different anime films and series, even coproducing some by

varying degrees of involvement. Moreover, only recently are producers promoting the

"Japaneseness" of anime for foreign markets, particularly in the U.S., to increase audiences. This

is especially true for promotions in the anime DVD market and the Anime Network, a cable

channel owned by ADV Films, an anime retail and licensing company based in the United

States. Still, the use of "Japanese culture" as a marketing point is not new. A devoted fandom

advanced anime's "Japaneseness" as a positive signifier back as early as the 1970s (Patten,

2004). This perception continues motivating fans' willingness to not only watch anime, but also

recruit others as fans. The associated pleasures and benefits of an anime movie or series, or

anime itself, are advertised as "selling points" rather than hidden as foreign differences.

<center>Anime and the U.S. Market</center>

Despite the focus on anime's "Japaneseness" by the retail and specialty cable market,

anime is most commonly accessed on the cable channel Cartoon Network and 4Kids TV, a

subsidiary of the FOX Network. Here, English-speaking voice actors have replaced the original

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Japanese voices. In some cases, particularly in anime meant for children, editorial changes have been made to the content as well. Except for a small amount of English-voiced anime broadcast specifically for adults hours past prime time viewing, by far most anime that appears on television is marketed toward children and youth approximately 9-14 years old.

Manga and anime that come with the original Japanese voices with English subtitles can be purchased via retail in most chain bookstores like Borders and Barnes & Noble and at one of the 135 anime conventions that take place every year in the U.S. attended by over 100,000 people (Biewen & Farrell, 2006). Anime alone can be found at video sales outlets such as Best Buy and Sun Coast and online at specialty websites such as AnimeNation.com. Because neither anime nor manga are stylistic genres, but rather mediums like television and film, both can encompass genres as diverse as horror, high school comedies, office romance, science fiction, and even westerns set in the U.S. or elsewhere. Therefore anime attracts a wide following of buyers, though the cohort aged 16-24 dominates most of the anime and manga market in the U.S. The retail market for both anime and manga in the U.S. was worth $625 million in 2004, with sales up 13% between 2002 and 2004 (Fortune, 2005). These figures include neither the televised anime mentioned earlier, nor theatrical releases such as films by Hayao Miyazaki and his Studio Ghibli distributed by Disney in the U.S. Adding this together brings the value of the anime industry in the U.S. to $4 billion a year (Biewen & Farrell, 2006). This is still a niche market when compared to anime's value in Japan in 2001, when it was worth $92 billion in U.S. dollars (Biewen & Farrell, 2006), but the U.S. figures would have been unheard of ten years previously.

Not included in these numbers is a widespread fandom practice of sharing anime online with subtitles added by other fans; this practice is discussed later. This is a common tool to distribute anime not yet licensed for sale in the U.S., though less commonly material that has

been licensed in the U.S. is also shared. Despite this level of technological sophistication, anime

fandom continues to engage in older practices of promotion of anime and pedagogy on Japanese

culture.

<div align="center">The Establishment of U.S. Anime Fandom</div>

For over fifteen years after U.S. viewers' first widespread exposure to anime in 1961,

there existed few anime fans and no fandom. Besides the absence of the Internet, this was largely

due to little knowledge that theaters and networks were showing films and shows from Japan

rather than, as most assumed, the U.S. The theatrical release of *Magic Boy* in June of 1961

launched anime's presence in the U.S. (Patten, 2004). On television, Astro Boy began broadcast

on NBC as a syndicated program in 1963. Seven more anime series began syndication in the

1960s, including Tezuka's *Kimba the White Lion* (Patten, 2004). However, adding to the

confusion over these shows' origins, they were edited in ways that removed any references to

Japanese culture to suit the perceived tastes of North American children (Leonard, 2004). Like

the Sony Walkman and other high technology products, anime first came to the U.S. from Japan

in what Koichi Iwabuchi (2004) calls a "culturally odorless" fashion: That is, in a way that

"cultural features of a country of origin and images or ideas, often stereotypical, of a way of life

are associated with a particular product in the consumption process" (Iwabuchi, 2004, p. 57). In

this early age of postwar anime, the only recognized mention of anime as a Japanese cultural

import in the U.S. was in *The Japanese Fantasy Film Journal*, ostensibly devoted to Japanese

live cinema, but noting anime whenever information of it could be obtained (Patten, 2004).

One major catalyst for the formation of an organized anime subculture in the 1970s was

the premier of two science fiction (SF) anime titles, *Gatchaman* and *Space Battleship Yamato*,

re-christened as *Star Blazers* and *Battle of the Planets*, respectively, for export to North America.

Some science fiction fans had become acquainted with anime in that decade when science fiction anime was shown at science fiction conventions and at informal gatherings of fans (Patten, 2004). Five Los Angeles-area devotees of anime who were a part of local science fiction fan circles had decided to form their own anime-centered fan club, the Cartoon/Fantasy Organization (C/FO) in May 1977 (Leonard, 2004; Patten, 2004). Their overlap in membership in different social networks contributed to the growth of early anime fandom in the U.S. by their including anime-related articles in Xeroxed science fiction newsletters (Napier, 2001; Patten, 2005).

A great degree of fandom agency and self-reliance were prerequisites for obtaining and understanding anime before 1990. At first a small isolated undertaking, the C/FO's attempts to recruit more people to watch anime were further bolstered by not just the syndication of *Star Blazers* and *Battle of the Planets*, but the distribution companies' willingness to market them *as* Japanese anime to the public. Clubs outside of C/FO begin to organize around the appreciation and promotion of these specific programs (Leonard, 2004; Patten, 2004). As the 1980s progressed, anime fan clubs appeared that were centered around anime itself rather than one particular show (McKevitt, 2006). Therefore, the power of the C/FO in organizing channels for distributing anime Betamax and VHS tapes has been disputed depending on how involved the historian or their sources were with the C/FO in those days (Leonard, 2004; Patten, 2004; McKevitt, 2006).

Early clubs were also dependent on outside sources to both obtain and understand Japanese anime. Some U.S. military personnel stationed in Japan had collected manga in their spare time. A few even managed to obtain filmstrips and Betamax cassettes of anime programs from Japanese sources to distribute to clubs like the C/FO (Leonard, 2004). In Hawai'i, manga shops were established and anime programming had been showing due in no small part to the

large Japanese and Japanese-American population receptive to these materials. This in turn gave interested U.S. military personnel stationed there a steady supply of anime and manga. On their discharge, these persons would take these materials back to both their home communities and to fan conventions to share their passion for these art forms.

The connection that fans felt with Japanese anime depended on both their abilities of making meaning about it and their perceptions of how accurate those meanings were. Before the advent of fan-made subtitles, fans fluent in Japanese would compile translation booklets, typically of twenty-five to thirty pages, that other fans could read along as they watched anime at clubs and conventions (Leonard, 2004). In the absence of a full translation, a plot synopsis was provided so that fans could infer about the action minute-by-minute based on the visuals (Leonard, 2004). Where fans missed that the anime they were being shown was from Japan in the 1960s, fans in the late 1970s and early 1980s were fully exposed to anime's immediate Japanese origins.

The sense fans had to make of both the dialogue and visuals relied on three levels of perception, each of which contributed to how fans believed they understood Japanese culture. The first was perceived universal communication through body language and action. The second was what knowledge they had about Japanese culture gained first-hand, through studying about Japan, and from U.S. stereotypes about Japan. The third was their own confidence in their perception of what Japanese anime characters were "really" doing on the screen despite their limited efforts. Small wonder then that many fans believed that their first "true" exposure to anime occurred when subtitles were included in the anime they watched because of home computer technology such as the Amiga computer (Leonard, 2004).

By more closely approaching (but not fully understanding) the Japanese characters'
dialogue, thoughts, and, therefore, motives and emotions through subtitles, fans could obtain a
sense of connection to the characters. Additionally they also attained more of a sense of
connection to, and mastery of, the Japanese culture of which these characters were a product. For
some fans, what they wanted to know about Japan stopped there; they could pick up what they
needed through watching subtitled anime. However, other fans prized specific types of
knowledge about Japanese culture that could give them insights into why the characters they
loved and hated behaved in the fascinating but strange ways that they did. That is, why did
Japanese people refer to each other with honorifics like *–san*, *-chan*, and *–sensei*? Why did some
characters kneel in front of an altar and hold a cup burning with incense after a loved one had
passed away? Why were cherry blossoms blowing in the wind so omnipresent in many anime
titles? Why did schoolchildren wear uniforms to class? For these fans, anime became a starting
point for further study into another culture that could further enrich their meaning-making of
anime. This knowledge could also promote their cachet of subcultural capital, or what Sarah
Thornton calls the measure of "hipness" used by subcultural participants "embodied in the form
of 'being in the know'" (Gelder, 1997: 11).

It is telling that the research on early fandom says little about the role of Japanese and
Japanese Americans in establishing this fandom beyond being the suppliers for the raw material
of anime. It is true that European Americans and their cultural concerns dominate U.S. anime
fandom. Nevertheless, the demographics of U.S. anime fandom have started to become much
more inclusive of females and nonwhite people, but fandom has not escaped domination by
middle class European American males.

Anime Fandom Meets the Internet

Anime fans have traditionally been heavier Internet users than most North Americans, and the Internet is a critical tool for the existence of today's fandom. Discussion of anime by its U.S. fans on the Internet took place as far back as the early 1980s (Google Website, *Usenet Archive*). This was a time when users from the military, research universities, and skilled computer enthusiasts heavily dominated the Internet. These enthusiasts were mostly European American middle-class males from the U.S. and other Western developed nations, who, not surprisingly, also dominated U.S. anime fandom during this period (Napier, 2001). Not coincidentally, these fans also comprised a heavy percentage of members of the older U.S. science fiction and fantasy fan communities much like the C/FO and other early anime clubs.

Awareness of anime by other U.S. computer users, even computer-savvy young people, was largely absent into the early 1990s. I infer that it was perhaps because of the lack of widespread Internet access that would have made more information about anime readily available. This changed with the proliferation of Internet service providers such as CompuServe and America Online beginning in the mid-1990s. Moreover, a large number of young university students enrolled who had both access to and the willingness to use high-speed Internet connections. Not coincidentally, many current collegiate anime clubs were started to make these aficionados' love of anime into a social and educational phenomenon for themselves and those unfamiliar with anime.

The penetration of broadband Internet access into U.S. households allowed anime fans to use the Internet to complement their fandom experiences to a greater degree than possible before. Sites such as Animesuki.com (colloquially, "I like anime" in Japanese) permitted fans to share subtitled anime via Bittorrent, a file-sharing technology. Some sites like Animesuki.com allow

only anime not licensed in the U.S. to be shared while other sites offer both licensed and unlicensed anime for sharing. Viewing anime online is a solitary activity, and fans who have opportunities for face-to-face viewing usually supplement their online activity with their social activity. Much of the pleasure that fans gain from social viewing lies in reading the intentionality of other members of the audience, heightening their own emotional response. Social viewing reiterates certain meanings and values about anime and, by extension, aspects of Japanese culture as part of the pedagogical process.

<p style="text-align:center">Anime Fandom's Relevance to Social Foundations of Education</p>

Most anime fans have a common understanding of anime is that allows for a fandom devoted to it to exist in the first place. However, explaining how people become and are anime fans, what type of anime fan they are, and judgments on the type and degree of their social and (sub)cultural capital involves a degree of interpretation. To be legitimate, such interpretations should be recognizable by people who identify themselves as fans. External definitions and interpretations of recreational activity aside, to acquire the interpretive skill to make such legitimized judgments within a subculture requires engagement with a system of pedagogy that simultaneously broadcasts and legitimates categories of knowledge. I propose that these include three categories of subculturally relevant knowledge: knowledge of the material culture, rituals, and regular means of emic interaction; knowledge of whether and how a person is a member, both generally and categorically within and across submember groups; and knowledge of a subculture's relationship to outside societal settings. Thought of in this way, fandom provides fan experiences with a definable structure that social foundation researchers can study to analyze and address common educational concerns.

Among the concerns of interest to social foundations scholars are inequalities based on, and rationalized by, race, gender, nationalism, and commerce. Unequal power relationships and stereotyped assumptions about little known others mark the "consumption" of nonwhite people appearing in media marketed toward a mostly European American audience. Catherine Lutz and Jane Collins's study (1993) of *National Geographic* magazine chronicled a nearly century-old pedagogical project of informing a mostly upper middle class European American readership of the cultures of peoples throughout the world. Though consistently influenced by U.S. conceptions of advanced technology and social change as unmitigated goods, *National Geographic* has, especially after the upheavals of the 1960s, come to a precarious crossroads. Editors and photographers developed a distaste for portraying colonized and formerly colonized people in subservient positions to Europeans, and attempts have been made to refute popular prejudices about these peoples in favor of humanizing them (Lutz & Collins, 1993).

On the other hand, *National Geographic* is forced by financial imperatives and a historic philosophy of focusing on the positive attributes of other cultures to avoid a critical examination of neocolonial power dynamics (Lutz & Collins, 1993). In many instances, the magazine continues to focus on the young uncovered bodies of attractive South Pacific women, the rituals of exoticized dark-skinned peoples, and the technological progress made by underdeveloped areas of the world (Lutz & Collins, 1993). These images often confirm rather than confront most U.S. readers' racial, gendered, and ideological sensibilities while leaving them feeling more humane and cultured from these virtual encounters (Lutz & Collins, 1993). However, they also offer a competing cultural pedagogy to those found in mainstream broadcast and print media. The latter tend to present nonwestern peoples as violent anti-U.S. malcontents, victims of war

and famine without agency, or helpless societies forever lacking mastery of technological innovations associated with the West.

Western conceptions of Northeast Asians and Japanese people in particular present their own unique challenges to and confirmations of a longstanding global racial taxonomy. Since the 19th century, Europeans and North Americans have positioned Japan at or near the top of a nonwestern racial continuum. It stretches from the "dark, savage, and tribal" peoples of sub-Saharan Africa on one end to lighter-skinned Asians producing technological and aesthetic artifacts deemed approaching, but seldom equaling those of the western world either in quality or familiarity. A typical report from the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition marveled that "The astonishing progress of Japan in arts and civilization is one of the wonders of the age," while another characterized the Japanese in terms of "filial piety, connubial affection, parental tenderness, fraternal fondness" (Rydell, 1984: 50).

Pervading international stereotypes of Asian people are interlinked with those of Asian Americans, who are often seen as "foreign" and less deserving of recognition of their humanity even if they were born and lived in the U.S. all of their lives. The same global racial continuum suggested in *National Geographic* underlies racial hegemony in the U.S. The "model minority" myth of Asian American achievement has been used by European Americans and Asian Americans to attack government support of affirmative action and education to "less achieving, less deserving" ethnic groups that lack access to needed resources and opportunities to succeed (Yamamoto, 1997; Osajima, 1995). In this case, Asian Americans become the "middle minority"; that is, a buffer group between European Americans and African Americans and Latinos whose hyped success gives European Americans justification to elevate Asian Americans to a status below them, but above other ethnicities (Yamamoto, 1997).

Central to the maintenance of the middle minority status of Asian Americans is the propensity of European Americans to turn a "model minority" into a "yellow peril" when the minority becomes too "model" (Kawai, 2005). That is, when Asian Americans are seen as too successful, and therefore threatening European American interests, majority interests then invoke nationalist tropes of stemming the tide of Asian competitors (even citizens). European Americans can then continue to oppress and dominate non-Asian, nonwhite racial groups with the "model minority" side of the stereotype, only to turn toward the other "yellow peril" side to defend their interests against Asian racial groups.

Though U.S. anime fandom is organized for recreation, it is embedded in a rich and troubling socio-historical context of national and global race relations that must be addressed. This issue is even more important when anime fandom is considered as an educational agency for fans who have had little direct contact with Japanese culture and people before. However, most studies of stereotypes, particularly media constructions of Asian stereotypes, focus on media made by North Americans for a North American audience. Japanese producers on the other hand primarily make anime for a Japanese audience.

Lutz and Collins (1993) discussed the appearance of Japan in the pages of *National Geographic* itself and remarked on how Japanese people were most often portrayed as a modern and aesthetic people, or "civilized aliens." This was in sharp contrast to the concentration on ritual, exotic dress, and a lack of modern technology when representing other Asians and Pacific Islanders. It is likely that, consequently, well-to-do U.S. readers are more likely to recognize a common humanity in the Japanese who appear in the magazine's photographs than in others from the same world region. Moreover, showing an appreciation for Japanese cultural artifacts and practices framed as aesthetics (e.g., sushi, tea ceremony, rock gardens, Buddhist

architecture) is a marker of possessing upper-middle-class cultural capital. However, knowledge of the cultural practices of the Penan of Borneo in the South China Sea, for instance, escapes the interest of most nonanthropologists. Although Penan rituals and Borneo's landscape may provide some fascination for the *National Geographic* reader, he (because most readers are men) may see little importance in learning about a people framed as an undifferentiated primitive tribe.

Anime fandom on the other hand is in a unique position because of its focus on Japanese *popular* culture. It bypasses the traditional Japanese aesthetic culture that *National Geographic* readers enjoy and learn more about as part of enhancing their cultural capital. Instead, fandom participants improve their subcultural capital in expertise about Japan they believe to be relevant to anime and anime fandom. On the one hand, fans can use their subcultural building exercise as an opportunity to learn about Japan on its own terms. On the other hand, subcultural capital may be limited if it is accumulated solely for self-efficacy and not to enhance the enjoyment of anime or to learn about Japan for its own sake. A sufficiently high enough level of knowledge and experience with Japan can be accumulated to the point that it legitimates subcultural capital as cultural capital. That is, someone can gain expertise about "traditional Japan" if they begin by learning about "pop Japan" and go beyond that narrow area of knowledge.

Most critical educators are cognizant of the effects of popular culture on their students' awareness of racial, gender, and nationalist issues. However, anime fandom in the U.S. is a far more participatory and pedagogical project from the vantage point of the fan audience than the more passive character of a mass media audience. Nevertheless, the possibilities exist for viewers to rely on stereotyped understandings for foreign or marginalized peoples to make sense of confusing or threatening situations in that media. These possibilities are heightened when differing subgroups of a community of fans present competing pedagogies aimed more at

garnering self-efficacy than engendering greater cultural understanding. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of youth and adults seeking out the stories of, from, and for another nation and socially-constructed race of people to relate to as their own suggests a potential for them to do much pedagogical good. That anime fandom accomplishes this partly through systems of labor and critique rather than simple consumption allows this pedagogy to become more meaningful and substantive.

<div align="center">Research Problem</div>

An increasingly globalized and interconnected social world for everyday people presents both challenges and opportunities for social researchers and educators alike. However, globalization is not an all-explaining paradigm for understanding human activity and consciousness. National issues and conflicts, even during a period of decline for the nation-state in general, are far from resolution. That national concerns are interconnected with global and local contexts expands rather than limits their impact on different fields of social interaction. However, U.S.-specific historical sites of conflict such as race and nationality are not so intertwined with global issues of media and overseas commerce and local issues of subcultural community, knowledge, and hierarchy as to be indistinguishable from them.

The anime fans in this study live in the United States, save for a fraction of online participants who live beyond its borders. Their fandom has increased its reach substantially over the past two decades, but significantly so in the past five years. Being largely, though not exclusively, European American, the collective devotion of these fans, mostly under age 30, to a medium featuring human-looking characters produced mostly by Japanese people in Japan invites investigation. How do these fans perceive Japanese people and Japan as a people, differentiated by skin color, gender, and nationality from themselves, if that is the case? What

impact, if any, does anime have on their perceptions of Japan and Japanese people, in communicating both with others and within themselves? How do these categories intersect? How does what anime fans learn and interpret as fans and as North Americans living within an historical moment intersect to form these impressions? In commercially driven anime production, distribution, and consumption, how do fans perform and make sense of their participation in this process compared to other ways in which they survive and find fulfillment in global capitalism? More locally, as in most any other youth-oriented subculture driven by a unique sense of style, how are meaning and power created, mediated, and legitimatized within fandom through the use of general symbols such as everyday language and unique symbols such as art, clothing, and a specialized language? What occurs within this subculture that educators may incorporate, resist, or otherwise address to exercise a socially transformative schooling program that encourages critical inquiry, thoughtful discourse, and cultural awareness?

Research Questions

To answer questions and concerns such as these requires approaching them from a broadly pedagogical perspective. Teaching and learning as processes enable and transform all means of cultural communication and understanding, not just in formal schools, but in all locales of human interaction. I tend, in the tradition of symbolic interactionism (Dewey, 1897, 1927, 1934; Mead, 1964), to view pedagogy and socialization as intertwined processes that are nearly indistinguishable, but not completely synonymous (Becker, 1991). An inquiry into the phenomenon of anime fandom as an agency of informal education should consider how socialization acts as an instrument of pedagogy more than how pedagogy acts as an instrument of socialization, although the latter should be considered as well. That is, I consider human social action as primarily goal-oriented. One of the overarching goals of anime fans is to understand

and enhance their experiences and sensory pleasures through self-consciously creating, sustaining, and shifting their meaning within a social context. Considering this, it is reasonable to regard teaching and learning *per se* as primarily the consequences of these processes rather than as the initiators of them.

However, although individual fans' enjoyment is a central purpose for fandom's existence, it is not the only purpose; enjoyment as an initial catalyst for fandom triggers many other purposes within and even beyond fandom, sometimes seemingly contradictory, which in turn call for other social processes, also at times appearing to conflict, to fulfill them. All of these processes, I argue, can be characterized as unique systems of pedagogy carrying out specific "knowledge projects" to fulfill, and often inadvertently create, new purposes that are nonetheless unified insofar as anime fandom itself has common characteristics and concerns.

Thus, pedagogy is a type of socialization in which social agents purposely engage in teaching and learning (Ayers, 1998; Mead, 1964). I use a framework of analysis that reveals the positionalities that fans experience while acting as pedagogical agents. That is, I seek to learn how fans occupy positions in and between fandom and the wider society, as primarily teachers or primarily learners, as experienced fans and novice fans, as (un)conscious products of a colonial past and postcolonial present, as inhabiting Japanese, North American, and globalized hybrid spaces, as media consumers and producers, and as sociocultural reproducers and resistors.

Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2003) offer a perspective on human learning and socialization that posits such conflicting positionalities as integral to the ability of humans to step outside a social world that would otherwise be so all-consuming as to render people incapable of autonomy. Their argument centers on how humans reproduce culture and represent institutions, embodied in their habitus (Bourdieu, 1984), from their positioned (e.g., heavily predetermined)

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social lives (2003). The *cross-positionality* of humans' various histories and occupations within and across institutions allows them more autonomy as learners to recognize their different positionalities through comparisons within their own lives. Depending on the type and length of social and cultural positions that people have inhabited in their lives, they can imagine to a superficial or deep degree how they and others may experience certain situations. This makes the "horizon for action" (Hodkinson, 1996), or perceived possibilities and realities of identity and experience, long or short. Therefore, a person's dispositions develop within horizons for action (Hodkinson, 1996) that an individual's cross-positionality allows. Symbolic interactionists view such dispositions more interactively and label them "meanings." Regardless, the end result is a person's "learning career," modeled less on the linear scheme assumed in formal schooling and more on the routines and transformations a person experiences (Bloomer & Hodkinson, 2000). Anime fans' cross-positionality involves them in different, multiple, and simultaneous socialization processes. These coalesce into pedagogies for varied social contexts and positions. These constructs inform the research questions I have developed to address the issues raised in the previous section.

To examine fandom in its totality is beyond the scope of a single dissertation. My concern is to identify key goals and processes within anime fandom and to explore how they develop within and simultaneously transfigure traditional social categories and power relations. Then I explore the implications of these patterns for informal pedagogy, inequity and inequality, commercialism and art, subcultures as sociocultural institutions, and even schooling in more institutionalized settings. These unifying themes are represented in my overall research questions:

- How do North American fans of Japanese animation (anime) learn to become anime fans, and what do they learn in this process?

- How do North American fans of anime create, sustain, and change meanings associated with anime and Japan within anime fandom?
- How do North American anime fans negotiate traditional sites of sociocultural consensus and conflict found in U.S. social hierarchies?

Below, I offer a brief description of the research participants and settings from which I collect data to address these questions.

Description of the Participants and Settings

The study focuses on one anime-related organization, Imagenu, which is a student-run extracurricular club located on the campus of a major research institution in the southeastern U.S. This "flagship club" holds weekly meetings on Mondays from 7 – 10 p.m. in an auditorium of the student center where anime is shown during that time. At a minimum approximately 30 people come to each meeting. In some cases, more than 50 attendees have been present. The participants are largely undergraduate college students, about 70% of whom are males, who attend the university, though anyone is invited to attend. Roughly 85% of those who do so are European American, with African Americans and Asian Americans making up the remainder. Other attendees include recent graduates, graduate students, and members of the local community. This club also has an active Internet message board that is also consulted for data.

Imagenu's idioculture does not, of course, represent all of anime fandom. To provide a point of comparison, I selected another research field, Kine Outmake, the student-run club at an engineering-oriented university in the same state. This group holds biweekly meetings on Saturdays from 12:00 – 5:00 p.m. in lecture hall where anime is shown during that time. At a minimum approximately 20 people attend each meeting. In some cases, more than 30 attendees have been present. Like Imagenu, the Kine Outmake participants are largely undergraduate college students, though males make up a higher percentage at around 90%. Kine Outmake is slightly more racially diverse than Imagenu. About 70% of the attendees are European

American, with Asian Americans making up most of the remainder of participants, and no more than 5% of the attendees being African American.

To further broaden the research context, I also studied conventions. Anime fan conventions, typically taking place on weekends at hotels and convention centers, provide a less permanent but significantly different context for anime fans under study to congregate. Therefore, anime conventions serve as sites for data collection such as interviewing, field-note taking, and document gathering similar to those at Imagenu and Kine Outmake. These include four separate anime or anime-related conventions, two in the Southeast and one each in the Midwest and Atlantic regions of the U.S.

In the next section I explain what I anticipated finding when I began the study from the qualitative research data collected from these field sites. I later contrast these ideas to my actual findings in the relevant dissertation chapters so as to highlight how the problems I did not foreshadow forced me to rethink and refine my theoretical frameworks. I use "foreshadowed problems" in Malinowski's (1961: 9) sense to describe my preceding conceptions as opposed to "expected findings", which carries more positivist connotations.

<div align="center">Foreshadowed Problems</div>

I noticed that most North American anime fans have never been to Japan, have never taken formal courses in Japanese history, language, or culture, and have known few if any Japanese or Japanese-Americans. Therefore, I foreshadowed that a combination of popular stereotypes about Japanese people, Japanese cultural references in anime, and fandom conceptions of Japanese culture would influence most novice fans' understandings of Japan. However, the two anime clubs I studied are managed by and made up mostly of university students, some of whom have had lived in Japan for many months or longer and taken Japanese

history, language, or culture courses. I noticed that there are no Japanese or Japanese-American members in either club; only one person of Japanese heritage has been documented to attend Imagenu regularly. Nevertheless, I foreshadowed that the college fans would express more nuanced knowledge about and tolerant attitudes toward Japanese culture than might be expected from fans without collegiate experience.

Because fandom is intentionally planned for social networking, part of fandom pedagogy would inculcate a sense of social distinction apart from mainstream culture associated with institutions such as the family, schools, workplaces, and places of worship. However, the degree and nature of this separateness I have experienced is less severe than those suggested or imposed by other subcultures that require a heavier commitment of time, resources, and willingness to eschew wider social norms for participation on average. However, unlike other leisure-oriented subcultures made up of sports fans or film buffs, anime fans acknowledge the cultural artifact of their focus as being Japanese in origin. Given the troubled historical relationship between the United States and Japan internationally, and between Asian Americans and non-Asians domestically, I foreshadowed that anime fandom pedagogy must inevitably address these divisions. Although I did not expect fans to be multicultural activists, I did think that much of their Japan-related pedagogy would both minimize the "foreignness" of Japan for new fans and emphasize the importance of Japanese cultural knowledge so that fans could appreciate anime on a more involved level.

However, from anticipating this pedagogy based on my experience in anime fandom, I have learned that *authenticity* becomes a key concern of socially engaged fans seeking a different form of entertainment in a different sort of community. Anime fans rarely contest whether people are authentically fans if they simply enjoy anime. By that definition, they are fans. A

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meaningful issue of fan authenticity would be the degree of knowledge and type of skill that a fan can claim, demonstrate, and pass on to others. Relevant knowledge is chiefly knowledge of anime, manga, and Japan. It can also encompass knowing and writing speculative fan fiction, fantasy card gaming, video gaming, computing, and costume making. Much as J. Patrick Williams (2004) cites conflicts over forms of participation within the subculture of straight-edge punk that define the contours of authenticity, I foreshadowed that anime fans would contest their own categories of participation based on their knowledge and skill practices.

Still, my study differs from Williams's in that my conceptualization of authenticity is wider. It encompasses another category that Kimberly McLeod (1999) in her study on hip-hop subculture also includes, "racial," and others that she does not. That is, traditional sites of conflict and identity such as race, ethnicity, and nationality are macro-level forces that anime fans must contend with. I foreshadowed that fans would have to contend with race and nationality in acts of reproduction, resistance, and rearticulation in local sites of pedagogy and action.

To better frame these expectations I brought to the study of anime fandom, I next describe myself as the primary research instrument for how my own subjectivities may have informed the process of data collection and analysis to address the research questions. This sets the tone for the study as an autoethnographic account (Ellis & Bochner, 2000) of my habitus within the field of anime fandom (Bourdieu, 1984) in addition to being a traditional ethnography (Boyle, 1994) of other subcultural participants.

<center>Subjectivities Statement</center>

Broadly speaking, I take an interpretivist framework for knowing the social world. This stance embraces the notion that the situated meanings that cultural participants devise about their

life-world can be best understood through analysis and constructed models that the researcher develops through observational and interactive data making with the participants (Crotty 1998). However, the models are themselves only approximations of reality, useful tools couched in the researcher's own life-world that attempt to explain the cultural understandings and frameworks of participants under study (Crotty 1998). More explanation of my theoretical framework is found in the methodology chapter, but an acknowledgement of my interpretivism now informs my approach toward examining what I have brought to this research.

In this study, I take on the dual roles of academic researcher and anime fan (in contrast, say, to Fine (1983), who studied fantasy gamers as a novice gamer). I am a European American male who enjoys spending hours using the Internet for social activity and am drawn toward fantastic genres such as science fiction and otherworldly fantasy. In short, I fit some of the stereotypes of a "geek," a badge of identity that I do not deny. Quite biased, I hold that animation is the superior medium of expression for not only science fiction and fantasy, but also other genres such as romantic comedy and drama. Although I practice a higher than normal suspension of disbelief for animation, I am also enamored by its capabilities to showcase worlds, convey characters' emotions, and produce visual effects not possible in fictionalized live action film.

Like most North American children born in the late 1970s, I grew up watching cartoons such as *G.I. Joe*, *Super Friends*, *He-Man*, and *Thundercats*. I even transgressed the thick gender line of children's cartoons to watch girl-oriented fare such as *Goldie Gold*, *Jem*, and *She-Ra, Princess of Power*. I unknowingly watched anime as a child, but the show featuring giant robots battling to save the earth I knew as *Tranzor-Z* was an edited version of *Mazinger-Z*. An English translation replaced the original Japanese dialogue, parts deemed too violent for children were cut, and the characters' Japanese names were replaced with English-sounding ones. At the time I

assumed that North Americans had made it, especially because Bunker Jenkins was listed as the producer and owner in the credits; the contribution of Japanese animation company Toei was barely mentioned. These early experiences familiarized me with animation's capabilities for storytelling. However, as I matured, I also became disappointed with how North American producers wasted those capacities with stilted dialogue, lack of character development, unrealistic melodrama, and the portrayal of characters as totally good or evil. Other than *The Simpsons*, I knew only of cartoons that existed for children's consumption.

I abandoned animation for the most part through the later part of high school and college until I became reacquainted with it through Japanese anime, first at conventions for computer hackers during my master's degree years, and then when I entered my doctoral program. Then and over six years later, my disappointment in animation as a whole was challenged when I found animation produced with an eye toward more mature sensibilities, even if I was not Japanese. Quite the contrary, that these cartoons *were* Japanese invoked a powerful curiosity within me to ask why these cartoons "felt" the way they did in visual aesthetics, narrative flow, and character voices. The flipside of my cognizance of these cartoons as Japanese tempted me to use what I knew of Japanese culture at the time to address those questions.

Besides the cartoons we watched, non-Asian U.S. children of my age cohort in the 1980s and early 1990s were well acquainted with the image of Japan as a fierce international economic rival and the Japanese as sinister-yet-subservient workaholics. Much of the blame for the decline of U.S. heavy industries, notably automobile manufacturing, was attributed to competition from Japan. The schools and the popular media influenced my perceptions and those of other European American children toward Japanese people through two projects. First, the schools continually emphasized the need for hard study and academic achievement in business-oriented

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subjects such as math and science to raise the U.S. standard of living threatened by Japanese industrial advancements. This was based on the recommendations of the U.S. Department of Education's National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) in its *A Nation at Risk* report to use public schools as instruments of economic competitiveness against Japan. Second, Hollywood films such as *Gung Ho* and *Rising Sun*, in addition to continued news reports about increases in Japan's dominance of trade and high work hours, cemented the images of Japanese labor and management to create a dualistic stereotype. While I inferred their captains of industry to be callous, soulless, and greedy, their workers appeared to be exploited automatons refusing to make a fuss. The details I heard about Japan's own schools – the over 200 days a year that classes met, the stringent and undemocratic culture of classroom discipline, and the longer school hours kept – were explanation enough for me for the behavior of Japan's workers. These tidbits of information combined to paint Japan as a threat insofar as Japanese corporate ruthlessness and employee overwork could force my generation to either work harder ourselves or make do with a lower standard of living. In either case, the Japanese received my childhood and adolescent blame and accompanying resentment while economic perils from Europe and neoliberal policies exacerbating economic inequality escaped my attention.

By the time I came into anime in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the media image of Japan as an industrial menace had subsided because of Japan's own recession and because the U.S. media had replaced Japan with China and India as the new foreboding non-European economic superpowers. These conditions, combined with a beginning multicultural awareness I cultivated in higher education, had begun to challenge my negative stereotypes about Japan. However, although my image of Japanese bosses as callous predators largely evaporated, I still clung to the idea of the Japanese people as nonassertive corporate serfs. Anime both challenged

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and reaffirmed that view, depending on the show and characters in question. Taken as a whole, anime complicated my perceptions of the Japanese in ways that forced me to revisit my attitudes, even when, on the surface, they were confirmed. For instance, I watched *Kareshi Kanojo no Jijou* and *Tenshi ni Narumon* in my first year of participation in anime fandom. Although both featured overworked Japanese students who were expected to achieve unrealistic expectations, I took note of how the characters dealt with these pressures in different ways. Sometimes adults exerted the pressures only indirectly, and at other times the students also put the pressure on themselves. Even though overwork and stress were represented in these shows, I could no longer assume that, if these shows were meant for a Japanese audience, uniform cultural expectations required them at the expense of individuality and dignity.

As a researcher of anime fandom, I acknowledge that my previous experiences with popular attitudes about Japanese people and Asians affect how I address my research questions. As a reaction to these attitudes, my impulse is to look for nuances and enriching philosophical messages in anime and to assume that fandom participants are, on average, more enlightened and accepting of national and cultural differences than most North Americans. However, my reaction is also tempered with six years of fandom experiences that have uncovered many overused clichés in anime, as well as many anime fans who care nothing about tolerance or cultural enrichment. I have tended to communicate more easily with those who define themselves as "geeks," or the self-proclaimed aficionados of the fantastic, the technological, and the bizarre (e.g., science fiction, fantasy, role-playing games, comics, and classic computer hacking). There is much overlap between geeks and anime fans in the U.S., but one group is not all-inclusive of the other. Moreover, geek subcultures often exist in conscious opposition to U.S. mainstream media culture, which tends to look at these interests disdainfully as the realm of social outcasts

and the emotionally unstable. I consequently tend to valorize anime fandom, a component of geek subculture, as a resistive agency against the media although many anime fans do not see themselves as geeks. Many fans are comfortable with broadcast television, Hollywood films, and print media for a general audience. Also, this bias may make me underemphasize the influence of some U.S. television shows such as *Firefly*, *Lost*, and *24* that have appealed to a wider geek audience, as well as North American cartoons like *The Venture Brothers* and *Metalocalypse* that are meant more for adults than children. How I compensate for those biases is discussed in the methodology chapter. Given the extent of my own participation in anime fandom and how much it affects me as a research instrument, my own process of reflection is part of the answer to the research questions. This is why I consider the study to be autoethnographic in addition to ethnography. Far from an exercise in personal indulgence, I root the autoethnographic portions within wider historical and sociocultural contexts, just as I view my ethnographic findings for other participants.

<div align="center">Dissertation Format</div>

The dissertation consists of five more chapters. The second chapter has two main parts. The shorter first part examines the literature immediately relevant to the topics of fandom subcultures, anime, and media education in light of how it has directly addressed the research questions and how it falls short of treating these matters. The longer second part reviews the theoretical frameworks that have informed my answers to the research questions, including symbolic interactionism, critical theory, racial formation theory, and world culture theory and creolization. In chapter three, I elaborate on my theoretical frameworks directly informed by the literature in chapter two and then discuss the qualitative methodology literature that informs my own research methodology and methods. I discuss the findings from my data collection in

chapter four. Then I conduct an analysis of the data informed by my theoretical framework and

methodology in chapter five. Finally, I explain the conclusions and recommendations that I make

for other social and educational researchers in chapter six.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE RELEVANT TO ANIME FANDOM PEDAGOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the literature that is relevant as background

information to answering the research questions mentioned in Chapter 1. To reiterate, those are:

- How do North American fans of Japanese animation (anime) learn to become anime fans, and what do they learn in this process?
- How do North American fans of anime create, sustain, and change meanings associated with anime and Japan within anime fandom?
- How do North American anime fans negotiate traditional sites of sociocultural consensus and conflict found in U.S. social hierarchies?

Therefore, the literature review should address basic issues of pedagogy, meaning making,

fandom, and the sociocultural world that is relevant to anime fans. These questions address a

subculture of primarily non-Asians who are not Japanese, but who are watching media produced

by Japanese people. Therefore, the literature on race, nationality, and their relationship to media

should be explored to offer relevant perspectives on U.S. anime fandom. Closely related to this

are the phenomena of whiteness and Orientalism that may be affecting the ways in which fans

are making sense of Japanese culture. Literature on this subject will be surveyed to address this

potentiality; as well as to discuss whether or not Orientalism as traditionally conceptualized by

scholars can readily apply to a study of U.S. anime fans.

It is a reasonable assumption that late adolescent anime fans are already socialized in the

cultural norms and practices of making sense of media that are typically found in the United

States. Therefore, it may well be that in their pedagogical practices related to media, fans are

joining together those native meanings of media with those meanings they have gathered from

Japanese anime to produce local subcultural norms. These norms may be in some way a hybrid

of these two systems of meaning. Hybridity itself will be defined and discussed along with a particular type of hybridity, creolization, insofar as it has been addressed in the literature on formal education. Creolization in this context refers to the ways in which educational ideas travel from one level of public administration to another, as well as how they travel from one geographic location to the next. One could apply this process to anime fandom and conceptualize the broadcasting of Japanese anime as one means of cultural pedagogy in Japan. In this sense, anime fans might be creolizing what they're learning about Japan from anime with the ways in which they have traditionally made sense of North American mass media. This process in turn could translate into a creolized pedagogical system of making sense of anime as a Japanese medium by U.S. fans. This system is one that might still attempt to be used by fans to maintain a sense of Japanese cultural authenticity despite this creolizing process.

Unlike the creolization process that typically takes place in formal classrooms in the literature, anime fans engage in a system of pedagogy that takes place outside of the classroom; that is, informal pedagogy. In so doing, fans receive the norms and values of one culture and produce yet another. Their case of informal pedagogy can be compared and contrasted to other groups' cases in order to find similarities and differences in the ways in which teaching and learning takes place. By taking other examples of informal education into account, imagining what the pedagogical processes of anime fandom might look like in this study becomes easier.

I will also consult literature on media fandom in general and anime fandom in particular so as to investigate this subculture in light of its status as a fandom more generally. Studies on media fandom have taken into account the ways in which fans have transformed the meaning of media texts, largely produced in their own countries, for their own specific purposes. Little has been written about anime fandom per se, but what has been written is instructive in the ways in

which it has (not) discussed anime fans as cultural pedagogues. These studies are notable, however, for the ways in which they have tried to characterize fans as social outcasts, both with positive and negative connotations.

In the final section, I will connect the discussion of the literature with the research questions as they were outlined at the beginning of the chapter. If media reinforces traditional attitudes towards race and nationalism, how might fans have to address these social hierarchies? How might their attitude towards Japan be different from those non-Japanese who traditionally appreciate Japanese culture? If hybridity and creolization are a challenge to traditional attitudes and are a component of pedagogy, how might fandom use hybridity and creolization in their social networks? In the case of informal education outside of schooling, how do anime fans socialize one another to become fans – how is anime fandom taught and learned? How might anime fans create, change, and sustain meanings? Finally, I will cite some deficiencies in the literature that the rest of this study might address.

In summary, anime fandom is a pedagogical agency that addresses issues of race, nationality, media, Orientalism, whiteness, informal education, hybridity, creolization, cultural authenticity, as well as fandom itself. In this review of the literature, I first consider race and nationalism in historical and contemporary contexts. Then I discuss how the U.S. mass media has used them, branching off into a related discussion of whiteness and Orientalism. Then I discuss the literature on informal education, anime fandom, fandom in general. Next I define hybridity and its relationship to race, nationalism, and cultural authenticity, and discuss creolization as a type of hybridity applied to pedagogy. Next, I survey some of the literature on fandom in general and anime fandom in particular. Finally, I conclude with connecting this

review with the research questions and posit ways in which this study can address deficiencies in the relevant literature.

Nationalism, Race, and Media

The intersection of nationality and race has played a foundational and permeating role in the history of the United States. From colonial times to the 1950s, citizenship has been legally bestowed largely to immigrants of European ancestry (Zinn, 2003). Its exclusion from non-native, non-Europeans until the 1950s continues to reverberate to this day in the popular conception of a typical "American" being of European heritage. This has affected the participation of non European Americans in spheres of public and private life: law, mass media, religion, schooling, family, and the state, just to name a few.

In the case of anime fandom in the U.S., the pattern of mostly European Americans forming and interacting within a subculture devoted to an art form from the Pacific Rim is a remarkable development. Traditionally U.S. mainstream media has given little coverage to other countries, let alone their cultures except in brief and often stereotypical contexts. The potential for cultural hybridity anime fandom offers warrants a discussion of the intersecting categories of nationality and race in the U.S. Then I will consider how these interactions between nationality and race have affected media in the U.S. Anime fans in general are responding to this media, which is shaped by these intersections, and have formed a cultural pedagogy as part of this response, which includes constructing a sense of cultural authenticity.

The literature I selected in this review illustrates these topics in more detail. Moreover, I will discuss not only how they address these issues of race, nationalism, media, and hybridity relevant to the pedagogy of anime fandom. I will also discuss the literature on anime fandom and general fandom, how they do and do not address these pedagogical issues. Finally, I will discuss

implications for cultural authenticity that this literature presents for anime fandom pedagogy that this study seeks to address.

