CALL ME SUZAKU: AN ANALYSIS OF ANIME FANDOM, NARRATIVE, AND THE
PERFORMANCE OF IDENTITY

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A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department

of Comparative Cultural Studies

University of Houston

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In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

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By

Michael Wilson

December, 2013

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ABSTRACT

As part of a larger project investigating the uses of storytelling for education, identity management, and transformation, this thesis aims to explore the relatedness between narrative, identity, and performance. Using ethnographic fieldwork with anime fandom as an illustration, I craft a theory of narrative identity in which individuals incorporate elements from anime narratives into their personal identity, and attempt to project this identity through personal performances. Using an analytical framework, the triad of narrative identity, I document how anime fans use anime-specific narrative resources such as archetypes, icons, and language to shape their personal identity narratives and perform those identities to both anime fans and non-anime fans.

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Dr. Gordon has read this thesis many times, and has always found ways to make it clearer, stronger, and better. He has been invaluable in honing my many ideas into a clear research point and has kept me on track. The other members of my committee, Dr. Rasmussen and Dr. Shimko, have also given me incredible feedback and helped me situate my thoughts inside larger, scholarly circles. In the early days of this research, I was heading in many directions and I have Dr. Lang and Dr. Anderson to most thank for helping me focus. Dr. Storey, Dr. Whidmer, and Dr. Lindahl have been vital in terms of research methodology and career advice. And then, there are all my cohorts. You kept me sane and laughed with me when nothing seemed to be going right. Thank you!

This has also been somewhat of an auto-ethnography and an incredible learning experience. In the past year-and-a-half I have grown as a scholar, fan, storyteller, and human being. I have my informants to thank for a lot of that. The anime fans I have worked with have been enthusiastic, warm, friendly, open, and encouraging. Though they come from many different walks of life, each brings a different perspective that has fitted together to create a beautiful picture. Many of these fans have become my personal friends.

Nicole, my fiancé, deserves a special kind of thanks. No one has been more patient with me, more encouraging, more believing. More than that, she is my best friend, confidant, and partner. I cannot wait to see what life has in store for us, and I am excited to be sharing it with you. There is no one I would rather ride a toast gondola with.

Finally, I dedicate this work (though it is not religious in nature) to Christ and the Christian community. Christ has given me my mind and my curiosity. Whatever truths I unearth are His. May this be for his glory.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

She sits on his knee, eyes as wide as silver dollars, full of breath caged in her tiny chest. The girl dares not move. She dares not breathe. The story isn't over. Her father's voice is low and hushed as he continues the tale, an ancient epic passed down through the centuries. He's heard it many times. She's experiencing it for the first time. Her hands tremble and her heart beats fast. The chase is on - down the streets of the kingdom and through the woods.

Then the story ends. The glass slipper fits. The girl is saved.

The child's tense muscles loosen and her smile grows. Her dad laughs when she starts asking question after question about Cinderella. She will dream about being a fairy princess. And she will never forget the first time she heard.

Stories hold power. They captivate our imaginations, transport us to places unseen, and let us explore parts of ourselves otherwise forever hidden. They are great fun. But can stories be more?

Do they teach us how to act, what not to say, and how to be us? Are some narratives examples to live by, and pictures of what to avoid. Can stories effectively be used to teach, heal and transform lives?

Stories are part of humanity, and have been ever since, and probably before, humankind took to speech. John Niles (Niles 2010) even went as far as to call humankind *Homo Narrans*, "storytelling man." And as long as people have been telling stories, others have been analyzing, dissecting, and using stories for very intentional reasons: to affect the behavior and identities of individuals or entire populations. It seems that stories can be a great deal more than fun.

Stories for Education, Identity Management, and Transformation

I first posit that the "narrative" as a "sense-making" structure that gives the "bones" allowed for people to "create and give meaning to our social reality (Hydén 1997:50)." Further, I

suggest that narratives can be effectively and intentionally used to teach, to shape, and to guide behavior.