Nationalism

The concept of nationalism has everything to do with formal political sovereignty and control. The concept of a "nation" had fit into what would be termed a *racialist* philosophy of the world. This applied in the time period before the rise of modern nation-states in Europe in the 19th century and their begotten scientific disciplines of study, but after European contact with and conquest of non-European peoples and their resources. Appiah (1996) and Pieterse (1992) discuss the work of these early influential racialist philosophers. They include Johann Gottfried Herder, an 18th century philosopher from what would later become Otto von Bismark's German state a century later. Herder articulated the *Sprachgeist*, literally "spirit", of a language as part of the culture of a nation rather than simply an instrument of that culture, thereby delving more philosophically into the nature of a nation's literary heritage (Appiah, 1996). "A nation" here can be taken to mean an ethnic group today. The lack of national boundaries for ethnic groups in both Herder's future Germany and present-day ethnic diasporas, and the use of "race" and "nation" were virtually synonymous in Europe until the 1930s (Pieterse, 1992). The widespread unofficial understanding of "Americans" as being English-speaking U.S. inhabitants of European extraction with a racialized sense of solidarity is one profound echo of this legacy (Nakayama, 2000).

Nineteenth Century scholars' sense of a distinctive national character for themselves and other compatriots, coupled with the challenge of making sense of non-European peoples encountered by the British Empire, led them to subdivide human beings into *races* (Appiah, 1996). These races were predicated on the notion of distinctive traits shared by a people,

including those who had formed nation-states as a little-disputed *natural* outgrowth of these traits. Taking cues from Herder's notion of linguistic and literary national distinctiveness, Arnold had racialized the concept of Herder's nation (and our ethnicity) to a point short of scientific principle to demonstrate a national *essence* characterized by, in Britain's case, the interbreeding of Celtic Britons and Anglo-Saxons (Appiah, 1996).

What separates Arnold's racialism from modern racism is his lack of a formal scientific set of principles with *predictive* powers. Arnold did not articulate what an *individual* would be like if s/he came from a Celtic and Anglo marriage (Appiah, 1996). An individual, be it an individual atom, plant, or human, is the basis of what would later in the 19th century be formulated as positivistic scientific reasoning. Arnold reasoned a race-based perspective after the fact to explain why the British were British *as a nation* - not why an individual Briton may have distinctive inheritable traits from the biological interbreeding of Celts and Anglos. Nevertheless, racialist historicism had led to Arnold's contemporaries in the sciences, such as Robert Knox, to sum up race as the benchmark for the worth of nations (Pieterse, 1992).

Today, the mere existence of an ethnic or so-called racial group does not portend that group's national polity or even the desire by a group's members for one. Quite the contrary, a nationalist movement may overtly reject racial or ethnic divisions. As Winant (1997) points out, the United States, in the tradition of official neoconservative racial neutrality, proclaims Enlightenment principles as the basis for political rule while using its institutions to amplify the influence of Anglo American cultural logic on the body politic. Anime fans in the U.S. are thereby confronted with an official national culture of "color blindness", but with a nationalist Eurocentrism that reifies assumed faculties of reason in which non-Europeans such as Japanese people are deficient.

Race

The defining component of the concept of race is power, and in the United States nationalism intertwines with race, a category already intertwined with gender. Race, as noted by Cornell (1998), Omni (1994), and Orbe (2001), differentiates among a society's members based on physical differences, such as skin color, that are noticeable by laypeople. The people who ascribe the *worth* of this differentiation, however, have the power not only to determine who is worthy (and they most certainly include themselves among the worthy), but also to articulate this determination through the use of a theory relying on allegedly supportive empirical findings. These findings then "become socially significant to the extent that we use them to organize and interpret experience, to form social relations, and to organize individual and collective action" (Cornell, 1998, p. 24).

Contrary to state condemnation of racism, in some states individuals are currently legally classified as nonwhite based on the "one drop rule" of having a nonwhite ancestor (almost always an African American one) going back an arbitrary number of generations (Gandy 1998; Omi 1994; Orbe, 2001). Lipsitz (1998) explains that those who appear "white" but have, say, great-great-grandparents who were not considered "black" or African American are not likely to face institutional racism. Nevertheless, this law is a descendant of the "scientific" attempts of Nineteenth Century scholars to determine race based upon presumed objective definitions of human biology, especially in parsing assumed differences between European and African Americans.

The case of Takao Ozawa, a Japanese immigrant declared nonwhite, and therefore ineligible for citizenship by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1922, demonstrates two processes. That is, the traditional intersection between nationalism and race, as well as a transition to the legal

use of "commonsense" logic in defining an individual's race as opposed to earlier "scientific" logic. Because Ozawa was Japanese, he was bared from participation in the national polity as a citizen. That is, being racially "Japanese" was incompatible with being an "American". Moreover, the basis upon which he was declared "nonwhite" was not based on a scientific determination since he technically had white skin. Rather, the denial of his citizenship was based on a layperson standard of appearance that judged him to not be considered "white". While the Hart-Cellar Act of 1965 had ended the last explicit barriers to citizenship based on national origin, the legacy of nonwhites, including Japanese and other Asians to be informally considered less than full citizens continues in the popular imagination.

Historical Racial Subjugation in National Media

If the commonsense logic of race discussed earlier is widespread in white-dominated U.S. society, according to Hall (1990) and Kellner (1995), it follows that domestic profit-seeking media institutions will in some way reflect this logic and legitimatize it. Hall (1990) cites the historical context for this logic in that during European colonization and domination of Africa and Asia, and in the United States until shortly after World War II, mass media conveyed *overt* racism in its messages.

By exposure to dehumanizing representations of nonwhites in print and later cinema, white laborers with histories of labor agitation in the Haymarket Square and the Paris Commune uprisings could be convinced of a superficial, albeit convincing solidarity with the white ruling classes. In belonging to a national racial group, and through industriousness and benevolence allegedly attributable to inherited white characteristics for both sexes, working class white people could rightfully claim a superior standing in most areas of life in the United States well into the 20th century. The media positioned this class as guardians of the racial status quo

(Pieterse, 1992). Even today, mainstream media promotes subtle *inferential* racial attitudes that

rely on seldom-questioned racist premises and assumptions held by whites (Hall, 1990). For

instance, persons of color have occupied increasingly marginal or absent roles in the media when

compared to their white counterparts in recent years (Bang & Reece, 2003; Greenberg, Mastro,

& Brand, 2002). This promotes the notion that people of color are inconsequential. When they do

appear in the media, people of color are often represented in less than optimal roles. These

include portraying African American as primitive and aggressive athletes (Hardin, Dodd,

Chance, Walsdorf, 2004), Asian Americans as hard workers devoid of a balanced family life

(Taylor & Stern, 1997), and Latinos as lawbreakers in both the news (Dixon & Linz, 2000) and

in fiction (Greenberg, Mastro, & Brand, 2002).

The portrayal of racial groups in U.S. cartoons is similar in its inferential attitudes, but

interpreting these inferences takes on an added layer of complexity when we consider these

cartoons' target demographic – children. Before the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and

1970s had successfully raised concerns about overt acts of racism in cartoons, these acts were a

semi-regular staple. World War II-era cartoons are perhaps some of the most infamous examples

of overtly racist media. The likes of Bugs Bunny and Popeye, representing the U.S. war effort,

battled Japanese military villains portrayed as scrawny, buck-toothed, always wearing "coke

bottle" glasses, speaking very broken English, and above all, treacherous in titles such as

"You're a Sap, Mr. Jap" and "Bugs Bunny Nips the Nips". The removal of wartime hostility

reduced the number of these types of portrayals in the later 1940s and 1950s, although other

racial stereotypes such as extremely dark, big-lipped African American characters eating

watermelons or Native Americans greeting each other with "How" persisted (Klein & Shiffman,

2006). However, racism was embedded into mass media practices to such an extent that a

precipitous decline to near-zero portrayals did not happen until 1964 (Klein & Shiffman, 2006), when the Civil Rights Movement's activism against overt negative stereotypes was in full swing.

Unlike Japanese animation, which has a broad appeal across age groups, U.S. animation has been traditionally marketed towards children as entertainment. More recently, cartoons have appealed to parents as means of having their children adopt pro-social attitudes, among them an absence or rejection of overtly stereotyped attitudes of nonwhites. However, an analysis of contemporary U.S. animation reveals a combination of both rejection of overt racial stereotypes and an embrace of implicit ones. African American characters for instance no longer have distinctive lips or eat watermelons and are often depicted as attractive and performing well at their jobs, possibly as a response to earlier characterizations. Still, they are more likely to be shown singing, dancing, playing music, and taking vacations (Klein & Shiffman, 2006), which alludes to the traditional "happy Negro minstrel" stereotype and suggests idleness. Moreover, Latino characters were less likely to hold a job (Klein & Shiffman, 2006). This could well allude to the "lazy Mexican" stereotype without the necessity of a sombrero-wearing Speedy Gonzales taking a long siesta to belabor the point.

Like their counterparts on live-action television, U.S. cartoons shifted towards under-representing nonwhites as characters relative to their numbers in the general population. Again, this risks the implicit attitude that they are inconsequential to the lives of "real" North Americans. The exception to this was Asians, who constitute around 3% of the population, but 4.3% of the characters in contemporary animation (Klein & Shiffman, 2006). Studies of U.S. animation have not addressed what roles Asian characters occupy, or if they identify by national ethnicity (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Korean). From my own experience of regularly watching North American cartoons in the 1980s, when Asian characters did appear, they were often

samurai and ninjas in the employ of European American villains, or scientific wizards using technology for the benefit of their non-Asian friends. There was certainly an air of exoticism and Otherness attached to them, but not anywhere as overtly demeaning as their WWII-era counterparts. Unlike those explicit wartime-era villains, there was an implicit notion that these Asian characters existed largely for the benefit of the main protagonists and antagonists, who tended to be European Americans in more empowering and complex roles.

<p style="text-align:center">Orientalism, Japan, and Whiteness</p>

For the most part, mass media in the English-speaking world continue to both reflect and perpetuate the ideologies of race and "Otherness" crafted through this history, albeit in different ways. Next I move to media representations of Asian Otherness and its relationship to whiteness.

The concept of Otherness, or the systematic marginalization of racial groups considered foreign and alien, traditionally finds its scholarly source in Edward Said's *Orientalism*. The "Orient" was (and among contemporary Orientalists, is) a somewhat culturally undifferentiated landmass located from the westernmost tip of Asia Minor and extending eastward to the Pacific Rim. Orientalism itself is an ideology developed by Western intellectuals during the 19th century colonial era that fixed the West as "rational, developed, humane, superior, and the Orient [as] aberrant, undeveloped, [and] inferior" (1978: 300). Justification for this stark dichotomy came from the West's view of the Orient as unchangeable and without a means to define itself apart from the culturally dynamic West's application of science to make those definitions (Said, 1978).

In the case of Japan, a tension existed for 19th century Europeans. If mainline Western scholars perceived of culture as a linear, progressing phenomenon, they could at once admit Japan into the elite club of progressive nations as the token industrialized, non-Western member, but in other ways also declare Japan so fundamentally different as to face relegation to a racial

taxonomy of nations mired in cultural stagnation (Pham 1999). The imagined superiority of Western writers determined where Japan would be in relation to the West in contextual and contradictory ways. That is, as a broker between the East and West, an "artistic" country standing as a critique(!) of the Western culture of industrial efficiency, an upstart and boyish student of the West, or an innocent, unspoiled, girlish, and naïve kimono-clad people living on a island both in a geographic and cultural sense (Pham 1999). Orientalism informs the historical case of Japan's unique relationship to the U.S. and Europe. However, the far more unequal situations of Western relations with Arab and Persian areas, India, Southeast Asia, and China, coupled the West's positioning of Japan as an "honorary" member of the white postindustrial powers, places Japan out of postcolonialism's full theoretical reach. This is not to say that postcolonialism has nothing to say about the relationship between Japan and the West. However, it may be helpful to explore the relationships between Western conceptions of Japanese culture and its own ideology of whiteness. Postcolonial theorists do not typically address this.

While the Orient may be viewed as a foreign, exotic, and unchanging land safely beyond the shores of the Western homeland, the Asian Oriental in the U.S. is less foreign than alien. Lee (1999) distinguishes alien from foreign in terms of pollution – the alien Orientals must either leave and become foreign again or be "naturalized" and cleansed of their pollution to find a place within U.S. society. U.S. media portrayals of Asians and Asian Americans have traditionally re-centered European American masculine heterosexuality. Asian male villains are suppressed *ala* a "wild west" style confrontation with European American males in action movies, making the setting safe for whites and subordinate Asians and Others of color (Nakayama, 1994). At the same time, they articulate Asian femininity in a sexually driven dichotomy of demureness and

deceitful cunning that can nonetheless be "won over" by earnest European American masculinity (Hagedorn, 1997).

However, the image of the Japanese in the U.S. media is not so easily domesticated. Long a military and diplomatic ally with a highly developed postindustrial economy, contemporary U.S. media portrays Japan(ese) in more humanized terms compared to other Asian countries. However, Japanese adoption of Western-style (though not necessarily Western) dress, employment, and living arrangements is seen as inauthentic rather than as a signifier that Japan is truly a country on par with the West. What North Americans typically conceive of and appreciate about "authentically" Japanese are the ahistorical, aesthetic and exoticized cultural tropes of painted geishas, martially skilled samurai, tea ceremonies, haiku poetry, and pastoral settings filled with cherry blossoms. Still, this appreciation is continually under threat by Japanese actions that conflict with Western ideologies and interests. This includes a recent denial of WWII-era state-enforced sexual slavery by then-Prime Minster Shinzo Abe in 2007 after the U.S. House of Representatives demanded an apology for this wartime conduct (Onishi, 2007). Such a threat therefore calls for a critical distance between Western "Japanist" (as opposed to Orientalist) connoisseurs of Japan and its culture and the very culture they appreciate. Hollywood has embodied such a relatable and trustworthy figure in Sean Connery's character John Connor in *Rising Sun*. Connor is an expert in and aficionado of Japanese culture who nonetheless opposes a Japanese corporation in Los Angeles suspected of a murder cover-up. He agrees with a police detective that, "We are indeed at war with Japan." (Lee, 1999).

Although the producers of *Rising Sun* constructed the omnipresence of Japanese culture and the threatening nature of Japaneseness, it predictably ignored scrutinizing Conner's whiteness in which such judgments are based. The project of whiteness has necessarily entailed a

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definition of what Others are as discussed earlier so that European Americans can make sense of themselves as what they are *not*, as well as who they are as white people (Dyer, 1997; Frankenburg, 1993). This boundary-making necessarily includes discourses on nationality when the invisibility of whiteness translates whiteness into the equivalent of being considered an "American" (Nakayama, 2000). Like "the Other," whiteness is hardly a static category, but is rather a fluid and contextual sense of identity, intertwined with gender, that is largely an outgrowth of the process of racial formation and reproduced through "circuits of desire and power" (McLaren, 1998: 66). That is, the power of white privilege is used to attain desired things such as wealth and status, and the use of this power, sourced in historical categories of race, both reinforces and changes the ways in which European Americans conceive of their whiteness. This process results in continually evolving concepts, beliefs, and practices that assign varying types and degrees of worth to racial groups on a society-wide basis (Omi, 1994).

Michael Omi and Howard Winant characterize racial formation more in terms of politics and the state rather than as a cultural phenomenon. However, I understand culture as one of the chief bases of the institutions under their critique. I use Clifford Geertz's definition of culture; that is, "…an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (1973: 89). In the case of anime fans, I focus on their informal educative practices that are the methods of inheriting and developing the meanings and attitudes they associate with Japanese culture. By extension, this includes their conceptions of Japanese people as a race.

Whiteness is often conceived in terms of stable and disciplined white, and especially masculine bodies contrasted to the sensual, kinesthetic, culinary, auditory, and visual excesses of

Others. This distinction allows European Americans to retain access to these constructed excesses for their own pleasure while disavowing them at the same time to claim a space of rational superiority in the life of the nation. Cultural theorist Eric Lott (1993: 482) comments, "Hatred of the other arises from the necessary hatred of one's own excess; ascribing this excess to the 'degraded' other *and indulging* it – by imagining, incorporating, or impersonating the other – one conveniently and surreptitiously takes and disavows pleasure at one and the same time."

Those European Americans who have traditionally essentialized Japanese culture for their own pleasure may regard Japan, on a surface level, as a field of constraint rather than excess as attributed to other Orientals, Africans, and Latin Americans. This makes the perceived threat of a disciplined Japanese competitor real, but it allows Japanists to connect themselves to Japanese culture without any danger to their own whiteness. Japan's status as an "honorary white" nation allows Japanists to conceive of Japanese culture in more nuanced and complex terms in comparison to that of other non-white peoples.

Still, this complexity allows for the location of an *underbody* of excess that the Japanist's expertise "discovers" that a more casual observer can locate easily in non-Japanese Others. For each poised and genteel Japanese woman in a kimono, there is a sexually available wench equipped with uniquely Oriental carnal techniques underneath that are unconstrained by the dictates of Christian feminine chastity. The archetype of the clean and exotically uniformed samurai of noble lineage is an efficient killing machine with a short fuse; doubly so for his freelance counterpart the ninja. They both kill, often unjustly, and for the needs of their provincial clan or their employer rather than for the Japanese nation-state begun in the industrial and Westernizing Meiji era. Japanists deeply admire Japanese culture as they have conceived it,

and they generally accept Japan's membership in the broader postindustrial world that is dominated by the West. However, in the Japanist's mind, eternally exploitable exotic feminine sexuality and ahistorical barbaric irrational masculine cruelty of the Orient are never far from the surface of ultimately futile attempts at true Westernization (Pham, 1999).

<p style="text-align:center">The Specter of Hybridity</p>

The boundary between a pleasurable, but antagonistic Japan and a rational U.S., itself bound up in whiteness, is in constant danger of violation. The "danger" is manifest in the polarized subjectivities of whiteness itself. That is, "Whiteness seduces the subject to accept the idea of polarity as the limit-text of identity, as the constitutive foundation of subjectivity" (McLaren, 1998: 68). Whiteness in the case of appreciation of Japanese culture involves competing notions of detached objectivity and engaged pleasure. This constitutes a tenuous political project.

A major challenge of this study is to address the question of how mostly European American anime fans approach a medium from a different perceived racial and national background to fulfill their desires for entertainment and community within the socio-political context of whiteness as societal domination over "Others". The project considers whether or not fan understandings of anime and Japanese culture are being made self-consciously from an interpreted *Japanese* as well as a European American perspective and under which contexts. They then can see the identities of Others and themselves as historically situated, permeable through interaction and exchange, and capable of resisting oppression from without and within (Ferguson, 1998). Cultural hybridity may transgress the rigid social categories that underlie these perspectives. However, it might also oppress by substituting cultural mimicry and assimilationist tendencies (Ferguson, 1998) for a self-conscious awareness of social categorization. Still, if

hybridity has the potential to consciously marginalize systems of categorization such as race and nationalism, then an examination of it and its pedagogical forms and potentials is relevant.

A Definition of Hybridity

To call something a "hybrid" typically classifies that thing as a construct that is the result of mixing elements assumed to be traditionally disparate by a culture's definition. To conceive of hybridity as a state and a process assumes that the categories that form its parts were themselves stable and coherent. Moreover, a hybrid structure itself must be stable if it is to encompass disparate elements into a recognizable and encapsulated form, even if only temporarily. Homi Bhabha (1994) defined hybridity within the context of the postcolonial experience of subjugation. He called it "a problematic of colonial representation…that reverses the effects of the colonial disavowal, so that other 'denied' knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority" (1994: 156). Hybridity does not necessarily entail states of flux and continual change, nor must serve as a stepping stone towards liberation as Bhabha implies here. However, it is closely associated with flux, change, and liberation given what is called a "hybrid" is innovative, recent, and often challenges the popular memory. What is called "hybridity" is a temporally contextual process contingent on a novel combination of what were assumed disparate elements that were not joined in a traditional association before. It is not simply the state of a hybrid that is new, but also the timing and nature of the fusion of the parts of the hybrid together, as well as that hybrid's function in the life-world(s) of relevant parties. Hybridity is by its nature an upheaval of the subject, though a person and, more broadly, colonized and colonizing peoples can influence this hybridity based upon their locations, interests, and identities.

Arjun Appadurai (1996) examines the current state of a globalized world awash in continually circulating capital, people, and images that trigger states of hybridity on a larger scale than ever before. Before the advent of globalization and widespread digital technology and immigration, cultural hybridity was not as ubiquitous since cultures, especially those of the West were more self-contained. This new circulation leads, in Appadurai's (1996) mind, to a schizophrenic social world in which agents are caught between a world in continual motion, compressed time, and uprootedness on the one hand, and their need for a stable social identity and network on the other. Agents are therefore caught between different states of existence, one real and one desired. The reality of a world swept in continual movement and digital communication and imagery thus virtually recreates a lost and desired sense of place. It does so by fostering virtual relationships with media images of stable families and communities, which are foundations of a lost time that is itself imagined.

This situation by itself encourages, but does not create hybridity. When individuals find themselves in such disjuncture, they do not necessarily want to build identities from what they know of traditional relationships or an "authentic" cultural tradition. Nor, as Anne Allison (2006) asserts in an elaboration of Appadurai, is the result necessarily a refusal for many to locate their identity in any one locus of physical or social place. This would involve shifting from one cultural locus to the next, but not a fusion between them within the life-world of the agent per se. One historical example was of 19th and 20th Century immigrants to the United States shifting from their ethnic family and neighborhood culture to the wider Anglo-dominated culture. Globalization fosters hybridity within a sense of comfort and competency that agents feel in this disjointed condition, as Anne Allison (2006) suggests. However, these same agents still seek to locate their identities within an authentic cultural point that is, instead of a product of tradition, a

manifestation of their divorce from it. Here, social agents readily borrow from a globally circulating menagerie of images and the meanings they attribute to them rather than specifically from the home culture. By defining a specified collection of images from elsewhere as authentic from the vantage point of their own cultural framework, agents change the nature of those images for their own purposes. Hybridization in this sense is the fusion of (sub)culturally bound understandings of and desires for the Other with images and narratives defined as foreign, even alien, to produce a newly "authentic" cultural location within which agents can inhabit.

The nature of this hybridity, unlike that of the agents' traditional culture, is not readily grasped from the experience of daily life. In the case of anime fandom, this type of hybridity is carried out in a subculture that has general expectations for how the process of hybridity takes place. Moreover, many of the Japanese cultural allusions found in anime are not readily understandable without some background knowledge. A recognizable pedagogy is required to realize certain competencies to achieve this expected hybridity and to allow novices to do likewise. The politics associated with this hybridity are also complex because agents are hybridizing at least two different cultural traditions by definition to produce a project of cultural authenticity. Ironically, agents distance themselves from their home culture as well because they self-consciously desire to locate their identity in a cultural area not completely within that of their traditional milieu.

The first is the perspectives of scholars of comparative education on hybridity, specifically creolization, and how these views may apply to the informal educational context of anime fandom.

Comparative Education and Hybridity

Basic theories from the field of comparative education provide a sense of scope and boundary in a world of traveled and hybridized educational ideas. In turn, these theories that have traditionally applied to formal educational practices across regions and levels of administration indicate a sense of the more fluid, but pedagogically important terrain of popular culture. Japanese animation serves as a topic of pleasure, inquiry, and critique by fans in the United States. This portion of the chapter examines the continuum of global-to-local pedagogical settings and a type of hybridity in comparative education, creolization, which occurs across them. I then suggest how U.S. anime fandom may act as an internationally aware and locally situated site of a dynamic cultural pedagogy.

Research on a continuum of levels from the global to the local can, when two or more levels interact through educational policy, reveal both local differences and a sense of common identity that transcends the local as well as highlight both conflicts of interest and the eroding of barriers to mutual understanding (Rust & Kim, 1997). The classroom is a contested terrain in which teachers and students interact with contradictory and opposing forces of policymakers, high-level administrators, principals, and parents, even if they're not physically in the classroom. The classroom provides an ideal setting to demonstrate these phenomena through ethnographic research sensitive to broader models and local contexts (Anderson-Levitt, 2003; Masemann, 1999).

Yet, the extremes of the global and local rarely come into direct contact without a "mediating middle" determining the type and degree of penetration of the flow of ideas and practices from one to the other. This can be understood as outside ideas entering at various levels, willingness or reluctance to change by actors, and the prevalence or lack of physical and

pedagogical resources that contextualize the middle levels of organization between the local and global themselves (Napier, 2003). At each level of a reform's movement, people recognize the original reform while consciously or unconsciously conceiving and implementing it in ways that address their particular context(s). This hybridizing process is also known as *creolization*, not unlike the Creole language that combines English, French, and West African influences.

Scholars have understood creolization, especially with the work of Ulf Hannerz (1987), as a cultural phenomenon of exchange and reinterpretation. Creolization is a never-ending process of cultural innovation at all levels of societal organization by actors asserting their identities within mediating and changing cultural landscapes (Stade & Dahl, 2003). For example, multinational corporations may integrate different types of management styles if managers and laborers come from significantly different work cultures. Hannerz himself was concerned with how social networks distributed these innovations. He understood the distribution to occur best within a local multitude of interacting perspectives differentiated by labor roles and countries of immigrant origin. These would determine the flow of culture in terms of, respectively, self-interest by labor and movement between the core and periphery by culturally hybridized immigrants who would affect both types of locations (1987). In this sense, the concept of "cultural purity" is an unachievable and unwanted anachronism in a time of cultural creativity inspired by transnational interactivity (Stade & Dahl, 2003). All cultures can in fact be thought of as "multicultural" when they are considered not as a monolithic set of societal values and norms, but as the product of interaction between people of different cultural roles (Goodenough, 1976). Cultural members' understanding of their roles and those of others are affected by their personal goals and their ability and power to realize them in a society – a process educational access profoundly determines (Goodenough, 1976).

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A creolized system is seldom intentional because policymakers and researchers at the top of societies usually have some definite idea of what a reform ought to be and how it should travel. Then lower-level administrators and practitioners inevitably alter those reforms in either a spirit of accommodation or resistance. This occurs within both intentionally integrated and intentionally separate administrative systems. South Africa's move toward a more devolved system of schooling authority did not erase the ministerial level or broader national mandates to educate for a multiracial democracy. Still, creolization of these broader mandates occurred with respect to provincial interpretations of, and practitioner attitudes toward, them (Napier, 2003). Considering their levels of resources and their practitioners' and parents' ease with the policies for their own settings, localities' creolization of reforms may or may not remain true to the spirit, if not the law, of what was originally intended. Whether the systems are officially national or state and local have also had an impact on the type of creolizations that have developed, but the process of creolization itself continues in the United States and elsewhere. Far from homogenous, these levels of decision-making are characterized by differing degrees of cultural heterogeneity brought about by the interactivity of labor roles (e.g., bureaucratic, policymaking, researching, training, teaching, and learning) as well as differing degrees of cultural penetration by outside influences from lower to higher levels (Hannerz, 1987; Napier, 2003).

For anime fandom, a similar process of educational creolization occurs in informal social contexts. Next, I consider anime fandom as an educational agency subject to the same forces of creolization in carrying out its pedagogical tasks as can be found in formal educational institutions, but responding to them very differently.

Informal Education and Anime Fandom

The type of education that occurs outside of schools and without formalized, curriculum and instruction, but nevertheless facilitates a transfer of knowledge, skills, and cultural ways of knowing and being is labeled *informal education* (Dewey, 1944). Often outside of the classroom, where the social world isn't shaped as rigidly by the dictates of teachers and policy makers, there is a greater possibility as Maxine Greene (2000) puts it, that, "Multiple and provisional perspectives fuses with a vision of spaces that are not closed in, that are open on all sides to the unexpected and the possible. They are not and cannot be closed to the search for meaning, which takes so many forms." For instance, sociologist Howard Becker observed in the 1960s that it can occur in some of the most unlikely settings, such as among marijuana users. Novice users learn from the more experienced users in two ways; the direct instruction from experienced users on how to smoke, and the indirect instruction through the novices' observations of how the experienced users are smoking the plant (Becker, 1991). Cultural norms such as the aesthetics of a good smoke and the shared meaning of a high are also transferred to and contemplated by student-smokers through the process of instruction (Becker, 1991).

Becker's study and findings were remarkable for the 1960s, a decade when the study of pedagogy was much more wedded to formal classroom instruction and divorced from leisure than today. During the 1970s, anthropologists began to consider the study of leisure as a legitimate contribution to scholarship on culture in general. Elizabeth C. Mouledoux and Edward Norbeck are examples of these pioneers. Indeed, Mouledoux (1977) stated, "What is expressed in play is no different than what is expressed in culture" (1977: 55) and emphasized play's simultaneously individual and social nature. Norbeck (1977), who wrote from what seems to be a functionalist lens, viewed play as a function of human competitiveness. He asserted that a

balance between play and "earnest" (1977: 16) (i.e. non-leisure activities) is vital for a healthy

civilization. "Civilization arises and unfolds in and as play," he wrote (1977: 17). Though

positing that play is fundamental to human societies and cultures accomplishes Mouledoux's

(1977) and Norbeck's (1977) objective of raising its status in anthropology, they do not

characterize it explicitly as pedagogical. However, it is not a great leap to this characterization if

we realize that social and cultural practices are taught and learned in every society, and we

consider leisurely activity such as play as social and cultural in nature. Jumping from this

realization, we can discuss non-classroom pedagogy more broadly and imagine what its

implications might be for anime fandom.

     Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991) devised the concept of *legitimate peripheral*

participation to talk intelligibly about different learning communities spanning very different

cultures. This term refers to the process by which learners are considered legitimate members of

a community of practitioners and move toward full participation in its sociocultural practices as a

function of the learning process (1991). Such a process implies that "learning is an integral and

inseparable part of social practice" (1991: 31), which goes beyond the notion of pedagogy as an

isolated process that happens to be a social action. Rather, as Lave and Wenger (1991) argue,

social practice is the main generative activity, and learning is one of its attributes. As such,

learning involves far more than an acquisition of knowledge, but involves a transformation of

social relations, social structures, and identities (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

The different types of learning communities that Lave and Wenger (1991) describe can

inform our own understanding of anime fandom's pedagogical practices. Rural South American

midwives often learn their trade as part of growing up in a family and watching their mothers or

other female relatives give birth and care for their young. West African tailors, on the other hand,

must adapt to new types of laboring practices in an unfamiliar shop (Lave and Wenger, 1991). In

another example, experienced North American members of Alcoholics Anonymous are not

explicitly teachers. However, they do instruct by providing narratives and the very act of telling

narratives to newer members as models of constructing a non-alcoholic identity (Lave and

Wenger, 1991). That is:

> If masters don't teach, they embody practice at its fullest in the community of practice. Becoming
> a "member such as those" is an embodied telos too complex to be discussed in the narrower and
> simpler language of goals, tasks, and knowledge acquisition. There may be no language for
> participants with which to discuss it at all – but identities of mastery, in all their complications,
> are there to be assumed (in both senses) (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

As such there is a definable community of practice in which to obtain common

understandings, skills, and a mastery of them, there need not be strict boundaries that delineate

the group within and from without (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Members can and do assume

varied roles and knowledges even at a relatively inexperienced level. A common understanding

and skill that members of most communities of practice must master, however, is relevant

linguistic proficiency (Lave and Wenger, 1991). That is, they cannot use random words from a

community's language repertoire and graft them onto any social context, but should know what

the language is actually about while in accepted use. This includes being able to talk *within* (i.e.

language to perform regular activities) and *about* a practice (i.e. stories and lore that may allow

reflection on the community itself) (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

It is a common practice in North America for children to grow up watching cartoons on

television. In repeating the practice over many days, young viewers learn what cartoons they

enjoy and don't enjoy. They begin to assemble, with the interaction of their siblings and

neighborhood and school peers, a common agreement of which animated shows – and what type

of shows – are exemplary or inferior. The practice of critiquing cartoons, and other points of

view about them, is learned in this way. While this sort of pedagogy is similar to the example of

South American midwives in that they learn their skills in domestic situations, anime fandom

more resembles the West African tailors in it separateness from traditional domesticity. A novice

fan typically encounters those more adept at knowing about and critiquing anime programs using

generally accepted standards of taste and aesthetics. Moreover, novices make these encounters

not in the daily life of school or family, but in anime-specific organizations, not unlike

apprentice tailors in shops or new attendees at Alcoholics Anonymous meetings.

Like the tailors who are there to specifically learn a craft from a recognized professional,

novice fans are, if they attend an anime club, likely to gain knowledge from someone in an

official position as a club officer. However, club officers are likely to be more akin to the

experienced members of AA than professional tailors in that their roles are not explicitly

instructional. Narratives told by club officers or fans with similar experiences may illustrate their

experiences as novices, events in anime that are particularly noteworthy, or examples of other

fans who were rejected from their own fandom circles. In this way, like the AA initiates, novice

anime fans can obtain their "identities of mastery" (Lave and Wenger, 1991: 85) out of the

interactions within their respective social context.

The roles between instructor and learner in anime fandom are not set. Novice anime fans

do bring their experiences and impressions of non-anime cartoons, anime they may have watched

before, and other media to fandom interaction. While more experienced members may be

familiar with hundreds of anime titles that make up an informal fandom canon, novices can bring

new interpretive mechanisms to make sense of them. This includes language, such as continually

evolving youth slang or catchphrases from newer media titles (e.g. the oft-repeated "THIS IS

SPARTAAAA!" line from the movie *300* c. 2006) that are applied to anime in novel or

humorous ways. A novice has to learn what is considered novel or humorous in fandom to

successfully apply language previously known only to them to "new" anime. Likewise, more experienced members may well have to learn new currents of language in order for their expertise to remain relevant. This is but one example of the fluid interactivity between instructors and learners in anime fandom who practice legitimate peripheral participation similar to what Lave and Wenger (1991) had in mind. Contemplation of Japanese culture and its role in appreciating anime might follow a similar tension between the expectations of experienced fans and the newer understandings of novices.

Mass culture, however, is often thought of less as an object of contemplation, but more as a means of giving fans' own socially constructed experiences and identities a boundary within which to explore the possibilities of whom they can be and how to make sense of those experiences (Nespor, 2000). Much of fans' interactions with mass culture depend on their position within other infrastructures, such as the formal school, family, and the workplace (Nespor, 2000). This is in contrast to *popular* culture wherein fans use mass culture in ways unintended by its corporate producers (Jenkins, 2006). Often the uses are for affective, social, and critical purposes. However, to participate effectively in social networks with other fans, like Becker's marijuana users, fans not only need to grasp important fandom concepts via informal pedagogy. They also learn to take disparate ideas from different mass culture resources and creolize them to build an edifice of locally coherent popular cultural meanings that shift moment to moment. These meanings speak to their anxieties and desires as active and self-cognitive participants caught in positions between cultural consumption and production, between different fandom factions, as well as between national mass cultures.

An example of this pedagogical process in practice, outside of anime fandom, is the fandom surrounding the Harry Potter novels by J.K. Rowling. One project overtly centered on

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writing pedagogy is the publication of *The Daily Prophet*, a "school newspaper" ostensibly

published by the students of the Hogwarts magic school. In reality, 102 children from around the

world write for the fictional newspaper online, itself edited by an adolescent fan, but the task of

learning writing skills to produce this fictional newspaper is very much real (Jenkins, 2006).

These global fans bring their varied and culturally contingent experiences of growing up to

inform the stories written by and about themselves as Hogwarts students writing about their

school (Jenkins, 2006). Jenkins (2006) asserts that the children are able to build up important

literacy skills while coming to know themselves and their own cultures, including their gendered

and educational disparities, more fully in expanding on the world of *Harry Potter*. In the process,

The Daily Prophet is created by taking a well-regarded, but seldom implemented pedagogical

idea—collaborative writing—from educational theorists and creolizing it with the perspectives of

both *Harry Potter* fandom and individual writers' own situated cultural contexts they experience

offline. *The Daily Prophet* represents one type of labor role that contributes to a heterogeneous

middle level of fandom where much of the work of creolizing educational ideas from

professional pedagogues for individual fans' purposes takes place.

        Considering the global reach of collaborative fandoms such as *Harry Potter*, I believe

some creolization of differing cultural responses to transnational mass culture is inevitable for

that fandom's pedagogy to resonate with diverse fans. In U.S. anime fandom, creolization is a far

more fractious and contested affair when compared to the fandom of a single fiction franchise.

As pointed out before, several different genres of anime exist with many different anime titles in

each genre, far more than in the days of clubs of the early 1980s that were often devoted to single

anime programs such as *Starblazers*. Aesthetic and thematic traditions from within anime itself

are regularly policed by more experienced fans to prevent intermixing between, for example,

mahou shoujo ("magical girl") titles and historical fantasy warfare in fan fiction-producing

circles. Even the more personal creolization of the self with the *Harry Potter* universe in *The*

Daily Prophet newspaper—with writers assuming identities as students at Hogwarts—is far

more discouraged in other segments of *Harry Potter* fandom, let alone anime fandom. This

practice of individuals inserting themselves personally in some way into a fictional universe is

blasted as a "Mary Sue" fiction in most writing circles (Chander & Madhavi, 2007). Such fan

writers are accused of attempting to bolster their status within the world in question at the

expense of what is deemed authorial judgment and good taste. Indeed, a major irony of North

American anime fandom is that, although it is made up of fans well versed in the mass culture of

the U.S., most of its subgroups disapprove of anime being perceived as a creolization of U.S. and

Japanese culture. That is, many anime fans tend to characterize anime as a uniquely Japanese

creation with no outside influences, especially from the United States, on its production. I argue

that much of the pedagogical practice of anime fandom is intended to prevent creolization and,

where it is allowed, to manage it within approved forms of authenticity.

  This contrasts markedly with many popular media franchises remade across the world.

Marvel Comics for example released *Spider Man: India* in that country in 2004 wherein the

characters were remade to fit more local Indian mythologies (Jenkins, 2006). Pokemon,

originally a Japanese video game for the Nintendo Game Boy, became a global megahit that

eventually spawned a mass-marketed anime, albeit altered in the U.S. release to emphasize

elements of the story thought to be more appealing to North American children (Allison, 2006).

For the more committed anime fans under review here, this type of commercially directed

creolization is seen as an affront to their abilities to interact with what they perceive as the

"source" material of Japanese culture.

Nevertheless, anime fans do creolize different aesthetic and thematic aspects of Japanese anime and Japanese culture with their understandings of North American mass culture and cult media into a pedagogical system of making sense of anime as a Japanese medium. Previously in this chapter I considered the means of attaining a sense of authentic interaction and even immersion with the Other as a result of a hybridization of understandings and desires for the Other with Its images and narratives. If Anne Allison (2006) is correct in that North American anime fans only care that anime-related products signify Japaneseness, then such a creolized pedagogy is unnecessary. However, fans argue about what constitutes authentic representation of "Japaneseness" whatever the source of the images. This aesthetic dialogue is part of being a serious fan, and it involves their confronting historical and fandom understandings of Japan(ese), to make sense of anime's images and narratives that relate to their emotional needs. Not only does this call for an examination of how fandom interaction takes place as a locally constructed pedagogical enterprise, but also how it does so under the systems of transnational capital that birthed anime as a cultural industry.

<p style="text-align:center">Literature on General Fandom and Anime Fandom</p>

Henry Jenkins' *Textual Poachers* does not address anime fandom per se, yet is an important work for any scholar seeking to research those who immerse themselves in media fandom subcultures. Jenkins' thesis is that fans of shows such as *Quantum Leap*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Star Trek,* rather than passively consume these shows, exploit the texts of the series to serve their own interests through fan-created fiction, art, and music based on the series' that are manufactured by major media companies (1992). In many instances, these fans build communities that carry on relationships with media companies and with each other that are either cooperative or antagonistic, given the circumstances that predominate at the time (Jenkins 1992).

Such relationships are dominated by media production companies that exercise social power and cultural dominance through their authorship, as well as by social prerogatives from society to subsume oneself to authorial meaning without imposing one's own interpretations on a text (Jenkins 1992). Nevertheless, media fans find it within their individual power as writers, artists, and critics, as well as within their collective power as a subculture to resist society's and the companies' hegemonic powers to decide both their tastes in and interpretations of, respectively, media (Jenkins 1992). Media fandoms often take on virtual ownership of elements or whole parts of media narratives for their own purposes, not of their original creators, and invert them from original ideologies. This most famously involves homosexual pairings of heterosexual characters by fan fiction authors (Jenkins, 1992), as well as fan-made humorous parodies of self-important melodramatic epics (Brooker, 2002).

Annalee Newitz wrote one of the earliest scholarly articles on U.S. anime fandom in 1994. Her research methodology, which consisted of issuing a survey to the local anime club at her University of California at Berkeley and to participants on the Internet newsgroup rec.arts.anime, as well as interviewing UC Berkeley club officers, was barely adequate given the broad and inaccurate generalizations about anime fandom in the U.S that she made. Her main thesis said that anime as a "fantasyscape" colonized the minds of U.S. anime fans through the Japanese ideologies of ethnic, national, and male superiority that the anime expressed. She writes:

> I do not mean that animation is *more* ideological than other forms, but simply that it is easier to convey the possible reality of what we imagine in a form which does not distinguish between reality and fantasy. If we consider anime to be part of Japanese national ideologies, then it is no wonder that American fans have become convinced that Japanese culture is superior to American culture. Anime promise that what Americans imagine to be pleasurable can be acted out only with the help of Japanese intervention (Website).

Her case for the U.S. anime fan as a cultural weakling is expressed in other ways. The networked subculture exists only for distributing anime cassettes, not for sharing intellectual, social or artistic matters. U.S. anime fans "steal" Japanese culture out of revenge for Japanese theft of Hollywood's creative ideas, rather than appropriate it for creative or socially worthwhile ends. Anime fans (who according to Newitz must be effectively all-male) live in fear of being feminized by their consumption of anime. The willingness of U.S. anime fans to subsume themselves to Japanese culture (strange enough, if Newitz's other idea that fans fear being "feminized" by anime consumption is valid) parallels, for Newitz, the American business world's willingness to adopt both Japanese business models as well as Japanese ownership of American companies. Newitz wrote these ideas in 1994 – five years after Japan's economical "bubble years" had burst in economic turmoil hardly worth emulating, conditions that continue in Japan as of this paper's writing. Anime fans in the U.S. should rightfully be insulted on two levels – both for being characterized as colonized dupes as well as being expected to believe in these assertions about themselves and a subculture they worked hard to create and maintain for themselves – not because the Japanese told them to do so.

On the heels of Newitz's work a few years later, Susan Pointon's contribution to the literature was perhaps one of the most misguided at best, vicious at worst, characterizations of a U.S. anime fandom growing to "epidemic proportions" (1997). In reviewing the international cultural sources and repercussions of the sadistically pornographic anime *Urotsukidoji* (*The Legend of the Overfiend)*, Pointon points to its reception by U.S. audiences as evidence of the fandom's outcast status – one that reflects jaded adolescent disillusionment with banal domestic media and youthful sexual anxiety gone horribly wrong. Besides being fans of sexually-depraved misogynistic entertainment, "average American anime fans are no casual consumers but

fanatically dedicated devotees who will demonstrate their allegiance by tattooing the names or images of their favorite characters on their bodies, writing their own versions of the texts, or even studying Japanese so that they can watch the videos in their original undubbed form" (Pointon, 1997).