In a general sense, this is building off of work by Joseph Campbell (2008) and Carl Jung (1981), who had complimentary notions of archetypes as described in Christopher Vogler's book *The Writer's Journey* (2007) where mythic narrative elements (archetypes and journeys) act as guides for personal and social behavior. Bronisław Malinowski also discussed the idea of a social charter (1971) where myths act as guides or a sort of playbook for behavior.

In more recent years, Charlotte Linde, an anthropologist, theorizes about the use of narrative as a sense making structure and story as a resource for identity management during her ethnography of an American Insurance Company (2003; 2000). The definition of "narrative" will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two, but for now we will define story as a presentation of events, whether real or fictitious, involving three primary elements: plotting, character, and setting (Morrell 2006:51). Linde details how incoming employees use stories from training materials and social settings to mold their own identity and guide their behavior in the workplace.

James Wertsch, an anthropologist from Washington University in St. Louis, carries this further by postulating that narratives are the primary sense-making structure, and are carried collectively by groups as part of a narrative schema inside a social circle's collective memory (2008; 2000). Indeed, the study of illness narrative inside medical anthropology suggests that narratives can be used to, among other things: 1) to reconstruct one's life in line with a greater narrative, 2) as a form of strategic interaction in order to assert or project one's identity, and 3) to transform illness from an individual into a collective phenomenon.

So, it can be asserted that narratives are instrumental in creating, shaping, and projecting (or performing) identity.

Anime as an Example

How could one methodologically investigate narrative's role in the shaping and performing of identity? There are any number of answers to this question: in an educational setting, or by way of a writer's group, for instance. Perhaps one of the most striking examples could be found in fandom, where groups celebrate fictionalized narratives to an extreme degree and, therefore, incorporate elements of the stories into their own identities. For this thesis, I propose to look at fans of the Japanese animation art form, anime. I will do this through a participant-observation ethnography rooted in the anthropological tradition.

<u>*Why Study Fans?*</u>

"Most people are fans of something," says Jonathan Gray in the introduction to *Fandom: Identities and Communities in a Mediated World*; from Potterheads, to Trekkies to Country Music Fans and Football Fanatics. "Fandom is beautiful…and [has become] an ever more common mode of cultural consumption." (2007:1,7) Where fans were once seen as "odd" or "absurd" in their dedication to a single show or pastime, this fervor has become increasingly accepted and even promoted by enterprise. No longer is a fan someone who has "lost touch with reality," but simply someone who "really loves that show" in the words of David, an anime fan in his mid-fifties.

Moreover, fandom has become a means of identification, especially for those who may feel marginalized by mainstream society. As the world shrinks through globalization, individuals find themselves with a growing array of identities to choose from. No longer are we simply defined by kinship group, religion, or occupation. We can now identify with social movements (women, gay men, lesbians, ethnic groups, disabled persons, etc.), social circles (networks through online socialization like Facebook), or common interest groups such as motorcyclists, extreme sports, scrap bookers or anime fans (Linger 2005:23).

So, again, why study fans? Why specifically study anime fans?

One answer is simple from an anthropological perspective: anime fandom exists and is important to people. These fans create a culture around anime; a culture with its own rules, taboos, taxonomies, initiations, and language. A second answer is that anime is a fascinating media exchange. The very word *anime* has crossed from Latin to Anglo-Saxon to Modern English to Japanese and then back to Standard American English (Drout 2010). Anime as an art form is a Japanese interpretation of an originally Western art form: animation. Anime is imported to the States, where it is picked up by individuals, for the most part, with no Asian identity. Few better examples of globalization and transcultural media exchange exist.