Pointon's total disregard of most anime fans that do not do those things or other aspects of her shameful display of academic recklessness doesn't stop there. Using Newitz as a source, Pointon concurs to further her account of the perverse nature of anime fandom in the U.S.:

> Noting that the anime videos often contain derogatory references to American militarism and the detrimental social effects of American pop culture on modern Japanese society, [Newitz] suggests that the American fans are willingly collaborating with the videos' producers in a critique of their own culture. Furthermore, in embracing without qualification the alien mores and traditions of a culture that has up until this time been characterized by its impenetrable "otherness", they are truly fulfilling their destiny as *otaku*, a bastardized term that in Japan denotes fanaticism (1997).

Newitz's own perceptions were at least drawn from albeit sketchy resources – interviewing a handful of fans at her university's anime club and distributing an online survey to a Usenet newsgroup devoted to anime. As far as can be discerned from her article, Pointon has *no* basis upon which to make her claims about anime fans in the U.S. apart from the sexually brutal films she used as research evidence – films that make up a tiny percentage of overall anime. If Pointon had even bothered to attend an anime convention, club meeting, or even on online anime message board, she could have easily discerned that even in 1997 when she wrote the article that the fandom was not overwhelmed by obsessive and sexually depraved young men filled with angst and alienation towards their own culture. To say otherwise is to ignore the vast cultural repertoire – let alone the female gender – that many fans possess which make up the subculture that even Susan Napier's own study of anime fans acknowledges (2001). Compared to most anime fans, the heightened anxiety and obsession with sexualized anime may be in fact her own.

Antonia Levi's treatment of anime fan subculture is an about-face from Pointon's fan-bashing, yet it is not without its problems. She manages to distinguish between the casual anime fans and the more obsessive *otaku*, but rather than chastise the more hard-core fans, Levi celebrates their use of the term *otaku* as an indication of their growing sense of pride (1996). Far from agreeing with the "transcultural orgasm as apocalypse" metaphor that Pointon abhorrently uses to describe fans in the U.S., Levi sees anime fan subculture as an opportunity for cultural exchange (1996). That Japanese anime has been self-selected by American youth she evidences as proof that multiculturalism is becoming adopted as pattern of thought that American school systems need not impose. "A funny thing happened on the way to the culture wars. We got run over by some cartoons. There we were, happily debating whether to focus on multiculturalism or Western Civilization, and the kids made their own choice with *anime* and *manga* [comic books]" (Levi 1996).

Though such an assertion is celebratory of anime fans, it is doubtful that this choice is reflective of "the kids" of the U.S. in general, particularly when many anime fans are unmindful of the Japanese roots in anime, a fact that Levi herself acknowledges (1996). Levi's positive portrayal of American *otaku* culminates in her appendix "How to Become an Otaku", which, though inviting to anime novices, undermines the participatory nature of anime fandom. The steps she lays out to become an *otaku* are straightforward enough. She encourages fans to go to Japanese districts in American cities to seek out both anime cassettes and Japanese ex-patriots who can translate and explain the anime (1996). She also gives *otaku* in rural areas advice on how to obtain anime through catalogues as well as college anime clubs and anime conventions (1996). Finally, she tells her readers that the final stage to becoming a full-fledged *otaku* is to go to Japan (to do what exactly she leaves to the reader's imagination) (1996). However, each of

these steps encourages anime fans to take a *consumerist* role in anime fandom. That is, to become consumers of anime and Japanese culture up through international travel. This characterizes the fandom as passive in nature with no regard to the fans' participatory roles (Thornton 1997) as fan fiction writers, artists, fan musicians, online forum commentators, moderators, panel discussion leaders, and even academics. To become an *otaku* (assuming a fan wants to adopt that as a term of identity) is to assume a social role within the anime fan community as opposed to engaging in isolated enjoyment of media and Japanese culture. This is contrary of Levi's assertions that one can participate in intercultural exchange through being a couch potato.

Susan J. Napier's *Anime: From Akira to Princess Mononoke* asserts that Japanese animation, while containing many distinctively Japanese cultural traits (e.g. references to history, social mores, language, etc.), is nonetheless a global medium well suited to international distribution and enjoyment (2001). Her appendix, which contains a study on the collegiate anime club at the University of Texas at Austin where she teaches, is a major part of her evidence of anime's appeal in this country. The purpose of her study as a whole is to discredit the notion that U.S. anime fans fit the stereotype of their being "nerdy" or lacking in good, balanced taste in entertainment (2001). This purpose itself lends credence to the idea that anime fan subculture's worth as being "normal" is derived only from its similarities to mainstream culture, and that anime fans are "normal" (and therefore socially acceptable) consumers of entertainment because their attitudes and lifestyle are closer to the mainstream than widely believed. There is no room for social acceptance of those who actually do fit the *otaku* stereotype in this study's ideology. Moreover, the survey portion of her research lacks much in methodological rigor. Her methodology does not take into account analysis of variance or regression analysis, but rather

relies upon simple percentages of her respondents' answers to give the reader an idea of the "typical" U.S. anime fan's traits.

There has yet to be a media fandom study, let alone an anime fandom study that focuses on fandom as a pedagogical agency. However, we can look to previous studies for an indication of how (not) to conduct this approach. Jenkins' (1992) idea that fans communally poach popular culture to create localized meanings complements Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of pedagogy as an attribute of novice and expert fans' socialization. It is not that Jenkins explicitly calls this poaching informal pedagogy, although he does later say that fan-created works can be used to aid the process of formal schooling (Jenkins, 2006). Rather, shifting from Jenkins to Lave and Wenger makes possible the realization that media fandom, including anime fandom, is an agency of informal education if there are fans that participate in the periphery of a (sub)fandom and gain knowledge and skills in deploying new insights that enhance their agency.

A further realization that anime fandom cannot operate in a social vacuum turns our focus to those historical understandings of Japan(ese) by North Americans and the perceived Japenseness of this animated media by fans. We can then consider how fans' pedagogy involves hybridity and creolization of Japanese culture, mediated by anime, and that of fans' traditional culture as they come to receive and interpret a "foreign" or "alien" culture while producing a new local one. To do so means to obviously not dismiss their activities as disempowering or antisocial, as Newitz (1994) or Pointon (1997) have done, respectively. Nor does it mean to celebrate fans in terms of being positive consumers of multiculturalism or normal and intelligent people with an intriguing hobby, as Levi (1995) and Napier (2001) have accomplished, respectively. Rather, studying specifically pedagogical processes of anime fans involves a great deal of reflection on history, fandom knowledge, interaction, and sense making. Add to this the

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willingness to be critical, rather than simply dismissive or accepting, of social and pedagogical currents outside and inside of fandom. The distinction between these attitudes lies in the researcher's willingness, tempered with care for the power of history, to recognize fans' agency in actively coming to new, albeit imperfect understandings of Japan(ese).

Conclusion

The literature in this review forces me to expand upon the research questions I listed in the beginning while remaining consistent with the original spirit of them. If media reinforces traditional attitudes towards race and nationalism, then how might anime fans have to address these social hierarchies? How might their attitudes towards Japan(ese) differ from historical enthusiasts of Japanese culture? If hybridity and creolization can infuse socialization and pedagogy while challenging older assumptions about culture, how might fandom use hybridity and creolization in their social networks? How do anime fans socialize one another to become fans; that is, how is anime fandom taught and learned? In the process, how might anime fans create, change, and sustain meanings?

At the same time, this literature does not adequately address some concerns inherent in the original research questions. Little is said about fans of foreign media – do they "do" race and nationalism the same way? How do people appreciate Japanese *media* culture as opposed to traditional Japanese arts? Anime fans might be accomplishing hybridity and creolization in ways that scholars specializing in there topics have not anticipated.

Anime fans have a system of informal pedagogy that deserves to be explored in a theoretical and systematic fashion. The next chapter will detail the rationale and components of the methodology devised to accomplish this. This will include my informing theoretical

frameworks, related methodologies, methods that will be used to answer these research

questions, and my expected findings.

CHAPTER 3

STUDYING ANIME FANDOM: A RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is concerned with pedagogical processes that fans undergo to develop

knowledge and attitudes about Japan within local social contexts and broader cultural histories.

To understand this pedagogy requires a research tradition that emphasizes history, individual and

collective sense making, social networks, and capacities for individual and collective agency.

Given these analytic tasks, my research design uses a qualitative approach.In this chapter, I

discuss the approaches that I have used to complete my study of anime fans' pedagogical

practices as they relate to Japanese culture. This includes a brief explanation of my theoretical

framework of interpretivism, my development of an ethnographic design, and my methods of

data collection, analysis, and storage

A theoretical framework provides a systematic model of qualitative inquiry that ensures

academic coherency, rigor, and fairness to the life-world under study. It should supply an

orientation to addressing the research questions in a way that best approximates the experience of

the culture under study. What follows is a discussion of the working framework and how it

ensures that these characteristics are upheld.

Interpretivism, the relevant overarching theoretical framework, operates under the

constructivist epistemological assumption that the subject and object co-construct each other's

realities in interaction (Crotty, 1998). Interpretivism holds that interaction between humans and

their world is the process by which meaning and subsequent reality are constructed in a social

context (Crotty, 1998). Critical to interpretivism is the notion of human intentionality in the

world. That is, immediately in the moment that a person in*tends* to an object, such as a fire, some sort of meaning is realized that makes herself cognizant of the fire as a fire (Crotty, 1996). However, the fire is not simply an abstraction not-in-the-world; it exists in a real sense, but the human intention to the object involved is what establishes meaning under this theoretical model.

I now turn to the research design I have developed, including its relevancy to the theoretical frameworks discussed as well as to the research problems under study.

Research Design

This study's primary research design is ethnography, which Muecke (1994) defines as, "a written description of a people that focuses on selected aspects of how they lead their routine, remarkable, and ritual lives with each other in their environment, and of the beliefs and customs that comprise their common sense about the world" (p. 191). Since the earliest days of anthropological pioneers such as Franz Boas (1966), Bronislaw Malinowski (1961), and Margaret Mead (1928), research in the ethnographic tradition has produced a rich corpus of texts. Scholars interpret these texts produced from their studies of communities—in this case, from participant observation notes, interview transcripts, and archival data—as representing their understandings and evaluations of the people they studied. Ethnographers represent their data by textually or visually defending assertions about themes and interconnections among the themes that they have located in their data to demonstrate how, with the aid of supporting literature, social interaction contributes to their participants' assemblage of a common life-world.

Unlike grounded theorists who purport to come into a field without preconceptions and who allow for hypotheses to generate *in situ* (Blumer, 1969), ethnographers have a predetermined focus before data collection begins (Stern, 1994). This focus is usually sufficiently broad and flexible to permit attention to other phenomena of interest. The strength of

ethnography is in its ability to use data to formulate themes, analyses, conclusions, and evaluations similarly to the *emergent design* model most associated with grounded theory. This raises the question of how themes in ethnography are formulated in the first place apart from the researcher's preconceived ideas of what was initially important to look for. To say that ethnography is totally inductive is inaccurate, but it is still *generally* considered induction because of the mostly open-ended nature of data collection and analysis that leads to what could be better called *evolving* design.

For this research study I had a preconceived notion that Japan is somehow related to a participant's thinking about anime. However, the nature of participants' responses might, for example, cause me to recognize relationships that participants might have with Japan that I would not have ordinarily noticed. Conversely, any substantive lack of connection that fans make between Japan and anime can also challenge this notion as well as broaden my understanding of other connections between Japan and anime that are made. Inductive analysis, inherent in most forms of ethnography, is a powerful tool for constructing theories at the end of the process of coding, synthesis, and evaluation. Still, I want to note that the entirety of the ethnographic research process is necessarily not inductive, at least not from the very beginning (Campbell, 1979).

Ethnography in this case was intended to uncover those connections between anime and Japan that fans teach and learn within the context of history, the dominant culture, and their own subculture. This was derived from a larger picture of the language, rituals, and relationships within fandom generated from listening and observing participants in ethnographic research (Hammersley, 1992). This required a holistic approach to studying anime fans:not just in their inhabiting different levels of social organization from larger to smaller networks, but also in their

participating in interactive processes (Boyle, 1994). Ethnography's focus on the researcher's immersion in the field of interaction is well suited to the task of understanding and explaining how this habitation and participation contributes to fan understandings: that is, how fans understand Japanese culture, the wider world, and their relationships to these things and to each other. The pedagogical processes at work in anime fandom are complex, rely on much *a priori* understanding of fans' allusions and cultural cues, and are imbued with fans' competing notions of cultural authenticity and legitimacy that affect the act of learning itself. An ethnography that can accomplish a thick description of the field setting in the Geertzian (1973) sense is well suited to identifying and explaining these pedagogical phenomena. Identifying these processes in context and conducting academic analysis with them require both emic and etic perspectives that can give both the study and the participants a judicious treatment.

Situating themselves in a community and its day-to-day life encourages researchers to take the view of that life from the population concerned, otherwise known as adopting an emic perspective. From a personal standpoint as a long-time anime fan myself, this facet of ethnography was at first glance easy enough for me to accomplish. Considering that I have been a familiar sight in these fields of data collection for several years and have for the most part been warmly received by anime fans, that ought to have made achieving an emic perspective easier. However, anime fandom is a collection of different subfandoms with fans possessing interests, cultural backgrounds, and motivations for participating that are different from my own. This situation prompted me to expand what an emic understanding of anime fandom encompasses to include those who identify as fans differently. In addition to this insider view, most ethnographic approaches include an etic perspective. This means looking at the community and the data produced from the standpoint of an analyst rather than a native to address one or more current

academic issues that lie somewhere close to the field in question. The relevant research literature and my self-conscious identity as an academic are useful counterbalances to my fannish sensibilities that might otherwise distract me from my research questions.

Ethnographic research normally includes gathering different sources of data such as fan interviews and field interaction that anime fandom generously yields. Anime fans are often eager to discuss their participation as well as their prior histories as fans. There is enough activity occurring in multiple sites of fan interaction, such as anime club meetings, anime conventions, and online message boards, to generate many fieldnotes. This means that the different sets of data coming from these settings can be triangulated, or contrasted with one another, so as to reveal common themes and patterns across them that address the research questions. Triangulation also helps ensure the study's validity by encompassing more research settings where relevant phenomena can be located while encouraging the use of a variety of complementary methods (Jenks, 1995; Rapport & Maggs, 1997).

Many of the sociocultural processes at work mentioned previously can go unnoticed or be misapplied. Therefore, researchers' reflections on their roles as a participant and analyst are critical. Researchers can partly accomplish this by shifting their imaginations between etic and emic perspectives in a reflective exercise by critiquing one perspective against the other. Considering my own dual roles as a scholar and an anime fan, this is an important aspect of ethnography to consider for this study. More details on the roles of triangulation and reflexivity in ethnography follow in a later section in this chapter.

Methods of Data Collection

Below is an explanation of my methods of data collection, which include interviewing, participation observation, and document analysis. I also discuss the process of data selection and

my role as a researcher. Selecting different research sites to collect data is a strategic method of

formulating a triangulated study. Rather than focus on one anime-related community, I divided

data collection among sites differing in location and the nature of their locales. This meant

participating and observing in more than one anime club that constituted a stable community, as

well as visiting many different anime-related fan conventions that were temporary gatherings of

fandom. In all of these locations, methods of data collection were the same, or very similar, yet

adjusted to each locale's different circumstances. Examples of the data located in Appendix B

and Appendix C include the following:

Appending B – Interview Transcripts	Appendix C – Data from Participant Observation
One interview transcript from an Imagenu club participant	One transcript from a meeting of the Imagenu anime club
One interview transcript from a Kine Outmake club participant	One transcript from the Kine Outmake anime club

I collected the data to inform the research questions intermittently over a period of four

years, from 2003 to 2007 across several different venues that varied by size, location, and

purpose. They ranged from an anime convention attended by over 20,000 people in the Mid-

Atlantic to the university dorm room of a single anime fan in the Southeastern U.S. Not all of the

data that was collected will be discussed in this study, but it will consider a selection of excerpts

that directly or significantly address the research questions. The data can be distinguished into

two main types – that collected in association with university-sponsored anime fan clubs

attended mostly by students, and data collected from anime fan conventions intended for the

general public. The bulk of the data collection effort centered on the anime clubs wherein

pedagogical and sociocultural processes could be observed with a much smaller number of

participants who interacted with each other across time. Interview research, participant

observation, and document collection were performed in both types of settings, albeit adjusted in ways to meet the demands of various settings. Below I discuss what I wanted data collection to accomplish both generally and specifically within these fields.

Interviews

In an open-ended interview, the goal is to obtain a first-person description of events (Bailey & Cross, 1997; Thompson, et al., 1989) or a reflection on the meaning of a participant's experiences (Seidman, 1998) rather than a consciously evaluative justification for previous actions or current beliefs. Therefore, questions in open-ended interviews rarely begin with "Why?", but rather usually with requests to describe a series of events or to discuss a particular event. Often an open-ended interview begins with only one preformulated question. As an interview proceeds, part of the analysis literally takes place through a process of probing (Kvale, 1996). That is, the interviewer notices allusions to events or concepts the participant has made that the interviewer wants to examine further. The interviewer then poses another question to the participant to obtain more first-hand information or recollections about that event or concept. Practitioners recommend that moving on to another main question should take place after participants have exhausted all that they know or recall in intricate detail (Thompson, et al., 1989).

Ethnography ordinarily involves structured and open-ended interviewing, but a specifically open-ended interviewing technique complements other data collection and analysis techniques in ethnography. Specifically, participant observation and document collection provide cultural insights by sampling person-to-person interaction in speech or printed and online text. An open-ended interview's relentless probing of an individual's experiences recalled in the interaction between participants and the interviewer augments these insights. Traditionally an

open-ended interview uses an emic approach, so that the analysis relies at first on the participant's own terms and classification systems rather than those of the investigator (Kvale, 1983). Researcher interpretations should be supported by the participant's own words alongside the overall context from which those words are situated (Thompson et al., 1989). In this study I have used my open-ended interviews as an emic-centered check against the methods of participant observation and document research that have provided more of my researcher's etic perspective.

Anime fans directly experience anime and anime fandom as distinct blends of sight, sound, and additionally in the case of fandom touch, smell, and taste. These experiences conjure feelings of excitement, awe, arousal, horror, confusion, repulsion, or indifference—sometimes all in the same episode or conversation. Those feelings experienced in the temporal moment in turn spur cognitive phenomena of beliefs, judgments, memories, anticipations, and imagination (Kohack, 1978; Ray, 1994). Anime fans, in this coming to know the world(s) they inhabit, then create meanings that are products of their own self-reflection (Husserl, 1970) as well as their own cross-positionality across social worlds (Hodkinson, 1996) to make sense of this cognitive phenomena. A collection of all of this--feelings, cognitive processes, and the making of meaning—is the basis of the pedagogical processes under investigation. This is what informs fans' individual and collective steps toward learning about becoming anime fans, Japan and its culture, and their own cross-positionality as fans.

I now turn to listing and explaining the open-ended interview questions that I formulated to capture these feelings and subsequent cognitive processes and meanings. Interviews began by my asking the participants about their age, home location, how they identified themselves (e.g., student, worker, or other), and how long they had been watching anime and participating in

anime fandom. Comparing fans' chronological ages with how long they had been anime fans and fandom participants helped in identifying the length and timing of certain stages of their pedagogical experiences. Their home locations and major non-anime-related life activities also provided clues as to their positionality in the wider U.S. society. I posed the same questions to 15 fans in both longer interviews lasting between 45 and 90 minutes and to 50 fans in shorter interviews that typically lasted for 5 to 15 minutes. In shorter interviews, I did not probe as deeply with more questions as I did with longer interviews. See Appendix A for the specifically open-ended interview questions that involved recollection, narration, and probing.

Both an Olympus digital voice recorder and an analog cassette recorder were used to record interviews. The data were stored on at least two hard drives, one on a laptop computer and the other on a USB flash drive. Data recorded via an analog cassette recorder were retained for three years after the conclusion of the interview or the study; whichever came first. Due to space constraints, data recorded on the digital voice recorder was overwritten with each subsequent interview.

Transcriptions of both interviews and participant observation notes were analyzed with the aid of ATLAS.ti 5.0, a qualitative research software program. This program allows a researcher to digitally label and locate portions of data and to build visual connections among them in the task of theory building. Although not a replacement for the analytical and evaluative skills of the researcher, ATLAS.ti 5.0 quickens mundane tasks of labeling, sorting, and making visual models of data by digitizing them.

Participant Observation

The second method of data collection I used was participant observation. This method requires a researcher to participate in a social context, or field, for an extended period of time

(usually one year or more), learn to use the local language, participate in a range of daily and extraordinary activities, informally observe, record observations in field notes, and use both tacit or unfamiliar and explicit or familiar information in analysis and writing (DeWalt, 2002). Unlike cross-cultural investigators using participant observation (Sanjek, 1990), I did not rely on a key informant to guide my attention to local rituals and practices the informant deemed important. Instead, armed with experience I gained in anime fandom as a nonresearcher and guided by my own research questions, I uncovered and analyzed significant pedagogical activities and understandings by acting as my own key informant (Wolcott, 1988). I decided to keep my participation at the level of complete, defined by James Spradley as being totally immersed in the field and continually interacting with participants (DeWalt, 2002). My membership in the anime community was full, the highest level of involvement as defined by Patricia and Peter Adler (DeWalt 2002). However, I did conduct myself as a known or visible investigator in that participants knew I was conducting a study (Gold, 1958).

In practical terms, I could not live in the field of anime fandom because, as primarily a leisure culture, its members gather only at specified places in limited intervals. However, when fans did generate fields of interaction, I participated in them as any other highly involved fan would. This included going to most anime club meetings and carrying on conversations with fans about everything from the latest anime series premiering on fansub networks to non-anime-related topics such as school, work, and family. I attended anime conventions with other fans that took place hundreds of miles away from our homes, I witnessed significant events in fans' lives such as their weddings, and I was a regular guest in their residences, including at house parties and other functions. I helped fans assemble costumes to wear at anime conventions, and served as a club staff adviser, that is, as a liaison between the club and the university that sponsored it,

before conducting this study. In many respects among my participants, I was not simply a familiar face in their fandom-related settings, but actively immersed in their lives as a friend prior to assuming my researcher role.

A participant observation approach in tandem with other methods addressed my research questions. It did so by allowing me to discover how fandom pedagogy, meaning making, and power negotiation happens in the field of participant(s)-to-participant(s) interaction, including between participants and me. Participant observation provided neither a truer nor more honest method compared to interviews and document research, both of which were more reliant on information intentionally provided by participants themselves. Rather, participant observation covered another important dimension of fans' interactive experiences to be compared to the ones they gave through recall and documentation. It helped to better reduce threats to qualitative validity and reliability through triangulation with other methods and by providing an exhaustive account of my time in the field that could later be thoroughly analyzed (Merriam, 1998).

I carried on informal conversations with participants and later recorded as field notes anything the participant or I discussed that I considered important to the study. I had a laptop computer with me at all times while taking field notes because I type fast enough to capture much of the participants' speech verbatim, as well as a description of the context and the participants themselves. This was useful because most of my time in participant observation was during anime club meetings, club organization meetings where club business was discussed, and anime convention panels where all of the participants were sitting down.

Typically researchers take notes with a legal pad and a pen or pencil and later, while the memory of their field is still fresh in their minds, they elaborate their notes on a computer to compose a narrative flow of the events in question. In many field settings, this approach is less

obtrusive to the researcher and the participants than if the researcher has used a laptop to take field notes. As a rule, however, anime fans tend to be technologically savvy compared to the general population and use technology, such as hand-held games, digital music devices, even laptop computers, in everyday settings among their peers. I found few if any anime fans who felt that I was unapproachable or were hesitant to speak with me if I were typing things on my laptop computer. To the contrary, some were keen to see what I was typing and to make comments on my input, a process that I obliged. Next I turn to how I selected participants for observing and interviewing.

Data Selection

I had generally similar selection criteria of interview participants for longer and shorter interviews. Although anime fandom in the United States is largely European American and male and the composition of my interview participants reflected that, I wanted access to the fandom perspectives of women and people of color. This permitted comparative insights on how fans of differing race-ethnicities and genders conceive of Japanese culture. Therefore, I made an effort to recruit people from these groups beyond mere tokenism, even when it meant that they were overrepresented relative to their overall numbers in fandom. Involving women in this study was relatively easy because anime fandom, as recounted before, has been increasingly inclusive of females in the last decade. Some anime genres are noticeably divided along traditional gendered boundaries (e.g., action adventure for males vs. romantic drama for females). This was another reason to consider gender as a factor in participant recruitment.

Beyond European Americans, I had noticed consistently over time that Asian Americans make up the second-largest race-ethnic group in anime fandom, Asian American being a category that represents many differing ancestral ethnicities and languages. Most any race-

ethnicity can be found in anime fandom, but African Americans and to a lesser extent Hispanics and Latinos were also visibly represented. Given that most of the data were gathered in the southeastern U.S. where these race-ethnic groups make up sizable minorities of the population, their appearance in local anime fandom is unsurprising. Asian Americans are relatively fewer in number in the general population in this region, but are more represented in anime fandom; this may be due to anime being Japanese in origin, despite sharp differences between Japanese and other Asian national cultures. I therefore sought interview participants, both for long and short interviews, who were not only Asian American, but who also represented different Asian national ancestries.

For long interview participants, I selected only those with whom I had a preexisting friendship. I believed that not only would they be more forthright with their answers with a researcher with whom they were already comfortable, but also I could adjust my probing questions with what I knew of their personal backgrounds. I knew their backgrounds both from what they had told me in conversations and from the common anime-fandom-related experiences that we had shared. I typically conducted the long interviews in a quiet and enclosed space of the participant's choosing where we would both be seated facing each other. The voice recorder, sometimes a large cassette recorder and sometimes a small digital recorder, either of which was attached to a large table microphone, was positioned between the participant and me.

I selected the short interview participants at anime conventions, and they were generally strangers. I approached people who appeared to be otherwise unengaged. Commonly this included people standing in lines to register for entry into the convention or those sitting in a chair taking a rest but not doing anything like reading or talking with others. Again, European American males were easy enough to locate and interview, but I also made a special effort to

approach females and people of color to first find out if they did enjoy anime. If they did, then I asked if they would be interested in participating in a short interview about their experiences as an anime fan. The interview proceeded with my use of a small, unobtrusive digital recorder held close enough to capture the clear speech of the participant and me.

Recruitment was less a factor in obtaining access to field sites for observation and taking field notes. All of my observations occurred in areas that were advertised by fans as inviting the general public to come. This included anime club meetings, anime conventions, and online anime-related message boards. However, the identities of participants in field settings who engaged in activities that I recorded in field notes were confidential, and I typically assigned them a pseudonym and a participant description that would protect them from being recognized. This was also a standard practice for conducting interviews, both long and short. I obtained the permission of all interviewees prior to interviews, and in doing so I made it clear that any interviewee could end the interview for any reason.

I used two types of consent forms, corresponding to long and short interviews. Participants in long interviews were given a consent form to sign while participants in short interviews were provided a consent agreement with no signature. My opportunities to interview anime fans at conventions were normally very brief because they had convention events they wanted to attend immediately afterward. Adding extra time for participants to read over the consent form thoroughly and provide a signature was impractical and unnecessary given the casual nature of the relatively brief encounter. Furthermore, the convention respondents were strangers to me, I was asking questions considered very low risk, and soliciting their names may have increased that very low risk. However, both forms provided contact information in case

participants had any questions or concerns afterward (see Appendix X for copies of my consent forms).

Document Collection

In addition to interviews and participant observation, this study also involved document research. This included collecting primary documents, or those produced by parties who are in some way involved with events and phenomena that a researcher has an interest in analyzing. Primary documents are distinct from secondary documents, or those texts that synthesize and interpret the materials of actors in events (McCulloch, 2004). In this case, I collected documents that were produced by anime fans that pertain to anime, anime fandom, and Japanese culture and analyzed them for a secondary document, this dissertation.

However, the distinction between fan-produced documents as primary documents and this dissertation as a secondary document is less than clear-cut. Many fan-produced documents are themselves an analysis of anime as primary documents and could be read as secondary documents. Other fans could talk about an incident that I recorded in my field notes and offer their secondary interpretations of it on an online message board that I myself consulted for primary documents. Likewise, the field notes I present in this dissertation might be seen as primary documents because they are firsthand accounts recorded by a direct participant in events. Moreover, a discussion of my own experience and participation as an anime fan, albeit within a research document, is also a firsthand account and therefore a primary document. Considering the inherent ambiguity between primary and secondary documents, I have specified what types of documents I sought, how I read them, and how they addressed the research questions.

Online fans currently produce by a wide margin most of the documents circulating in fandom today. These documents directly and indirectly communicate information and analysis of

anime, Japanese culture, expected fan practices, and commentary on fandom itself and its relationship to the nonfan world. For a novice fan, these can provide a valuable resource for understanding anime and this subculture without the awkwardness of asking other fans potentially embarrassing questions. Because online documents are less static and change almost continuously as new words, video, and sound are added and deleted, they themselves are sites of dynamic meaning creation and change among anime fans. Their changes also reflect new negotiations of sociocultural consensus and conflict, depending on what sort of fan is producing the document, for what purpose, and for which audience. Attention to these documents has the potential to reveal subordinate fan voices, which are normally silenced and marginalized in the physical realm (Hodder, 1994).

Examining all of the different types of documents that anime fans produce was beyond the scope of this study. The documents I collected include those directly related to the organizations that I encountered to conduct participant observation and interviews. I focused my document collection efforts on those produced as part of the activities of anime clubs and conventions. These were the types of documents I was able to more effectively triangulate with interview and participant observation data from the institutions under study. Individual fans who participated in these organizations can and do write fan fiction, produce fan art, and blog about anime apart from club and convention activities. When these more independent activities eventually became enmeshed in the practices of these organizations, then I formally noted them in the study. I initially planned to specifically collect these documents, in order of importance:

- Anime club constitutions
- My photographed scenes of anime conventions
- Online anime club message board posts

Researcher Role

I discuss my own experiences as an anime fan toward the end of Chapter One, including potential biases that I brought to the study, and I mention addressing those biases in this chapter. I planned to bracket, or identify my tendencies to typifying anime fandom as a subversive subculture hostile to North American mass media and embracive of Japanese animation in response. I have taken into account how fans use products of North American mass media in their daily lives. I also attempted to bracket my tendency to see fans as astute cultural connoisseurs and to attend to how their relationship to anime might actually limit their potential for cultural understanding. Moreover, I also noted and bracketed my affinity for self-described "geeks," "dorks," "nerds," or those otherwise self-consciously distinct from a perceived mainstream. In response, I attempted to be alert for fandom participants who did not identify themselves in this way.

The vast majority of participants under study were college undergraduates and high school seniors. Considering that I am a European American male doctoral candidate several years the senior of many fans, I feared that possible power discrepancies might hinder both the comfort of anime fans and their willingness to participate. To address this concern, I briefed each participant before an interview of what the interview was for and assured them that they were welcome to stop the interview and leave at any time. After each interview, I debriefed participants by letting them know that they could contact my dissertation adviser or me for any follow-up questions or concerns that they had. One individual availed himself of this option. Apparently reluctant to tell me of his desire to withdraw from the study, he contacted my adviser, and I subsequently removed his data from my field notes. Throughout the study I continued to have a high level of everyday participation in relevant fandom communities. This allowed

participants to get to know me as a familiar participant in their fandom contexts and elevate their

level of comfort with my presence. I reflexively and continuously evaluated my positionality in

fandom with respect to data collection and data analysis, the latter of which I discuss in detail

below.

<div align="center">Data Analysis and Management</div>

Different types of data were interpreted from their respective analytical methods to

produce a theory to my research questions. Generally speaking, all qualitative data, including the

spoken, observed, and written variety are identified based on common and differentiated

characteristics important to the researcher. They are then divided into categories, either

previously conceptualized or emanating from the data itself, and the categories themselves are

connected to one another via observed patterns. The patterns are then linked within assembled

theoretical structures to build an overall theoretical description that addresses the research

problem (LeCompte, 2000).

In this study, the three types of data analysis I used, narrative analysis, in vivo coding,

and document analysis, were my approaches to coding the data and making judgments about

contiguous blocks of text (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). This involved identifying specific samples of

text that substantively addressed fandom pedagogy and its practices related to Japanese culture

and social hierarchies. Parts of the relevant texts were coded based on themes derived from the

research literature (e.g., race, nationalism, creolization) and on patterns more extant within the

data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). These codes were both tags for later retrieval and categorization

as well as values assigned to units of text to aid in theorizing (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). Patterns

and relationships were found among the codes in such a way that a theoretical model was

constructed. However, the model was then matched against unreviewed cases in the data that

provided a contrast for refining the model as it was being developed (Becker, 1998; Miles &

Huberman, 1994).

Because the purpose of most of the interview questions was to solicit a narrative about a

participant's experiences in anime fandom, I used narrative analysis to examine these accounts.

Traditionally narrative analysis attempts to break down a story into constituent parts based on an

assumed formula of narrative sequence found in many human cultures (Labov, 1972: Propp,

1968). William Labov's (1972: 363) analytical sequence, for example, conceptualizes narratives

as consisting of these elements:

1) An opening abstract
2) An orientation to the narrative setting that describes the who, what, when, and where
3) A complication that introduces a conflict that confronts the people in the narrative
4) An evaluation by the teller of the significance of the conflict and/or resolution
5) An eventual result of the preceding action
6) An optional coda that finalizes the narrative

Unlike open-ended interviewing, which attempts to collect the unexamined aspects of

lived experience, narrative analysis assumes that the story told by a participant is a form of

interpretation (Cortazzi 2001; Riessman 2002). A participant's ordering of the narrative and

selective inclusion and exclusion of events told and not told in their accounts provide a starting

point for analyzing how participants place themselves in the broader narrative. More than

relaying information, narratives are performances wherein the tellers situate themselves within a

web of social relationships and expectations between themselves and others (Cortazzi, 2001;

Riessman, 2002). The use Labov's method of narrative analysis can potentially focus on

narrative structure to the neglect of social context. Therefore, relevant social relationships, and

the purpose of the narrative, are important to consider alongside the structure. Anime fans used

their stories to go beyond chronicling their experiences. They also made sense of their anime-

related narratives within a matrix of relationships among fandom, outside social relationships, their non-Japanese nationality, and their personal fan identities.

I used domain analysis to construct a model of fans' sense making for both the interview and participant observation data. A domain is "a set of symbols that share meaning in some way" (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 91). Domains are made up of core terms (Spradley, 1979), which in this case refer to concepts that are significant to the research questions (e.g. "Japanese culture," "dubbing," "mainstream media"). Terms that participants used both informed the construction of core terms through in vivo coding and were included within the category of the core terms themselves. Semantic relationships were found between the core terms and included terms, such as inclusion, attribution, or cause-and-effect (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). These relationships in turn formed hierarchical taxonomies and overlapping mental maps (Ryan & Bernard 2000) to draw an overall picture that addresses the research questions.

Documents were analyzed similarly, but with the following considerations in mind inspired by Gary McCulloch (2004). The authenticity of the document was verified either by documenting the website from which it was produced or, in the case of hard copies of documents, documenting from where they were received. The reliability of the document was also established by noting the authorial bias, the audience for which it was written, and whether or not it came from a predominant or marginalized source. The document's meaning was reconstructed by exploring what context it was produced in, what was absent as well as prominent in the content, and how the reader's interpretation may differ from the author's intention. A view of the documents as arising from interaction, a key assumption of symbolic interactionism, informed the theorization of how the documents addressed the research questions.

Strengths and Weaknesses

The study has a number of methodological strengths. I explored anime fandom settings both in depth and across a variety of settings, albeit more deeply in some than others. This again included an ethnography of one large and long-established anime club, an ethnographic study of another established club, participant observation of four fan conventions, one of which was visited twice, and collection of documents associated with these organizations. My own regular involvement as a longtime fan of anime also strengthened the potential for arriving at an emic understanding of this subculture.

However, my own status as an insider could diminish an etic perspective necessary for uncovering concepts and situations that I might otherwise have taken for granted. To compensate for this, I relied on outside scholarship mentioned previously to force me to think more critically about the data and to consider issues that would otherwise escape my cognizance. This sort of interplay between emic and etic perspectives allowed for an exercise in reflexivity for understanding the data as I moved back and forth between myself as a fan and as a researcher. Another limitation is that this study does not generalize to all of U.S. anime fandom, given the vast differences in geography, demographics, and local cultures that influence unstudied sectors of fandom. However, the findings in this study may allow other researchers to contextualize the patterns I report to help explain similar social contexts of informal learning. Finally, the possibility that participants gave misleading responses to me in conversations and interviews, even in good faith, is present in any study relying on self-reports. To address this potential for undermining validity and reliability, I compared participant responses to similar questions and situations and noted discrepancies.

Having described how I selected, collected, and analyzed the information for this study of anime fandom I now turn to what I learned. In the following chapters I give an overview and explanation of the data that I collected, an analysis of the data, and implications of the research for educators and researchers alike.

CHAPTER 4

BECOMING AND BEING ANIME FANS AND A FANDOM

In this chapter, I describe the data that I found during the data collection phase of my

project. This includes a description of the anime clubs under study, a description of the interview

participants, an overview of the anime conventions that I attended, themes related to the first,

second, and third research questions, and a conclusion that summarizes the patterns that I

discussed.

Anime Fans and Their Venues

This section gives an overview of two anime clubs under study. The description includes

brief information about the clubs' histories, club operations, official membership criteria, and

officer positions.

The Imagenu anime club is the primary organization from which most of the interview,

participant observation, and documentary data were collected. Imagenu is a large student anime

club sponsored by a land grant research university in the southeastern United States.

Approximately fifty club members regularly attend weekly meetings, which have been held

every Monday evening during the university's fall and spring semesters. Imagenu considers

anyone who regularly attends meetings to be members. Those who only attend sporadically (e.g.

once a semester) are not normally considered members. It is perhaps the largest such club in the

region for regular meeting attendance. Imagenu has held meetings in some members' private

residences during the summer months, usually those of student club officers. These officers are

elected yearly by members who paid membership dues of five, and later, ten dollars per

semester. Because anyone can attend meetings, these dues do not purchase admittance, but they do provide a membership card that grants discounts at some retail outlets and voting rights at officer elections. At the end of each spring semester in April, dues-paying members would elect officers by majority vote. Only those candidates that were considered students by the sponsoring university could participate in elections. The constitutional offices included:

- A President that, according to the Imagenu club constitution, is "responsible for ascertaining that all regular and organizational meetings take place. He [sic] delegates day-to-day duties, and takes ultimate responsibility for all club actions."

- A Vice-President who is "responsible for overseeing the background/support operations of the club, and support of presidential duties."

- A High Minister of Technology and Acquisitions that has responsibility for "the maintenance, upkeep, and physical storage of any UGAnime resources for club audio/visual needs."

- A High Minister of External Affairs that has responsibility for "the promotion and advertisement of UGAnime on the campus and in the community."

- A High Minister of Operations that has duties that include "organization of fundraising activity, acquisition of club funding, and the acquisition of materials and benefits for club activities and programs."

The Imagenu officers decide club business such as the anime to be shown at meetings and social events to be planned, among other policies as outlined in the club's constitution. However, weekly organizational meetings between officers and the regular membership in a conference room on campus inform officer decisions. Most of these members are students of the sponsoring university, but some are nonstudent members from the surrounding community.

Two male college student anime enthusiasts, who wanted to publicly showcase anime they personally found entertaining, founded the Imagenu club in 1996. This was almost twenty years after the first anime club in the U.S. was founded (Patten, 2004), which suggests sustained growth of this subculture. Imagenu's male-to-female ratio of members is usually 3:2; while a male majority, it is not as pronounced as the imbalance found in most other North American anime clubs. The sponsoring university's student body having a slight female majority may factor into this. However, like many other anime clubs in the U.S., Imagenu's membership is largely European American with people of color making up anywhere from a fifth to a quarter of the group.

During my data collection period, the university forced Imagenu to move between two auditoriums because of the construction of a new campus building. Each auditorium was large enough to seat at least one hundred individuals, had staggered seating, a large screen with a laser projector, and a sound system that showcased subtitled anime to whoever showed up. These settings have been somewhat conducive to the wish of each successive generation of club officials to keep a "movie theater environment" wherein attendees ideally do not talk during showings. This policy has been enforced with varying degrees of success. While nothing in the Imagenu club constitution specified that the club is to edify fans on being connoisseurs of anime, as will be discussed, this understanding prevailed among club officers.

Kine Outmake, the second anime club under study, was founded in 1995 by students of the sponsoring university who were anime fans. Approximately twenty people were in regular attendance at each of the club meetings that I attended. However, unlike Imagenu, Kine Outmake considers anyone who is subscribed to their email listserv to be a club member, even if they do not regularly attend club meetings. Officials had told me that the listserv had as many as five

hundred subscribers. The club made no requirement of members being silent during showings.

Members freely offered running commentary and jokes while anime is being shown with little

interference from its student leadership. The club is situated at a technology university about 75

miles from Imagenu's campus. Unlike its counterpart, Kine Outmake's host institution has a

significant male majority in its student body. This is a possible factor that influences the male-to-

female ratio of Kine Outmake members of roughly 8:1. However, its membership composition of

people of color is roughly the same as Imagenu's. Like Imagenu, Kine Outmake is lead by a

corps of officers that are elected by dues-paying members every spring semester in April. Their

officers included:

- A President whose duties include "making a reservation schedule for
  meetings/showings, getting the location, organizing how meetings will take place, the
  general flow of the meetings, and assigning and assisting in other officer's duties."

- A Vice-President whose duties include "Managing and updating the [club] website
  and requesting permissions from anime licensors [to show anime in the club] when
  needed."

- A Secretary whose duties include "keeping records of attendance, creating and
  distributing advertisements for events, and working with the President and Vice-
  President on advertising campaigns."

- A Treasurer whose duties include "keeping a detailed record of all financial
  transactions the club makes, possessing and assuming responsibility for the club
  funds, creating and submitting a budget or other funding requests, and working with
  the President to create new fundraisers."

Like Imagenu, Kine Outmake was forced by its sponsor to move locations during the data collection period. However, it was moved from a smaller conference room with a television hooked up to a laptop computer to a larger auditorium with a laser video projector not unlike Imagenu's setting. Kine Outmake has student officers elected by the club membership, as outlined in its own club constitution, but holds no organizational meetings between the officers and the members to discuss club policy. Kine Outmake's members are allowed to vote on the anime to be shown for a semester, based on a list selected by the club officers. In contrast, Imagenu's officers are free to set the anime programming schedule without a direct vote by the members. Kine Outmake holds no summer meetings on or off campus, and it also has charged anywhere from five to ten dollars per semester for club membership that confers the same benefits as dues-paying Imagenu members.

Selected Anime Club Members

All of the fourteen participants in the long interviews I conducted were members of either Imagenu, from which nine participants were selected, or Kine Outmake, with which the other five participants were associated. Below is a brief description of each of the participants, all of whom were interviewed for anywhere from 45 minutes to one and a half hours. All of the long interview participants had been watching anime regularly (i.e., at least once per month) and participating in anime fandom for at least a year. They included nine males and five females, as well as ten European Americans, three Asian Americans, and one African American. These demographics were roughly representational of both clubs' demographic composition aggregated together.

Imagenu Interview Participants

1. Carl: A 22-year-old African American male undergraduate student with a background as an artist whose drawing style was partially influenced by those commonly found in anime and manga. He had been a member of the club for about two years.

2. Diana: A 23-year-old European American female worker and recent graduate of the university. Various anime and manga titles had influenced her as a writer, artist, and costume designer. She had been a member of the club for about three years.