Manga, Anime and Fandom in the United States

"Anime" literally means animation from Japan, and begins, like all animation, in the early

Figure 1: A cel from the earliest known Japanese animated short, 1917

20th century with the advent of animation production. Japanese animators of this era experimented with techniques that were being developed in the West, and eventually adopted the production pipeline (storyboard, character sheets, animation, in-betweeners, etc.) made successful by American and French animators. However, Japanese animation quickly became distinguished from Western animation primarily because of economic reasons. With Disney's release of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* in 1937 a domestic success, the Walt Disney Company was in a position to export second releases of their cartoons and features to places like Japan at radically discounted rates. Local production companies in Japan, who did not have the financial resources or the distribution base, had to sell their work at more expensive rates simply to break even. The competition forced Japanese animators to work more efficiently and develop techniques that could produce animation of quality at very low costs. The time leading up to the Second World War saw

Japan's nationalization of many art forms including animation. Kenzō Masaoka and Mitsuyo Seo used government help to make great strides in animation for education and propaganda. *Momotaro's Divine Sea Warriors* directed by Seo (1944), Japan's first feature length animated film, was sponsored by the Imperial Japanese Navy. The postwar period saw Japanese animation continue along these trajectories, attempting to compete with and in some ways mimic, Western animation. The 1960s, however, saw the rise of the characteristic "anime" style.

Anime is literally any animation from Japan. In popular circles, however, and especially among fans, anime is characterized by a specific visual style. Merriam-Webster defines anime as "a style of animation originating in Japan that is characterized by stark colorful graphics depicting vibrant characters in action-filled plots often with fantastic or futuristic themes" (2005). While it is true that anime is as varied as any art form, anime fans, critics and the general population identifies anime with some common visual tropes such as large eyes with richly

Figure 2: Screenshot from Momotaro's Divine Sea Warriors (1944)

colored corneas, multi-colored hair, stark animation, exaggerated style, and dramatic camera angles.

Frequently, visual cues take root in Japanese comics, Manga. Often, manga series will spawn anime spinoffs or remakes. Many of the terms used to describe anime also have their roots in manga such as *sojo* (anime or manga for girls), *shonen* (anime or manga for boys up to 18), *seinen* (anime or manga for young adults), and *seijin* or *hentai* (anime or manga with adult, often graphic themes). Certain reoccurring anime themes also owe their existence to manga. The "giant robot" genre, "real robot", and retelling of Japanese folklore were all made popular by the "god of manga," Osamu Tezuka. Manga series are also known for their very long runs and extensively complex

storylines. This has been adapted to anime in series like *Gundam* and *Pokémon* with universes more

complex than almost anything found in Western literature.

Here are some visual examples of common anime and manga style:

Anime fandom became more prominent in Japan during the 1970s. The Japanese film market began to shrink because of television competition, which led to experimentation and the adaptation of manga styles. This created many of the current features of anime and gave rise to a couple key genres such as Mech and Space Operas. A subculture in Japan formed around magazines. This group called was called *otaku* which generally means someone obsessed with something, usually games, anime or manga.

Astro Boy (1963) was the first television-produced anime series, and the first anime to be widely distributed overseas (Clements 2006). Through the 1970s and 1980s the worldwide export of anime grew beginning what has been called the "golden age of anime" and the "second golden age" of Japanese cinema (Kehr 2002). In America, anime fandom began growing 1980s, taking cues from the otaku of Japan. These small groups would gather to watch pirated episodes on VHS tapes. The imports of anime and manga were difficult because of price and translation issues. After the computer revolution in the 1990s, an undercurrent of anime culture began to grow in the United States, fueled by increasing interest in goods from Japan. The internet opened the door for anime fans to connect with other fans and share their media. At the same time, main-stream television began replaying dubbed anime such as *Gundam*, *Pokémon* and *Sailor Moon*. Several networks reformatted their late-night programming around anime. Soon after, anime began to hit the mainstream market as "Japanimation," graphic novels started to climb in the bookseller charts, many stores adding a dedicated manga section by the early 2000s.

By 2010, anime style had taken a powerful place in influencing popular culture. Many American films and television shows borrow hallmark anime style techniques, clothing and fashion has assimilated an anime look, and graphic novels in manga form have become bestsellers for children's and young adult fiction. Even with this growing popularity, the kind of fanatical devotion many "true" anime fans exhibit has not been adopted by the mainstream. This will be discussed in

detail later. Therefore, many anime fans sit just outside the cultural norm here in the United States. Many consider themselves a counterculture or a subculture, holding meetings to watch and discuss anime, dressing in anime character costumes, and interacting intensely with other fans through the World Wide Web.

The 2000s also gave rise to satires and non-Japanese competition (such as *Transformers Galaxy Force* and *Avatar: The Last Airbender*) that borrow anime aesthetics which become popular, showing the wide acknowledgement of anime. Anime has become such an important aspect of Japan's financial health that, in 2008, the Japanese government created the position of Anime Ambassador and appointed Doraemon as the first Anime Ambassador to promote anime worldwide in diplomacy (Doraemon Swon in as Anime Ambassador 2008).

The Research Question and the Road Ahead

Building on the assertions from Linde, Wertsch, and Hydén and leaning on Irving Goffman's theories of symbolic interactionism (Goffman 2002), we can craft a theory of narrative identity in which individuals incorporate elements from narratives (fictionalized, social, and others) into their personal identity narrative. The individuals then project this identity narrative by way of a performative identity. By using anime fans as an illustration, we can investigate this phenomenon in a specific, real-world context.

All these definitions will be detailed in Chapter Two, but they suffice now to form a central question: How do anime fans use anime to perform their personal identity narratives? Even anthropologists and scholars not interested in anime could find the finding here applicable to other settings. Researchers of narrative studies, media studies, fan studies, identity studies, and cultural exchange may be interested in various elements of the ethnographic findings.

Going forward, I will attempt to walk a three-sided line. First and foremost, I will strive to enable anime fans to share their own voices through their own interviews, interpretations, and

performances. Many times fans, and especially anime fans, feel marginalized and seen stereotypically as weird, socially inept.

The second line is an attempt to create an analytical framework for investigating the theory of narrative identity. I will explore three facets: the personal identity narrative, the narrative resources provided, and the performative identities. This framework will help us draw conclusions about the form and substance of narrative identity in social contexts. This is a test, and it may be that the framework is insufficient or plain faulty.

The third line is to fit this work in with the larger question of stories for education, identity management, and transformation. I will discuss some applied approaches and further directions for research of this type.

The first order of business is to root this project in theoretical traditions, primarily anthropology, narrative studies, and performance studies. In Chapter Two, I will clarify my definitions, lay out the basic framework for the triad of narrative identity, and briefly discuss the history of fan studies, narrative identity studies, performance studies, and the study of narrative resources. I end this chapter with a recap of the research question.

In order to make sense of a host of ethnographic observations, interviews, and conversations, I present my general findings concerning anime fandom in Chapter Three. Here I describe many features of anime fandom, dividing the experience into subcategories for logic's sake. This chapter not only provides a basic foundation to the anime fan experience, but it also provides the data to be used with the analytical tool, the triad of narrative identity. It is important to root the later theoretical discussions in a very real social setting.

In Chapters Four and Five, I break down the observations into the triad framework. Drawing conclusions from this framework, we arrive at some basic theoretical assertions. Lastly, I discuss the practical, applied uses of this work, and propose how it fits into a larger scheme.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE AND TOOLS

"We are forever composing impression of ourselves, projecting a

definition of who we are, and making claims about ourselves and

the world that we test and negotiate in social interaction."

-- Riessman 1990:1190

The ultimate aim of this thesis is to contribute to the discussion revolving around the use of stories for transformational purposes. On route to that discussion (Chapter Five) we have taken on the question "How do individuals use stories to shape their personal identities?" and specifically, "How do anime fans use anime to shape their personal identity narratives?" For that, I propose a framework of analytical tools called the "triad of narrative identity." Each of these purposes raises questions of their own such as, "how does one define identity?" and "how does one investigate identity narratives through anime?" After an introduction to fan studies, I will lay out the triad of narrative identity, tracing the scholarly traditions each component is built upon. Finally, before going into Chapter Three, I will revoice my research question and discuss methods of data collection.