3. Edward: A 19-year-old European American male undergraduate student who served as the club's Minister of Tapes and Acquisitions [of anime], or as the club dubbed it, "High Minister of T&A". He had been occasionally involved with the club before coming to the university, as his elder brother was a club officer before him.

4. Iseul: A 21-year-old first-generation Korean American male undergraduate student who had lived in the Republic of Korea (ROK) before his family moved to the U.S. several years prior to the study. During this time Iseul had legal access to neither anime nor manga because of ROK's importation ban of many Japanese cultural goods up until the late 1990s.

5. Kimmel: A 26-year-old European American male graduate student who had specifically majored in artificial intelligence so that he could become a video game designer and work in Tokyo.

6. Kristin: A 19-year-old European American female undergraduate who was part of a subclique of five women who watched anime together outside of the club, in addition to the anime they watched in the club.

7. Naomi: A 20-year-old first-generation Japanese-Filipino-American female undergraduate student who had been born in the Philippines. Her Filipino mother and European American soldier stepfather had moved around to many military bases as she grew up before they settled in an area in this southeastern state with very few other Asians and Asian Americans.

8. Neal: A 24-year-old European American male undergraduate student. Neal, Edward's brother, had served as the club's "High Minister of Operations" before the interview took place. A Japanese major, Neal had spent a year in Japan on a study-abroad program.

9. Nick: A 22-year-old European American male worker who had never attended Imagenu's sponsoring university. A lifelong resident of the university town, Nick was regularly involved in the club from his high school years up through the interview.

Kine Outmake Interview Participants

1. Ben: A 22-year-old Jewish American male undergraduate student who, at the time of the interview, was the treasurer for the club.

2. Eileen: A 22-year-old European American female undergraduate student, who was club president at the time of the interview.

3. Emile: A 22-year-old first-generation Chinese American male undergraduate student who had lived in Taiwan before his family had moved to the area served by the university. A few months after the completion of the interview he was elected internal vice president of the club.

4. Laura: A 24-year-old European American female office worker who was a recent graduate. While a student, Laura had been the club's president and also held the unofficial title of "Captain Hentai," because of her large collection of pornographic manga and openly expressed love of the genre (*hentai* is Japanese for "pervert" and is also the name of the genres of pornographic manga and anime).

5. Tim: A 20-year-old European American male undergraduate student who was internal vice president of the club at the time of the interview.

Anime Conventions

All of the conventions I studied were organized for the interests of fans of anime and manga. The conventions continue to share many common characteristics. They last three or four days, typically coinciding with weekends, at either a hotel or a convention center. They are attended by youth mainly from 14 to 24 years of age. However, younger and older attendees with a visible interest in anime and manga (e.g. doing cosplay, talking about these topics, participating in activities) make up a significant portion of conventions.

Some of the convention attendees host panels wherein fans discuss an anime, manga, gaming, or fandom-related topic, or lead a workshop that instructs fans in artistic endeavors such as drawing or writing. Sometimes these include an adult-themed panel held late at night where erotic anime are shown to an 18-and-over audience, and/or anime-related topics of an adult nature are discussed. These panels also include "game show" type events where fans are encouraged to answer anime and manga-related trivia questions for prizes.

The convention hosts concerts featuring Japanese musicians or music that is related to anime or Japanese video games. Besides concerts, the conventions also feature guests who are

notable in the anime, manga, and/or gaming industries for question-and-answer sessions with fans as well as to allow fans to collect their autographs. Some officials associated with the convention as well as guests of honor judge contests between fans to determine the best anime, manga, and gaming-inspired costumes in terms of creativity, craftsmanship, and character interpretation. "Cosplay", the making and wearing of costumes in anime fandom, is also practiced in a non-competitive manner at virtually all anime conventions.

At conventions, there are usually video game tournaments where fans play against each other, sometimes in tournaments sanctioned and judged by convention staff. In another competitive event, conventions sponsor karaoke contests between amateur fan singers who sing anime and video game-related music, or other types of Japanese music to other fans over recorded melodies. Conventions also feature fan-created anime music videos (or AMVs) of edited anime clips set to music to express an overall theme that are played in rooms for viewing at the convention. Sometimes AMVs compete against one another in contests and are judged by convention staff for quality of editing, music choice, originality, and/or concept.

Conventions also partner with commercial dealers of anime, manga, gaming, music, craft, and food items to allow them to conduct business in one or two "dealer room(s)" for a fee paid to the convention [Figure 1]

Figure 1: Examples of items sold in the "Dealer's Room" of an anime convention. Clockwise from upper-left: anime-embroidered t-shirts, kimono on hangars, headbands from the *Naruto* anime to the left of a mock *torii* gate, and plush items from an assortment of anime titles.

Besides allowing businesses to sell merchandise, conventions also allow amateur and professional artists to auction their anime, manga, and video game-related art in auctioneering events sponsored by the convention. Artists are also allowed to participate in a section of conventions called "Artists' Alley" where artists set up tables and sit behind them to either sell premade art to passing fans, or create and sell art for fans (typically sketches of anime characters) on the spot.

Anime conventions also put on one or several dance events for convention attendees that range from formal masquerades to pulsating raves. They also hold children's events for those

ages six and under, typically as an exercise in day care for parents who attend the conventions as fans themselves

Anime conventions usually charge an admission fee (typically $20-$50 USD) at a registration desk for most participants. The practice of offering admission at a discount if a participant registers at an earlier date (typically up to six months beforehand) is widespread across anime conventions. If participants have not paid for and received a badge in advance, they are issued a badge to gain admittance on payment for either part of or the entire duration of the convention. However, anime conventions do not officially call this an admission price, but rather the price of "membership" in the nonprofit organization that runs the convention. In some cases, the convention officials check for badges only at certain venues. Many attendees pay only a partial price for a truncated time span at the convention, or do not pay at all and attend convention areas that are not guarded by volunteer badge checkers. Typically the dealer's room and concerts are the only areas guarded by badge checkers. In some cases, the entry to the hotel and/or convention center is monitored to direct those without a badge to the registration desk where they can acquire badges.

Unlike the pseudonyms I have used for the anime clubs and long interview participants, the names of the anime conventions that served as sites of data collection are real. Because even the smallest convention was attended by thousands of people, the data from the participants I interviewed briefly at these venues were not individually identifiable. In the following pages I describe three of the anime conventions where I collected data.

Anime Central, also known as ACen, is an anime convention that began in 1998 in Rosemont, Illinois, a community in the Chicago area, and continues to be held there. I had collected data from ACen in 2003, when 6,190 people attended the three-day convention

(AnimeCons, Website). The convention was held at both a convention center and a nearby hotel within walking distance. A membership at the convention was sold for $45 at the door, but many attendees were not wearing a badge throughout the weekend. ACen attendees had checked into several hotels within walking distance of the convention.

Otakon began in 1994 in a Days Inn hotel in the Penn State University area before eventually moving to the Baltimore Convention Center in 1999. "Otakon" derived its name from combining the Japanese word *otaku* with "kon" from convention. *Otaku* is a second-person pronoun in Japanese that had, as understood by North American anime fans in the mid-1990s, come to refer to a fan of anime in Japan. North American fans themselves, including the organizers of Otakon, adopted "otaku" as a self-identifying term. Today the term is controversial as an identifier of fans, as I discuss later. When I collected data at Otakon in 2003, it was for that year the largest anime convention by attendance in the United States, with its 17,685 attendees surpassing the traditionally largest anime convention, Anime Expo in the Los Angeles area. Membership at the convention was sold for $50 at the door, and few if any were allowed admittance past the registration table unless they had a membership badge. Several area hotels were sold out for this convention, and some attendees had to walk at least two miles to arrive at the convention site from their rooms because of the lack of closer hotels with space available.

I also collected data at the Anime Weekend Atlanta, or AWA convention, in 2003 and 2006. In both years, the convention was held at the Cobb Galleria Centre and an adjacent hotel. While the 2003 convention had 4,584 attendees and a $40 at-the-door membership charge, three years later the 2006 convention had almost doubled in size at 8,949 attendees and a $45 at-the-door membership charge (AnimeCons.com Website). This is the convention that both Imagenu and Kine Outmake have historically attempted to participate in the most in terms of encouraging

club members to attend, given both AWA's proximity to the two universities and its large size. Some of the club members I interviewed in 2003 and others in 2006. Consequently, I collected data at AWA twice so as to more effectively triangulate the findings from AWA with those from interviews with members of both anime clubs. This included taking photographs to show how some convention attendees' affinity for anime is reflected in everyday objects such as automobiles [Figure 2].

Figure 2: Examples of automobiles adapted to reflect tastes in anime participation at Anime Weekend Atlanta 2006. Clockwise from upper-left: "EVA 01" referring to the blockbuster anime franchise *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, "NEK07" referring to *neko*, or the Japanese equivalent to "cat", and side and front views of the "Pika Bug," exemplifying the pocket monster Pikachu from the Nintendo game and anime series *Pokémon*.

Learning to Be Anime Fans

My first research question was "How do North American fans of Japanese animation learn to become anime fans, and what do they learn in this process?"

Fans Before They Enter Fandom

I begin here by first explaining what fans bring into anime fandom before they become participants. Novice anime fans are typically experienced viewers of anime or other types of animation, both alone and in social settings, before they enter into the larger fandom. Fans who watched anime by themselves before entering fandom most frequently reported that their exposure was via Cartoon Network in the form of anime dubbed into English. These previous experiences likely influence the nature of their early fandom interactions.

Fans did not typically recount what their knowledge or perceptions of Japanese culture were before they became anime fans; this was also the case for both Naomi and the sole Japanese American convention participant I interviewed. One exception is Iseul, who had grown up hearing the history of Japanese imperialism against Korea from his parents and his grandfather, a Korean who experienced Japan's early 20th century annexation of Korea firsthand. Although his family had not objected to Iseul's collecting Japanese anime and manga merchandise over the years, they were insistent that Iseul not forget the history of Korea-Japan relations. Moreover they emphasized to Iseul, "It's in the past. It's not as if people right now in Japan are doing it to Korea right now, so you shouldn't hate them for it."

Other fans began watching anime in the proto-fandom of their immediate families. Naomi was one of two fans who described watching anime with parental figures, specifically her mother who enjoyed anime films only by Hayao Miyazaki. Her mother was not as receptive to other anime, as Naomi recollected, which suggested to her the stereotyped reaction that nonfans

have to animated titles. "She has the same sort of 'It's animated' barrier a lot of people seem to have. Just because it's animated, that automatically means it can't have a serious plot or sexual innuendo or serious relationships or violence or anything over PG." Carl similarly positioned his mother as an "everywoman" who understood *Robotech*, an anime series about giant robots, which Carl characterized as "accessible…to most people in my opinion." When it came to *Evangelion*, another giant robot series but with more violent, religious, and metaphysical themes, however, he explained, "She might have a couple of hang-ups with it, just because she doesn't *get* it, you know?" Instead of acting as role models for their children to emulate in appreciating animation, Naomi and Carl's mothers were figures positioned, like others in everyday U.S. society, as ignorant of or oppositional to their learning through anime.

More common among the five interviewees who described watching anime in a family context was viewing with their siblings. Carl and his older brother for instance had watched *Robotech* as children, Edward and Neal had watched many anime shows growing up, Naomi and her younger siblings did likewise, and Tim had seen at least one anime, *Record of Lodoss War*, with his older sister. At least six of the anime convention participants who were interviewed began watching anime or reading manga among their siblings, and four of these were in two sibling pairs at the conventions. Although these fans' earliest anime-related pedagogy occurred within a familial context, most participants did not report any significant interaction with other fans in their own family before their first interactions in anime fandom.

Fans' Initial Fandom Experiences

When fans did enter into fandom, either in anime clubs or larger group gatherings to watch anime, they reported that the titles they first viewed were often not edited for U.S. broadcast television. This struck most fans with a shock of cultural difference that they had to

make sense of compared to watching edited anime or North American cartoons in general. For instance, they noted the higher degree of sexual and violent activity in anime relative to not only domestic cartoons, but also anime edited by U.S. media companies. None reported being offended, though a handful of fans added that they felt "appalled" in finding out that more graphic scenes and even entire episodes had been cut or censored for U.S. release. This observation was often a prelude to fans' desires to join organized fandom and learn more about anime in terms of its previously concealed narratives and imagery.

These fans were often exposed to anime in the Japanese language for the first time, which Tim described as "Martian speak" to his ears at that initial point. Neal remarked that his first exposure to anime in Japanese introduced him to the system of honorifics and the high degree of participation in school clubs by Japanese high school students. He added that the first anime series he closely followed, *Kimagure Orange Road*, offered "lots of other glimpses into contemporary Japanese life," as did a 29-year-old European American at ACen who noted how Japanese schools were "more structured" from watching his first anime series *Ranma ½*. Neal also discovered that he could find something enjoyable about watching a "girl's series" such as *Marmalade Boy*, a melodramatic series about complicated high school romances, that made him question his masculine self-concept. Fans' earliest experiences in fandom often entailed reflecting on their assumptions about social practices such as schooling, interpersonal relations, and gender identity.

Fans remarked that they had found themselves in a very different type of interactive community when they began watching anime with others outside their families. Generally they felt a sense of amazement and pleasure to find others who had similarly esoteric tastes in entertainment. Kristin reported an urge to "share with everybody" unmet with solitary viewing,

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but fulfilled in a group context with others "who knew exactly what [she] was talking about." A 19-year-old European American college student at ACen similarly reflected that he was initially drawn by "the whole experience of watching stuff with people and talking about it and analyzing it to death." A 33-year-old European American fan also at ACen conceptualized one of his first days at a college anime club where he watched eight anime movies in one day with others as a "coming of age" for his own identity as a fan. Missing from this talk of fans' earliest experiences was any acknowledgement of fandom's pedagogical roles of master and apprentice. This recognition of specialization came as fans recollected their later fan experiences.

Other fans' initial integration experiences into anime fandom were not so seamless. Eileen was taken aback by Kine Outmake's anointing of a club member "Captain Hentai," someone who "tends to be the person with the most amount of *hentai* on their computer." Tim faced initial frustration trying to attend to the anime on-screen at Kine Outmake while other fans openly referred to future episodes. "I'm watching comedy, I want to hear the jokes as they come, shut up. But of course they're not, so it's like 'AUUUUGH!'" Nevertheless, Eileen and Tim were willing to overcome or overlook these initial challenges.

Fans' Linguistic Proficiency

As Lave and Wenger (1991) caution, acquiring the linguistic proficiency of a practice is essential for new participants to effectively talk within and about that practice. Some of the terms that novice fans acquire are specific to specialized activities in anime fandom. These include abbreviated portmanteaus such as "fansubbing," derived from the words *fan* and *subtitling* to describe the practice of sharing anime online with non-Japanese subtitles added by other fans. Similarly, "scanlating" describes putting pages of Japanese manga under an electronic *scanner*, erasing the Japanese dialogue, and replacing it with a *translation* before distributing it on the

Internet. Other terms endemic to U.S. anime fandom include "art table" (i.e., a table at an anime convention where an artist creates an anime-related sketch on demand), and "anime fanfic," or fan-written fiction that reinterprets anime texts. Fans who engage in these activities acquire a functional vocabulary that reflects their roles as specialized practitioners, whether it is for video editing in fansubbing, photo editing for scanlating, or producing art and literature on art tables and in anime fanfic, respectively.

Nevertheless, most of the terms fans acquire for use in general anime fandom are Japanese in origin. Some terms are used more frequently than others depending on the subfandom group in question, but all fandom participants are expected to know at least some of them after a period of involvement. High-level proficiency is not required, as even Ben, an Kine Outmake officer, admits that he's "terrible with Japanese words". Fandom pedagogy in the acquisition and use of Japanese terms relies more on modeling general behavior found in anime and among experienced fans rather than on specializing in a particular activity in fandom or on formal study of the Japanese language.

A novice fan is most likely to acquire and use terms from all three categories at once. For instance, a new fan of *shoujo*, anime and manga marketed to young women, will likely use the word *shoujo* to describe the genre, *bishounen* ("beautiful young male") to describe certain characters, and phrases such as *kakui* (cool) and *kawaii* (cute) in conversation with other fans.

Otaku as an Identifier of Fans

Novice fans are also more willing to use the word *otaku* as a self-identifier as a fan when they understand the word as approximating "anime fan" in Japanese. Moreover, novice fans tend to expand *otaku* to describe other anime fans in general in addition to themselves, often as a term of inclusiveness for "fellow *otaku*" as one 19-year-old European American male at Otakon put it.

Another fan, a 21-year-old European American female college student from Pennsylvania, also at Otakon, said she "came to be an *otaku*". In the following she articulates her own definition of an *otaku*. Note that this fan refers to *otaku* in the third rather than first person, indicating that, while she shares an affinity for this group, she is not necessarily willing to assign herself an *otaku* identity in outside social contexts.

> Usually seem to be intellectuals who…I don't know, there's a certain type of people who tend to get obsessed with things, I think; who tend to, you know, latch on to something and learn all about it and become an expert on it instead of just casually watching television or casually reading books. They become obsessed with them, they let them take over their minds or something. I think that a lot of people who end up being otaku are the kind of people who become obsessed with things. They just happen to latch on to anime and find out that there are others like them, and you just never get off of it.

Although more experienced fans continue to use Japanese terms to describe anime genres and characters, they are less willing to use Japanese phrases in everyday speech unless they are attempting to use whole Japanese sentences. When the topic of Japanese phrases interjected in English-language speech came up with more experienced fans, they often expressed annoyance or dismay for those who practiced this. Kimmel voiced an opinion echoing this view that, while extreme, is consistent with the negative attitudes of more experienced fans:

> There are certain types of anime fans, which are into nothing but the really, really, really cute stuff. And they are the same people who think that their Japanese is so friggin' great because they know the word *neko* [Japanese for "cat"] and they use it every five seconds. And because, take for example, some people in certain anime clubs, which I have been a part of, think that it's really friggin' cute to add "-chan" [an ending to the names of children] to the end of everything. They'll be like [deepens his voice], "Oh my god, we're gonna take bus-chan to dorm-chan," and people like that, like I wanna just take my fist, like this [makes a fist], curl up the knuckles, and just embed it in their faces, because it's that obnoxious to me and it's that annoying to me.

Experienced fans are also less likely to use *otaku* as a self-descriptor *because* of its connotation of obsessiveness. One seasoned fan at AWA, a Trinidadian American 23-year-old male expressed concern that reporters from the mainstream press would visit the convention. Then they would find and present an exemplar of the *otaku* stereotype – an outlandishly costumed anime obsessive with a tenuous grip on everyday reality – as representative of anime

fandom as a whole. Although both novice and experienced fans used Japanese terms in fandom, conflict over the context of use reflects dissent on the link between fan identity and legitimate appreciation of Japanese culture.

Fan Mockery of Anime

Novice anime fans also acquire cultural cues to differentiate between anime worthy of appreciation or mockery according to conventional fandom perceptions of cultural authenticity and aesthetics. One of the most prominent cues is whether the characters are speaking English or Japanese. A widespread fandom belief is that almost all anime titles should be enjoyed "subbed" wherein the characters speak Japanese and the viewer reads English subtitles to follow the dialogue. This suggests to fans that their viewing experience is closer to the anime as originally intended by the Japanese producers without interference by North American voice actors and editors. Some fans remarked that subs allow the characters to sound more natural, and that the translation of the subs was closer to the original meaning than the dubs.

In contrast, English-language voice acting in "dubbed" anime was variously described as "kind of bad" by Ben, "too emotional" by a 21-year-old Japanese American female at AWA, as if "done by William Shatner's brood of illegitimate children" by Emile, and as "not matching the characters" by many others. One 18-year-old European American female at ACen had told her friends that she watched the *Sailor Moon* series dubbed, and they ridiculed her as a "dubbie" for her practice. Novice fans come to realize that many more experienced participants think dub watchers are too lazy to make the effort to read subtitles. This view challenges the attentiveness, enthusiasm, and even intellectual acumen of fans who view dubbed anime to shift to subbed anime to properly appreciate anime in its "original Japanese" format.

When some watched the dubs, they did so for the sole purpose of mocking the anime with other fans. Edward described Imagenu's "The Game," a viewing ritual during the Wednesday of a once-a-semester week-long anime marathon that I myself experienced as a participant observer. The Game involves the club showcasing "the worst shit known to man," or anime that is typically crudely drawn, includes nonsensical situations and incoherent, clichéd storytelling, and is almost always dubbed. This provides two lessons for novice fans playing The Game for the first time; that is, what type of anime is considered unworthy of appreciation, and how to express derision of this type of anime for collective enjoyment and self-edification as an authentic fan.

I discovered that the mockery involves intertexual references to other anime titles valued by fans, exaggerated sexual humor in responding to situations fans consider even remotely perverse, and resistance to the title's attempts to convey seriousness. Even I had participated in this way in response to a dubbed scene in *MD Geist 2* that did not merit the seriousness that it conveyed. I added to a male character's exclamation, "You lied to me, Preston!" with "You told me you had on a condom!" to successfully garner laughter from others. In doing this I sexualized the situation to subvert the North American producers' attempt to force my appreciation of a serious situation through stilted and heavy-handed dialogue in an action *mecha* title that relied on low production quality and incredulous action sequences. That the characters spoke in English with an exaggerated inflection rather than Japanese marked the title with an added sense of inauthenticity that encouraged resistance in the form of mockery. However, none of us, myself included, reflected on whether or not *MD Geist 2* would have invoked the same type and degree of mockery had it been shown in Japanese.

Not everyone was willing to assess dubs as universally terrible. One 20-year-old Taiwanese-Argentine male at AWA preferred dubs when the anime was set in the United States because English was "appropriate" for the situation. Many fans who ordinarily distanced themselves from dubs were willing to credit a few dubs such as *Cowboy Bebop* and *Excel Saga* for being "true to the characters" and voiced well by the actors. Laura went further by praising rather than condemning some dubs' changes of Japanese jokes to North American jokes "so they actually make sense…and you don't have to think about it." Others, including a 26-year-old Puerto Rican female at AWA who proudly called herself a "dubbie," claimed that the dubs were more engaging.

Tim, Kristin, and Carl preferred those dubs they had heard before they heard the subbed version because they had identified the characters with the initial voices they had heard. Unlike participants who disdained dubs, these three experienced fans reflected on this mentality. Kristin sympathized with the sub watchers' aversion to North American editorial cuts, but argued that they were missing out on the positive editorial changes. Tim criticized the notion that subtitles equated authentic viewing because he claimed that Anglophone viewers do not actually understand what is happening in the Japanese versions of anime. Moreover, given their lack of experience with the Japanese language, English speakers may not recognize when the Japanese voice actors are giving an inadequate performance. Some other experienced fans including Carl concurred with this view, and he added, "It is good to hear the way that the voices are supposed to be [in Japanese] and the way they end up [in English], and that's when you know that not all dubs are good. But I don't feel that all dubs are bad." Even in defending dubs, however, fans positioned anime shown in Japanese as the original version closer to the creative intent of the Japanese producers than anime dubbed into English.

Club Officers' Pedagogical Intentions

Harry, one of the Imagenu club officers, and I had a conversation during a break in one of the regular club meetings. We discussed what the officers' intentions were for fan pedagogy, and he explained that he and the officers wanted to introduce novice fans to both canonical anime titles and titles notable for their depth of plot and theme. Harry and other officers specifically avoided anime already shown on the U.S. Cartoon Network so that novice fans would come to appreciate titles the officers considered notable yet underexposed. As I have already noted, Imagenu Club showings were accompanied by the "movie theater environment" wherein officers commanded chatters to be quiet when anime was being shown, except during The Game and its accompanying heckling. Harry explained that talking was discouraged both to accommodate newer fans who wanted to listen to the anime and to allow everyone to concentrate on the anime for its artistic or canonical value.

On the other hand, Kine Outmake's officers have no such pedagogical aim, focusing instead on providing enjoyment to their members. Their viewings are rife with heckling similar to, but not as blatant or encouraged as, that found in The Game. Like The Game, the heckling done in Kine Outmake's regular viewings responds to anime plotlines fans consider contrived and frequently make sexual innuendos or reference other anime titles to give the action on the screen a new meaning. Ben, himself an officer, thought that chatting among club members, even when anime was being shown, was "the point of the club". However, when fans in Kine Outmake consider a dramatic, contemplative, or suspenseful scene to be heartfelt, moving, insightful, or integral to the plotline, the heckling ceases. In this case, novice fans who make an inappropriate sarcastic or ironic remark are shushed and admonished; they learn from their experiences with Kine Outmake's continual heckling when to inject humor.

Anime Club Recruitment

Novice fans also learn to form a sense of what anime fandom is and how to categorize it in terms of relationships within and outside of fandom. At one organizational meeting, Imagenu's club officers discussed how to conduct a recruitment drive for new members in addition to its traditional means of placing fliers advertising the club's existence and meeting times on walls and bulletin boards [Figure 3]. One idea was for

Figure 3: An Imagenu recruitment flyer featuring Noelle, a protagonist from the fantasy anime series *Tenshi ni Narumon*, intended to attract incoming university students.

club members to dress as ninjas and distribute fliers to passersby. The officers stressed that the members who would be dressed as ninjas should not "act stupid" (with no specification on what this meant) and should simply hand out fliers without talking. They added that this publicity stunt would be a "weed out device" so that those who were already interested in ninjas would be

more likely to take a flier and join the club than those who were not. I assumed that this emphasis on ninjas was related to a popular Internet activity at that time of debating which fighting archetype was better, a pirate or a ninja, so I asked why a pirate was not being considered. Stacey, one of the officers, said that ninjas were more closely associated with Japan. Harry was concerned that club members would have to talk like pirates, might do an inadequate job, and risk alienating the students whereas members who dressed as ninjas could be silent and not risk that problem. While popular with the officers, the idea of donning ninja attire was never realized.

Though no anime featuring ninjas was scheduled for the upcoming semester, the Imagenu officers considered using ninjas to play on a North American stereotype of Japanese culture for publicity. This reflected a pattern of the officers' attempting to recruit people who were already interested in Japanese culture. Other recruitment efforts included an unsuccessful attempt to build a relationship with the university's Japan Club and to attract its members and to discuss the club with people taking Japanese language courses. Similarly, many of Kine Outmake's novice members had learned about the club from meeting club members in courses on Japanese language and culture. Imagenu and to a lesser extent Kine Outmake were mindful to convey a mainstream sense of decorum in outside settings, and especially Imagenu sought members with these sensibilities. Although Kine Outmake's president Laura introduced and taught about *hentai* anime to nonmembers, she did so at Frolicon, a convention that emphasizes sexuality in science fiction and fantasy.

Anime Fandom Distinctiveness

Both clubs' pedagogical practices rest on the assumption that novices will learn to view themselves as part of a distinct fandom subculture with its own unconventional means of

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appreciating Japanese culture incomprehensible to outsiders. That is, learning to imagine fandom

as a subculture encourages fans to form specific conceptions of the relationship between an

imagined "mainstream" North American culture and Japanese culture.

One widespread way in which fans define anime fandom is as a "geek" subculture, or a

subculture that appreciates stereotypically fantastic elements or aesthetics in a fictional narrative.

Examples include the *Harry Potter* series discussed in Chapter 2 as well as older media

franchises such as *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, and *Lord of the Rings*. At AWA 2003, I talked with the

main producer of a documentary film, *Otaku Unite!*, which chronicles a series of anime

conventions to advocate fandom unity so that anime could achieve mainstream popularity. He

defined "geek culture" as "exist[ing] outside the mainstream, and it centers around something

that isn't acceptable to the mainstream; the whole cartoons and comics being for kids' mentality

still definitely exists in our country." When I asked him what he meant by "mainstream," he

offered a description based on associations:

> I think of pop music, I think of radio, I think of MTV, I think of shopping malls, I think of
> fraternities, I think of action films, I think of everything that is blatantly advertised on a day-to-
> day basis. I think that is our mainstream, and I'm one of those people who's under the opinion that
> the mainstream is dictated by the advertising and the corporations and what they push upon us
> and, yeah.

Though an explicit anticorporate ethos is not prevalent in other interviews, fans often

articulate anime as a "geek culture" existing in opposition to "mainstream culture," the latter

formulated by media institutions and practices. Specifically fans cite the practice of consuming

Japanese cartoons and comics, despite outside nonfan beliefs that these media are childish, as

indicative of anime fandom's subcultural status. In response, fans commonly promote anime, and

by extension anime fandom, as sophisticated, intellectual, and mature. Carl echoed this sentiment

when he reflected on fandom's appreciation of anime. "I think that was probably the thing

though that appeals to my brother and I, my friends, about anime was that it was able to use the

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cartoons, you know, to do those exaggerated things that you can't really do easily or believably in real life and be able to do them with a serious tone to them."

That subcultures typically hold self-conceptiosn that counter societal disapproval is nothing new (Williams, 2004). However, this response communicates to novice fans an expectation for them to base their conception of anime fandom, and therefore fandom pedagogy, on an oppositional consciousness critical of U.S. popular culture. This attitude is especially common when discussing instances where outside U.S. media companies, rather than amateur fansub groups working with anime fandom, are involved with anime importation and translation. Nick expresses his and other fans' frustration with specifically U.S. attempts to interfere with fans' learning about Japanese cultural references in manga.

> We don't want…American references when reading a Japanese manga unless they're originally in there, and they're funny to both Japanese and Americans, then, yeah, leave them in there. But I mean, there's going to be cultural references in a Japanese show, it's your duty to translate it as accurately as possible, and just try to explain it. It's like, "Well you don't understand." I'd rather have [a translation and explanation] than a really bad joke.

Similarly, experienced fans like Nick teach novice fans that the integrity of anime fandom's status as an educative agency depends on noting and criticizing changes to anime and manga for marketing purposes. As noted previously, some fans, both novice and advanced, enjoy English-language dubbing in anime, a very noticeable change made by importers, within certain contexts. However, there is widespread disdain when the changes are made that conceal relevant Japanese cultural facts, such as those related to Japanese food, alcohol, names, popular culture, and sexuality. This not only reifies anime fandom's oppositionary consciousness against North American media, but it encourages a particular type of cultural pedagogy – fact-learning – for novice fans to access.

Supplemental Knowledge about Japan in Anime Fandom

Academic study of Japan is not discouraged in anime fandom; its pedagogy is not limited to fact-learning. A considerable number of experienced fans are Japanese language majors and take college-level courses in Japanese history and culture. Some like Neal had travelled to Japan to study abroad, and others were planning to live in Japan to become more acquainted with Japanese culture. Still, most fans do not view academic learning as an integral component of fandom pedagogy, although academic knowledge about Japan is valued. In addition to translations and supplemental notes describing Japanese cultural phenomena found in anime and manga, fans also consider experiential learning through regular anime viewing and fan-to-fan interaction a legitimate basis for novices to learn about Japanese culture. Diana acknowledged that novice fans tend to not learn about Japanese culture at all unless they begin to think about and discuss noticeable differences with U.S. society, such as the presence of public baths in *Ranma ½*. Eileen also noted the unreflective way in which fans learn about Japanese culture through a kind of osmosis, remembering cultural phenomena via viewing anime. "Just watching so much I've learned a lot about that [Japanese] culture and not really realized it. But then I'll be like, 'Oh yeah, that's how they do that.' And everybody else went, 'Oh, well, I must've learned that at some point.'" Still, neither Eileen nor her fan friends necessarily supplement their memories with further study of Japanese culture, although some fans often do just that. Neal also used *Ranma ½* to claim that both Japanese and North American viewers notice martial arts-style fighting that defies physics. However, "from a Japanese perspective, what's interesting about the series is not just the mundane everyday things that are going on in the series, but the exceptional things. But in this series in particular, they show enough of the mundane to serve as a reference for an American anime fan."

As I discuss later, more experienced fans express skepticism about the type and degree of knowledge of Japanese culture that anime can convey over the period that a fan participates in anime viewing. Kimmel on the other hand believes otherwise: "Understanding anime requires a tremendous amount of knowledge about Japanese culture." He reflects the widespread assumption in fandom that, for novice fans, anime fandom offers opportunities for richer media appreciation and Japanese cultural education as a means of countering the perceived deficiencies of North American media culture. In the following section I pursue this idea from the perspective of the fandom rather than the fan.

<div align="center">Meanings Made with Anime and Japan in Anime Fandom</div>

My second research question asks, "How do North American fans of anime create, sustain, and change meanings associated with anime and Japan within anime fandom?" The vast majority of fans consciously distinguish between anime and Japan just as they differentiate fantasy and reality. However, the relationship between anime and Japan is a close symbiosis where one influences the conception that most fans have of the other and vice-versa. This is especially true for fans with no direct experience of Japanese people and little other exposure to Japanese culture via its nonanime and nonmanga media. The purpose of this section is not to provide a laundry list of the "correct" and "incorrect" conceptions that North American anime fans have of Japanese people and culture. Rather, it is to demonstrate fandom's approaches to making sense of anime and Japan from the vantage point of an appreciative subculture.

The Appeal of Anime

To understand why fans bother to impute and shift meanings related to anime requires explaining what fans find meaningful about anime in the first place. Despite fans' varying

allegiances to different genres within anime, the reasons given for anime's appeal are remarkably similar. Art styles used in the medium of anime vary considerably among artists [Figure 4].

Figure 4: Examples of differentiation of art styles in anime. From left, *Ranma ½* initially directed by Tomomitsu Mochizuki, *Shoujo Kakumei Utena*: *The Movie* directed by Kunihiko Ikuhara, and *Cowboy Bebop* directed by Shinichiro Watanabe.

However, fans emphasize artistic elements (e.g., detailed backgrounds, characters' large eyes as conveying innocence, oversized swat beads conveying anxiety) as if they are emblematic of a consistent singular anime art style. In contrast to a North American animation style characterized as "Superman realistic" by Nick, fans praise art styles in anime not as realistic but as innovative, detailed, and expressive.

In addition to the maturity of anime plots, themes, and characterization mentioned previously, most fans also cite many anime titles' use of narrative arcs across episodes as an appeal. This is different from the model of one narrative contained within one episode characteristic of North American fictional series. Concurrent to plot development through narrative arcs is character development within those arcs. Most fans express appreciation for being able to trace the change in the characters' feelings, abilities, awareness, and relationships (e.g., romance, friendship, and rivalry) compared to the characters' previous life histories. When a fan complains about a series being "drawn out" instead of praising a series for its narrative

continuity, the complaint is consistently tied to a lack of interest in the characters and their development, or the absence of character development altogether.

Fan appreciation of anime comedy titles such as *Ranma ½* and *Excel Saga* are exceptions to this pattern: episodes can be appreciated out of sequence, and character development is minimal. As Carl explains, "That was one of the things I liked about [*Ranma ½*], and at the same time it was something that was fun. It didn't go too serious, but I think that was because…with all the other kind of [dramatic] shows I was watching, it was sort of refreshing in the way it used its humor and slapstick." Fans infrequently mention episodic slapstick anime when discussing why they are attracted to anime, yet these series have wide appeal across fandom. As Carl indicates, and as I observed in both anime clubs, uncomplicated slapstick anime titles often accompany anime titles with more complex storylines and character progression.

Some fans conceive of popular titles as bizarre rather than innovative, such as when Laura described *Gundam Seed*'s art style as "over the top" and Iseul dismissed the minimalist art style of one episode of Anno Hideki's *Kareshi Kanojou no Jijou* as "really really weird." However, Iseul praised Anno for *End of Evangelion*, which "messes with your mind and you have to take three aspirin every ten minutes or something like that. I mean, I really like his directing style." Like Iseul, other fans praised specific Japanese anime producers such as the manga collective CLAMP, Hayao Miyazaki, Studio 4°C, and Rumiko Takahashi for innovations in their work.

Anime as Literature

What is never mentioned, however, is that these producers are Japanese or that any relation exists between their being Japanese and their artistic ability When a relationship between Japaneseness and artistic innovation is made, it is abstracted as a contrast between Japanese

storytelling and the narrative conventions common to North American media. As a 41-year-old European American male fan at Otakon who had been in anime fandom for 22 years put it, "There's a lot of Japanese storytelling that's much fresher to my mind because I haven't seen them a zillion times. An American says, 'Show me something new. Surprise me.' A Japanese says, 'Show me a story I know already, but tell it better than I heard it last time.'"

The boundary between an innovative and bizarre plotline is not well defined in anime fandom. Ben criticized *Shoujo Kakumei Utena*, a series about a heroine who dresses in men's clothes at a preparatory school and must duel with members of the student council to help her best friend, as "[making] absolutely no sense." For Ben it features "some sort of girl's school in some weird bubble universe, and they're fighting each other with swords they pull out of their chests" while Diana repeatedly described the series as "animated literature" outside of her interview. Indeed whenever Diana encountered complaints about *Utena* similar to Ben's, this is the phrase she used most often in response. What she means by this is:

> Literature, in my definition is more than just a good story or a novel. It's not pop or pulp fiction. Literature is something that can be studied academically, like you were in a class, you would read a book and write papers on it and be able to write essays and have deep in-depth discussions over the subject matter. You can't do that with pulp fiction; there's nothing to discuss. *Utena* is different from a lot of other anime series in that respect. It has enough depth that you could write a term paper on that, easily, if it were ever used as a discussion in a media class.

Another young European American woman at ACen described the *Utena* series as one "you have to watch a lot of times to actually figure out the underlying plot, and there's always something you noticed new in it." A 25-year-old European American male at Otakon mentioned his and his friends' "intellectual debates" about *Utena*. Stacey once went so far as to say, "If Americans could make something like *Utena*, then there would be no need to be an anime fan."

A common term used in interviews and that I heard in my participant observation is "anime physics," which describes the improbable motion of bodies and objects (usually vehicles)

in anime in service to a thematic purpose. Similar to Diana's "animated literature," "anime physics" is often a reply to another fan's complaint about the unlikelihood of an anime character's exaggerated breach of Newtonian science. When some fans voice displeasure at inconsistencies, improbabilities, and complications in an anime title, others reinterpret these characteristics in two ways: first, as a reflection of rich intellectual complexity or, second, as a generic trope of anime that requires the audience's suspension of disbelief.

Fans rarely refer to Japanese culture, and especialy conventions in Japanese animation and narrative, when considering these complications and points of confusion. The exception to this is when the anime title makes specific allusions to previous Japanese literature or history that non-Japanese fans would find otherwise incomprehensible. At issue is how the allusion helps the fan follow the plot. How the allusion contributes to further understanding Japanese culture is not usually considered by fans.

Sexuality in Anime

Less easily dismissed than obscure historical and literary references are fans' frustrations and misgivings about the violence and sexuality found in some anime titles. A common concern about one of Japan's most popular and prolific manga artists, Rumiko Takahashi, and other Japanese artists is unresolved sexual tension among their characters that can continue for dozens of episodes or more. This is consistent with fans' expectations for continuing character development, including romantic relationships. Concurrently, many male fans express appreciation and many female fans voice derision for the degree of sexual titillation exhibited by mostly female characters in suggestive poses. This phenomenon, known as "fanservice" in anime fandom, less frequently showcases attractive male characters intended for female appreciation.

However, if both male and female fans perceive fanservice as gratuitous or in some way

inhibiting the development of the plot or characters, criticism usually ensues.

A fandom-wide perception that Japanese culture promotes sexual activity outside

(hetero)normative bounds may have inspired the innuendo I heard, hinting at a same-sex

relationship between prepubescent girls. This is reinforced by some comments made in

interviews. They range from a 45-year-old European American male attendee at ACen

remarking, "Attitudes towards…sex [in Japan] are somewhat different than ours. You get a lot of

nude scenes and stuff that's, you know, they don't see any problem with the kids seeing it" to

Iseul saying, "I think all of Japanese culture over there has some sort of a weird fetish for

pedophilia or something, I don't know [chuckles]." A 27-year-old African American female

AWA 2003 attendee said, "[The Japanese] really don't have as many taboos as the American

society does when it comes to nudity, sex, anything basically that we would consider, 'Ooooh,

no-no' around here. They're a lot more, I guess, freer, but a lot more twisted in their thinking in

my opinion. [laughs]" Edward, in recollecting his early experiences in anime fandom,

remembers Japan being likened by other fans to "a Garden of Eden with devil porn" and himself

initially accepting that view. Emile referred this topic when criticizing the enthusiasm of novice

fans. "Some fans…seem to think Japan creates everything wonderful, even though they

reputedly have used panty vending machines." However, Kristin's reaction to *Card Captor*

Sakura, a show about a Japanese girl who must collect magical cards to save the world, shows

this fan reflecting on her own changing understandings:

> Like *Card Captor Sakura*, the girl, one of the little schoolgirls is in love with her teacher. And the
> teacher, they get engaged or something. So [chuckles] it's really weird. So, at first, like when you
> first see stuff like that, you're jaw just drops and you're like, "Oh my god! What?! Oh no!" And
> it's, after you watch a little bit, it's maybe not so much desensitized to it, but you're like, "Oh,
> well maybe it's got something right. Maybe we are a little bit too uptight about certain things."

Indeed, Kristin's commentary not only points to fans' perceptions that Japanese sexual mores, represented by what is found in anime, are not as constrictive as those in North America, but also exemplifies anime fandom's self-perception as being people more tolerant of open and nonnormative sexuality in media compared to other North Americans. A major artifact of Imagenu club lore serves as an example. Once during an early recruiting drive at the sponsoring university's student center, club members were attempting to explain what anime is to a man unfamiliar with the medium. After being given an explanation and shown a few visual examples, the man asked, "Is it that cartoon devil porn?" in a heavy southeastern U.S. accent that is emulated in the retelling. This incident is retold to new club members at the first or second organizational meeting of each new school year.

The retelling of the incident is reminiscent of one pedagogical technique of Alcoholics Anonymous (Lave & Wenger, 1991) mentioned in Chapter 2. Experienced members share personal narratives as a way of helping novices construct a new identity. For Imagenu, the retelling of the "Cartoon Devil Porn" story reaffirms the perceived ignorance that nonfans have of anime in comparison to knowledgeable fans, who know that anime is not just explicit pornography. Moreover, it implies that fans are tolerant enough to embrace an animated medium that includes some material of an adult nature. This is in self-conscious comparison to conventional wisdom, especially in the sexually conservative U.S. Southeast, that holds that cartoons are traditionally meant for children. This narrative is such a fixture of the club's identity that one item was reserved for "porn" in the agenda for every organizational meeting during my participation. The item invites members to share personal stories related to pornography or sexuality. It also reminds an officer to perform a 1-2-3 countdown so that everyone shouts

"PORN!" at a level audible to people outside the room; it serves both humorous purposes and also as a social device to set a group boundary.

Fans' awareness of sexuality in anime is not institutionalized to the same degree at Kine Outmake. Still, the sexually related jokes told during meetings and the "Captain Hentai" title discussed previously indicates that explicit talk about sexuality is part of the club's life-world. While criticizing Japanese deviant sexual practices in the same interview, Emile admits, "Few people are as sexually repressed and filthy-minded [laughs] as [Kine Outmake's university's] students," Kine Outmake members included.

Violence in Anime

Violence between anime characters is a staple of male-oriented genres such as action, science fiction, and horror, and it is also present in *shoujo* series such as *X TV* by CLAMP. When discussing their favorite anime, both male and female fans mention instances of betrayal among characters. Usually an erstwhile ally kills or causes physical harm to a compatriot. Anger at the betraying character is minimal as fans talk about him or her in descriptive and nonjudgmental terms, sometimes expressing sadness that the betrayal "had" to happen for thematic reasons. Consistent with fans' need for character development to appreciate an anime title, Tim expresses a viewpoint about *Cowboy Bebop* that echoes that of other fans I studied. "You had people going off, and it had a reason for shooting people, it wasn't mindless. I like to have some reason to why I'm doing, why I'm watching a show. There has to be some plot. I don't like just shoot-em-up fests or whatever." On the other hand, *DragonBall Z*, an action-fantasy anime series, is often the butt of fan jokes for its characters preparing for fighting matches for several episodes at a time with no character development whatsoever.