Fandom as a Community of Practice

Francis Hsu (1963) posited that, in societies where clans and castes have become de-emphasized, people seek social identification through a system of clubs. The clubs are groups that become "imagined communities with false borders" (Anderson 2006), and play an integral role in constructing and disseminating cultural norms. Clubs do this chiefly by offering social resources that create "communities of practice" in which individuals use common social-symbolic tools to construct and perform their identities.

So, in our case, anime fandom is a community of practice that provides narrative resources, allows fans a place to test-drive these identities, and provides contexts into the redefinition and projection of personal identity narratives.

Fan Studies and Anime Studies

As we are using anime fans as our example, it is important to discuss the history and
important literature of both fan studies and anime studies. Fan studies is not a new field, as fans
have always existed. In the early 1980s, scholars became interested in fandom through Michel de
Certeau's discussion of the powerful, the powerless, and media consumption (1988).

> Fandom is a common feature of popular culture in industrial societies. It
> selects from the repertoire of mass-produced and mass-distributed
> entertainment certain performers, narratives or genres and then takes them
> into the culture of a self-selected fraction of the people. They are then
> reworked into an intensely pleasurable, intensely signifying popular culture
> that is both similar to, yet significantly different from, the culture of more
> 'normal' popular audiences. (Fiske 1992:36)

This first wave of scholarship saw fans as cast aside from the mainstream and looked down
upon because of their devotion. It focused on the artifacts of extreme fandom such as conventions
and gaming circles. Fandom was to be seen as a beautiful form of otherness and the study fans was
dedicated to championing those disadvantaged within society. (Gray, Sandvoss, and Harrington
2007; Tulloch and Jenkins 1995).

This sort of binary did not do justice to those who loved a show and watched it religiously,
but did not engage in any other forms of fan expression like fanfiction (fan-created texts based on
more popular texts) and cosplay (costume-play). Meanwhile, the cultural status of fan changed,
becoming more accepted and even promoted by corporate America, which wanted a dedicated
consumer. This led to a focus on fan texts and a more literary investigation of fandom. The third
wave of fandom strives to look at fandom as a more holistic and integrated aspect of life:

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Here fandom is no longer only an object of study in and for itself. Instead,

through the investigation of fandom as part of the fabric of our everyday

lives, [this wave] aims to capture fundamental insights into modern life

(Gray, Sandvoss, and Harrington 2007).

Contemporary fan studies has moved in many directions, mostly following fandom as it

expanded to computer mediated, virtual spaces. As the field of interest matured, it became

intertwined with a number of disciplines. Literary scholars still study fan produced texts, questions

of canon, and textual evolution (Black 2006; Bronwen 2011; Kap 2006; Black 2007; Oviedo 2007).

Many sociologists and psychologists investigate fandom in terms of intertextual conglomerations

from multiple sources (Henry Jenkins 2007; Gray, Sandvoss, and Harrington 2007; Alters 2007).

Fandom has even been looked at as therapeutic (Ashby 2010; Harris and Alexander 1998). Of

course, business and marketing has a keen interest in fandom as consumption (Fiske 1992; Elliott

and Wattanasuwan 1998).

While anthropologists have been slow to do ethnographic fieldwork in fandom, a number of

researchers are looking at fandom on anthropological ways, specifically in fan interaction. Longhurst

(2007:137) "seek[s] to connect contemporary cultural theory to the mundane practices of everyday

life, and concludes that there is "evidence for the analytic power of the simple, mass, diffused

characterizations…among the audience continuum." Roberta Pearson looks at self-identification in

fandom, classifications, taxonomies, and stigma attached to certain types of fans (2007)

Studies in anime texts are proliferous. Not only are there textual studies on the anime itself

(Newitz 1995; Drazen 2003) and media studies on theme and craft (Kono 2011; Gustines 2007), but

many scholars have looked at anime fandom in particular. Madeline Ashby's (2010) cyborg theory to

explore a fan's online identity in contrast to the fan's offline identity. Others look at how different

regions produce different fandom experiences and attitudes about fans (Frasier 2007; Manion 2005).