Although fans rarely complain of the presence of violence in anime, the male fans especially voice concern with who is using the violence and for what ends. Like sexuality, violence in anime that offends the sensibilities of anime fans, particularly if they are male, invokes fans' use of Japanese culture as an explanation for what they view as disturbing. For example, the anime series *Hana Yori Dango* involves a group of wealthy high school boys who bully an entire school, but one of them falls in love with the young female protagonist and becomes a more caring person. Despite the character development, Ben expressed anger that the entire school is bullied.

> I realized [the Japanese are] definitely not concerned with the individual. Like it's all about doing what we, what they think is socially acceptable, and requiring what's right for the whole. That and they're, they seem to be very, very willing to take abuse from each other. Like if you have one guy from the school who decides to be a bully, everyone is just gonna sit and take it from him for no real reason. And that just kind of pisses me off a lot.

Though not expressing anger, Nick also cited Japanese culture to explain bullying in anime: "Because you're living in a country where codes of honor exceed everything. You rattle on someone, you're just shit-listed from society." Edward characterized Japanese schools as "a lot more strict" to explain why a teacher in a "normal Japanese business outfit" in *Tenjou Tenge* threatens unruly students with violence. Iseul surmised, "Japanese culture seems to take the male being blown up or beaten up by the female characters as really, really entertaining" without explaining why this may be so. In short, a pattern among anime fans is to appeal to Japanese culture to explain unfamiliar or objectionable content in anime when literary or generic explanations are not used.

Despite this pattern, fans often question the strength of the relationship between anime and Japanese culture. As previously noted, Neal said that the *Ranma ½* series "show[s] enough of the mundane to serve as a reference for an American anime fan." The key term is "mundane,"

which for most fans refers to everyday activities occurring within dominant social institutions in Japan, especially in school settings that figure prominently in many anime titles. Fans widely accept the idea that anime accurately portrays Japanese food, student life, formal greetings, and manners among strangers insofar as these are distinguishable from their North American equivalents. As Naomi explained, "A lot of what [Japanese producers] portray about Japanese culture [in anime] is slightly skewed, or they've taken liberties with it. But I probably wouldn't know as much about the [Japanese] school system if I didn't watch anime and read manga. Because most of what they tell you about the school system isn't too far off." However, she also questioned whether the demands of storytelling overly dramatized the representation of Japanese school life in anime, rather than depicting her notion of how undifferentiated and unremarkable Japanese students are. "A lot of them portray the students as, well, a lot more [chuckles] interesting and odd than what you would normally see. I think because it's a story, and you need to have strong characters that you can differentiate from the others that tend to make them, well, less Japanese."

Naomi's assessment about "strong characters" echoes a pattern of fans' second-guessing the accuracy of anime's depiction of Japanese culture. This occurs even for topics like schooling where there is a higher level of trust in the accuracy of anime's representation. On the Imagenu online message board, one club member who had been familiar with anime since childhood once used the following sentence as an appellation to all of his posts. "If a Chinese person watched American television and thought it made him expert in American culture, we would think that he is deranged – and be right." When many advanced fans talk about their favorite anime titles' focus on expressive stylization and bold characterization, it is *because* anime has these appealing elements that its ability to convey Japanese culture is for them "slightly skewed".

Most advanced anime fans are also careful to mention the stereotypes about Japan that they themselves do not subscribe to, be they found in anime or widely accepted in U.S. society. Fans cite literature they have read, conversations they have had with people who have been to Japan, or their relationships with Japanese people that have informed their perspectives. Though Edward had originally believed that Japan was a "Garden of Eden with devil porn," he emphasized that, after speaking with his brother Neal who had studied in Japan, "I still think that Japan's a pretty good country, but it's got its problems just like any other place." Similarly, advanced fans disputed stereotypes of all Japanese people being martial artists, brilliant and conscientious students, and obsessed with cute products such as *Hello Kitty* merchandise and anime itself. One 19-year-old European American male and longtime fan I interviewed at ACen explained the views of a Japanese friend of his: "One of the things he hates is whenever he's traveling in America, whenever he mentions he's Japanese, one of the first things people ask him is, 'Well do you like anime?' It just kind of ticks him off. No, he doesn't like anime. There's been other parts of Japanese culture he's very much into."

However, when even someone who is half-Japanese like Naomi believes strong anime characters are "less Japanese," it raises the question of what "Japanese" is, especially when fans do describe what it isn't. Other advanced fans never gave a precise definition of the construct, but they used their conceptions of Japaneseness to make sense of unfamiliar subject matter related to violence and sexuality. As discussed previously, they associated Japaneseness with a rigid code of honor under which adherence to the strict dictates of social superiors is enforced through violence or other threats. Individuality is expendable. This conflicts with the North American values for individual liberty and social equality. Conversely, Japanese culture is thought to allow a greater degree of latitude in sexual expression unknown in North American

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media and society. Sometimes this extends to the level of perversion even by the standards of anime fandom, where tolerance of open sexuality is part of the subculture. The anime fans I interacted with regularly described anime as "Japanese" to contrast it with the shortcomings they perceived in North American media.

<div align="center">Gender and Sexuality in Anime Fandom</div>

The third research question I posed is "How do North American anime fans negotiate traditional sites of sociocultural consensus and conflict found in U.S. social hierarchies?" I discussed fans' conceptions of Japanese culture in the previous section. These conceptions are connected to race and nationalism, and I analyze this relationship in Chapter 5. In this section I present data on additional contested sites in anime fandom that include gender and sexual orientation, although these often intersect with fans' perceptions of Japanese culture. Anime titles and characters enact gender and sexual orientation very differently than what is represented in North American media. These enactments are differentiated by varied anime genres intended for primarily male or female audiences. Anime fans vary in how they feel about characters who embody different masculinities, femininities, and sexualities.

Anime Fandom and Gender

Neal's recollections of his novice fanhood included his unexpected enjoyment of a "girl's series" such as *Marmalade Boy*, Emile reported liking some *shoujo* manga, and Nick's favorite anime title was the *shoujo* series *Fushigi Yuugi*, but their cases are exceptional for male fans. Female fans, however, reported a wider range in what they like. Laura and other female fans reported enjoying more male-oriented fare, typically *shounen* ("young man") anime and manga. Though Laura once said of her tastes in anime, "I'm a man at heart, okay. I like guns and

violence [laughs]," she was among many women fans who watched action anime titles that include violence.

Ben was similarly defensive about his *shoujo*-viewing as Laura was about her love of *shounen* action titles. "[*Shoujo* has] some humorous parts, and that's good enough for me. I'm really casual about it. Like, I'll watch whatever somebody else puts on. You know, enjoy whatever good parts of it are, for the most part." However, instead of being a "woman at heart," Ben positioned himself as a man exercising his agency to select portions of a *shoujo* show to enjoy in ways that prevented his complete immersion in the genre. Though male fans did report watching *shoujo* anime, they frequently talked about it in ways to distance themselves from it. Men either enjoyed only one or two *shoujo* titles and not the entire genre or reported only specific things to enjoy about *shoujo* as a genre.

Anime Fandom and Sexual Orientation

Fans of both genders often cited the presence of *bishounen*, or beautiful young male anime characters, in *shoujo* as a reason why male fans tend to only dabble in the genre or avoid it altogether. This avoidance is compounded when *bishounen* anime characters are romantically involved in homosexual relationships in a subgenre of *shoujo* called *shounen-ai* ("boy love") and in a more sexually explicit version of *shouen-ai* called *yaoi*. Although some male anime fans openly enjoy *shoujo* and even *shounen-ai* anime, widespread male ambivalence and unease, respectively, reinforce traditional masculine anxieties over feminization and homosexuality. This may partly explain why both *shounen-ai* and *yaoi* merchandise occupy a fraction of anime retail sales, but are characterized by a devoted following [Figure 5].

Figure 5: At left is a female-majority gathering at a nighttime "*yaoi* panel" at a male-majority anime convention. Sexually explicit *yaoi* anime titles featuring male-to-male anime characters having intimate relations are shown and celebrated. At right is a small solitary dealer's booth selling *yaoi*-related merchandise to overwhelmingly female customers.

Anxiety about the ambiguous closeness of same-sex characters may lead some male fans to overinterpretation, attributing sexual tensions where none exist. As part of its weekly schedule, Imagenu showed an episode of *Card Captor Sakura* in Japanese with English subtitles. In the film two of the Japanese girls about age 10 who share an affectionate and platonic friendship went to bed with one another to sleep. This was after bidding each other a heartfelt "goodnight" while dreamily looking at one another. That elicited a round of slight laughter from the males in the audience, followed by some female laughter. Then one of the male club members exclaimed, "Whoo-hoo, lesbians!" and more boisterous laughter followed from both genders. Then the next week's meeting opened with this dialogue:

"Okay, now it's time to start the anime," says Irene, then the club president.

"Woo-hoo, Japanese demon schoolgirl porn!" a college-aged male exclaims.

"Oh, and one more thing. Don't heckle during the show. You can think [the *Card Captor Sakura* characters are] totally gay, but don't yell out, okay. The girls don't think of them as being gay. They think of them as cute little friends who want to be friends," says Bob, another club officer

"No, they were really needed," says Nick.

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"No, you think I'm joking, but I'm really pissed off, Nick. It was a touching episode and it was not deserving of that. They were just trying to be friendly. Not everyone lives in the gutter," responds Bob

It is not entirely clear if by "the girls" Bob was referring to the girl anime characters in *Card Captor Sakura* or the female club members watching the series. The reaction to *Sakura* and the subsequent dialogue illustrate the perceived relationship between Japan and deviant sexuality with the outburst, "Japanese demon schoolgirl porn!" to describe anime. It also underscores a tendency in anime fandom, especially by males, to impute sexuality to close relationships among Japanese characters. Unlike my own use of sexual innuendo to heckle *MD Geist 2*, intended to denigrate the serious tone of the English dub voice acting that I believed was undeserved, these hecklers were responding with innuendo to a facet of Japanese culture that made them feel uncomfortable. The "Japanese schoolgirl demon porn" remark made by the Imagenu club member is likely a reference to the "Cartoon Devil Porn" story mentioned previously. However, that the student in the *Sakura* incident refers to it as "*Japanese* schoolgirl devil porn" reinterprets the story to focus on the nation of Japan as the manufacturer of deviant pornography.

Bob's reaction in the *Sakura* incident indicates the Imagenu officers' intent to use anime shown in the club to address perceived shortcomings in fans' knowledge and capacities for cultural appreciation. This includes fans' abilities to understand close relationships among Japanese characters in an "authentic" way as perceived by the officers, exemplified by Bob's counterpoint, "They were just trying to be friendly. Not everyone lives in the gutter." It also demonstrates that this pedagogy is reciprocal: people are teaching and learning from one another. The officers acknowledged that fans make contrary meanings, and those with different pedagogical purposes in mind challenged the officers. For Nick, this meant reinforcing North American fans' use of sexual orientation as a mechanism for making sense of close Japanese friendships and introducing the additional purpose of comedic enjoyment.

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Although some female anime fans also expressed anxiety over the issue of homosexuality in anime, they were more accepting of unfamiliar platonic relationships. At issue is other fans' acceptance of overtly homosexual anime characters and relationships, particularly between male characters in *shounen-ai*. This conflict involved not only female fans attempting to convince reluctant males to be more tolerant, but other females as well. Below is a Labovian (1972) presentation of a narrative that Kristin related in her interview on how she was introduced to the *shounen-ai* series *Gravitation* [Figure 6], an anime about a love affair between a rock band singer and a romance novelist (see complete transcript in Appendix B). The series remains well known in fandom almost 10 years after its initial release and is still used as a "gateway" anime for introducing fans to the *shounen-ai* genre.

> *Abstract*: This is a discussion of watching *Gravitation*
> *Orientation*: Fiona introduces *Gravitation* to Kristin by watching it with her.
> *Complication 1*: They cannot make any snide comments because only two people being there makes Kristin afraid to do so, compared to how she feels in a larger group.
> *Resolution 1*: They simply joke back and forth.
> *Complication 2*: Kristin suggests that the characters have sex by the 5th episode. Fiona says that it is the 3rd episode.
> *Resolution 2*: They laugh very hard.
> *Complication 3*: Kristin doesn't want to spoil the series for me [the researcher] by giving away much more information.
> *Resolution 3*: She justifies sharing the information with me by noting that it is only a 13-episode show.
> *Evaluation 1*: It is very funny, giggly, bouncy, and hyper, despite it being only a 13-episode show.
> *Complication 4*: Many people do not like *shounen-ai* (i.e., anime featuring beautiful young males).
> *Evaluation 2:* People who normally do not prefer *shounen-ai* could like *Gravitation* because it is not something that Kristin does not make clear.
> *Evaluation 3:* Gravitation has both down moments and wacky moments, such as a 33-year-old male carrying around a stuffed pink bunny.
> *Coda*: Ah, it's great [chuckles].

Figure 6: Protagonists Eiri Yuki (left) and Shuichi Shindou from the *shounen-ai* manga and anime series *Gravitation*, directed by Bob Shirohata.

Conflicts arose over proper fan etiquette (Comp. 1), the sexual readiness of anime characters (Comp. 2), the potential for "ruining" a series for the uninitiated listener (Comp. 3), and *shounen-ai*'s potential detractors (Comp. 4). The resolution to these conflicts, however, entailed joking (Res. 1), laughter (Res. 2), appealing to the uninitiated listener's assumed expectations of a 13-episode show (Res. 3), and describing why *Gravitation* should win over critics (Eval. 2 & 3). The narrative therefore served plural functions of resolving problems (i.e., convincing *Gravitation* detractors) and reaffirming the expectations that fans have of common fan behavior and knowledge (i.e., knowing when not to make snide comments, when *shounen-ai* characters have sex, that not all anime fans like *shounen*-ai, and what sequence to expect from a 13-episode anime series). For Kristin, conflicts with anime fans over *Gravitation* should be handled with laughter, good cheer, appealing to shared understandings of fan knowledge about anime as a medium, and remaining optimistic that others who ordinarily avoid *shounen-ai* anime may change their minds. Other fans like Diana were less optimistic, alleging that male anime fans

> gripe about…the fact that all the male characters that the girls swoon over basically are quite effeminate and delicate-looking and they have beautiful long, flowing hair, and they say they're basically girls trapped in guys' bodies that look like girls [laughs]. Even

though the girls will emphatically deny it, citing, that, well, they have broad shoulders and muscular chests, and they don't have boobs, and they act like guys.

Fandom controversy over *shounen-ai* also involves cases where fans suggest a sexual relationship between male characters that is not part of an anime title's text. Unlike the sexual innuendo made in the *Sakura* incident, the implied sexuality between male characters arises from *shounen-ai* fans wishing for or sincerely hypothesizing about a relationship off-screen. This is regularly expressed in fan fiction, particularly online venues such as FanFiction.net where amateur authors contribute derivative stories about preexisting fictional characters and receive feedback from other authors. As in the *Sakura* incident, experienced fans who consider themselves to be fulfilling a pedagogical role in fandom often discount the sexualization as running counter to the anime producers' original intentions. Laura, a former club president of Kine Outmake who counts herself as a fan of sexually explicit male-to-male anime titles, discussed the issue when bringing up a favorite non-*shounen-ai* anime series, *Gundam Wing*.

> [Gundam Wing] tends to have a female following 'cause there's five main characters. They're all male, and they're all very effeminate, and they're all very, in the fandom they tend to be portrayed as homosexual even though they're not really portrayed as homosexual in the show. Although some rabid fangirls will argue with me, but they're not portrayed as homosexual in the show.

The "fangirl," and her counterpart the "fanboy," are labels closely related to the negative connotation of *otaku* as an obsessive fan discussed earlier, but the usage also refers to fans' sexual desire. Iseul used the term in a self-deprecating manner when he discussed a situation where he and his friends were commenting on the attractiveness of Tessa Testarossa from *Full Metal Panic*. "Once again [we're] proving exactly how pathetic some of us fanboys are [laughs]." Experienced fans often constructed the fangirl as sexually obsessed too. However, the fangirl's obsession is allegedly based on a sexuality – either in relationships or desires – that is not textually present within and between the characters. Both the fangirl and fanboy are

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discredited by experienced fans as obsessive and irrational. Nevertheless, because the fangirl's obsession is based on conjecture and subtext, her experience is regarded as less authentic than the fanboy's preoccupation with on-screen sexuality.

That *shoujo* anime titles marketed toward females attract a gender-specific following that includes few male fans is of little surprise. Using sexual innuendos to make sense of culturally unfamiliar practices through references to Japanese culture can connect gender and sexuality to race and nationalism. These categories substantially intersect with each other. Fans who suggest that characters have non-heteronormative relationships do not use Japanese culture to explain why this type of relationship should exist. That is, when same-sex relationships in anime are desired and argued for rather than mocked, Japanese culture is seldom invoked to support those desires and arguments. It may be that *shounen-ai* fans do not think of Japanese culture as sexually liberating in terms of acceptance of non-heterosexuality, and therefore do not use Japanese culture to support their arguments for non-heteronormative relationships in anime. Another possible explanation is that fans have used Japanese culture as an explanation for and to distance their non-Japanese selves from sexual elements in anime that they do not want to associate with themselves. If *shounen-ai* fans are not trying to distance themselves from non-heterosexual sex in anime, then they may feel that using Japanese culture to explain or justify their desires isn't necessary.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

Anime fans often have a wealth of experiences with animation before entering into anime fandom. They usually become anime fans because they find anime to be visually pleasing and characterized by long and complex narrative arcs and in-depth character development. Language

is a critical issue in fandom in terms of fans gaining a vocabulary, whether characters speak in English or Japanese, and what terms are used to describe types of fans.

Most fans consider themselves to belong to a distinct and authentic subculture. Fans characterize anime fandom as rational, non-obsessive, and knowledgeable about Japanese culture. Fans resist most North American media institutions by countering them with the promotion of Japanese animation as what North American programming, especially animation, should aspire to be more like. However, another of the ways that fans attain distinctiveness is by using Japanese culture to simultaneously explain and distance themselves from elements of sexuality and violence in anime that threaten their rational and non-obsessive self-image. This is despite most fans' stated opinion that anime is not an accurate representation of Japanese culture. Moreover, "fanboys" and "fangirls" are fandom constructions that label fans that do not practice this type of critical distance. The fangirl is especially prone to marginalization since her alleged obsession is based on conjecture and subtext about non-heteronormative relationships in anime.

In Chapter 5, I analyze the data in terms of what it means to learn in fandom, what anime and Japanese culture mean to fans, and understanding gendered and sexual hierarchies in fandom.

CHAPTER 5

THE MEANINGS OF ANIME FANDOM

I now summarize what I learned from the data collection discussed in Chapter 4 and

analyze them through the prism of the literature discussed in Chapter 2. Like the data findings,

the data analysis is oriented by the content of the research question posed. Though themes from

different research questions overlap, the differences in the questions focus and differentiate my

analysis.

What It Means to Learn Fandom

The first research question I posed was this: "How do North American fans of Japanese

animation learn to become anime fans, and what do they learn in this process?" The data

addressing the issue of learning to be an anime fan include the following:

1) fans' prefandom experiences with animation
2) initial fan experiences in fandom
3) fans' acquisition and use of key anime-related terms
4) the meaning and position of *otaku*
5) the subtitling vs. dubbing debate and authenticity
6) fan mockery of anime
7) official pedagogical intentions of anime clubs vs. fan actions
8) the self-conscious relationship between anime clubs as part of a "geek" subculture and the wider social world
9) pedagogy and oppositional subcultural consciousness

That most North American anime fans grew up watching domestic animation and other

media and make it a point to contrast them to anime speaks to the importance of these early

experiences. Anime allows fans to inhabit a new cultural position that underpins fans' "horizons

of action" discussed in Chapter 2 for new identities and experiences (Hodkinson, 1996). Fans'

early impressions of what animation is or is not supposed to be contrasts with their memorable first experiences of what anime is. This necessitates a system of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in anime fandom as an informal pedagogical enterprise to help fans make sense of this contrast in animation content. For fans to understand and interpret the contrast between anime and North American animation they need a vocabulary and an authentic subcultural location from which to make interpretations. An exception to this pattern is Iseul, who had watched anime and knew that it was Japanese animation during his childhood in the Republic of Korea. He had no North American animation to contrast it to at the time, but compared it rather to specifically Korean media programming. However, participating in anime fandom in the U.S. expanded Iseul's horizons of action from another position. His learning the meanings North American fans ascribed to anime was necessary for his fandom participation.

In expanding their horizons of action, novice fans encounter multiple examples of hybridity, or cultural conjunctions, permeating anime fandom. English subtitles are digitally grafted onto Japanese-language and Japanese-produced anime. Anglophone fans use Japanese terms to describe both Japanese and North American people and behaviors. Anime clubs mix frivolity and innuendo about anime with serious appreciation of anime to achieve a hybrid mission of entertainment and education. Appadurai (1996) positions a desire for traditional family and community life as the locus of a desired stable social identity and network in response to the disruptions of hybridity: people seek the familiar to adjust to strange. Anime fans also desire social stability, and its pedagogy confronts hybridity's challenges to stability, but not in ways that directly reaffirm the stability of family and community traditionalism.

Rather, taking into account the conflicts that surround this hybridity is a pedagogical program with a different kind of stability that anime fans are expected to learn and uphold. This

is indicated by the anxiety and hostility surrounding how Anglophone fans use Japanese terms inappropriately, including the identity marker of the intelligent-obsessive *otaku*. Fans' preferences for subtitled or dubbed anime calls into question their authenticity as fans. That is, do those subtitle or "dubbie" fans enjoy anime as "originally intended" by the Japanese producers? This is despite the fact that Japanese producers did not likely intend for their anime titles to be hybridized – either as a Japanese anime cast speaking English or as a Japanese-speaking anime cast being interpreted with English subtitles. For anime club officers and some experienced fans, a prolonged focus on fan entertainment through vocal mockery threatens the clubs' other differing purpose, that of cultural education. The opposite is true for mockery-making fans whose participatory enjoyment of anime is threatened by a focus on the passive and uncritical osmosis of the anime text.

Anime fandom's capacity to achieve a stable and authentic social identity and network is contingent on how fans learn and reinforce fandom conceptions of being knowledgeable and rational and of exercising critical distance within its characteristic hybridity. If this pedagogy makes fandom an authentic subcultural place and produces an authentic means of navigation within hybridity from the position of that authentic fandom place, then that pedagogy can be claimed to be successful. In other words, Appadurai's (1996) circulating images that create states of hybridity in fandom (e.g., Japanese and English language used in anime and Japanese terms used in North American fandom) are not a threat to fandom stability. Neither does the hybrid mission of two often-conflicting objectives – cultural education and entertainment in anime clubs – necessarily lead to instability. Rather, the threat comes from fans' inability to "successfully" enact this hybridity through navigation. Successful navigation moves fans toward Japanese cultural understanding and away from mimicry, toward sexual freedom and away from

perversion, toward individualism and away from collectivism, and toward intellectualized passion and away from obsessiveness. Although fans' horizons of action and their capacities for cultural critique of North American society expand, those horizons are still limited by fandom's self-conception of a subcultural position within the broader North America society. Fans inhabiting an assumed rational and knowledgeable fandom location are trying to avoid, but are not clearly defining cultural mimicry, perversion, collectivism, and obsessiveness and their counterparts.

Even those who make up the subaltern, or the bottom of the social hierarchy, in anime fandom under this ideology—the "obsessed *otaku*," the "*yaoi* fangirl," and the lovelorn "pathetic fanboy"—tend to make self-effacing comments about how their own fan actions do not comply with most advanced fans' model of fandom. Although these self-derogations are often made in jest, they are also made in the absence of a systematic counter-ideology that might focus more on the experiential, emotional, and pleasurable facets of anime viewing for their own sakes. Instead, these self-descriptors can be read as a capitulation to this prevailing understanding of what anime fandom is supposed to be. This understanding is reinforced to some extent by influential advanced fans who become anime club officers and convention organizers. Pedagogical success means that fans reify fandom as a knowledgeable, rational, and non-obsessive subculture for connoisseurs of Japanese popular culture in which to situate their identities as fans who can authentically appreciate anime. While Imagenu's officer corps and advanced rank-and-file fans embodied this attitude to a greater degree than Kine Outmake, the latter's membership tried to avoid disruptions at meetings that could interfere with this goal.

Subcultures traditionally "sell out" when their aesthetic components become widely popular and overly commercialized, especially subcultures based in music (Hebdige, 1979).

However, the oft-stated point of fansubbing in the media subculture of anime fandom is to have anime titles licensed for commercial distribution and wider popularity in North America. Clubs such as Imagenu and Kine Outmake want to recruit as many new members as possible. Failure for anime fandom is not commercialization and popularity *per se*. Nevertheless, North American anime companies may be perceived as corrupting anime's authenticity through the hybridizing processes of translation and editing to ensure the products are successful in the mainstream marketplace. Moreover, if fans watch anime only through Cartoon Network without participating in fandom pedagogy, that isolated viewing may threaten fandom's sense of control over the interpretation of anime. In other words, the key sign for successful authenticity – being culturally different from a perceived mainstream – is still relevant despite anime fandom's desire for the art form to have wider mainstream exposure. Therefore, an additional goal for anime fandom's pedagogy is to create and continue an authentic subcultural space from which North American mainstream media can be reviewed and criticized.

The context of North American mainstream media—with its economic and cultural power—is omnipresent in anime fandom, hanging above this authentic subcultural place like some impending threat. If creolization describes how a "mediating middle" combines intersecting macrosocial forces and local needs (Napier, 2003), then wider anime fandom can be thought of as this mediator. Creolization occurs when fans make sense of Japanese anime to meet the local need for authenticity in its contrast to, and within the context of, North American media. Again, this occurs from the position of a rational and knowledgeable fandom from which fans respond to North American media's overarching content and presence.

The enjoyment of anime is of course a prerequisite for being an anime fan. However, fans who are involved in fandom are expected to learn how to appreciate anime beyond simple

enjoyment and within the hybridized social phenomena pervading anime fandom. This

necessitates learning and upholding a set of aesthetic and behavioral expectations that continue

fandom's assumed legitimacy to make cultural judgments, including critique of both North

American media and anime. In the next section I elaborate on ideas fans have about fandom as

they pertain to fans' interaction with Japanese culture.

What Anime and Japanese Culture Mean to Fans

The second research question I posed is "How do North American fans of anime create,

sustain, and change meanings associated with anime and Japan within anime fandom?" The data

addressing the nature of anime fandom include these areas:

1) the importance fans place on anime character development
2) the perceived innovativeness of Japanese modes of animation and storytelling compared
3) to modes used in North American media
4) fans' use of literary rather than Japanese cultural explanations to interpret inconsistencies,
5) improbabilities, and complexities in a specific anime plotline
6) fans' use of Japanese cultural explanations to interpret sexuality and violence in anime
7) fans' qualified beliefs that anime fandom is a more sexually relaxed venue than the
   environment of the outside society

When most fans watch an anime movie or series, they are—with very few exceptions—

watching the development of one or several Japanese characters. These characters have Japanese

names, often live in Japan, and speak Japanese in the case of subtitled anime. They create and

resolve conflicts, experience pain, act courageously, fret over responsibility, challenge or accept

the social order, and come to a different understanding of the self over time. They love, cry,

worry, laugh, and envy, and oftentimes they die. In contrast to the limited and stereotyped

exposure of Japanese and other Asian characters in North American animation (Klein &

Shiffman, 2006), Japanese anime characters experience a multitude of human roles and

experiences. However, this raises a question: Are North American anime fans appreciating

Japanese characters' individual development, or are they appreciating the development of anime

characters who just happen to be Japanese? That is, how do fans' recognition and appreciation of

Japanese anime characters and their personal development affect their conceptions of Japanese

culture and people beyond anime?

Anime fans are quick to point out the superiority of the artistry and narrative complexity

of Japanese animation in comparison to its North American counterpart. In contrast, fans often

take offense to North American editorial changes in anime, such as substituting an ice cream

cone for an *onigiri* (rice ball) in a character's hand. Another offending practice occurs when an

importer changes the dialogue so that an anime character refers to U.S. rather than the Japanese

celebrities named in the original Japanese production. As mentioned previously, these sorts of

changes diminish the perception of anime as an authentically Japanese cultural product. That

anime is "authentically Japanese" matters to fans, as it allows fans to directly experience

authentic character development and develop emotional connections to those characters.

However, I rarely heard any fans, whether in interviews or participant observation,

discussing Japanese anime characters as being specifically Japanese when the subject of

character development came up. One exception was Kimmel, who explained that the character of

Godai from *Maison Ikkoku* could not outright propose to his girlfriend Kyoko because of a

Japanese cultural emphasis on indirectness during delicate situations. Unlike most fans, however,

Kimmel had lived in Japan for a period of several months and kept in regular contact with close

Japanese friends. Other fans did relate anime to Japanese culture when comparing anime to

North American media, when referring to the medium's style and narrative conventions, and, as

discussed in Chapter 4, when explaining discomforting issues of sex and violence in anime. A

comparison to Lutz and Collins's (1993) study on the *National Geographic* mentioned in

Chapter 1 suggests elaborating how anime fandom conceives of Japanese culture. Lutz and

Collins (1993) conclude that the *National Geographic* positions nonwhite people for

consumption by middle class European American readers for titillation, exoticism, and reifying

notions of western industrial progress. However, the same study also concludes that Japanese

people were most often portrayed in the *National Geographic* as an industrialized and aesthetic

people, or "civilized aliens" in contrast to nonwhite, non-Japanese Asians. Still, Japanese people

and culture continue to be considered alien in North American society, no matter how "civilized"

they are conceived as being.

However, the *National Geographic* and even fictional Hollywood portrayals of Japanese

villains like *Rising Sun* rarely portray individual Japanese people undergoing changes to their

lives and personalities over time. For anime fans, the "alienness" of Japanese anime characters

would ordinarily make it impossible to relate to them emotionally. Also, no matter how

inconsistent, improbable, and complex—in a word, alienating—an anime plotline is, it has to be

understood in terms that allow an anime fan to connect with the story that surrounds the

characters. For this connection to be possible, the Japaneseness of the specific anime characters

and title in question falls away. Fans use the Japaneseness of anime as a medium to give

themselves terms for anime's description, explanation, promotion, and comparison, but not for

personal connectedness. This may indicate that anime fans still consider Japaneseness to be alien

in terms of individual Japanese people. Instead, they could be relating more to Japanese media

institutions and Japanese aesthetics, partly in genuine attachment but also in reaction to their

alienation from most North American animation.

I return to cultural theorist Eric Lott's (1993) comment cited in Chapter 2, p. 44 to

elaborate on fans' referring to Japanese culture to explain sex and violence in anime. That is,

culturally dominant groups hate their own pleasurable excesses, conceive of marginalized Others

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as embodying those excesses, and indulge in the culture of Others as a way of enjoying and removing themselves from those excesses at the same time. If Hollywood film portrayals of Asians discussed in Chapter 2 are any indication, most U.S. moviegoers subscribe to traditional societal conceptions of the Other as the basis for their hatred, pleasure, and disavow of it. For all of their reluctance to conceive of their favorite anime characters as specifically Japanese, anime fans do conceive of their fandom as having a special relationship to Japanese culture that nonfans lack. Despite the fact that academic knowledge about Japan is not a prerequisite for fandom participation, fans in both clubs were more willing than non-fans to take Japanese language courses, read about Japanese culture, and visit, study, and work in Japan. As was discussed in Chapter 4, a considerable number of fans in both clubs were Japanese language majors and had or expected to live abroad in Japan at some point in the future. If they themselves neither studied Japanese language and culture nor travelled to Japan, then they were more likely to be friends with someone who did than non-fans on the same campus. Fandom as a whole views this as a distinguishing characteristic of a subculture that is cultured, knowledgeable, and humane.. Therefore, anime fandom's distance—from the point of view of fans—from the Japanese Other is lessened.

At the same time, anime fandom keeps a distance between itself and wider North American cultural mores on sexuality and nudity in media. As discussed in Chapter 4, some fans had reconsidered their own stances on the issues of sex and nudity that were prevalent in many anime titles. Many fans are critical of North American media strictures on content such as sexuality and violence, which they believe inhibits narrative depth and ignores viewers' maturity. When a subculture like anime fandom positions itself closer to the Other and away from

traditional definitions of "excess" (e.g., sexuality and violence), then there is probably less of a

need to attribute excesses to the Other as referenced in Eric Lott's (1993) observation.

However, anime fans view excesses as just that – *excesses* when their self-perception as

rational, individualistic, and discerning are threatened. When sexuality in anime is considered to

interfere with the plot and character development, or when it involves prepubescent characters,

and when violence offends the sanctity of the individual, then fans are more likely to explain the

patterns by referring to Japanese culture. Those explanations oftentimes incorporate older and

stereotypical notions of Japanese and Asians as being sexually perverted, brutal, and

unconcerned with the individual in favor of slavish groupthink. Eurocentrism reifies assumed

faculties of reason in which non-Europeans such as Japanese people are deficient. Fans

sometimes assume Eurocentrism to defend their own rationality. When fans do not perceive a

threat to their rationality, then they tend to put the onus on North American culture to be more

accepting and open to sexuality and violence in domestic animation. They will argue that

Japanese anime successfully uses sexuality and violence to create compelling visual narratives.

My intention is not to label anime fandom as a band of hypocrites, which would be

inaccurate. Fans' disjuncture between considering anime as Japanese and not considering anime

characters as Japanese makes fans likely to search for explanations for perceived excesses in

those characters. Fans that view anime characters as fictional Japanese people, rather than

fictional any people, may be less likely to use cultural stereotypes to explain sexuality and

violence in anime. What may prevent this kind of anti-stereotyping is ironically a position that

fans use to avoid stereotypes about Japanese culture in the first place. That is, experienced fans

emphasize that anime and Japanese culture are not exactly synonymous because anime includes

fantastical and chaotic elements that are not present in daily Japanese life. This position is true

and shows that fans avoid relying solely on anime for their information about Japanese culture. However, making a hard division between anime and Japanese culture may lead fans to not recognize the Japaneseness of a well-loved and developing character. More personal exposure to Japanese culture similar to what Kimmel experienced may be one way for fans to relate to anime characters as fictional Japanese people. Fans would then presumably be less concerned that they might confuse fantastical, absurdist, or otherwise fictional elements in anime with Japanese culture.

Understanding Gendered and Sexual Hierarchies in Anime Fandom

The third research question I asked was this: "How do North American anime fans negotiate traditional sites of sociocultural consensus and conflict found in U.S. social hierarchies?" The data addressing the question discussed in Chapter 4 includes these patterns:

1) male fans' occasional acceptance of *shoujo* and *shounen-ai* anime
2) fans' use of homosexual innuendo to make sense of close same-sex relationships in anime
3) fans of *shounen-ai* anime discussing their minority status in fandom
4) a discussion of the "fangirl" stereotype
5) the lack of Japanese cultural explanations for homosexual relationships in *shounen-ai*

Many male fans view some *shoujo* anime, and they are familiar with popular *shoujo* titles that are part of the unofficial anime canon, such as *Fushigi Yuugi* and *Sailor Moon*. However, the relative lack of anime directed to girls and women in anime fandom may make less popular titles in the genre seem even more alien and threatening to male fans' masculinity. Also, the stigma among nonfans that anime is mostly misogynistic pornography (Pointon, 1997) may have its counterpart here. Many male anime fans may shy away from *shounen-ai* with the expectation that it features only homosexual sex for women's enjoyment. Male fans most frequently referred to homosexual sex between male anime characters when the topic of *shounen-ai* came up in conversation in my participant observation.

The previous section discussed fans' criticism of perceived misuses of and excesses in sexuality and violence in anime. However, I also observed fans making sexual insinuations about unfamiliar nonsexual relationships in anime, such as close platonic same-gender friendships. Sometimes officers like Brock would try to counter such commentary because it ran counter to their conceptions of what these close relationships authentically were in Japanese culture; if not an expression of friendship, then they were at least nonsexual. Close platonic relationships in anime are not an "excess" of the Other (Lott, 1993: 482) to be indulged in and disavowed, so why is there a need for fans to attribute sexual excess to them?

I argue that this type of sexual innuendo arises from anxiety about the nature of a close same-sex relationship that might ordinarily be read as sexual in the U.S., but carries no overt sexual overtones. On the one hand, innuendo may be an ironic response to nonfan perceptions that anime is, as one person in Imagenu's lore put it, "cartoon devil porn." That is, what might be, but is not sexual becomes ironically sexual as a way of making fun of the nonfan perception that everything in anime is sexual. On the other hand, the innuendo may borrow from stereotypes of Asians as more sexually perverse, or at least non-heteronormative, as a way of making sense of confusingly close same-sex relationships. Fans rarely express explicit homophobia and are often admonished by other fans when they do. Still, the frequency of homosexual innuendo suggests that many fans think that homosexuality is in some way present in a variety of anime titles in the absence of an alternate cultural means of explanation. Other fans who do not necessarily perceive this, such as Bob the Imagenu club officer mentioned in Chapter 4, had never offered a detailed counter-explanation that drew upon indigenous Japanese understandings in my presence.

Fans of *shounen-ai* are overwhelmingly female and occupy a subordinate position in fandom, both in numbers and in status. Unlike aspects of other genres that have wide appeal to both male and female fans, *shounen-ai* has an almost exclusive appeal to women, and only some female anime fans are *shounen-ai* fans. Besides the incidence of their relatively small numbers, fans of *shounen-ai* are often dismissed by other fans as "fangirls" who read sexual relationships in male-to-male relationships in all anime. They are never called "fan women," likely because the appellation of "girl" connotes childishness, faddishness, and a lack of sophistication to understand and interpret anime appropriately. Those who read homosexuality into anime as innuendos to calm their anxieties and gain laughter are not themselves labeled. Although the innuendo-maker stokes and affirms fandom anxieties about uncertain same-sex relationships in anime, the fangirl dismisses those anxieties altogether. The fangirl does not have the privilege of humor to reify gendered boundaries, but rather the burden of sincerity to resist them.

Like those who personally connect with anime characters, fans of *shounen-ai* rarely mention the Japaneseness of the same-sex characters, whether they are romantically involved in the anime text or subtext. Fans of *shounen-ai* and its more explicit counterpart *yaoi* do discuss whether or not Japanese society as a whole is tolerant of homosexuality. However, when discussing homosexual couples like Shuichi Shindou and Eiri Yuki from *Gravitation*, these fans rarely describe the characters' love for each other as a Japanese type of love. Fans may take care to avoid reading into Japanese culture the "funny, giggly, bouncy, and hyper" as Kristin described *Gravitation*. Still, what that love might say about Japanese culture may be ignored.

Conclusion

Athough fans in fandom have different tastes in and motivations for enjoying Japanese animation, wide-ranging social similarities occur across fandom. These include the nature of

fandom pedagogy, the agency of fandom within states of hybridity, and the praise of anime as a specifically Japanese art form worthy of adoration. Fandom can be considered and is considered by fans to be a subcultural location from where fans can appreciate different means of creating visual narratives. Where the Japanese Other might be objectified into alienation and suspicion in daily U.S. life, U.S. anime fandom celebrates Japanese modes of storytelling and characterization. In a sense, anime fandom allows fans to expand their "horizons of action" (Hodkinson, 1996) for new identities as fans of foreign media and experiences as subcultural participants. Anime fandom offers tools for media analysis and critique, and a starting point for fans to study and experience Japanese culture more broadly, deeply, and personally.

However, anime fans rarely engage in reflection on the role of their group as an explicitly rational, knowledgeable, and critical subculture. In its drive to be respected as cultural connoisseurs rather than dismissed as "fanboys," male-dominated fandom may have unwittingly created and reaffirmed its subaltern and the Other, respectively. In the last chapter, I discuss my findings about anime fandom for projected areas of future research and for fandom's strengths and weaknesses that provide lessons for all, and particularly media, educators.

CHAPTER 6

IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH ON ANIME FANDOM

I conclude this report with implications for educators as well as for anime fandom researchers and educational researchers. I believe that these findings and analyses can inform educators and researchers as part of an ongoing process of our learning from and interacting with anime fandom.

Educating for Productive Leisure in the Age of Media Convergence

North Americans have traditionally associated formal schooling with acquiring isolated bits of knowledge necessary to assume wage employment in adult life. However, improved productivity in the workplace and the home has increased leisure time for the U.S. workforce over the past few decades. Between 1965 and 2003, leisure for men increased 6-8 hours per week and for women 4-8 hours per week (Aguiar & Hurst, 2006). This trend shows little sign of abating. Educationalists David C. Berliner and Bruce J. Biddle (1995) view this phenomenon as an opportunity for schools to shift some of their focus to educating students in the productive use of increased leisure time. Their list of suggested productive leisure activities includes "various kinds of community service; hobbies; sports; music; enjoying and performing the arts; reading philosophy or history; travel; studying comparative religions; and so forth" (Berliner & Biddle, 1995: 316).

Berliner and Biddle omit television and film likely because of these mediums' reputation for encouraging passivity, consumerism, and the unquestioning acceptance of dominant values. Anime fandom anchors itself in the admiration of television and film media, yet its opposition to

dominant North American media and the perceived values it embodies is widespread. Moreover, fans must go beyond simply watching anime to participate in fandom, and this requires acquiring knowledge and interpretive skills via fandom pedagogy. Most television and film viewers do not belong to an organized subculture devoted to their favorite programs and movies. Still, the capacity exists for television and film to serve as the basis for leisure activities that encourage participants to engage in critical thought, cultural learning, and active social participation.

Most teachers have been and should be mindful of some of the harmful effects associated with excessive television viewing for students. Despite this, dismissing all entertainment television viewing as unproductive may be counterproductive if student viewing enriches intellectual, social, and affective experiences. This possibility is especially relevant at a time when more North American cable and satellite television channels offer programming for a non-Anglophone audience. Examples include Telemundo and Univision for Spanish-speaking audiences, STAR for Mandarin speakers, and Zee TV that broadcasts in Hindi and English. Besides encouraging the learning of other languages, non-English entertainment programming can inform students of cultural similarities and differences in other regions' approaches to identity, values, and social relationships. These and similar channels' programming can complement more formal instruction on foreign languages and world cultures. The reverse direction of formal instruction complementing television can also contribute to encouraging students to watch and appreciate non-Anglophone programming long after their postsecondary years.

The example of anime fandom can also direct educators to consider the social dimension of media participation as an area of productive leisure. Increasingly media companies are using the process of convergence, or relying on different communications technologies to send and

market media content to consumers (Jenkins, 2006). Subcultures such as anime fandom have used projectors, televisions, computers, newsletters, and later the Internet to disseminate and comment on anime titles for years. However, the mass media's more recent convergence approach is also more reliant on viewer participation than ever before. For example, *The Matrix* franchise produced by the Wachowski Brothers consists not only of the three famous theatrical releases between 1999 and 2003. Pieces of the overall story not found in the movies are available in electronic console games, comics, animation titles, and a massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) that connects players across the world through graphics and text. Media conglomerates have noted the increased profitability of convergence by using different electronic devices that many North American consumers typically own (e.g., high definition televisions, video game consoles, computers, and cell phones) to provide a more immersive media experience.

However more participatory and interactive convergence technologies and marketing allow media consumers to become, this commercial infrastructure is comparably less decentralized than that found in anime fandom. That a convergence model is commercially directed as opposed to fan directed may discourage a fan pedagogy that relies on criticism and engagement beyond the expectations of media companies. There is also a risk that companies may prohibit fan-generated content if it is seen as a violation of the producers' creative intentions or of the firm's intellectual property rights. Educators should be mindful of these restrictions and make their students aware of them as part of an overall discussion of what constitutes critical participation in a media fandom.

Although the convergence model is a change from the previous pattern of individual television viewing isolated from much social contact, it still lacks the immediate social context

of sense-making that anime clubs provide. Educators could point out this advantage and disadvantage of different methods of fandom participation. This would make students aware of the differences between media fandom participation in an online participation model vs. a friend-to-friend or club model. Not being in personal contact with other fans has the advantage of allowing online fans to obtain additional material on the social and thematic context in which their shows are produced to expand the conversation into thoughtful directions. The disadvantage of online participation is that the communal experience of watching programming and making sense of it at the moment that significant moments occur is lost.

This pedagogy need not stop at encouraging students to consume and reflect on non-North American entertainment media as a means of cultural appreciation. Teachers in subjects such as English, social studies, and science could show some anime titles to introduce relevant topics, as anime fandom interaction may neglect to elaborate on some areas. English teachers could use anime as a way of introducing the field of cultural studies and its basic methods of analysis and criticism to students. Teachers in social studies might feature anime titles that demonstrate some aspects of Japanese culture and social criticism in a visually appealing yet realistic context. Science teachers could conceivably show science fiction or war titles in anime to begin a discussion about the social implications of scientific concepts.

One example for science teachers could include the effects of warfare and weapons of mass destruction that anime films such as *Barefoot Gen* and *Grave of the Fireflies* realistically depict. Hayao Miyazaki addresses current global environmental problems by a number of anime films including *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* and *Princess Mononoke*. Miyazaki also criticizes the current era of overconsumption by developing societies such as Japan in *Spirited Away*, and other filmmakers do the same in franchises such as *Galaxy Express 999* and anime

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series such as *Ergo Proxy*. Besides engaging nonfans in the intellectual challenges of some anime, teachers' use of anime in this way could encourage more anime fans to consider vital areas of global importance. Fans could then discuss these issues more frequently in fandom interaction.

A Challenge for Media Educators

Media education is a field of pedagogy and curriculum that encourages students to reflect how they and society consume and interpret print, broadcast, and digital media. Scholars who advocate the use of popular media in formal classrooms in most cases want students to interrogate that media in some way to understand its effects on themselves and society. Media educators should note Japanese animation's ascendancy and the likely involvement of some of their students developing interest in this cross-cultural phenomenon.

The literature on media education tends to ignore students who watch television from another country because scholars assume that students' television viewing habits reflect their own ethnic or racial group (Berk, 2002; Howard-Hamilton, 2004). Media education scholars differ in their emphases, some stressing the pervasive roles of media in forming students' consciousnesses (Hepburn, 1998) and others considering the unpredictable ways that students attach meanings to media texts (Bragg, 2001). As this study has indicated, anime fans may rely on predominant racial and national ideologies to make sense of Japanese animation when sexuality and violence are involved. Nevertheless, they are often more likely to examine and reinterpret such ideologies via humor, social commentary, or otherwise speaking to their respective fandom, given most fans' initial active engagement with specialized media.

A similarity exists between the culturally relevant texts that racially marginalized students choose for themselves and those the school makes irrelevant for them through pedagogy

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that discounts their identities (Duncan-Andrade, 2004). For anime fans in most U.S. schools, including Asian American fans, coverage of Asian cultures in general, let alone Japan specifically, is sporadic and superficial at best. Also, few students have access to Japanese and other Asian language courses. To respond to these deficiencies, media educators could make students aware of their own identities borne out of global power structures and relationships. Students' agencies in making sense of foreign media in addition to domestic media should be explored, be they fans or not. Schools and policymakers can make more comprehensive resources, namely cultural texts and language and cultural courses, more readily available. With these, students could take their interest in foreign media to further areas of cultural appreciation.

Educators ought to encourage students to exercise mindfulness of their own horizons of action (Hodkinson, 1996) in the construction of knowledge. Foreign media appreciation should be a legitimate goal itself and not merely a route to formal culture study. That especially applies for a medium such as anime that has been influenced by cross-cultural aesthetic and narrative sensibilities. The historical processes both anime and more traditional Japanese cultural artifacts exemplify inform one another in ways that allow students to articulate their cultural competencies in the classroom as fans or those who have some familiarity with anime. At the same time, students can be given an opportunity to more fully understand how and why they came to the understandings of Japan through anime and consider local and national notions of Japanese culture, including the origins of these ideas.

I now turn to implications that this study has for further research by those who are interested in the study of anime fandom and education.

Implications for Further Research

What people know about another culture may be easier for ethnographers to discern than the connections participants are making between themselves and another culture. This is especially true when participants expose themselves to a different culture either partially or wholly as a reaction against their home culture. How interaction with another culture's media or other cultural artifacts informs or weakens the distance someone places between themselves and that culture is uncertain. This begs the question of what motivates people to engage with cultures other than their own? Is it an interest in alternative ways of life versus dissatisfaction with their own culture – or some combination of a pull toward others and a push from own? Researchers of people who engage with the media and artifacts of other cultures should design future interviewing and participant observation methods to directly address these questions.

Most researchers would probably view a phenomenon like anime fandom as a positive development that allows more people to experience another culture from that other culture's vantage point. Though anime is made by Japanese directors and producers (and Korean laborers), the importation processes of translation, subtitling, dubbing, and marketing affects audience reception and encoding. Future research could involve collecting data at this site of anime's movement from Japan and Korea to North America. This might include the comparison of importation philosophies and methods between commercial distributors and fandom subtitling groups.

Researchers could also compare anime fandom to other subcultures that specialize in a particular type of media, whether that media is from the fans' home culture or another culture. There likely exist similarities and differences in how other subcultures do the work of pedagogy, authenticity, and categories of identity compared to anime fandom. These might include North

American subcultures that appreciate primarily North American media, such as live-action series *Heroes, Lost*, and North American animation such as *Avatar: The Last Airbender*. Other comparisons could be made between anime fandom and other media fandoms that center on other Asian entertainment, such as Cantonese kung-fu movies, Bollywood cinema, and Korean drama. Moreover, with the appearance of acclaimed Korean animation films such as *Wonderful Days* and *Aachi & Ssipak*, the time may come soon to where a sizeable and sustainable U.S. fandom for Korean animation may form and be of interest to researchers. Similar conditions may someday exist for a North American fandom for Korean comics, or *manhwa* and Chinese comics, or *manhua*.

A study on anime fandom could also be done phenomenologically in the future. Phenomenologists see conscious beliefs, social, and historical contexts as barriers to uncovering phenomena (Crotty, 1996; Ray, 1994). People's subjective interpretations about the phenomena they experience in the form of beliefs and rationalizations can serve as clues, but little more, to unravel an assumed unsubjective phenomenal reality. By laying aside these beliefs and seeing phenomena for what they are, best conceived as culturally undigested experience, researchers and nonresearchers more fully realize their own selves as social constructs. As van Manen explains the use value of phenomenology, it "does not offer us the possibility of effective theory with which we can now explain and/or control the world, but rather it offers us the possibility of plausible insights that bring us into more direct contact with the world" (1990, p. 9).

The model of traditional ethnography I have presented here is one valuable approach to studying anime fandom, but I have interests in other dimensions of the experience as well. Phenomenological research addresses fan pedagogy in ways that ethnographies normally cannot while permitting many similar theoretical assumptions as ethnography. Both are derived from the

interpretivist tradition discussed previously. However, whereas the subject-object relationship in ethnography manifests itself in interaction, phenomenologists conceptualize this relationship's nexus as human intending into phenomena made up of an essence inexplicable in human language. This is the often-quoted "things themselves," or the phenomena that humans experience before they make sense of them through socio-cognitive processes (Crotty, 1996). Edmund Husserl, a pioneer in phenomenology, proposed the process of *bracketing*, or laying aside those beliefs people had to make everyday sense of a phenomenon, to capture or catch the essence of this phenomenon (Cohen & Omery, 1994; van Manen, 1990).

Maggs (2000) asserts, "What distinguishes and separates ethnography from phenomenology is, simply, the role of the observer or researcher." This observation ignores contrasting assumptions between the two methodologies of what an entire study, not just a researcher, should accomplish. For instance, phenomenology's primary assumption about humans is that their conscious beliefs and socio-historical contexts are, if taken alone, barriers to uncovering phenomena (Crotty, 1996; Ray, 1994). Ethnography's traditional interest, however, is in thematizing those human beliefs and socio-historical contexts to create an analysis of their life-worlds rather than laying them aside to come closer to describing an unspeakable phenomenon.

As van Manen explains the use value of phenomenology, it "does not offer us the possibility of effective theory with which we can now explain and/or control the world, but rather it offers us the possibility of plausible insights that bring us into more direct contact with the world" (1990, p. 9). A study of anime fandom that uses phenomenology as a methodology could help address questions about how anime fans experience anime as phenomena. This type

of study can complement this project which has been more concerned with the meanings that fans make after experiencing anime as phenomena.

While anime fandom pedagogy emphasizes entertainment and formal classrooms usually eschew it as a purpose, similarities exist between these two institutions' pedagogies. Both anime fans and schoolteachers generally want to encourage the appreciation of different cultures, healthy skepticism towards domestic media, and closer analysis of media texts. However, the results of achieving these ends likely have a different significance for anime fans and educators. The former is more concerned that these goals' achievement bolsters the authenticity of anime fandom while the latter hopes that it will create a more informed citizenry. Studies of media education classrooms could not only inquire into the process and motivation of pedagogy as they differ from anime fandom. They could specifically ask if authenticity is an unspoken issue for media educators, and if so, what type. Such a study might also inspire anime fandom researchers to inquire into what kind of citizenship anime fandom is forming through its pedagogy.

More broadly, this study calls on educational researchers to go beyond the classroom and explore the concrete intersections between classroom and informal learning. In so doing, we can develop more comprehensive studies that take into account the multifaceted ways that students learn, including through media programming and everyday peer interaction. By going beyond teacher-to-student instruction to student-to-student instruction, these studies can inform learning programs that encourage conscientious reflection and democratic participation by students and teachers alike.

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APPENDIX A

AN EXPLANATION OF THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Below is a table that graphically illustrates which interview questions are more closely

related to specific research questions. Those questions that have a significant relationship to one

another are marked with an "X". Below is a list of both the research and interview questions.

	Research Question 1	Research Question 2	Research Question 3
Interview Question 1		X	
Interview Question 2	X	X	
Interview Question 3		X	
Interview Question 4	X	X	X
Interview Question 5	X	X	X
Interview Question 6	X	X	X
Interview Question 7	X	X	

- Research Question 1: "How do North American fans of Japanese animation (anime) learn to become anime fans, and what do they learn in this process?"
- Research Question 2: "How do North American fans of anime create, sustain, and change meanings associated with anime and Japan within anime fandom?"
- Research Question 3: "How do North American anime fans negotiate traditional sites of sociocultural consensus and conflict found in U.S. social hierarchies?"

- Interview Question 1: "Describe for me some of your favorite anime genres or shows."
- Interview Question 2: "Tell me about a time in which you watched anime with other people."
- Interview Question 3: "Tell me about a time in which you learned something about Japan from anime."
- Interview Question 4: "Tell me about a time in which you became emotionally involved with an anime."
- Interview Question 5: "How would you compare anime to what you might find in American media?"
- Interview Question 6: "Tell me about a time in which you had a disagreement with someone over an anime."
- Interview Question 7: "How would you describe the subtitling versus dubbing debate in anime fandom?"

The first question was designed to ask the participants to focus in on their experiences as anime fans by going straight to the titles they most enjoyed and likely identified with. By "genre" I meant the classification for a range of anime titles that have common characteristics as typically identified by fans. From an emic perspective, both the fan and I almost always knew what counts as an anime genre, but what they named as a genre and its associated typifications were subjected to an etic analysis. I further probed participants on what genres or shows they named, asking them to describe these in further detail. This provided a sense of what type of anime—and its associated images, narratives, and themes--and an associated (sub)fandom that participants considered worthwhile.

The second question addressed the issue of fandom interaction in what Kvale (1996) would call an "introducing question" (133) designed to elicit rich and spontaneous descriptions. The participants were encouraged to recollect an episode of anime fan-related interaction that was meaningful to them. One or more narratives they told indicated some experience that was impressionable for how they realized themselves as anime fans. With further probing, I sometimes urged a participant to clarify topics I deemed important, especially key words that a participant might mention (Kvale, 1996).

The third interview question addressed the second research question by directly asking participants what about Japanese culture they had learned from anime. Kvale (1996) cautions against asking direct questions until toward the end of the interview after participants have exhausted their more spontaneous descriptions. However, the question itself invited rich, in-depth descriptions because participants had normally not only learned a list of facts about Japan, but also offered impressions they had of Japanese culture they had gained from anime. Again,

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probing was instrumental here, especially when the participant mentioned topics imbued with their assumptions that required clarification.

The fourth question asked the participant to recall a visceral event that, like the first question, allowed them to express their attachment or, in this case, their repulsion to one or more anime titles. This addressed the phenomenological concern with cognitive activities that lead to the construction of meaning. Implicitly this interview question addressed all three research questions. The process, type, and degree of emotional involvement with an anime title the participant described indicates how that involvement was cultivated and what type(s) of pedagogy were used to do so. Because members of anime fandom regard anime as a Japanese cultural artifact, the development of emotional relationships with anime affects how anime fans conceptualize Japanese culture. This in turn affects how fans negotiate social hierarchies, not just those related to Japan and Japanese and Asian people, but also those reflecting age, gender, and sexuality, depending on the characterization and themes of the anime in question.

In the fifth question I broke from open-ended interview tradition by asking the participant to make explicit judgments rather than to describe an experience. In anime fandom, people commonly make comparisons between anime and the media of the dominant culture, usually at the expense of the latter. Hence this interview question was more organically generated from my previous observations than the preceding questions. It related to the first research question by encouraging the participants to consider how their relationship to the U.S. media might have influenced how they adopted their role as a fan of Japanese animation. It addressed the second research question by encouraging participants to elaborate on anime and, by extension, Japanese culture in direct comparison to a comparable institution, mass media. Fans making a comparison

between anime and an institution so ubiquitous and influential in their host country were very likely to also address U.S. social hierarchies that the media reflect.

The sixth question returned to a focus on the participant's firsthand experiences in social interaction. It directly related to the first research question by asking about situations involving learning to become a fan by accommodating or resisting dissent. It addressed the third research question on the assumption that disagreement over an anime title, a cultural artifact from Japan, inevitably relies on or resists prevailing sociocultural norms in fandom and the wider society. This interview question had an indirect impact on the second research question when the point of conflict mentioned was over Japanese culture. In any case, asking a question about disagreements within fandom revealed both dominant and less-accepted norms and values as a whole and how they are formed and negotiated.

Like the sixth question, the seventh question asked about disagreements, this one directly related to Japanese culture and, indirectly, the Japanese language in relation to fan identity. Because anime fandom in the U.S. is almost exclusively Anglophonic, there is little widespread comprehension of the original Japanese dialogue in anime. Therefore, current anime DVD releases offer fans a choice between characters' speech in either dubbed English-speaking voice actors or the original Japanese-speaking voice actors with subtitles (or "subs") at the bottom of the screen. Anime distributed outside of Japan without the anime companies' permission through online peer-to-peer Bittorrent networks discussed in Chapter 1 is nearly always subtitled into a non-Japanese language, and for U.S. fandom this language is almost exclusively English. A few U.S. fans can understand Japanese perfectly and do watch anime without the aid of translation, what fans colloquially call "watching it raw." However, their numbers are so miniscule that translation from Japanese in dubs or subs is almost always present in anime.

The decision to watch anime dubbed or with subtitles has been a long-running point of contention in anime fandom since at least the early 1990s when anime dubs achieved commercial success as products of Japanese culture in the United States. The seventh interview question asked fans how they make sense of this debate rather than on which side of the debate they stand. This required fans to make another judgment about fandom as they did for interview question five, which veered from the concern with experiential understanding. Like question five, the last question addressed a significant issue with strong opinions widespread in fandom that prompted my investigation. A question about the debate encouraged fans' self-reflection about their relationship with the issue of subtitling versus dubbing, as well as with fandom itself. Because most fans had encountered the issue while becoming fans, their responses provided some insight into that pedagogical process. Also, because the question was about Japanese versus English language use in anime, it prompted answers related to Japanese culture.

APPENDIX B

TWO INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Below are two interview transcripts. The first transcript is from the interview with

Kristin, a 19-year-old European American undergraduate student who was a member of

Imagenu. The second transcript is from Emile, a 22-year-old first generation Chinese American

male.

Transcript One – Kristin's Interview

[BMA/9.9.03]
R = Researcher
N = Interviewee

Note: The conditions of the interview explained in the handout were read to the interviewee
before the tape began recording. Punctuation and capitalization were added by the researcher as
part of the transcription's interpretation. The interview participant is a 19-year-old Euro-
American female college student attending the university with which the club in question is
affiliated with. She is an actively involved club member with strong friendship ties to some of
the other club members.

R   **Okay, today, or tonight we're gonna be basically talking about your experiences in anime fandom and how you learned about Japanese culture through it and all that kind of stuff. You've already read through the consent form and agreed to all of the conditions that are on it, right?**

N   Yep!

R   **Okay, great. First off, how long have you been in the fandom?**

N   Um, actually I think I got into it probably my senior year, 'cause Cartoon Network would air the late night, you know, Toonami or something where

R   **Yeah**

N   they would show Midnight Run, and I got into it watching a couple of shows on there; *Gundam 08th MS Team* and *Outlaw Star*. And, I didn't really know they were Japanese animation at the time, and didn't know what anime was. And so, I just kinda thought that the shows were really neat, and I didn't really think anything about it until I got to college, and all the sudden I ran into some people randomly who knew exactly what I was talking about, and it's like, "Yes, finally!" so, it's really crazy.

R   **Hmm. What would you count as your favorite shows or genres?**

N   I go actually back and forth between complete opposites. I love the little happy-go-lucky sugary shows, and then I like the really dark, twisted, scary kind of like. I like *X*, and I haven't seen *Evangelion* yet, but everybody tells me I'll probably like it or, you know, hate it, but it looks good from what I've seen. On the happy-type things, I love like anything Clamp, basically, as just intriguing because they're just so good. I read a lot of the manga, not so much I've seen a lot, but a lot hasn't been animated. But, I love that stuff, and it's kind of, I like here and there. I like what we showed in club last semester, pretty much. Yeah, yeah. (clicks tongue).

R   Mm, okay. All right, first off, tell me about a time in which you watched anime with other people.

N   I think one of the funny things is when I got to college and met other people who knew what I was talking about *Outlaw Star* and stuff, and they're having a get-together to watch *Escaflowne*, and they decided to marathon it, all 26 episodes, one weekend, you know, go through it all. And I think I missed the first couple of ones. I got in there and it was me, Melinda, and Tracey, and all these other people, and we're all crammed into one of these little Russell Hall dorm rooms, and there's I think one of them each up on the lofts, people on the floor, the computer chairs. And one of those little TVA's we're watching it alternating between putting in a DVD on the laptop, or putting it in tape in one of those little tiny televisions. And I had never seen anything like that. I had only seen what they've shown on Cartoon Network, and I got into this it was just, "Oh wow!" you know, "That looks so great!" And we get to the end, and it was really cool 'cause it was fun to share with everybody 'cause if you watch it by yourself, there's only so much mumbling that you can do under your breath before it's like, "Never mind, I'm not gettin' any response." (laughs) So, but with everybody else there, and it's fun to point out things, and especially when they haven't seen it before. So, they would point out little things here and there like "Okay, you know, you might wanna shh shh shh. Listen to what they're saying!" And so, it was a lot of fun. It's definitely different watching it by yourself than with people.

R   Mmm.

N   More interaction with people.

R   You were talking about point out stuff when they were trying to point out stuff. What were some of things you remember that they were trying to point out?

N   Just like certain things that the characters would do. They would be like, "Remember that?" or you know, "That'll come in handy later," and they would try to not spoil it for you, but be like, "Keep that in mind." Or they say something like that, or they just point out how cute they thought one of the characters were, or they'd grumble for me about how much they hated this person or what a horrible, horrible villain they were, and this, than and the other. It's just little things, but it was kind of fun because you could confirm and go like, "Oh yes, yes, I hate them with a passion."

R   What were some of the people that they hated with a passion? Some of the villains.

N   Ohhh, from *Escaflowne*?

R   **Yeah.**

N   Ohh. Let's see. It was hard to hate the main villain. I can't remember the one, the scientist guy. I can't remember his name ever, but no, I think it was, was it Durenkirk? Dorenkirker? I dunno, but he was a scientist, and he was the one who was basically trying to control everybody. Nobody liked him, and let's see, and Melinda was dead set on not liking one of the female characters. What was the princess, Nora, she didn't like her, she was just always like, "Uuugh, don't like them." And I think those are pretty much the only two that; the catgirl kind of annoyed them. I guess it was the fanservicey aspect.

R   **Mmm.**

N   You never know. We can put up with so much, but there's a point where your tolerance levels is just like, "Okay, no more, just stop." (chuckles)

R   **M-hm. What were some other things you were showing in Russell Hall?**

N   Umm, let's see. We watched *Gravitation* a couple of times. I think we watched *Yami no Matsui*. We watched, I can't remember, different groups would watch different things. Melinda and Tracey used to watch *Hamtaro* religiously in the mornings before they went to class, which was really fun. And, let's see, we try to get together sometimes, get a group together and watch different things. Let's see, sometimes we'd watch what was on later in the evening. Not always because we'd miss it or wouldn't catch it. I can't remember anything else. I didn't get to watch some of the shows that other people did, but

R   **Mmm.**

N   I think we watched *Full Metal Panic* in the dorm rooms one time. Um, oh, *Card Captor Sakura*. We watched a ton of that. (chuckles) I think Fiona and Jason actually watched the entire series back-to-back with all the movies. I don't know how long that took. (laughs) So, that's all I can think of. I don't remember what also we watched. Just recently they've been watching *Full Metal Pan*, they started *Full Metal Panic* again today at Mary Lyndon.

R   **I gotta ask, first or second season?**

N   Ah, first season again, because we have a couple of friends who haven't seen it yet. We do have like copies, and we're seeing parts of second season, but I haven't seen it yet. That have, I think; they have them and haven't seen them or something.

R   **Mmm.**

N   But yeah.

R   **You were talking earlier about *Escaflowne*.**

N   M-hm.

R   **Could you kind of describe *Escaflowne*; you know like what it's about, and.**

N   *Escaflowne* was, it started out with this one character, and I don't remember it all, but he cam from a certain planet, and he had wings and he was all pretty, and he was the hero and everything. And he was the main male character basically, and the main female character was Hitomi, and she was from Earth. And she had to go to, or she managed to get to his planet somehow, because the two worlds like clashed and all sorts of weird stuff. And it was fantastical, but they went back, I think his planet was Gaia, or his planet was in Gaia, the planet which was in Gaia. And it was just one thing after another, people getting in battles and they used the

big mech, the big robot, and everybody had their own one and there was the prince from this one kingdom and everybody just loved him and he had a dark secret hidden past and unknown. And there was, you know, the princess who's constantly chasing after him, and I think it was a knight, excuse me. And he was just like, "No, stop, I don't like you!" and it was just all twisted and weird and then at the end you're just sitting there going, "What? Wait, how did, oh," Well you watch the end of it and finally everything starts falling into place 'cause the evil scientist who's been controlling them, and planning their fates out. And, Hitomi has been trying to see the future the whole time, but every time she does she screws something up, and, you know, somebody gets hurt, and everybody; I don't know if everybody was, but I didn't like her, the heroine because it, "Why didn't you just stop?! Why couldn't you just leave well enough alone?!" But, I did have friends that liked her a lot. I think Fiona in particular, she like, "She was one of my favorite anime heroines, I liked her a lot." And I was like, "Nah, couldn't do it." (laughs) But, you know, and there's just plot twists all over the place. And you're thinking, you know, you think you got it down? No, no, no, you, you're wrong. It was like, "I was very confusing," but it was really. What it is is it's a cartoon, so you expect it to be light-hearted basically, but it's really weird to watch something like that, like watching animated after you've been through years of American cartoons we're you're like, "Yeah, Road Runner. Mmm." And then you watch something that actually has like depth and has storyline besides running off a cliff. So it's just like, "Whoa!" Like, "Wow! Oh dear," (smacking sound) It was different, and it was really fun. It was just, ah, I like it a lot. I guess with anime you can be a lot more over the top because you've got a lot more freedom with how you're doing it because you're animating it, you're not; you don't have to work with the confines of reality, and what you can edit with your computer and stuff like that, it's all you can put in anything you want. (chuckles) And it'll be fine 'cause; I mean don't get me wrong, they're still cartoons, you can still get away with the kind of the absurd, but at the same time, you can get away with being realistic too. So, it's great. (chuckles)

R   **Hmm. Tell me more about this Hitomi character.**

N   She was the main heroine, and she was from Earth, and she was in the planet. And, she thought, or she liked Vaughn, and she liked Allen, and she couldn't choose between them, and then the villain kept trying to, you know, mix their fates or whatever, and you know keep them from her liking one guy and liking one more, and then making sure, like, I think one of the scenes I happen to like is they made Allen the knight and her kiss, and had Vaughn walk in on it, and they like choreographed and orchestrated the whole thing! And of course Vaughn's like, "Oh, no!" and she's like, "Oh he saw!" and it was kind of over the top and it was too soap-opera-y, and she just, she did this thing where I think it's called "dousing" where she had her little necklace and she would use it to try and see the future. She used tarot cards I think too. And she would constantly try and foresee what was gonna happen next. And there was something that would happen every time that she would do that, and like someone would get hurt, or there was just; well there was a negative effect to what she was doing, but she couldn't stop herself from looking ahead, where she couldn't control it properly, and that's why

it was messing things up. And, I dunno, it just annoyed me 'cause I was like, "I think I probably would've stopped if I knew I was hurting people." She wasn't my favorite heroine, so it was just, ehh. I mean, there are other female characters in anime that I really like, so. Like, Haruka, so yeah. (chuckles)

R **Hm. Well, tell me about Haruka, what's she like?**

N That is her name, right?

R **I know who you're talking about.**

N The main character, the main female character from *Furi Kuri*.

R **Yeah.**

N She was this, she's crazy, so I had a lot of fun. She's just, she was wild. She was one of the main characters, but it focused mainly on the boy, the younger boy who's name was; I can't think off the top of my head. But the focus, and it was mainly about him, but she was all in the scenes too and she was one of the main characters. And she was just one of those characters, but when she was in a room, you knew she was there. And she was just over the top, crazy, fearless, she rode on a little Vespa and carried a guitar around, and could play the guitar and do everything and could be flirty and she'd tease people. And it was just one of those type of characters where it's like, "Yeah, I sure would like to do that," 'cause it's fun to be over the top and outgoing and crazy and wild and, you know, not caring? And that's the type of character she was. She didn't really think about the consequences, and she just went for it, and she did what she had to do, and went nuts.

R **Hmm. You were also talking about *Gravitation*.**

N M-hm.

R **What's the sort of things you all would be talking about in *Gravitation* was?**

N I think the first, 'cause Fiona got it, and so we all watched it the first time through. 'Cause I remember she came up to me one day and she was like, "Oh, I got this new show, you gotta see it. I think I've watched like the first episode," or, you know, "You'll like it." So we went over to her room and we put it on her computer 'cause she had the little CD-ROM and she has a nice computer. And we're just sitting there and watching it, and she goes, "Okay, you have to see the main character; he's so hot!" So I'm sitting there and I'm waiting for it, and he gets on the screen and we're both like, "Eeeeeee!" Fangirl squeal, you know, jumping up and down. So, I guess most of the comments that we made through that were; just, when it's a couple of people, you are a little bit more afraid to make snide comments here and there. But when you have a big group you don't worry about it. So, you know, we would joke back and forth about this thing and that thing. And it's a shounen-ai show, so it's got, you know, that kind of thing going for it. So it's easier to make, like, you know, we'd giggle and something like they would kiss and we'd go, "Ge-heeee!" and, you know we'd laugh. And one of the ones that stands out the most for me was like in the first or second episode they kiss. They kiss really early on, and so I was joking with Fiona, I was like, "Ha ha, they're kissing by the first one. They're probably gonna be having sex by the fifth," and she goes, "Third!" And I remember I was falling over a few times because we were both laughing so hard. Just the way she said it, she kind of coughed in her breath and. But, not trying to spoil it for you, but at the same time

going, "No, no, it's going to be a lot faster," because it was only a 13 episode type show. But it was so funny. And the show was really giggly and bouncy and hyper. And, J-pop, J-pop everywhere. That show got me into J-pop. And, you can't, even people who don't like *shounen-ai*, I think they could almost like, I think a lot of them could like it; just because it's not. It has its down moments where you're like, "Oh that's sad!" But then in the next scene, he's dressed in a puppy suit singing on stage, so you can't, you know, everybody's a little wacky, and one of the main, not one of the main characters, one of the supporting characters is also a pop star, and he always carries around a little pink stuffed bunny, and has to take it everywhere. He's 33 years old. And he just, ah, it's great. (chuckles)

R   **Tell me more about the show in general.**

N   In general?

R   **Yeah.**

N   It's the story about Shuichi who's up and coming pop star. And his band is his best friend Hiro, and they're trying to start a band called Bad Luck. And so, they use their records, or their producer rather, the manager, and they get into one of the big name, are found out by a big company. And they're basically competing against another band called Ask, and they're basically; I guess they tend to be the antagonists, because they do, they're in the beginning, and you see them a little bit throughout, but they start playing major parties about mid-series, and that's when you really start to hate them. You're just like, "Ahh, those jerks." But it's about Shuichi, and he is trying to start his band, and he's in the park and he standing there and he's holding the lyrics in his hand, and he's trying to write this new song that's he's supposed to have done, but he's late on it. And the manager is just going crazy, going "What haven't you gotten it done?!" And so he's in the park, and he drops the note, and there's this strange mysterious gentleman standing there, smoking a cigarette and looking very good and very suave. And he picks up the lyrics and he's like, "Oh, these are crap," and he's like, "How can you say that, you don't even know me!" and he goes, "Oh I know crap when I see it," and he hands it back to him and just, it's absolutely one of those moments where you just expect the big stamp thing that's gonna go "DENIED!". (chuckles) And he's standing there going, "Oh, god! What an ass, oh why?!" And so, you wanna laugh, but you feel kind of bad for Shuichi 'cause it's like, "Aww, he's trying so hard!" And so he keeps being bugged by this. He's like, "I shouldn't let him get to me. Why is this?" And that's what he says to the premise of the show 'cause he's like, "I gotta find out why," and he goes to his house the next day, and when he does find out who he is, he didn't know his name or anything because he's on TV and is like, "Oh, oh," and he's a famous author of a book. And it's really funny because he's a romance author, and is loved by millions of fans, and it's like women fans in Japan. And of course he's shacking up with Shuichi, so it's sort of like, "Tee-hee," you know, they just don't know. It's got a couple of little plot twists, so it kind of keeps you guessing, like, "Oh, what's gonna happen next?" But it's not one of those shows where you take it too seriously, because it's, eh, it's good, but it's just kind of funny and light-hearted throughout the whole thing. And it's also about Shuichi chasing Yuki, which is the other man and the author, and it's him chasing him throughout the whole thing, and him

becoming a pop star in the background and what he goes through and Yuki constantly being like, "No, get, no, get way from me. No, I don't like you, I don't like you, I don't like you." But deep down you know he just has to love him. It's just really cute.

R   **Hmm. You were also talking about how you're all watching *Full Metal Panic* right now.**

N   M-hm.

R   **Tell me more about like what you all like do when *Full Metal Panic* shows on.**

N   We watch it in a little group of 4 or 5. And it's kind of, well, I only stay for like 15 minutes because I have to go to work. But, it was, you know, I had to make a couple of snide remarks 'cause I kind of think about it with my job. I can't let a moment pass by without letting something slip under my breath. Like you die, at the very beginning he falls out of a helicopter and you see the little pan-in on this like CD-ROM thing, CD-R he's got inside his hand. And I go in under my breath, I'm like, "Oh no, they're after my porn!" 'cause it's a shady deal like chasing him down. So, you know, just little snide comments, and they're all like; and Stacey of course who's the mother figure goes, "Kristin!" and scolds me, and then I whisper to her, "Sorry, I had to slip it in!" But I didn't get to stick around, but it's funny 'cause they hit a couple of humorous moments and everyone's kind of giggling together, or someone will be like, "Oh, the sex talk scene!" You know, a few of us have seen it.

R   **Mmm.**

N   The first time that I saw was the first episode of the first season of *Full Metal Panic*. I actually saw it at AWA. They were previewing it last year, and that was the first con I had ever been to, and I was scared out of my mind. But, they showed it in one of the video rooms, and I think one of my friends said that it was gonna be really good. And so we're like, "Okay, we'll go with you." So we went in, and sat down, and I think they showed the first episode or maybe the first couple, but oh it was funny. We just laughed hysterically, and ever since we've seen it we wanted to see more of it. Finally managed to procure the whole first season. Then, we watched it in like bits and pieces. Like, me and Fiona would watch a few, me, Fiona and Stacey would watch a few. That's the show we'd grab when we get together. They were kind of suspenseful at times, and kind of like you're holding your breath and you're, "What's gonna happen, what's gonna happen? Throw in the next episode quick! Oh crap, Media Play is freezing, do something!" But, I think one of the most hated characters had to be Tessa. And, it's really funny because we watched it in club over the summer. Everybody you could just hear, when she came on the screen, it's like, "Grrrhmmhrrr." You heard grumbles coming from people, especially me, because she just, it's just a character. She was supposed to be the captain of the submarine,

R   **Mm.**

N   and head of like this huge organization. And just seems so ditzy and clueless and stupid about everything she was doing. And she was one of those characters where you just couldn't help but wanna hate her because of stuff like, "Ahh, no, stop, don't, oh, go away." (laughs)

R   **Mm.**

N   But yeah, but that was the first time I watched it. I watched it the first couple of times at AWA in the video room, and then I watched it with Fiona and Stacey. And then you know we watched it in club over the summer. I didn't stay for it because I had already seen it, so she's kind of like, "Ah, I'm good. I can get all of the story." I'd stay for like a couple of my favorite episodes, that sort of stuff. But, (chuckles).

R   Mm. You were also talking about Tessa from *Full Metal Panic*.

N   (chuckles)

R   Can you discuss some other characters from the show?

N   Yeah, the main character from that one, her name was, Kaname?

R   Chidori Kaname.

N   Yeah. Chidori. Chido. She's actually a main one that I really liked, you know, female figures in anime. Because she was really strong female character. And she wasn't, there are some characters in anime, females in particular that are portrayed as kind of weak or you know.

R   Mm.

N   They're ditzy or they're over there for fanservice, and so you kinda, you just, a lot going against them that makes you not want to like them. But even though they had a fanservice a lot for the guys, you know I was expecting her to start out being just this ditzy kind of girl, blah, blah, blah. And then she has that paper fan that she carries around. I can't help but love it because somebody says something, like some guy says something, and she just pulls out this fan and just knocks him one, and he goes flying backwards, and it's just like, "Okay, she's gonna decide to be one cool character." And she doesn't take stuff from anyone, basically, and she doesn't like, she likes the main character, the guy Souske, but she doesn't kind of fully admit to it all the time, so she'll be like, "Okay, maybe he's all right. I'll go take him these things, this food that I've made for him." (chuckles) And you know, but it's just awesome. I just liked her a lot, but Tessa was just, ehhh, and then there was Melissa Mao. And again, I thought she was gonna be fanservicey, but she was one of the people who was in the organization with Tessa.

R   M-hm.

N   And she was just so funny. She would walk around in like her tanktop and her fatigues and drinking beer, and you know, she was just one of the guys. She would just soldier around and she could hold her own like any of them, and you know, Kurtz would always just joke around with her, and she'd just reel back and smack him one, and he'd be like, "Ow, sis!" you know. And that was the character Kurtz, and he was kind of like the pretty, you know, long-haired blonde boy that everybody, "Ohhhh, so cute!" And, but he was really funny, and wasn't just an airhead pretty face. He actually, he was comic relief, but he's awesome with them, getting down with the best of them and fight with the mechs, and of course there's Souske. He was the main character. We were arguing over about who was the main character; was it Souske or whether it was Chidori, so.

R   Mm.

N   We were coming forth and like, "Well, Souske has a lot of screen time, but Chidori was in the opening more, so, hmmmm." But he's like the cold soldier type, which is really, really funny. And just things he does, he does them

dedicatedly, like how he's been trained, 'cause he started out young in the organization, and that everybody else is in. And he started out young in it, and so he's been trained for years and years and years, to be, "I'm the soldier, grrrrr!" And in the first episode, it was a scene I saw today, they're trying to get him ready to come to this high school, and so they're giving him like all of these magazines and, "Okay, here are what teenagers are in to, and you have to dress like this. Okay, let's prompt you. This is what you're gonna say when they ask you what you like, what you dislike." And he picks up something, and it's a condom, and he's holding it. So he's like, "What do teenagers need these for?" And Melissa who's helping him figure out what to do is like, "What? Have you ever used one of them," and he goes, "Yeah, I've used them a few times," and she's like, "Ohhh!" "They're great when for when you lose your water bottle in the jungle. They can carry up to 3 gallons, blah blah blah blah blah," and then he's rattling off the statistics of them. And of course her head hits the table and just like, "We're dealing with an idiot." (chuckles) But, she's really cool about a lot of things, and so it's funny 'cause Chidori kind of expects him to know more than he does, 'cause he's just total dense about things, and especially about when he goes to the high school and he introduces himself, and he's like, "Sergeant Sagura Souske! Blah blah blah!" and he rattles off his service to the military, and they're all just staring at him and he goes, "Oh, right. I like this and this and this," and he's talking about like a certain J-pop group or something. They're all like, "Oh wow, he likes so-and-so." *whistles* (laughs) Hope I didn't botch that. He's funny though.

R   **You were also talking about watching *Card Captor Sakura* too**

N   M-hm.

R   **in the group. What was it like to watch it in the group?**

N   I haven't gotten to watch a whole lot of it in the group. I've watched a few episodes with different people. And it's just, it's not a totally interactive show because it's so cute, but that's what you do the whole, you know, you do the whole show you watch with someone. You sit there and go, "Awwww," and then, you know, there's the scenes where you're just like. And of course, you have to laugh out loud at, what is it, Kerochan? The little,

R   **Yeah.**

N   oh god, plushie. So, we've watched a couple, I think we had to watch the movie dubbed one time

R   **Mmm.**

N   because, Fiona, the DVD player didn't have the remote, and she couldn't make it change to subtitles on the DVD player, 'cause apparently, I didn't know this in time, when they're talking about, "Oh, the dub is so awful. Oh, oh they messed up so many things." And I was like, "What do you mean?" and of course it opens, and (chuckles) she was like, "Just trust me, (whispers) Sakura sounds like a valley girl." I go, "What do you mean?" And she's like, "(shouts) Kero-chan!" and I was like, "(shouts) Oh Lord!" you know. And we just had this; I think we mocked it a lot throughout the whole. I don't think we took the movie too seriously when we had to watch it dubbed-over. And they changed a lot of the names and we just, ohh, it was so bad. Just the voices that didn't fit with people, and like Touya

became "Tori" and Yukito became "Julian" and Tomoyo became "Madison". And she's all like, "Sa-*kura*!" and then the other one, it wasn't Sakura, it was Sa-*kura*. And I think the biggest joke that's still held on and held true is when Kuro-chan sounds like a cross between a surfer and Cartman from *South Park*. So we also joke around, and I do my Cartman voice, and be like, "Bring me back my Clow Card, you whore!" And you know (laughs) we made jokes about it. It was fun, and I have a little keychain of him somewhere. He's just so retardedly funny. When he chased the octopus balls, that episode funny. (breathes out in appreciation)

R   Hmm. What did you all think about the Yukito-Touya thing?

N   Of course we all go, (screams), you know, "Ooh, it's so cute!" 'Cause they have that show on regular TV, I now call it regular television, it's called *Everybody Love Raymond*. Everybody loves Yukito. You can't not like him. I think even Li who should see more than competition for Sakura's affections 'cause she, Sakura, has a crush on Yukito. He even likes Yukito! He's even like, "Awww." You can't hate him, and Touya is just like; he's the Clamp good-looking guy, 'cause Yukito is so girly and cute, you couldn't just be like, "Oh, yes, love you," but yeah, you can do that with Touya and be like, "He's so cute." And so of course you just put two of them together and it's like, "Awww, so adorable!" and that's just been the general reaction to it. Just everybody kind of like, I guess Ike, one of the guys who watches us with it, he tolerates it. And at first he just didn't believe that they were gay, and we were joking about it. And we're like, "Ike, what are you thinking 'cause they're not?!" and Fiona was showing me in the art book earlier this picture of them. I had pulled out the art book, and it's the two of them sitting on a bench together playing with bunnies, and I pulled it out and I went, "Ike, the homosexuality is staring you in the face!" and he goes, "Oh sweet Jesus!" And he never, he's not naysaying about it, but he just kind of accepts it and goes with the flow. And most of the people I know who are pretty much like that. It's a tolerance. It's not, you know, they're not madly in love with the idea. Of course all the girls mostly are like, "Awwww-hww-hww," you know, "That's so cute!" We don't have much more to say other than giggle and laugh and be like, "*sigh* They're so lucky." (laughs) And then of course Ike comments later about after seeing *X* going back and being like, "Man, Touya does look like Subaru. Nooooo!" (makes shuddering sound)

R   Mmm. Describe for me a time in which you learned something about Japanese culture through anime.

N   Let's see; it's stupid to say, but Clamp did the *Clamp School Detectives*, and of course it was the 3 little boys and they were the detectives at the school, and they have the damsel in distress. And it's funny because they try and stick in little bits about Japan and all this stuff throughout the manga. And in the very first one, they were talking about Tokyo Tower and how what it year it was built in and all sorts of stuff. I can't rattle off all of the facts of it. I remember it had a lot to do with number 3, like the Japanese year and everything. And, there's that and later on the main characters were pointing out things here and there for everybody and be like, "Oh, well didn't you know?!" and then point something out here and there. And, just little things like that. That one in particular; the manga just stands

out to me because I read it recently. But that's the one I can think of right now. (chuckles) Trying to think of another time, but I'm also taking Japanese now, so I'm just waiting for them to get to cultural events and start bugging me with those and be like, "Well didn't you know?!" and, oh! I think it was *Card Captor Sakura* when we first saw this one, but it was the White Day-Valentine's Day thing. I had no clue about that, and actually somebody else described it to me when they were like, "Okay," they were like, "On White Day, the guys," or the girls give the guys candy? And then on Valentine's Day, the guy gives the girls, whoever gave them something, they give back to them. And so, I thought that was really neat. I was like, "Wow! I'm all about that!" So, that made me laugh. (chuckles)

R   Hmm.