It is also important at this point to clarify the notion of subculture versus popular culture versus counterculture and so on. These terms have been traditionally fuzzy. Many anthropologists prefer the term "popular culture" when describing groups such as the anime fans I interacted with because that does not draw the same sort of "hard line" around a group. This is important to recognize: anime fandom is not isolated or separated from other social circles. One is not a fan here, but not a fan there. In this way, popular culture may be more appropriate. However, since the prevailing term in fan studies as well as among anime fans is "subculture," subculture will be used here. In any sense, the discussion on "communities of practice" is most helpful when speaking of a social context for the analysis of narrative identity.

Now that we have grounding in our subject group, let us turn to the analytical tools used in exploring how fans construct and perform personal identity narratives.

Basic Definitions

First, we need to establish some basic definitions that will be expanded throughout this chapter. The term is in bold and the simple definition is followed by underline.

Narrative is the central sense-making structure that allows human beings to arrange, categorize and present symbolic ideas. Hydén (1997:50) said, it has only been recently that "social scientists began to consider narratives as one of the ways in which we create and give meaning to our social reality. To earlier generations of social scientists, the narrative was merely one of many forms of representation." Therefore, narrative provides the schema or roadmap for symbolic ideas to be connected and interpreted. Narrative is built in the same way story is: with character, plot and setting.

Identity, according to Joel Charon is "the name we all call ourselves" and also "the name we announce to others that tells them who we are." (2009:84) Identities are positional or relational. They are "perceived social locations of the individual where one has situated [themselves] in relation to others,…[and] the name one tries to communicate with others" (Stone 2011:93). So our working definition of identity is the socially constructed, socially maintained, and socially transformed meanings a person attributes to himself or herself (Berger 2011; Burke 1980). It is the internal "me" that nobody else sees, separate from the external "self" which is the perceptible and socially recognized or validated "me." (Goffman 2002:103). Here, I speak of a "self" as detailed by Erving Goffman instead of the concept of "personhood" discussed by Tom Boellstorff in his ethnography of a virtual role playing game, *Coming of Age in Second Life* (2008). It is admitted that the term "self" can be very obscure, especially when one acknowledges that not all cultures carry the same notions of independence as Western cultures do. Boellstorff does a fantastic job recounting and narrowing the idea of personhood and self. Still, for the purposes of this thesis, we will stick with Goffman's term.

To further clarify definitions, I will call the internal "identity" the personal identity narrative, here meaning the story we tell ourselves, about ourselves. The external "identity" in the paragraph above, I shall refer to as the performative identity, meaning the "me" we attempt to show others. The external self is what is perceived by others.

These definitions come together in the theory of narrative identity which we described earlier as the interplay between narratives and social identity construction in which individuals incorporate elements from narratives (fictionalized, social, and others) into their personal identity narrative and attempt to project this identity narrative by way of a performative identity.

The triad of narrative identity is an analytical framework that is used to analyze narrative identity by describing the connectedness between the shaping and projecting of narrative identity using narrative resources.

Narrative resources are narrative elements that provide symbolic points of reference, context, and content for fashioning identity and for performing identity.

These three aspects work in concert together: personal identity narratives, performative identities, and narrative resources. This works in a procedural way:

1. Narrative resources exist "out there" and are shared by both audience and performer. They do not have the exact same set, and both interpret these symbols differently.

2. The actor uses these shared resources to cobble together a personal identity narrative. That is "Who do I say I am?"

3. That personal identity feeds into the performative identity: Who do I want others to know I am?

4. The performance is the observable interaction projected by the actor.

5. The audience relies on the shared narrative resources for audience interpretation.

6. This creates the perceived self, or perception of the actor. This is who the audience thinks the actor is.

7. The audience provides feedback, both intentionally and unintentionally.

8. That feedback influences the performance, which influences the performative identity, which can ultimately influence the personal identity narrative.

Consider this simple example: Jerry is a football fan. His personal identity narrative is, therefore, informed by narrative resources that may include sports narratives, sports jargon and personal experiences. Jerry also performs this identity in order to situate himself as an athlete among his circle of friends. In order to communicate this, he again draws on narrative resources. In

this case, those resources may be a brand of clothing that carries symbolic weight and that the group understands to point towards athletes. He may also adopt (enact) certain gestures and language that have been made popular by celebrity athletes. The audience (individuals in his circle of friends) sees these performance features and associates Jerry with athletics, therefore perceiving him as an athlete.