N   I don't remember which gives to which out of the two, but I remember it was the White Day-Valentine's Day gift exchange's kind of amusing. And so it was like, "Ahh. Oooh."

R   Hmm.

N   I like to get presents. (chuckles)

R   Anything else about Japan you learned from anime?

N   If you read Clamp, Tokyo Tower gets beaten in your brain a lot, and

R   Mmm.

N   pretty sakura petals. And the whole cherry blossom thing, and, oh lord, let's see. That's all I can think of, actually. Sadly, I know there's more. I probably seen more and just can't think of it now.

R   Mmm.

N   And just like, culturally, oh, culturally, haaa, yeah. Things that come to mind are just how things are different from here and there. And how, hooo, *Card Captor Sakura* again! But, how they would change what they would eat for breakfast, or for lunch. And like the dub they would say, "Oh, you want some of my sandwich?" and they're eating riceballs! And you're like, "(whispers) Never mind." That's not a ham sandwich, I'm sorry. (laughs) So, it was kind of funny. Just little things like that, and how it seems like in, I dunno if it's so much in Japan, I don't know if it's an anime-type thing, but things that we wouldn't consider to be acceptable are okay. And it's just kind of like one of those "anything goes" type things. Clamp is big on the whole, "Love is love, it doesn't matter," you know, age, gender, whatever, 'cause they're notorious for the guy-guy relationships, and girl-girl for that matter, and of course in like *Card Captor Sakura*, the girl, one of the little schoolgirls is in love with her teacher. And the teacher, they get engaged or something. So (chuckles) it's really weird. So, at first, like when you first see stuff like that, you're jaw just drops and you're like, "Oh my god! What?! Oh no!" And it's, after you watch a little bit, it's maybe not so much desensitized to it, but you're like, "Oh, well maybe it's got something right. Maybe we are a little bit too uptight about certain things." And, you know, maybe we aren't as accepting as a culture of, you know, this that and the other. Not that I condone you're falling in love with your teacher, but maybe the pedophilism is a little bit creepy, but the whole thing with same-sex relationships, it just seems like those seem to be a whole lot more forgiving in anime. So I don't know if that's a, I guess it might be a cultural thing in Japan, or if it's just shining

through in television, but it's getting better over here now considering they have the gay block on television now. What is it, that's got *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, and *Boy Meets Boy*, and all the other shows, and *Will & Grace*. I think it's getting better over here, but Japan's been on top of that for a little while.

R **Hmm. Tell me about a particular time in which you were watching something in anime where something about same-sex relationships came up that just made you feel like you learned something about Japan. (silence) You were describing one of those moments you had where it's like, "Oh my gosh," you know, and you just had this new revelation about relationships.**

N Yeah.

R **Yeah. Would you like to just tell me about a specific one that sticks out in your head?**

N Let's see. I dunno if this will work, but when we were watching *X*

R **Uh-huh.**

N in the club, it's actually funny because I never really got into *X* until probably around episode 13 out of 24 episodes. So, I've seen little bits of it, but I was like, "Eh, whatever, I'm not too interested in it." And it's funny because it's one of my favorite series now. (chuckles) Like, the favorite. And so, but at the time, I remember, I've seen episodes; I never got to the one episode where Subaru kills Seishirou on Rainbow Bridge. And it was just like, you kind of didn't like Seishirou because he's the villain, and he's bad and evil and all this other stuff. And he's done all these things to Subaru to make where you think Subaru would just hate him and everything. And it comes down to the last few seconds, and it's just like, he whispers something to him, and they never tell you what he says. I've seen the manga to where I've gotten the Japanese version and found translations of them and everything. And they never, ever tell you exactly what he said, but they insinuate, and insinuate that he was saying, "I love you," to him. And it was just one of those times where it was like, "You know, that was probably more touching than anything I've ever seen in American television and in movies and stuff." American movies, not even just animated, but I'm like, there have been moments where it's like, "Okay, that was heart-wrenching. I need my pocket tissues!" And this one comparative to one of those. Like, you know, you just like stop, and you didn't think so much about their both guys, and think so much that he was the bad guy and he was the good guy. It was just, "That's so heartbreaking that that just happened." And that it had to end like it did. It's just like, "Ohh! Oh no! No, that was bad!" but "Oh, that was touching, that was good!" Is that kind of, like, what it is? So, yeah. Whoop!

R **Hm.**

N That's where my relationship with *X* takes off.

R **That's cool. Tell me about a time in which you became emotionally involved with an anime.**

N Ha! The end of *X*? I did not cry; I had not cried for months and, maybe? Over the years I; I hadn't cried just months. Nobody could get through to me, like nothing could really just hit me and make me emotionally attached to anything. We got to the end of *X*, and they had decided to put in the last 2 episodes all in one go. And they didn't realize that 24 was the last one, and they thought they were going to

be showing another one next week. So they get to episode 23, and they put it in at 24, and only about halfway through do they realize, "Oh, crap! This is the last one! Okay, well just show it. It's not gonna spoil anyone too bad 'cause then we'll be done with that, and we can finish up this other series next week." Well they put in the last episode, and I think it was the last show we watched that night. And it was just, the whole ending like I had read, I had read so much fan fiction for it that I was sure, so sure that I had absolutely spoiled the ending for myself. And we see the movie, and you see how that ends, and that was just, that was a joke. But, it ends with, you know, Kamui killing Fuma and then whacking his head off in the most, you know, biggest letdown of a climax ever 'cause it's like, you think there's gonna be this great big battle. And there's nothing. It's just, "And, 5, 4, 3, 2, *choomp* Fuma!!" And that was it! And so, you're thinking, "Okay, they're probably gonna kill Fuma again because, of course, he's the bad guy. Bad guys don't have to lose." And so, you know, so you think. Even though, you know, you're going through to the end, and it's just I read so much beforehand, and I gotten the manga, had read this, you know, this, that, and the other. And the manga's not done yet, so I don't know how the manga's gonna end. But you're reading through that, and then when you're, you know, you go through fanfic shit, and they all, they all come up with like alternate endings and stuff like that. But still, you know, they're all really plausible, so you're like, "Okay, well it can end in all different ways." And then it ends in the most left-field way that you could ever imagine, and you're just like, "Wait, wait, it can't move on. That didn't happen right," and it was just so heart-breaking 'cause it was like, "No, that wasn't; ohh, no, that wasn't supposed to end like that!" I was not expecting that, and it was just like, I just broke down and I cried for hours. I went back to my dorm room and was still crying. My roommate say me, was like, "I really can't handle this, I'm going down to RA's room and just gonna sit and talk with her and let you cry out. I haven't seen you cry in months." And it was just like, I could not, I did not know what just did just absolutely just touched me about that. But just the very end of it where it was just like everything was, there was, agh, and it was like, the good side won, but the protagonist who you had been expecting to, he won, but he had to die to win, and it was the whole "sacrifice for the one you love the most," and you know, who you care about, and all this kind of stuff. And it was like, "Oh no!" and I had never really liked, I never remember liking the protagonist, Kamui so much, until after the end. Like, I liked him, and it was okay, but I was just kinda like, "Ehehehehehe." Got to the end, and I saw that where he just goes. And he mentioned something they do earlier in the series where he puts his hand up on his chest and he was like, "I know you're in there," and he goes, "and my wish was, that no matter what, you come out and you be okay, and you live, and everything be perfect." And of course his *kekkai* (note: protective barrier that only the good guys could set up; a portal) comes out, and surrounds the world and keeps the world safe, and everybody lives, and the day is saved. You know, people start clapping and go, "Whooooo!" But oh, it was so sad! (chuckles) And there was tons of people crying! But, I think my friends were freaked-out, like, "I think you cried more than everybody put together!" It was that; I was like, "Uhhh-huhhh." So, I've been meaning to watch the whole series

through again, and I think I'm up to episode 16 and we ran out of time trying to watch it all. It's like, I don't know if I can take doing that ending again."

R **Mm. Tell me about another time in which you got emotionally involved with an anime.**

N Does it matter what kind of emotion?

R **Oh, it doesn't matter. It's just like it's just something that's like emotional intense, it's just intense emotion.**

N I can talk about the last time I laughed so hard I cried. This was from AWA again. And, I had never, I didn't know there was a thing for conventions or whatever. And you know, a couple of weeks beforehand, Fiona and them started going on about how they're going to AWA. And I was like, "What is this?" They're like, "Oh, it's a con, for anime. You go, and some people dress up, and they show shows and there's this the dealer's room." I had just seen *Escaflowne*, so I was really hoping that I would find *Escaflowne* stuff. Little did I know, it wasn't obscure, but it wasn't the most popular thing, and I think I was looking for *Gravitation* stuff too, and *Yami no Matsui*, and it was like, "Oh, maybe I'll find some stuff!" Only now was it becoming popular, so this year when I go back, there will probably be stuff for that. But that time I was like, "Well maybe there will be something." I got hooked on Pocky that year. And, I remember they had the yaoi room, so they take me there, and Fiona's like, "You do know they're gonna ID you to get in because 18 and over," and I'm like, "Yeah, that's fine, I'm 18, I'm good, blah blah blah." And she's like, "They're gonna *ID* you," and I was like, "Okay, whatever," so we get in there, and I think the first thing that they showed was *Level C*. And we went to the con, and it was really funny because I ran into one of my old high school friends that I had lost touch with after high school ended. And, you know, I'm into my sophomore semester in college, and I'm walking into one room out of another and almost run into them. I grab onto them and I'm like, "Fancy meeting you here, stranger!" We grabbed him to the yaoi room with us, and so it was like 4 or 5 people that I knew; it was me and Fiona and Matt, and I think Tracey was in there. And the first thing they showed was *Level C*, and there was this huge room of people, and it was on the big screen in the front. And it was the most outlandish, stupid thing I had ever seen, I couldn't keep a straight face. I think, I almost fell off of my chair a few times during it. And afterwards we were just rolling in laughter. I, oh good lord, I laughed, I cried, I was laughing, and there was just, and the funny part was there was the cheesiest storyline and plot you could ever imagine! And the girl in front of me just looks at me 'cause they even starting doing the cheesy porn music where it's like (makes a guitar noise, chuckles). And it's funny 'cause as soon as it started up, I did it, the girl in front of me did it, and I know I heard one somewhere else. It's like we're all sitting here (makes cheesy porno music sounds), and you're just, oh god, it was awful. And you almost feel like you should be taking it seriously, because, you know, it's pornographic or something. It's hard to keep a straight face! I was, oh, good lord! I thought, (makes groaning sounds). Everyone was laughing. Like I looked over, it's Fiona the one who is, you know, we've been talking about coming to it, and Matt are both, you know, I expected that maybe somebody would take it seriously. Everybody is laughing at

it! It was so horrible. The fansubs on it were just hysterical with some of things, you know, that's what they were saying! But it was so hard to believe 'cause it was just like, "What?! Did that?! No!" And, oh god, we laughed hard, and even after the fact when we were talking about it and telling other people about it, we all had to bring out what part we thought was funny, and so most of us were like, "Oh, that scene was hot!" It's just, you know, that scene almost made me pee in my pants. Let me tell you about it so you can experience the horror!" Just recently Ulrich, we were sitting over in his room, and we're just sitting around playing video games, or watching anime or talking and stuff. And John was over, and we made Kirk watch parts of *Level C*. (laughs) And he wasn't horrified, but he was like us. We're just saying (makes nervous grunts), I can't keep a straight face, you gotta laugh, it so awful (chuckles).

R **Tell me about a "pee in your pants" type scene from *C+***

N From *Level C*?

R **I mean from *Level C*.**

N Huh! Oh god, there's this one thing, 'cause you have the *uke* who's on the bottom and the *seme* is the top. And of course in retrospect when we're thinking about it, there's one scene, and the *uke* has his clothes on, and then magically he has no pants. And so, you know, we had to wonder how that worked out. But, just, you know, whatever, it's "*seme* magic". It was magically (laughs), John thought of that by the way. I didn't; it's *seme* magic, he just loses his pants. And I was talking about that, and then all the sudden, it's just one scene where he, he bites his nipple, and it was hysterical 'cause he goes, "Ow, why did you bite me?" and he goes, "Because it looked yummy." And I had never heard anything so stupid in my entire life! I was leaning over, holding on to the chair next to me or in front of me just about to just die laughing. Fiona is over there, no better, and she was like she was about the collapse. Matt curls up into a ball and he goes (makes a whimpering sound), and he's rocking and laughing hard. And of course afterward we all get in the hall and go, "Why did you bite it?" and Fiona goes, "Because it looked yummy!" You know, we just follow in fits of laughter, and that was a running gag for a very long time. Anytime anyone brings up "Why did you bite me?" you know, somebody else always has to pipe up, "Because it looked yummy!" you know with the *seme* voice and "Rarrrr!" and all porn, ugh. It was awful, but porn is funny. (laughs)

R **(laughs)**

N Now we're all traumatized.

R **Mmmm.**

N Whoa-ho! Catch your breath! I keep remembering it, it keeps haunting me! And I'll try to send the DVD of it. (laughs)

R **Oh god. I've gotta watch that.**

N (laughs) It's so stupid, and the other, the other one that's funny was, we were all really surprised 'cause you get in there, and of course it's yaoi, it's two guys. You're expecting, you know, anatomy to pop up everywhere. But no. No, no. (laughs) It was invisible, and so (laughs) I just remember looking at Fiona going, "What the ass?! Wha-it-wha-it, wait, they have no gender! What is this?! (laughs) How are they, oh god you can only see it when they, ohhhhhh!" and we were just

screaming and crying and (groans and laughs). Laughing and, so, just letting it come up again, come up in conversation like, "What the ass, it's invisible!" (laughs)

R   **(laughs)**

N   'Cause you're talking about something random, go "Shh, and then the balls. (whispers) What's with the random penis?" (laughs) (catches breath) Oh gosh, laugh so hard about stuff like that. (coughs intentionally hard)

R   **(catches breath) Okay! All right. How would you compare what you find in anime to what you might find in American media?**

N   I know I compared it to American cartoons earlier, like, I mean there are some people who take it very, very seriously and take anime really, really seriously, or just they're scary about it sometimes. They're just like, "(whispers) Okay, I'm gonna back away now." I guess one thing that I've had to remember is like, "Okay, it's a cartoon," you know, it could be, you know, doing a kind of a farce on something realistic, and all this other stuff. But, you know what, it's not real, but it's just, they actually put a lot of depth into it. And there's character development, and there's a plotline, and, you know, it's one of the things where you can see them just fall in love with the character and how the personality is and it's hard to do that with American cartoons. Because, it's almost like they try sometimes (chuckles) to try and mimic that and give characters a personality and everything. But it just seems almost plainer compared to what anime does sometimes. Like, you know, when watching *Nickelodeon* like cartoons and stuff, like shows like *Doug*. Where he was, you know, he was an outcast. He wasn't the most popular guy in school, but he was nice to everybody, and he's kind of quiet, a little bit shy, wrote in a journal, this, that, and the other. It still seemed plainer to how some characters have been developed in anime where it's got, you get like a whole back story and it's just everybody, you know, how they interact with other characters all the time, and you know, there's just something about it where it's better, and it's more solid-seeming than what it is, just, you know, (mumbles) animation cells. (chuckles) So, that's totally different, and as far as like real television, you know, people and stuff, you could see them mimic stuff here and there with, you know, what we do on like real television and real movies. And some of them, like on live-action stuff is really good too. Like *Battle Royale* at least. It's almost like anime, it is a cartoon, but it seems to develop characters like a real action American show does, as opposed to how we develop our cartoons in America. And some series I know, I, some series run forever, like *Inuyasha* over here. It's probably been going on like 100-something episodes, and *DragonBall Z* which I can't stand to watch. But I know it runs well over a hundred. But, and in American television, some series just seem to go on, on, and on, and you know, you can just you can take it up from any point in the show, and basically understand what's going on. And while that's nice sometimes, you almost wish like you're in like a group that, "Oh, well I know," you know, "the whole story, fa-la-la." In anime some of them are showing running 13, 26, or 32 episodes and stuff. So you really need to watch it all, and you watch it in order to kind of understand everything, and it kind of gives you a good feeling to finish it, and

you're like, "Wow, it's sad that it's over," but it's like, "I know everything now!" And, there's always fan fiction! (chuckles) So, it's always really neat.

R   **Hmm. Tell me about a time when you had a disagreement with someone over an anime.**

N   Lemme see. I'm sure I've had one recently. Who was it we were talking to? I'm trying to remember if I've discussed *DragonBall Z* with anyone 'cause I know I already gotten into a hefty debate over that one. Oh, I think it was *Jo-Jo's Bizarre Adventure*. It wasn't like, I just remember arguing with people over this one. I remember it being agreed with a lot of people, but it was actually we showed during summer in club. And it was just, I couldn't stand it (chuckles). It was so dumb, the one episode I managed to catch, it was like, "What? No, please, tell me that's, ohhh, that's not the whole show." And it just, it seemed really, not shallow. I'm sure it had some subplots and this, that, and the other, but it's just, the way the show was animated, it was just, it wasn't like good to look at. You didn't want to watch it because, "Oh my eyes hurt!" you know? And it was just so dumb, but there were some people who were just so adamant about liking it, and, "Oh, how can you not like this show?" and this, that, and the other. And it's just like, (makes shuddering sound). And they were just like, "Oh, but it's got such good this, that and the other, and blah blah blah." And I'm like, "It's okay, we have our different preferences, you watch *Jo-Jo's Bizarre Adventure*, I'm going over here and watch, you know, my happy anime, my *Princess Tu-Tu* (chuckles), you know, I'm good." And another one I can think of off the top of my head is *Hikaru no Go*. And at first I just, I rabidly did not like it because it just moved so slowly, and it was so boring, and I fell asleep during every time I watched it, and then, you know, like Cathy really likes it and everything. And when I thought about it, I think I was talking about it with someone else. And I was just like, you know, it's hard to admit that I was wrong, in that it is a good show, and it was like, I really hated it, and I thought I hated it, but it kind of like it was hard watching it in club because you only got one episode a week, and *Hikaru no Go* is one of those show where just kind of sit down and watch it at your own pace. And when you can sit down and watch, you know, all 5 of these episodes that go together in one go, you know, as opposed to waiting a whole week and be like, "Oh god, not again!" (chuckles) And I know a lot of people that would like it, but it's one of those things where I completely disagree with everybody who liked it, and I'm sure they completely disagree about not liking it, and we finally reached that middle ground where it was like, "Okay, it is a good show, but, it's not a good show to put in a club schedule, and it's one of those shows that's like; it needs to be watched at your own pace." Those are the two examples that I can think of.

R   **Hmm. You were talking earlier about *Jo-Jo*'s. What's something particular about that one episode of *Jo-Jo*'s that stands out that you just couldn't stand that really latched on?**

N   The main character had a mullet. (laughs) It was kind of scary. He had, it was generally the flat top one with the hair standing up and it was all shaved off and he was very, very large! And he had the mullet thing going on, and all of the guys were just drawn; so obviously a *shounen* anime because all the guys are ripped and "Ruurrrrah!" and "Grrrrrrah!" and just, augh, muscles popping out of their

arms like this big, and they can barley fit in their little camouflage shirts and like, "We're gonna go kick some butt with these robots that are ghosts which magically appear out of our bodies." Like, "Okay, you want, no, no I'm sorry, I can't, no, ah, no, don't make me watch this!" (chuckles) It was just (chuckles) awful. Just, mainly my preference in anime, you know, that kept me from watching it. It could be a good show. It could have a good plot. I could not get past it having to look at it because; huuuah! You're going like, "Oh, the second season's animated differently, and I was like, "Yeah, that episode I watched just absolutely ruined the whole thing for me." (chuckles)

R   **Hmm.**

N   But yeah. (chuckles)

R   **In what plane did you discover, or being to think *Hikaru no Go* was a good series?**

N   I think when I was discussing it with just other people and their telling me more about how it progresses, and just saying about it more instead of just, you know [snaps] rattling off the top of their head that what I'd seen in club was awful, blah, blah, blah, blah. And, there are a couple of episodes that, usually was on Monday nights, and so first semester I actually had to work and they come to club, so I was really exhausted from work, so that's one of the reasons I would fall asleep during *Hikaru no Go*. So it's kind of, you know, one of those things. Second semester, I think my excuse was (chuckles) that I just wore down from that semester because I had 16 hours of classes, so of the few episodes that I actually stayed awake for that I was totally prepared for, actually in the theater for, I was just like, "You know, it's not that bad." I watched a couple, and it was like, you could see where it was going more, and all the sudden more action took place, and I paid more attention to the episodes, and I caught how the plotline was starting to develop, and it was like, "Okay," but I guess it started annoying me when I first started watching it, whereas they'd only do like part of a Go match. Also, like at the very end of it, they put down like one Go stone. It's like, "Auuugh, could you develop it a little quicker?!" And it was just, it was so slow-moving when I was trying to watch it with club. We're like, "You know, I think it's one of those series where I can watch it outside of club and enjoy it more." And this idea didn't come around until I started talking with other people about it who liked the show, and they started telling me about, you know, this, that, and the other, and how it went. And I started liking the opening scenes. (laughs) That also helped. So, yeah.

R   **Hmm.**

N   So it wasn't until probably, you know, late spring or the summer before I would actually admit to, "Okay, it's a good show, but it's not a good, you know, slow type show (chuckles) to watch in pieces."

R   **Mmm. Now, how would you size-up the whole sub vs. dub debate**

N   Oh that.

R   **in the fandom?**

N   Sum it up?

R   **Yeah, like how would you describe it?**

N   I mean, I can understand where both sides come from because honestly there was this, some dubs are so horrible (chuckles) that you can't stand to listen to them. *Card Captor Sakura* would hurt me deeply. But it was kind of like; it's kinda funny because it's like, all right, Americans couldn't handle (chuckle) doing the Japanese names, so they, you know, tried to replace them with American names and tried to make the show more appealing to an American audience, which is kinda sad. 'Cause they like took out the whole relationship between Tomoyo and Sakura, and which isn't; I guess some people can take it really seriously. Like, "Oh they're in love, oh blah, blah, blah, she loves her so much." But it was kind of like, you had to go 'cause it was cute, and then of course the Touya-Yukito thing. They're just best friends, they've never, you know, actually, you know, insinuated it to be more than that. And because part of that they had to remove for an American audience, and I can understand 'cause, I dunno, it just seems Americans sometimes isn't as accepting of that, especially showing it to kids, and *Card Captor Sakura*'s aimed at being a children's audience. It's just kinda hard how they screw some of that up. Going for an older genre, *Yamino Yatsurei*, their dub was so horrible. And, Fiona and I watched, I think we've watched almost the whole thing dubbed. I haven't seen the last arc dubbed. But, it was one of the things where it's just like; it was really awful, but go was it funny. Like, I think we ended up watching the dub for the sole purpose of laughing hysterically. And Fiona put it she goes, "They almost made it more *shounen-ai*, than it was originally in the dub, or in the subtitled." But I had to laugh about it because, and this isn't something that'll probably be aired on television, so that's probably why they got away with it. The other really funny part about that was we swear to god that about 3 or 4 of the voice actors are porn stars. It has to be true 'cause the voices are so funny. But I mean, I can see where both sides come from, and I have heard a good dubs, so I can't, you know, just shun everything and go like, "Oh, all dubs are evil and suck." 'Cause I actually watched *The Slayers*. I watched it dubbed first 'cause it's all my friend had at the time. And, I actually liked the dubbed more than I liked the sub. Like, I don't know why, but I can't even concentrate on it when it's subtitled, 'cause it's just; the main character's voice is so piercing and it's like, "Ohh, oh lord!" you know? "(in a low, strained voice) Stooop!" (chuckles) So I guess I got used to that first. And that's just, I mean it's; they both have their points. Like, people who do dubs, who like dubs I think you're missing out on a lot sometimes if you only watch the dub of it because there's a lot they're gonna take out in a dub, and they tend to edit it sometimes, especially if you're watching it on, like Cartoon Network. Like, I was appalled to find out that *Outlaw Star* had more episodes than I had seen because they were for American television. So, it's stuff like that, and so it's kind of. But people who only watch subtitled are like, "All dubs suck." You know, I think maybe they're missing out too because it's kind of interesting to see how it's being Americanized, and how good of a job they're doing. And for nothing else then maybe to critique it, or like, you know, to laugh our butts off apparently. But I dunno. People who are so adamant about subtitles only, only, only, I happen to think it's silly, 'cause it's like, well, "If something was only dubs, would you still watch it?" You know, like *Vampire Hunter D* was anime, but it is originally

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created and drawn to be a dub. And, I think I've seen; I dunno if I've seen the sub version, or which one I've seen, but you know, I haven't seen a dub of both two parts of it. And, you know, I had no problem with it. It was really, really well done, and it was really, really, really good. And so, it makes you wonder, it's like, "Maybe you should watch this," or, "You shouldn't be so entrenched in your camp," and, "Try it out," or, 'cause it could open up new possibilities or something?

R **Hm. Okay, I think we can wrap it up here. I really wanna thank you for just coming out here and doing this, so yeah. So, thanks a lot!**

N No problem!

<center>Transcript Two – Emile's Interview</center>

[BMA/5.19.06]
R = Researcher
N = Participant
[54:53]

Note: This interview took place in a quiet study room on the Kine Outmake campus where we both sat on opposite sides of a table with no one else around. The conditions of the interview explained in the handout were read to the interviewee before the tape began recording. Punctuation and capitalization were added by the researcher as part of the transcription's interpretation. The interview participant is a 22-year-old Chinese American male who was once a member of the other anime club in question, Imagenu, and still posts infrequently on its message board. He has been an anime fan for 4-5 years, and has been a member of organized fandom for 3-4 years.

R **Okay, this is going to be an interview to talk about your experiences in anime fandom, anime, Kine Outmake, and what not. Before we begin, you've read the consent form and you agreed to everything that's written there, right?**

N I did ah [cough] me no speak English.

R **[laughs]**

N [laughs] Okay, well, I answered yes I understand it. Whether or not I know English is irrelevant.

R **[laughs] Okay. All right. Actually, how many years could you say you've been an anime fan?**

N Geez, I dunno. When did they start airing Ronin Warriors and Dragonball in the morning?

R **Hmm.**

N Quite some, ah, a casual fan, at least since Sci-Fi Channel aired it, even though I only watched to like five minutes of Galaxy Express and like one episode of Dominion Tank Police OVA. Not the new crappy CGI one, the old one.

R **Okay, how many years do you think that probably was?**

N I wrote the wrong date on a consent form. I wrote the wrong month on it. At least ten years, probably more. Oh yes! [taps hand on the table] Actually, a lot more since they did Voltron on the old USA Cartoon Express, did they. Or did

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they not? I've been a casual fan of one series or another for a long time. Before I even knew about anime, or, so.

R   **And, how many years you think you've been in fandom?**

N   Geez. Four, five, but I'm not crazy.

R   **[laughs] Okay.**

N   Well not as crazy as some people in fandom. I'll qualify it as that.

R   **Hmm, okay. All right.**

N   Yeah. Of course it also depends on your definition of "in fandom", so.

R   **Let's say that you've been around other anime fans watching the stuff.**

N   Oh, that. Three years, four, not more than that.

R   **Okay.**

N   Never been too serious about an anime. Nice, something to kill time with. I'm not gonna go around lynching people for writing bad fan fiction with pairings I don't like. I will lynch them for writing utterly atrocious fiction that should not be produced by anyone over the age of four, but that's different.

R   **Hmm, okay. All right.**

N   Now I do not actually advocate lynching anyone. You know, just for the record.

R   **[laughs] Okay. All right. First off, describe for me some of your favorite shows or genres.**

N   Oh geez. I'm very strange. I watch a little of everything. I'm the kind of guy who will drop fifty bucks at Border's, but easily between on bilingual copy of Caesar's Commentaries, two volumes of Battle Angel Alita, very nice series, post-apocalypse, not really cyberpunk, very nice. And it's kinda bloody, but I like it. \And the other 20 goes to Ouran Host Club. It's funny, it's light, and it's rather disturb. I dunno, it's just odd that every series Viz releases under their Shounen Jump line I detest.

R   **Hmm.**

N   They just seem to be the same never-ending thing about fighting and all that, and it just doesn't appeal to me, so.

R   **Hmm.**

N   But I happen to actually like a couple of titles they have under Shoujo Beat, so, go figure.

R   **Hmm, okay. Could you describe for me**

N   Oh well, favorite series by, the big one would probably be Nausicaa the Valley of Wind. That's a great movie. It's older than I am by a few months or a year or so. But I liked the manga more because it actually develops the world and the people, so much greater than what you can do in a, what, hour, hour-and-a-half movie? That man kept writing it for like ten years, off and on I think; better part of a decade at least. Silent Mobius, it's a police and paranormal thing. The world reminds me a lot of Piers Anthony's Incarnations of Immortality, cause he has magic and time working side by side. So in Silent Mobius, the magic is only used by a handful of people, and most humans aren't aware of it. Whereas in Incarnation, you have ads for flying carpets all over the place. And even after some cars, you'll have a miserable family being soaked by a hurricane on a carpet.

R   **[laughs]**

N   And death is a horse that comes in a limousine, which is kind of awesome. And a boat at one point I think, even though it runs just fine on the waves. The horse does, yeah. It's a great series. I highly recommend it, except books two and four. Those should be burned and forgotten! But, again, I just don't like them. They're not as strong as the other ones I think.

R   Okay.

N   Yeah, I like a lot of series. So, I think I'll just stop there.

R   Okay. Describe for me a little bit about Ouran High School Host Club.

N   Well, geez, you want the spoiler version or no? [laughs]

R   Oh, I'm okay with whatever you want to talk

N   Oh right, you're following it too, aren't you?

R   Yeah.

N   Okay, good. Then, can anyone else listen to this? Go to Border's a pick it up on the shelf. Okay, it's about an academy called Ouran Academy, oddly enough. And, there's a club there called the Host Club, founded by these six really rich guys. Yeah, six rich guys in an academy devoted to rich guys, go figure. And they run the Host Club which is dedicated to providing this, geez, how do I put this? A friend of mine described it as male geisha, basically. [laughs] Yeah, and I suppose that is a fair enough description in some ways. Although, there are these twins who have a sense of humor that are such that allows them to pretend to be, how should I put this, very attached to each other in front of the girls. Because the girls go crazy for that. I don't know why, but anyone into Harry Potter fandom will attest to it.

R   [laughs]

N   I'd rather not be able to attest to this. So I pretend it does not exist. Much like any Asian would for thing they would not like to know about. It works too, actually, for a time. Anyway, so, and there's this, anyway, the Host Club series, back on topic, is primarily about this one scholarship student there who's kind of poor. Well, relative to the others in the series. I mean, they're not on the streets or anything, but they seem to live comfortably enough, in a Japanese house at least, given how tiny those can be, urban society and all that. But, so, he, well you think it's "he" at the beginning, and now I've spoiled it. Spoiled the surprise at the first episode. Goes in, stumbles in the Host Club by accident looking for a quiet place to study. And another accident, she breaks a vase by that, which would've auctioned for as much as 8 million yen, drafted in slave labor to pay it off. And the club, series just goes on with the weird and wacky people in the club. And very weird people in the club. Weirder than Imagenu for the record, so that is very hard to do. Well, weirder than my recollections of them from three years ago. Hard to do, still. Yeah, you don't need to tell them about this, by the way.

R   That okay, all of the identities are confidential.

N   [laughs] Whatever. I don't care!

R   Mmm, just letting you know.

N   Go ahead, print my, print the name that I would actually recognize in your, in the thesis. I don't care. It's not like I'm slandering anyone. I mean, anything I say to

the matter of, both of my statements are matters of opinion that cannot be proven false or true. And they're certainly not defamatory in any way, so.

R   **You were also talking about the relationship between fangirls and Ouran High School Host Club.**

N   I haven't met any. It's merely the general relationship between fangirls and any series with bishounen as they are called. And twins, I don't know why. It is something I've heard whispered and overheard conversations that were online about the Weasley brothers. And that is all I'm gonna say because I, one, know nothing about it, and wish to know nothing about it. Because, well, I'd just rather not! On the other hand, I would note that one of the characters had the surname "Ohtori", and I'm sure someone has manipulated that to write fan fiction crossing it with Utena. Although I must add that Akio is only an Ohtori by marriage, and that he's already screwing his mother-in-law, so you might as well make it a set!

R   **[laughs] Okay. You were also talking, could you describe for me about Angel Alita?**

N   Okay, well, again, very basic. It is set in the future at some unknown point. Though, comments in certain notes and things attached to the end of it suggest at least a few centuries. It is set in a region of the world called "The Scrapyard", which is, well, kind of a city and junkyard all in one. And over above it, there's the flaming city of Defargas, which is maintained by a set of factories on the ground that supply it with food and raw materials. Many people are cyborgs. Yes, anyone familiar with Ghost in the Shell, most of these cyborgs could kick Motoko's ass without [knocks on the table] a sweat. You know, because they're much more advanced. And Alita herself was basically a head on a spinal cord and a bit of a torso that was found by a surgeon in The Scrapyard one day, and he revived her and gave her a body and she becomes a bounty hunter. And later as a night club singer for a brief period. And a sports star. Fortunately I've only watched the first half of the series. [snaps fingers] I believe there is an OVA, one or two episodes, have not seen it. And there is a sequel manga called, "Battle Angel Alita: Last Order". If you are using the Imagenu boards as a resource, they're, I have read that the name was changed for the U.S. release. But, I personally think, including both the name of the title and of the character. But she was originally named "Galley" or something. But, I still think Alita is a better name just in general. And it does remind me of Alita of the Knife from the Dune series. And she does show certain loose resemblance to her and her history because, in that she was born on a desert world, though a red desert, and there's sand worms as far as I know. Same earth system, actually, Mars. And she is quite an excellent fighter, as Alita was. So she never really, almost never really see her use it. And she is occasionally possessed by strange memories because she's lost her memories at the beginning of the series, but she recovers them throughout. But she is certainly not haunted by her ancestors' ghosts as Alita was. And anyone who, and I'm not gonna spoil much more of Dune for you on that.

R   **[laughs] That's okay. You were also talking about some Shoujo Beat titles that you like. Could you expand**

N   Well that would be Ouran Host Club and Full Moon wo Sagashite. Full Moon is about a girl who has some kind of throat cancer. Sarcoma, I think the series says. I'm, I have almost no background in biology or medicine, so I can't comment on whether that's accurate or not. Although I will say that sometimes even translators who presumably understand that language and linguistics can make very strange mistakes by referring to the declension of a verb as they did in, what was it, "negima", in the manga. Because you don't decline verbs, you decline nouns. It just irritated me, so, anyway, back on topic!

R   **[laughs]**

N   I love doing this. Especially to rant and wander so. Where was I? Oh yes. Anyway, the girl Mitsuki Koyama from Full Moon, and apparently her name Mitsuki means "Full Moon", so she, and she is visited by a pair of death gods or shinigami as Japanese call them. She's had to learn she's fated to die within a year, but she dreams of being a singer, so one takes pity, and grants her the body of a 16-year-old version of herself, with a dye job so she could go audition, become an idol singer. Now, after this, the manga and the anime series diverge a little in that the anime series, she's insanely popular at once, and in the manga, she is, she, as of the fifth volume, she is not, she's in the top five or so, but not, yeah, she's not Michael, 80s Michael Jackson. Let's leave it at that. But, and then we go, and then the series. The manga is also considerably darker and explores the shinigami's path a lot more in their relationship with the characters. And it has a lot less filler, especially towards about half. Anyway, so, I love that series, it's nice. Although I'm not sure I like the artists' other series. Kami Kaizte Kaito Jen [reincarnation of Joan of Arc] quite as much, not enough to buy it certainly, but it's not bad.

R   **Okay. Tell me about a time in which you watched anime with other people.**

N   Very rarely. Probably because I'm not much [laughs] of a people person. In fact, much of the campus is not really conducive to people, I don't know why. Neh. But generally at the anime clubs, although I only go at their showings something I think is something worth watching. Once or twice at a couple of cons I've attended, just cut by the definition of a showing room. Now and again I, actually I'm not sure if I've actually gone to see one at the movie theater. Well, doesn't matter.

R   **What was it what movies?**

N   Any anime movie that's had a theatrical release stateside. I don't think I've actually bothered going while they're actually in the first run. Maybe barring a theater like Tate. I saw [Laputa] Castle in the Sky there. And I think it's just stupid how they butchered the presentation of La-poo-ta, because it happens to resemble a Spanish swear word. I mean that's the kind of sense that happens all the time, and Swift did not give a damn! And yes, they took the name from Gulliver's Travels, as anyone who has read anything would know. And, although [unintelligible 15:47 – fisticull?], the etymology Gulliver gives, spurious of course, could be used to support either pronunciation. I simply think La-poo-ta just sounds a little unnatural. Eh.

R   **Hmm.**

N   Anyway, I haven't, and sometimes a group of friends might get together to watch anime, but those occasions tend to degenerate into more just random talk instead of watching anything. I suppose that's how some people are.

R   **Hmm. Can you tell me about a time in which you did watch anime in anime club?**

N   Well let's see. Well I've done it with two clubs, Imagenu and Kine Outmake, the clubs at [university deleted] and [university deleted]. Imagenu is a rather larger club. Yeah, big surprise that, considering the difference in enrollment and in advertising, which they actually have. And, well, the people are a little more social outside the club, generally speaking. At least, when I was around them a lot more [laughs] at the club I should say. And, but they tend to be a lot quieter, except that every now and then for a couple series they would be a handful of people singing along for the song with the opening or the ending. I remember doing this with I think The Irresponsible Captain Tylor a couple years back. My memory might be wrong on that. That was a funny one. But with Kine Outmake, is a much smaller club, and quite frankly they use, this was put out during the last meeting, but the space they're currently using is way too large for them. And they, we'll try to fix that, get a smaller space maybe. And they do a lot more talking through the series about more silly jokes that aren't quite so funny when you read them after the fact. But they're a little more scrupulous about not showing licensed anime, but [makes a swooshing sound and snaps] it really is a nonissue to me. Although they repeat the cries for Spanish subtitles in Japanese voices on Captain Tylor once. Got old after a while, but it was funny the first two or three times. Yeah, I don't think we've really shown, yeah we don't show DVDs at Kine Outmake club meetings. So that, they must've shown fansubs, unlicensed. But the last season or two have been pretty abysmal, but that's [unintelligible – serged?] involved for you.

R   **Okay. Could you describe for me a specific time in which you were at a Kine Outmake meeting?**

N   Geez, I told you about it at the time, right? You know, dark room, bunch of people sitting near the front. And series starts, people start talking once something kind of funny happens. Not much to really say about it.

R   **Can you think of a particular instance where that happened?**

N   Oh geez, they tend to be remotely given a sexual innuendo. I mean, geez, there's plenty, god knows there's enough of that in anime, even in non-comedy series. Few people are as sexually repressed and filthy-minded [laughs] as [university deleted] students. Oh geez, except that I haven't been too much at many of the meetings this semester, last semester because I'd either already watched the things I thought were worth watching and, or the other series I just didn't feel much interest in. So, yeah. And I don't remember much of the semesters before that, so.

R   **Other than Captain Tylor, can you think of a particular instance of being at a Imagenu meeting?**

N   Oh yeah, plenty. They showed Tylor ever week, so it, geez, was also Hana Yori Dango. That was an interesting series. High school romance, comedy thing, writ,

let's see, four rich guys, one kind of poor girl caught in the middle. Eh, funny series. But yeah. Meetings week to week, it's, it was fun.

R   **Hmm. Tell me about a time in which you learned something about Japan from anime.**

N   Okay, geez. Well, the thing about learning about cultures from fiction is that they always leave out the parts they assume, because it is written for their culture, they will leave out the parts they assume everyone already knows about things. But one thing you learn that, very obvious thing you learn very quickly if you watch a lot of it is that schools has uniforms, which is moderately unusual among public schools in the States at least. Though it is rather more common in Asia, in Taiwan too, perhaps because of a heavy influence that they were a colony up until like '45 or so, maybe a little later than that. So that's the main thing, bigger thing to learn. But there's, you don't learn particularly much from them directly, cause again they leave out many things that are just assumed to be that everyone knows that's just how things are. Cell phones are big, TV's big, narrow streets. I mean, not really much I can say about Japan, not that I've ever been there. Or haven't talked much with anyone who was.

R   **What are some things you think they left out of the plot at one point?**

N   It's not so much plot, it's just how people act and interactions. Like one thing I picked up from a few sources is that in Japan women control the money for family, and that husband is only given a part of allowance she thinks is needed for him to do what he wants to. I mean, every now and then you'll have a character who is a salaryman who is always dreaming up ways to catch more money from his wife. But, that's basically an invisible part of it, perhaps because most of the anime is either set in slightly not in Japan proper or is about high school students, and they don't really handle that sort of thing much. Yeah, that's one thing. Oh yeah, another thing I did learn, love hotels. Yeah, name, a place, and they're a big focus for a lot of misunderstandings in romantic series, yeah. And that their houses tend to have those thin walls you can hear right through them.

R   **Things that you say you had to know about Japan in order to watch anime**

N   No, no, I can't think of anything, well, most translators these days will explain certain customs and things like and, like how Americans say, "Your ears will burn if someone's talking about you," they say "You'll sneeze." And they say that men bleed through their nose when they get aroused. That is not true actually, as any man can tell you.

R   **Tell me about another time you learned something about Japan from translator notes.**

N   Geez, a few words. Yeah, certain terms for, say, sports. Like, couple of things from sumo wrestling. Like, certain moves that they use as a cultural reference which, again, no translation of anything really gets to well. Like, one big thing they leave out is the like 500 forms of "you", "I", and "we". Even in translations from Greek, from French for example, the "vois" and "tu" thing, that cannot be translated into English in any natural form. Or even in, geez, I think German has the "du" and "vee", or, I mean, so they leave that out completely simply because English does not have the words to do that, easily anyway. Certain forms of "you" are kinda known as "jackass", "bastard", "son of a bitch", because that is

probably what [laughs] the character intended. But, so, that's one thing about translation that I picked up here and there

R   **What are some other things you've used to get information about Japan that you've used to make sense of anime?**

N   Well, once or twice I've followed, I got my hands on, not particularly much actually. But, like one day at a mall, I think a Walden's, I picked up a book called Asian Mystiques, which is about how the West sees and mis-sees Asia in general. Not just the important countries; China, Taiwan, and Japan, but also of the Northeast sector the important countries. And also the major countries of Southeast Asia, as far as the Philippines out to Laos and Vietnam, about that whole area. It explains quite a lot about the culture of the region that the stereotypes and things. And I follow a rather amusing series of editorials about a guy who's teach, student teaching in Japan, an American, and his impressions of people. Not terribly favorable in some instances I might add, but that's true of any people, any country you go to, really. You'll have a bad impression of a lot of people, just because, they're people! [laughs] Not much more to say about that.

R   **Okay. Let's see, and, tell me about a time in which you became emotionally involved with an anime.**

N   Geez, I wouldn't say that really happens, really. I mean, I will follow things until they end, or until I decide that it's just not worth continuing. But I generally don't get too attached to the characters. I do get irritated at how some authors will draw things out forever, and never end, and, but, just, I've never, I don't think I've ever really gotten all that involved with any fictional works in general.