The Triad of Narrative Identity: An Analytical Tool

Narrative Resources: What do we draw on?

Both internal personal identities and external performative identities rely on a socially shared, common set of symbols, signs and sign-vehicles. Narrative resources are shared external, social resources that act as: 1) References for the personal identity narrative; 2) Signs and performance elements for the performative identity; and 3) Signifiers to the audience used in interpretation of the "self." Simply put, these are the tools shared by the actor and audience.

Primarily, this concept is birthed from symbolic interactionism. Erving Goffman in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (2002:109) describes symbolic interactionism as "the ways people interpret the identities of others from symbolic and social clues. The clues can come from many different "sign-vehicles" such as conduct, appearance, clothing, speech, etc. (2002:103)" The actor "expresses" himself (both intentionally and unintentionally) so that the audience is "impressed" by interpreting the symbols gleaned from interactions.

The first part of *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* focuses on the "impressed" (audience) point of view; the next part looks at the individual who is "expressing" herself (actor). Whatever the individuals motives are, they express themselves "largely by influencing the definition of the situation which the others come to formulate, and she can influence this definition by expressing herself in such a way as to give them the kind of impression that will lead them to act voluntarily in accordance with her own plan. (Goffman 2002)"

These symbols and sign-vehicles are shared inside groups. James Wertsch, an anthropologist at the Washington University in St. Louis, researches the use of narrative in collective memory. He states that both specific narratives and narrative schemas exist, and that narrative schemas are concerned with general patterns rather than specific events and actors. He explores narrative schemas through a look at Russia's WWI and WWII stories to investigate the role narratives play in cementing organizations by creating and implementing collective memory. Specifically, he looks at a stock narrative schema of "Expelling the Foreign Invaders" that forms the foundation for countless incarnations of stories, myths and legends inside the Russian Collective Memory. Next, he builds further on Vygotsky's principles of sociocultural learning and Bakhtin to view narratives as cultural tools that produce narrative texts used to propagate cultural norms inside a group.

Charlotte Linde takes this concept one step further in defining a narrative schema as a sense-making apparatus shared by a group as a collective set of stock stories that distinguish by example things like shared taboos, archetypes, or responses.

A good example of narrative resource use outside the social sciences is from the advertising field. Elliot and Wattanasuwan describe how brand names can be used as narrative resources in *Brands as Symbolic Resources for the Construction of Identity* (1998). In particular, they look at the symbolic weight the brands carry. Consumers do not just purchase products because of utility, but because the brands of a specific product carry symbolic significance. "The individual visualizes her/his self according to the imagined possibilities of the self. (Elliott and Wattanasuwan 1998:132)"

The authors break this significance down into two forms that operate in two directions. *Social Symbolism* constructs the outer world and *Self-Symbolism* constructs the inner world. In regards to the prior, the individual interprets a web of symbols as a narrative and then actively seeks to situate the "self" into it. The self-symbolism is a function whereby the individual identifies with certain outer symbols in order to situate the self-inside the grander narrative.

In many cases, especially in the case of anime fans, the narrative is more of a reservoir being fed by a river of stories and story elements. The pieces that influence the performative and personal identity narratives may or may not be specifically about plot or character. Anime is highly visual and so gestures, icons, images, sounds, and other non-story elements may also be considered narrative resources as they all flow from the narrative source.

Personal Identity Narrative: What we say about ourselves.

This concept has roots in the classic studies of narrative and identity. Through most of scholarly history, these two pursuits were seen as largely separate, perhaps intersecting in minor ways with special circumstances. In recent years, however, many theorists and social scientists have begun to connect the two into the study of narrative identity. This entails looking at both narratives on an individual and social (or cultural) level.