R   **Tell me about a time where an author had drug out an anime.**

N   Oh god, geez, anything by Rumiko Takahashi. To my knowledge, she has, of her four major series, I believe Maison Ikkoku might be her only she actually gave a concrete ending to. I'm not too familiar with the other three of her series, favorite series though. Yeah, that's a big example. Another example would probably be the anime version of Full Moon wo Sagashite in that the entire second season consisted mostly of filler as I see it. And they probably could have done it one season, maybe one and a half stages; cut that out and just gotten on with it. So yeah, that's probably, those are the ones I can think of right now. Geez, I mean, I can also compare it to American fantasy series like Wheel of Time. Where that one he wanted to take a long time to write another book, but, that's, every major novelist does that anyway. What, geez, the latest books I've read, like seven, eight, nine covers relatively short amounts of time and almost no events of any real significance. And I suppose I can say the same of the Sword of Truth series. Although I gave up on that one around, geez, four out of, I think seven or eight now? I just gave up on them. They just weren't, really worth continuing with. But, somebody obviously still buys them because he's still writing them. Or at least they were a year ago.

R   **Hmm. Describe for me a Takahashi series you think was drawn-out.**

N   Oh geez, how about the big series everyone seems to love right now, Inuyasha. That one, geez, I don't even know how long it is now, nor do I really care. I've heard rumors, but I've never bothered trying to substantiate them, that it has

stopped publication in Japan. But I do not know anything for certain on the matter. And it would surprise me very much if she had actually written an ending to that one, just because of her history. Ranma's the same way. I don't, that one has stopped, but I don't, I've heard that the ending is not popular an ending. Too many loose ends and no real conclusion to it. That's just what I've heard, I haven't actually bothered to check on that.

R   **Hmm. You were also talking about things that irritated you in anime. Could you describe some of that a little more?**

N   Oh god, a lot of the things that irritate me are actually fan behavior, and certain ways. [laughs] Silly, that. But one thing that irritates me about certain animes is, well, the genre known as harem anime, although I do actually like some of those series. It's just that some, the thing is, it's not so much in anime. It shows up in every field of fiction, printed or otherwise, is that there are, tons of different series that will share the same bloody plot. "With almost no changes, we'll swap the characters around, they can get bigger boobs, give that one green hair, make that one look like a two-year-old, make this 18-year-old look like she's 14, look like she's 10." I mean, they just sort off, too many series are just made of stock characters pasted together onto a plot that's been used 800 times, much like American television. Except they try to have a plot, unlike reality TV. So yeah, that's probably one thing that irritates me, but I know it's not just anime, or that. Yeah, that's probably about it.

R   **Okay. Describe for me a show you can think of that has stock characters in it.**

N   Oh geez, where do I begin? Magikano, Love Hina, Shuffle to an extent, but this is just more recent series. I'm not too familiar with older ones. I suppose, I suppose to a good extent, Silent Mobius, but I actually like [laughs] that one, so I don't care. You have to keep in mind, the stock characters unfortunately show up in everything, from Italian opera to anime to German opera, and they're just everywhere. And everyone uses them cause, well you kinda need them. [laughs] Anyway, so for any given series you set in a boarding house, from Maison Ikkoku to Love Hina to Mahbora, to Mahoraba, not Mahbora, you will have a drunk, a bum with no apparent job, a character who is a housewife basically, no matter what her age, be it she's, I would say mid-to-late 20s, 13, or 18, or 16 who basically spends a good deal of time taking care of the house, cleaning, and doing laundry, and there will be this kind of wishy-washy loser of a man who somehow still winds up with at least one of the girls. And it's also usually some kind of woman who, usually female, who has a, an usual prowess with a weapon of some kind who is willing to pound the man

R   **[laughs]**

N   for no reason at all. Although this does not necessarily show up in every series. But a major theme is that the man in the series gets hurt quite often.

R   **Hmm, okay. Also, describe for me anything else you learned about Japan from anime.**

N   Geez, from anime. Hmm, not terribly much really that I'm willing to say is concrete and I actually believe. Not much that I would actually believe is true. But I know that public baths, much like, but that, I know that much, including

both my, bath in the city or perhaps like hot springs resort type thing. They usually show up all over the place, even on other planets. Yeah.

R   **[laughs]**

N   And I know a fair amount about Japanese food from that, from anime. At least a thing or two. And I also know that the guy on, that the chairman of Iron Chef is actually kinda tame

R   **[laughs]**

N   compared to certain TV personalities; the characters created for anime, which is quite a statement if you're familiar at all with that series.

R   **Hmm. Okay.**

N   Not much

R   **All right. How would you compare anime to what you might find in American media?**

N   [sighs] I'd say that it obeys Stergeon's Law; 99 percent of it is crap! But 99 percent of everything is crap. Now we might not say this of the classics, or anything of a sufficient age. This is because all the crap has been forgotten and buried from that age. Well most of it. Some of it probably still survives in one edition or another.

R   **Mm-hmm.**

N   But, yeah, I would say that's the big thing about anime. That all too often, some fans won't forget just because seem to think Japan creates everything wonderful, even though they are reputedly have used panty vending machines. And I have heard a friend who's traveled there say yes, she has, or he has seen them. But that they were shut down for a while at least by a certain laws on the sales of antiques or second-hand merchandise. I know that's about all I know about it. Another thing is that they use many of the same plots and stock characters you will find, if you look hard enough, in any Western genre. Especially corresponding to like fantasy and sci-fi, and the various subsets of those. And quite often they will animate old Western stories, maybe with a change or two here and there, and with varying amounts of success, much like any Western film adaptation of a movie. What am I saying? Any film adaptation of a novel or a play or anything, so. It's just a name for a type of medium produced in one place, nothing more, nothing less. Although, I will say that I'm more into manga than anime lately, really. But I've always been a partisan of things in print, so.

R   **How would you compare how they adapt things from print to anime compared to how they adapt things from print to visual media in America?**

N   Well quite often, what they adapt into anime are manga, comic books basically. But even I who will say manga instead of comics for some reason, I dunno why, even though at its best, American comics are at least as good as best, as the best in manga. The worst of each are, well, should be burned by the way. And because they look up and adapt from what is already a visual media, not text, they do it very well. The character designs might change a little, but most often they adapt quite well. They follow the same plot lines, usually. Though Full Moon is an exception, I believe Sailor Moon has certain exceptions to it, but I'm not learned enough to comment. Yeah, but, Silent Mobius is another one, especially at the beginning of the series. But they made that one follow the manga which is still

ongoing, so it hasn't, so it doesn't anime style with a proper ending to it. Just kind of an add to, buy the rest of the manga when it comes out. It's not as blatant as that, obviously, but.

R **Mm-hmm.**

N So they do it quite well when they adapt already, like, accommodate to it. Now I believe that the series Crest of the Stars and the Banner of the Stars series were adapted from novels, as was the Vampire Hunter D from actual print novels. I have not read the D, I have not read any of those novels because they're not yet available in English, or no presence. I remember the First Vampire Hunter D novel is available, but the, either the style of the author or the style of the translator is not what I'd like enough to actually buy it and read all of it. I will say that the Crest of the Stars, those two series feel a little rushed, especially when they re-condensed them later into the manga in three volumes, one volume for each series. That was way too compressed! But the series themselves are okay, although the dubbed voice acting is quite atrocious. And, but, also recently there's been an adaptation of Dumas's Count of Monte Cristo, which I believe is actually better than most American film adaptations, even though it differs considerably from the novel and setting and in how many characters are portrayed. But overall it is actually a decent story, unlike say Troy. All copies of that should be burned and the director hanged! Or burn and hang him, like they did to St. Leibowitz, who is not actually a real saint by the way, only in a canton called Leibowitz in case anyone thinks I'm Catholic.

R **[laughs]**

N And that's actually a very good novel, but anyway. American adaptations can be good, you know. I'm not sure if it's actually American, but Lord of the Rings is okay as a story, but most hardcore fans of the books have many issues. I have great issue with the portrayal and omission of certain events, and I especially have a problem with how everyone is portrayed in some ways, and I'm not going to go into it here cause, well, I need to actually particularly to know better, and this is definitely not the time for that. But the Spider-Man movies have been pretty good. Batman Begins is a good movie, again those are comics, but. Sometimes they're good, sometimes they're bad, it's all a shot in the dark, but fairly or unfairly, most movie adaptations of books and, especially video games have been roundly panned, and vice-versa. Video game movies, movie, video games based on movies also tend to be pretty atrocious.

R **Hmm.**

N It's just how it goes. Seems to be, no one really knows why, although there's many theories. I'm sure, but I haven't read any of them, and I'm not going to try to put one together in five minutes.

R **Hmm, okay. Tell me about a time in which you had a disagreement with someone over an anime.**

N Oh geez. Anytime someone brings up the sub versus dub debate.

R **[laughs]**

N Because quite frankly it's silly. Okay, I mean there's, I'm sure that if you actually knew Japanese you will find, there's a good chance you will find Japanese voice actors to be just as unconvincing as American ones. It is probably that you do not

know the language, and you do not know how they tend to show emotion in that language. I can't actually say if this is true or not, but that might be part of it. Another part of it is might just be this kind of elitism that, translating for the masses dumbs it down somehow. I will agree that most of the American changes are frankly stupid. Like referring to a bottle of sake as tea when it quite clearly has the kanji for "booze" on the label. Or painting suits on some people when they're in a bath. Or geez, I think recently there's a lollipop instead of a cigarette in One Piece, which I haven't seen and refuse to watch just because the premise sounds so bloody stupid! The series in general, I mean. And I generally agree that yes, the editing is just in general, editing of works should be done with care, and not to remove material that might offend someone. I mean, but in general I don't like dubs in and of themselves, only when the voice acting is literally just terrible like it was in Crest of the Stars, where it sounded like it was being done by William Shattner's brood of illegitimate children.

R   **[laughs]**

N   Trained by him

R   **[laughs]**

N   to act. And there's a couple of issues like that, but I can't bring any to mind, so. Yeah, that's probably the biggest disagreement. And it's never gonna go to rest just because of the nature of people, and the fans. But the truth is that dubs are what fuel sales, because that's what most people watch more than likely. Because subtitles are distracting, I will say that. Most disagreements I have with people are whether or not a series is good or not. And that's just taste and of no importance whatsoever for anything, except for deciding what to watch on the car DVD player on the twenty-hour trip to Orlando, or wherever. So, yeah.

R   **Tell me about a time where you had a disagreement with someone over whether or not a series was good or not.**

N   Oh geez, trying to think, sadly I can't think of, I can't really think of an example from anime, unless it would be something like, say, trying to convince someone to watch something older like Rose of Versailles, but it's, in anime fandom particularly, whether because of the age of the fans or some other factor, they have this belief that newer is better. And I will point them, geez, but that's obviously not true. But the main disagreement I have, I've ever had over a series with someone, several someones actually, including people in both anime clubs I've been part of is Babylon 5. Certain people believe that it is a rip-off of Deep Space 9, even though its pilot went in production earlier according to a source on the Internet, including the creator of the show. It was pitched and produced earlier than Deep Space 9's pilot. Deep Space 9 went to air earlier for one reason or another. And if you ever actually take the time to follow both series, they develop very differently from the start. With Babylon 5 the Earth government goes off, it starts slowly, but it's very inevitable that as the story progressed, you actually see it took an insanely different direction. There's never a civil war in the Federation fought itself. There's never any kind of military dictatorship taking over Earth. And certainly no kind of police state federation. In the main Tech universe of course, not the alternate universes would, not the alternate universes, so. Just it's a very good series in its own right. You just have to watch

all of it. It's not episodic enough to judge on one episode because it is one great story. So that, even though some people refuse to admit this and say it's just bad.

R   **But back to disagreements about anime.**

N   I can't really think of anything at the moment, but it's not really something I talk about to other people as much as say video games and complaining about classes, and other things.

R   **Hmm, okay. You were also talking about crazy people in fandom.**

N   [laughs]

R   **Could you go into more detail on that?**

N   [sighs] Well, okay, I will say that, well, I've gotten half of all their fan fiction. I don't like much of it these days. I've read a few, I will confess to that. But I've mostly gone to writing semi-original fic now. But with fan fiction predictably, there are people who will go around and flame authors who write pairings that they don't agree with. That's what I mean by "crazy". And I will say that, by Sturgeon's Law, a lot of fan fiction is really, really bad. Yeah, but, and some people can be very irrationally attached to their pet pairings and theories, even though if you read Lord of the Rings with enough attention, you know that Elgorn is only a year or so younger than Bormeo's father, or Farifineer's father. So, which, and of course Alwin's a couple of thousand years older than him, but no one cares. Same with Luffian and Baron and Adrio and Tour I think was her husband. It's been a while since I've read similarly. Eh, anyway, crazy people in fandom, yeah. I wanna call cosplayers crazy, although some of them show deliberate obliviousness to their own body type in the costume they wear. You know, ManFaye. [laughs] I will say the name, and if you know Faye Valentine from Cowboy Bebop. It's not like he's a 400 pound giant or anything, it's just the idea. At least he was on Unscrewed. But yeah, and if you go to an anime con, there will be like, I don't want to give numbers, but there will be an obscene number of Na-roo-to players or Inuyasha players, both those characters and characters from the series in general. And, what I wish is that a con would do a Highlander style thing for cosplaying where. Well, fighting is illegal in most countries. The idea is that there would only be one person allowed to be each character. They decide this by fighting to the death. Now I suggested it for one con because they have what amounts to a self-cleaning amphitheater out back behind the con building. There an amphitheater and there's a fountain, so turn the fountain on, blood goes away. Sadly, it is illegal to arrange this kind of thing in most countries. And even if we were to hold a con in international waters to have this event,

R   **[laughs]**

N   too many, the fact that we come back with half the congers gone would trigger cause for investigations by authorities as soon as we touched land. But it's an idea. It's a good id, it's not a good idea [laughs]. That's another, I don't know why, but the Na-roo-to fans have kind of irritated me for some reason 'cause they're so many, and they can be kind of. They're referred to as "Na-roo-tards" by people online now and then. They're just very attached to it. And it's the new DBZ or Inuyasha or whatever. Series is dated by now, so. They'll move on to

another thing within a few years or a new generation of fans will be onto something, it passes.

R   **Can you describe any interaction you've had with the Na-roo-to fans?**

N   Not terribly much. I don't really hang around, I don't really hand around the younger fans so much because that seems to be what, who are really into it. Not surprising, because that's who was into DBZ five years ago, seven years ago. Has it been that long really? Damn. [laughs] Yeah, I don't, haven't been around them much, not to talk to anyway. But, all fans of the series get a little irrational about theirs, now and then. I just get irrational about disliking people who are into the latest new series.

R   **Okay. And finally, what have you heard about One Piece?**

N   Bunch of very strange and uncalled for edits mostly. The premise is something about a guy who eats some fruit and can now stretch himself like Mister Fantastic, except that Mister Fantastic has a brain! So basically he's Mister Fantastic's half-wit brother without the hot wife.

R   **[laughs]**

N   Well it doesn't, well of course he's not old enough to be married I don't think. I just, I might have read a piece of the manga when I borrowed someone's Shounen Jump at one point many years ago, but the premise of the series just has never appealed to me. And I have no intention of ever following it. No.

R   **Okay. Okay, I guess that can wrap it up here. I just wanted to thank you for participating. You've helped me out a lot.**

N   Yeah, and thanks for letting me ramble on about random things.

R   **[laughs]**

N   Yeah, it's fun.

R   **All right.**

APPENDIX C

Two Participant Observation Fieldnote Samples

Below are two samples of field notes that were taken as part of data collection. The first

set is from observing the Imagenu anime club, and the second set is from observing the Kine

Outmake anime club.

Sample One – An Observation of Imagenu

8:00 p.m.

28 males, two black, one Asian
11 females, one black

Irene goes to apologize for the showing list week, specifically Master Magma. She then presents
some merchandise such as keychains, T-shirts, "big metal signs" for Futurama. She doesn't
really know if anyone really likes them, but now she is encouraging people to go to a Cartoon
Network presentation. Sporadic cheers are heard from the audience. She continues to detail
what's going on, and more cheers come from the audience still.

She then talks about how they will be back in South PJ later, and also the agenda for the next org
meeting, specifically for the conventions coming in. Diana goes, "Go, go go!"

"Animazement is one prize, Acen is another. Acen money has to be to me by this Friday. So
come to the org meeting and give me money to go. It will be fun to go to a con other than AWA,
because they're more fun than AWA most of the time. There's also MDOA, and more cool stuff
that we'll be giving away at the game."

"Come or I'll have to shoot someone," says cool Harry.

"Okay, now it's time to start the anime," says Irene.

"Woo-hoo, Japanese demon schoolgirl porn!" someone exclaims.

"Oh, and one more thing. Don't heckle during the show. You can think they're totally gay, but
don't yell out, okay. The girls don't think of them as being gay. They think of them as cute little
friends who want to be friends."

"No, they were really needed," says Nick.

"No, you think I'm joking, but I'm really pissed off, Nick. It was a touching episode and it was not deserving of that. They were just trying to be friendly. Not everyone lives in the gutter," says Bob after some of Nick's taunting that indeed there should have been taunting of that episode.

8:09

The episode of Angelic Layer starts out with the white angled being guided by the wheelchair-bound woman. The auditorium is relatively silent as one member lays on the floor with a book open and laying on a blanket with a blanket over her.

Most of the audience continues to be transfixed to the screen, some looking away, and others watching intently. Neville walks into the room and then looks at the audience, and walks down the aisle.

The scene cuts to Misaki sleeping with Hikaru. The Aunt remarks that it will be the first parent-child reunion in 7 years. It then cuts to the theme.

Two women are smiling and talking silently to themselves. Other small conversations are being carried out. Irene takes some pizza and shares it with a member behind her, and then to Nick. Diana seems to be looking at her cowbell that she's wearing in celebration of the Nanami cowbell episode of Utena.

Irene continues her conversation. Most are still looking at the screen. The opening title pans, and then the episode starts with the action once again. It shows scenery from another Angelic Layer tournament. Bob then walks down the aisle with two drinks, a Coke and a Sprite, in hand and walks to sit next to Irene, giving her the sprite.

Some chuckles come out of the brown-haired characters' use of puppets of tow of the main characters. Everyone laughs when she uses them to show the male character's crush.

They keep watching as Misaki is being led by the hand by another of the male Angelic Layer players. The male character says, "Try licking your wrist. Now smell it." "What I weird scent," says Misaki. "The male character says that he lied, and that gives most people a good chuckle. He says something else, causing even more laughter. The giggles keep going for a little while.

Harryn walks down the aisle and sits down. Hakoto and Misaki are preparing to play backstage. The audience is calm and transfixed to the screen. Some look interested, others watch passively.

Misaki remembers how far she has come from when she first got into Angelic Layer.

8:16

The first match is about to start. The woman laying in front is reading and writing something on top of her notepad. The screen shows the opening spectacle of graphics and sound for the TV audience. The regular audience looks somewhat interested as a whole.

The screen shows some more of the angels. The announcer has to give a disappointing announcement. People throw things at him, causing some laughter from this audience.

A spectacular angel flies into the layer, the white one before guided by Misaki's mother. Misaki is stunned. Everyone in the TV audience cheers. They show the dues, who is Misaki's mother.

Most of the people here are sitting in the middle of the auditorium, with some scattered individuals in the sides of the auditorium. Everyone laughs at Misaki's nervousness. Hatoko compares the champions of AL to night and day, like royalty, even gods.

Gamer hair waves his head from side to side. Someone gives an airy laugh when the sister get into a fight. The men, including Icchan have to go out, causing some laughter.

The woman says that he has to guard the wheelchair champion from getting away, provoking a little bit of laughter from the audience. Icchan and Misaki's mom get some conversing in. Her mom wants to see a truly great fight.

Midpoint of the show. The audience is still watching. Nick gets out of his seat to go out of the auditorium past Diana. The fight onscreen starts, with the Angles in some sort of simulated forest. "She can't let her guard down," says the male protagonist. "Even if you chase me, your hands will never reach me," says one of the players. The fight is punctuated with announcer's thoughts, and shots to the deus's faces. Then it shows three of the men who are in charge of the tournament.

8:24

One of the angels is being pummeled. One of the audience, a young man with dark hair smiles at his female companion, possibly about the action onscreen. The "hyper-model" as the male protagonist calls it smashes one of the simulated trees. Ulrich is smiling at the fight. One of the angels is beat mercilessly, with her body in the midst of broken trees. People laugh. The angle is declared the victor.

The audience laughs some more about something. "I think you should see that person's strength with your own eyes," Hakoto says to Misaki.

The second battle is about to begin. "Open the Future! Wings of Athena!" say the Mom. "Angel, fall in!" she then says in English. She goes against an angel in black "bunny clothes" and high boots. The battle looks more like a dance than an actual fight. The mother's angel is always stunning. The TV audience marvels and the announcer tightens up his legs beside himself, prompting laughter from this audience.

The fight continues, with the mom's angel looking like a frizzed TV with the bunny angel not able to even touch her. They go up a white mountain. The audience is paying close attention. A few laugh as the battle continues. The mom's angel then jumps up with the other and basically breaks her on her back as her eyes glow red. She tosses the other angel down the mountain. The TV audience cheers.

8:29

The current audience keeps looking at the action as Hotoko and Misaki talk on a park bench. Misaki talks about how great Athena is as an angel. They both speak in high-pitched voices, especially the older Misaki. Someone laughs at Misaki's mention of the Angel Egg.

They girls rigde up some cart. Irene's hand is on Bob as she leans on him. The two girls are holding a pinky as they descend quickly to the ground as part of a ride. Some laugh as they keep their promise to fight Athena while plunging down scared.

The ending theme comes on. Some sporadic conversations break out. David runs out of the auditorium. John is walking down the aisle and then stretches right next to me. He then leans to see what I am typing, making his presence very known. Bob then walks to the other side with the audiovisual equipment. He and John, who has walked towards him, are conversing. David then runs back down to be back in his seat. The conversing continues as it gets quiet before the next week preview.

The preview shows Hikaru on a boat, and then the advertisements fore the Angelic Layer video begin. Most are watching while some more watch as they speak to their friends, about five of them.

Bob stops the tape and then says, "Okay, so now it's time for Inuyasha," while prompts some "woo-hoo!'s" from the audience, though only about two or three.

The screen is blue with "Notevision". Some isolated wisecracks related to something John said are yelled out a little bit. David then says something to Matt. Bob continues setting up the tape.

"Okay, so apparently the air conditioner is pulling the screen back," says John, prompting some laughs as he looks at it doing the pulling. Inuyasha starts out very loudly, drowning out the last part of his sentence. F then comes back down the aisle to sit next to Diana. He is pretending to "dance" to the music by bopping his head and swaying his body as he continues to talk to Diana.

A woman the n comes to Bob to see if she can retrieve something from behind the screen. The song reaches its high point as Diana sings along with it. About a quarter of the audience is having some sort of conversation, and then the episode begins.

8:36

Bob then goes back into his seat, having to go past David and Harry. The episode does a flashback for some of the reasons why the characters are opposing Naraku. Bob then says, "Sorry guys, this is last week's episode," but does not shut down the tape. The Japanese-speaking guy then walks down to sit close to the front. He waves hey to me, which I acknowledge.

Miroku is explaining how Naraku can give birth to a woman by being made up of many youki. Some laughter is heard, but I don't know why.

No conversations are going on really. The woman laying in front is looking away from the screen, almost as if she is asleep. I cough a couple of times. Mikoku and Sango are talking while Kagome adds to the conversation. Harry then gets up and takes a newspaper with him.

Naraku is with his maiden as people continue to each munch on snacks or simply watching. Dark-haired guy is talking to his friend some more. The skinny olive-skinned guy comes in with a coke, which he opens while trying to uncrick his neck.

The scene goes to a marsh with a woman cowering behind some reeds. Three men find what they believe to be a monster, and Sango in peasant dress knocks one of them down. "She's beautiful, let's take her back with us," say one of them, prompting air laughter from one of the members.

"Are you the boss?" Inuyasha says while punching the man, getting some laughter from the audience. Diana is smiling broadly as she anticipates why the woman is very glad to see Inuyasha. The woman, Koharu is explaining who she is to Miroku. Diana is laughing very heartily and points out to Nick something is about to happen.

Koharu keeps telling her story of hoer parents dying. She then talks about how she meets Miroku as he feeds her. "How old are you?" "11," she says. "Hey, will you bear my child?" he asks, prompting lots of laughter form the audience. Miroku now faces the sanction of Kagome and Sango, getting even more laughter from the audience.

Othe dark-haired guy speaks more to his friend. One of the women laugh at Koharu's enthusiasm from Miroku, and then when she says that she can bear Miroku's child, the audience laughs as a whole. They laugh a little more when Kagome says something.

When Sango expresses jealousy, and she says that he never asked her to bear her child, one of the women go, "ooooooh." Then Miroku does his traditional proposal, and Sango exclaims that he didn't have to do it right then, more laughter is heard from the audience.

8:46

The action pauses a bit to go to the bucolic scenery. A rooster crows as people are generally silent and attentive. The group tells Koharu that it is dangers to be with them as they travel. Miroku then says to come over here, and he takes Koharu to a patch of grass below the hills.

Miroku holds her tight and says that he can't guarantee that he can protect her. "parting with you is painful for me too," he says.

To Kagome, it looks like that he is hitting on Koharu, getting some laughter from the audience. Inuyahsha remarks that he senses tension form Sango, prompting an "electric look" from her and a full-body flame engulfing her, prompting much laughter from the audience.

As Miroku says that he might make a mistake and get her pregnant, then gets a gasp of disbelief from Kagome and Sango, prompting even more laughter from the audience. Inuyasha tells Koharu to cry, and that they won't leave just this minute. Kohaur looks excited and acknowledges it, prompting laughter from the audience. AS Kohaur says that she is glad she can prepare a bath from Miroku, two of the women are smiling and looking at each other in disbelief.

The gang is eating dinner at separate little tables. Miroku says that the food they're eating might be getting cold when Inuyasha says they should look outside. They then see a town mob with torches coming towards them. The audience is transfixed, but two men on the back side row are talking. F wraps up a wrap and puts it in a bigger wrapper, which he wraps.

The action starts with Inuyahsa punching the townsfolk and leaping from one to the other. "Inuyasha, they are ordinary humans!" Miroku says, and Inuyasha says, "I know that!" Kagome and Sango are inside, and they prepare for battle as Koharu tells them of the circumstances occurring inside. Youkai had done in some elder people. Kagome doesn't understand since Inuyasha said that it didn't smells like youkai.

A small child is standing with a mirror. The audience doesn't seems as attentive it was with Angelic Layer, with some slumped on fists, but for the most part they are paying attention. Something hits Sango's boomerang as she holds it, knocking her down. The child says, "Kagome," and Kagome thinks that the girl is a youkai. The girl tells her to give her her soul, and some vapors come out of Kagome as Sango holds her up after she nearly collapsed. The audiences doesn't change to any considerable degree. However, one woman is holding another man in the right back row.

Inuyasha continues to fight, and Naraku's handmaiden Kagura says that they should have just killed them all, as it would be easier. She then tells Inuyahsa and Miroku that she has now captured Kagome's soul, as she did the townspeople's.

"What are you, scared?"

"Miroku, go back to Kagome. I will get this chatter box!" Inuyasha says as he pulls out Tetsaiga to deflect some of Kagura's light weapons flung at him. Miroku is running away to see what is going on. Some audience members chuckle slightly.

Miroku finds Koharu, and she is glad to see him. Sango then leaps at the girl to stop her taking Kagome's soul, and he is deflected by some sort of invisible barrier. Koharu is looking sad, and then looks angry, as if she is about to strike Miroku. The show then cuts to the closing song at this cliffhanger. The audience then breaks out into sporadic conversation, presumably about what

just happened. Diana then sings along with the ending theme. Irene and Harry talk, then Harry and David. Travis is talking with John. Some people exit and enter the auditorium. A few others keeping watching the screen. About 30% of the people are conversing, laughing, and carrying on as the closing them wraps up.

Next week's preview is showing. Some of the conversations start to cut down, though one with Han and his friends keep going on in earnest. Bob then stops the tape, and then people talk much louder and freer.

"Well, I hope you all have your drugs ready for the next one," says John, shaking his fist in triumph. Many laugh along with him. They then begin to show Benobashi shopping district, causing a few "woo-hoo!'s" in the audience.

<p style="text-align:center">Sample Two – An Observation of Kine Outmake</p>

10 white males
1 white female
1 Asian male

7:00 p.m.

Gene begins by playing both the Fruits Basket preview as well as a live action preview for some live action American series reminicient of Malcolm's in the Middle. "I'm hot for teacher," says ponytail, and the short-haired glasses goes, "I'm surprised that you can remember Van Halen."

They then talk about whether or not it's Pioneer or Geneon. They then start playing the DVD opening. "This is close enough for the dub, forget it," says Gene. The opening is actually in English. "Just know that this is hig-speed voice and some of the video from the DDR projects, where they actually had to slow down their mouth for the DDR," says Gene. "I miss the Micromachine guy, that was a great ad campaign," a blondish guy talks to Emile. Gene asks for the time, and they say that it's 7:04. He then says that someone else had set it up. "Anything we should know?" asks short haired guy in glasses, and Gene goes, "Only be quiet, and no flaming."

They play the opening, the super-fast one. "I gotta hunt down some old anime stuff for this winter," Gene says to the audience. The audience seems pretty entrancede with what's going on. "I think that's enough volume," Gene says as he rises up from the controls, stumbling, and then making his way to his seat, sitting next to the lone female, neither Eileen or Laura

"They used the 2nd opening because of copyright issues," says Gene, and Ken says, "No, licensing issues, I'll explain later. Sana is waking up, or at least her wacky alarm is trying to get her to do so. She is up on a mountain, hearing "School," and the ponytailed guy goes, "Riiiiiicola!" The title says this is where Sana meets her pimp who will take her to elementary school, and someone goes, "What the fuck!" and flare goes, "This is what Eileen picked out."

"Is that a chipmunk or a squirrel," asks blonde guy, and the woman goes, "It's a squirrel." "Apparently she got that from Fujiko," says short-haired glasses, commenting on Mama's cherry blossoms coming out of her hat.

Sana fans over Rei, and Gene says that he thinks he saw this somewhere before, but he doesn't know where. "See, I think that symbol was the confederacy of Zeon…principality, not confederacy," says blondish guy, to some sort of symbol in the opening.

Rei has taken Sana to her school, and reminds her that she has a filming of her show. She gives him a sweet kiss on the cheek, and while a couple of guys smile, there's really no reaction to this. Sana opens the door, and sees chaos in the classroom, with kids throwing objects at each other. There's not much reaction, except for Ken smiling. The girls are talking about how the boys are pesky, and picking on the girls. Still not much of a reaction, except for the smiles as Sana goes to try and resume business as usually, but Akito is sitting his foot on her desk. He's ignoring him, and she's getting frustrated. Sana is kicked away with her desk. "Was that Babbit?" asks a guy, and the female goes, "No, it's Bobbit." "John Wayne Bobbit," goes the short-haired guy. "It's interesting that he was named John." The class seems to have gotten a little more subdued on screen, until the boys throw dust balloons at a teacher turned to the blackboard. Ken seems to be really enjoying this, but everyone else seems subdued themselves, except for another Tech student.

Akito is listening to music through his headphones, and Gene is wondering what he might be trying to pull out. The class goes back into chaos, and a male coach who tried to keep order runs after the escaping teacher. Ken is really grinning, but everyone else except Emile, who is also grinning, seems to just be taking it in.

7:14

"You have Game Boy!" goes the short-haired guy in glasses, seeing a teacher holding an electrical device of some sort. Sana is getting her hair done for the show. "Rei-kun is my boyfriend and pimp," says Sana to her stylist, and that gets laughs from Gene and short-haired glasses guy. There's also general laughter when she also says that

The sound goes silent, and people are wondering why. Ken explains the issue, that the voice actor did not allow them to use his voice because he had already sung the opening theme. Ken and the other guy keep talking about it, and short-haired glasses guy goes, "Who the hell cares?" and Ken says, "They're Japanese," as an explanation. The sound had since come on, but I'm not sure if anyone else in the conversation was really interested in Ken and glasses-guy's conversation about licensing.

Sana is shouting something in the camera about how much she hates Akito, and that gets plenty of laughs and smiles form all around. "You poop it out, and it's all terrific!" goes Sana as she's standing on the couch, and that gets plenty of laughs.

Mama warns that Sana may be pounced upon by the boys because of her actions on camera against Akito. Blonde guy at least is smiling as Mama explains this potential revenge. Sana asks

Rei to protect her, to "ship them off somewhere," and Mama then goes to Rei and warns him not to do anything beyond a kiss on the cheek, and Rei nervously agrees. That gets laughst from short-haired guy, flare, and Emile, and smiles from others.

7:20

Sana does her usual playing on her instrument thing, and then plops down next to Rei-kun. "You have a feeling that you want to kick him in the face," says Emile. "He's wearing sunglasses," says a guy in the back with the moustache, and short-haired guy goes, "That's probably why I'm thinking of it," and then there's a discussion on Gendo having glasses himself between short-haired glasses guy and Ken.

They're in the car, and he drops her off at school. Rei asks if she should escort her, and Sana says that she's worried about her, and then shows her "Russian kick" that a few in the audience laugh at. "This device will send you a signal," Rei says to Sana about mutual electonic devices, and they both vibrate when they try it? "Why did Eileen choose such perverted titles?" asks Gene, and short-haired glasses guy goes, "You're only thinking that because you're perverted," but in a light-hearted way.

Sana seems to be confronted by a gang of boys. "what's wrong with being cute and a little smart-alec?" asks Sana as she's with a bunch of girls. The girls go away, and Sana continues to criticize the boys. "Floks like you are called the 'asses that borrow the lion's skin,'" and that really gets the boys after her. About 3 or 4 guys are smiling, and her face apparently gets pounded in. She shows up to her show in mummified badages to the point of comedy, with blue-heart glasses. She then enacts some romantic sunset in Hawaii with Rei where her face is still pounded in, and about 3 guys are smiling during this fast-paced (as always) scenery. However, this was all just speculation on Sana's thought as Rei goes and gets the boys off her back. "He supposed to be hitch-hiking?" asks short-haired guy, commenting on Akito's backpack slung over his shoulder, and the blondish guy goes, "He's supposed to be Stewy."

Hayama seems to be using colored ink with his friends, shooting at the teacher water guns with paint. "She just needs the board of education," blondish guy says as the teacher is huddled next to a chalkboard. The coach is sprayed too, and Akito says that he's exposed the adults' true nation. However, he gets shot with blue paint by Sana-chan, and there is only one guy smiling while everyone looks on with some apprehension. The ending theme music comes on. "That's extremely unnatural," says the short-haired guy. As the ending theme images come on, ponytailed guy goes and fast-forwards through it. A guy in a green shirt and dark hair comes to me, asking if Treasurer Adam is here, or will be here in Saturday. I say that I don't know, and he says that he's trying to buy a membership. "Join the club, so am I, so…" I say to him, and he laughs a little and leaves. Ken comes to me and asks me for a ride home, and I agree.

7:29

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The next episode is starting. "So he wears a watch on the outside of his sleeve," says short-haired guy as Akito is wiping off the blue paint. The girls are trying to use a chant to get the "devil" Akito out of the room, but to no avail. There isn't much reaction, except a few smiles, and some chuckling from Ken.

Apparently Sana gets Akito out of the room. The girls surround her to celebrate her victory after saying…something to him to get him out of the room. Akito washes up in the boys' room. Okhi is in the room with him, and he says that he's glad that he didn't have to beat up on Sana. The boys are congratulating him for what he was able to do, and Akito says that "They'll do it after school," and the boys erupt in celebration.

Sana goes and handles a "gateball stick" like a twirling baton. She messes up, and short-haired guy and blondish guy are saying something to themselves. Okhi says to Sana that she's too much for Akito, that she's like a mongoose and he's a cobra, and that gets a few smiles, and big ones from Ken, as she images themselves as these animals.

"Keep out of this, you homo!" says Sana as she bats him away with the baka mallet, and he declares his love for her, and blondish guy goes, "Take off your vest and say that." Sana seems pretty unphased by the declaration of love by Ohki.

Sana resuces some female classmates from the pond. Apparently the boys tried to drown her. Sana is enraged as the other girls try to take her to the nurse. She's never trembled out of anger before, and Akito says congratulations. Sana slaps him, and other than smiling blondish guy and Gene, everyone else seems wrapped in the tension.

Some bags of flower are dumped on Sana from above, and Sana takes him inside the warehouse for a small talk. Sana says it's time to split their guys, and Akito says that their butts are already split, getting a few laughs. Akito then starts to strangle her, and blondish guy goes, "Go Shinji on her," getting a few laughs from the front. Sana seems to be really getting angry at Akito for being unresponsive.

7:37

Then there's more silence. "So did they get something out of the gay hairstylist?" asks blondish guy, and short-haired guy says that it has something to do with the background music. Ken offers some more explanation about that period of silence. Sana apparently was victorious in one point in her karate class.

Mama is calculating something in an electronic Babbit book as Rei is saying something to her. "Goodness, it says that I have the personality of an angel, loved by everyone," says Mama, and that gets laughs from Gene and smiles from the blondish guy. "Sometimes people have to play dirty," says Mama when it comes to getting some sort of opportunity for Sana. That gets a few smiles, and not much else.

A snake and a variety of reptiles are thrown by Sana to Akito, and then she's threatening to throw vegetables at him, and then enacts some famous horror movie characters to threaten him.

It gets a chuckle or two, and smiles from the woman and Emile. She's then scraping her fingernails on the blackboard, and does it some more, then some more, and then some more until she falls over, getting laughs from Emile, ponytailed guy, and some others.

Sana then talks to Ohki about helping him with Akito, and you can tell that he's nervous around her. That gets some laughs, and Ohki scrambles away. "So, what are you doing ot me here, Hayama?!" asks Sana-chan in flaming anger.

The teacher runs away, but it appears that nothing was thrown at her first. Sana tries to get them to behave, but the boys pull out their scissors to cut her skirt. However, she's wearing bloomers, so it's okay. That gets a few smiles and some chuckles, but not comments. The boys take her away as she confronts Hayama. "Waah, the girl I like is being violated, and there's nothing I can do about it!" says Ohki, and other than Ken and Emile smiling, there isn't much audience reaction.

At the end of school, Sana is still trying to get out of the classroom closet. She's trying to think of a way out, and she remembers a rule where she had to climb up a mountain. Other than one guy smiling, no one else is really reaction. Even Emile seems to be reading a book in the faint light of the theater.

Sana finds some running pants which are pink and are tagged as being someone else's. A lightening storm comes on, and a small tornado gets her. "It's Super Mario Brothers 3," says short-haired glasses guy, and that gets some laughs from up front. "She must have blown a whistle or something," he follows with. Ken makes some other gaming-related comment.

7:45

Sana is cold after than rainstorm, but then she pulls the vibrating device from her pants that Rei had given her, and ponytailed guy goes, "Oh no!" as others laugh. "That is so not right," says Emile. Rei comes to help her after he is vibrated. After confronting Akito one more time, she and Rei go to the studio, but it seems that she's late, and her and Rei continue to bow to the boss for their missing the meeting. There aren't many reactions until Sana begins to get mad in the car and thinks of ways to get back at him. And then, only ponytailed guy and Gene are smiling, and Gene is chuckling.

Akito meets Sana outside of her house. She then asks what his weak spot is when he offers to reveal it. She goes to search for something in a pile of stuff, and she pulls out what looks like a leash of some sort. "The show gets kinkier and kinkier," says short-haired guy. "Can't get that out of your mind; the show has to be somewhat dirty," says Gene to short-haired glasses guy.

The 3rd episode comes on, this time with a little bit of flashback material. There's some conversation, and blondish guy says that he wants Babbit to do a guitar solo. "He plays drums," says Ken. Someone seems to be watching the show from the door in the furtherest back row, but then they go back outside.

There's more chaos in the classroom as Sana comes to class. Apparently, a soccer ball is thrown at her face. "Sana chan is scary when she's mad," says a female classmate, and that gets laughs from ponytailed guy.

Sana is then in some cheerleading exercise. She has then thrown something at Akito, and ponytailed guy says that she's looking more like a villainness, especially with the "mean" expression on her face as she innocently says that she didn't know Akito was there. Sana then says that her bungee cord can be climbed for about 30,000 yen, and that gets a tumbling fall of disbelief from classmates in the gym, and some laughs from ponytailed guy. She then is taunting Akito, and Akito aks if he would really be so stupid as to be like this, and she taunts him some more. The boys confront her, and the girls are wondering just whether or not Akito would really be climbing the bungee cord. Sana then says that if Akito doesn't climb up, that she can make him do whatever she wants, and if Akito wins, then she'll stop meddling in his affairs.

Sana seems assured of being victorious. Akito is about the climb the ladder, but again, there isn't much reaction until a boy goes, "Ha-ya-maaa!" as he climbs up. Sana sees how nervous he is as he's climbed all the way to the top. "Do not climb like this by yourself, consult parents for details," and short-haired guy guys, "Totally random shit." Hayama then then goes right down to the floor with the bungee cord, and he doesn't even make a peep, even though she Sana is listening with some listening devices for it. Sana then does the same jump, but as she makes the blank face of doom, this starts hysterical laughter as she screams her way down, especially from ponytailed guy, short-haired guy, and Ken. Everyone else is smiling. Her classmates ask if she was so confident, and she says that she's glad she has connections in high places, but as far as jumping from them, she's not really good at that. That gets laughs from the guys as she makes that explanation.

It seems that Sana has indeed lost, and that gets a chuckle or two from the audience. Sana is very mad at herself. Mama at home goes on about how she used to have fun tossing baby Sana up 3 meters, and that reminds Sana of why she hates falling, and she starts chomping on her book, to the laughter of the guys in the front. Sana is then singing a song of defeat. "What's going to happen at school?" asks Sana in her song.

The teacher seems to be scared of something again, holding a crawdad away from her as the boys torture her with them. "But they're so tasty," says short-haired glasses guy. The torture continues to go on, until the coach comes in, but then a pizza delivery somehow deflects him, a delivery to the boys. Emile and some other guy wonder why the coach just doesn't carry weaponry around, or why he just doesn't kick their asses. The coach leaves in yet another panic. Sensei looks upset talking to Sana in the nurse's office. It's as if she's the counselor to him, and he's wondering what exactly to say to her. There's not much reaction until she goes, "You're making out, aren't you?" asks the coach, and Sana says that everyone knows that he and their teacher are together, or at least suspect as such. That gets laughs from the guys, and he talks about how Akito tried to blackmail him by taking a picture of their making out. "How lewd!" Sana shouts, and that gets a good many smiles all around. She then says that she'll sing the "make out dance," more to some amusement.

"Is she supposed to be cha-cha?" asks Gene as she really seems to be dressed like her in her magical-girl form. Zenjiro in the lobster outfit talk about Sana's problem, and Rei says that she should take a compromising picture of Akito too, and Sana goes on about how smart Rei is as she glomps him, and that gets a few laughs, but not as many as "An eye for an eyeball, and a tooth for a toothball!"

After this part of the meeting, three interesting incidents occurred. One of Sana-chan's friends was wearing a tanktop-like yellow shirt with "Baby Doll" imprinted on it. A male in the front asked what that was for, and the one beside him said, "It's Engrish, there's plenty of it in anime."

During further discussion of why some of the Kodacha dialogue was missing, Hertzog explained that it was simply the fault of both the musician and the company, not just that "they're Japanese" as he previously explained.

The previews for another anime featured scantily clad but street clothes-wearing women with weapons fighting it out amongst one another. About 5 of the males, through speech or laughter, affirmed a rule that Herman had uttered. "The less clothes the woman is wearing, the more weapons she has."