In Jerome Bruner's formative work, *The Narrative Construction of Reality* (1991), he lays the foundation for the study of narrative in social terms. Here, culture can be seen as organized narrative and he puts forth that people organize their world in the same way that narratives and stories are organized. These individual narratives interact with other individual's personal narratives at a social level in patterned ways to allow a more complex social narrative at a cultural level to arise. The interplay between these realities is the domain of behavior models and symbolic interaction.

Bruner describes the correlation between narrative in literature studies and narrative as a sense-making tool for the social sciences. He says,

> I have described the properties of a world of "reality" constructed according to
> narrative principles. In doing so, I have gone back and forth between describing
> narrative mental "powers" and the symbolic systems of narrative discourse that

make the expression of these powers possible. It is only a beginning. My

objective has been merely to lay out the ground plan of narrative realities.

Concerning narrative and identity, Ochberg (1988:186) noted that,

The stories people tell are important not only because they offer an unmatched

window into subjective experience, but also because they are part of the image

people have of themselves. These narrative self-representations exert

enormous power. They shape how we conduct our lives, how we come to terms

with pain, what we are able to appropriate of our own experience, and what we

disown - at the familiar price of neurosis.

One of the most prominent branches of narrative and identity study exists in the analysis of

illness narratives. Illness narratives are organized (but often informal) ways of talking and acting in

relation to a specific disease or illness. In many ways, an illness narrative offers a sort-of "common

language" for those with the malady to converse in. They also help define sick roles, patient /

practitioner relationships, and offer ways to make sense of the causes and effects of a disease. For

instance, cancer patients often speak of their "struggle" or "journey" and see the cancer as a

"blessing in disguise" because the struggle is making them a better person. This is an illness

narrative.

Lars-Christer Hydén provides a comprehensive overview of the theory and methods that

underlie the study of illness narratives. The article, *Illness and Narrative* (1997), looks at four aspects

of illness narratives. 1.) Typology, 2.) Use, 3.) Organization, and 4.) Social Context. These narratives

influence the way individuals speak and think about themselves as they incorporate elements form

this shared resource into their own identity.

In her ethnography of a Midwestern Insurance Company, she explored what she called

"narrative induction." This is the process by which outsiders join a group and begin adopting

elements of the groups shared narrative into their own personal identity narratives. To discuss this further, we will look at two of Linde's specific pieces: *Narrative Institutions* found in the Handbook for Discourse Analysis (2003) and *The Acquisition of a Speaker by a Story: How History Becomes Memory and Identity* from the journal, Ethos (2000).

Coming from a background in discourse studies, *Narrative Institutions* focuses on group-level, shared narratives inside institutions. She uses the term institution rather than organization because this paper focuses on formal, professional institutions. She offers two approaches to the study of these institutional narratives. The first approach is to look at the way narrative is used to carry on daily tasks. This approach includes both, how members use narrative to do daily work, and the "attempts of nonmembers to use narrative in professional settings such as legal or medical situations. (Linde 2003) These shared narratives facilitate the work of these institutions, define (somewhat muddled) boundaries and serve as a mode of communication between institutions (especially large, interconnected institutions).

The second approach is to investigate how narrative reproduces the institution. Here, the use of narrative creates, maintains and reproduces the institution, as well as contestations and changes in the institution's self-representation. To this approach, she studied how narratives were used in the training program. She likens institutional representation to sexual reproduction, which is passing DNA that changes slightly from generation to generation. Narratives act as DNA in this case. Furthermore, because of the ever-changing nature of narratives, they are among the first observable attributes when institutions undergo change.

The article, *The Acquisition of a Speaker by a Story* shifts focus from institutional, group-level narratives to narrative acquisition; that is how individuals adopt, adapt and perpetuate the group narrative. Most simply, narrative acquisition is taking on another's stories. This is integral to identity acquisition. Narrative acquisition is done (in the case of her ethnography) through non-participant

narratives (the telling of a story by a person not present at the events recalled). Some examples of these are "Founder's Stories" and "Paradigmatic Stories" (examples of successful types).

In examining the role that narrative plays in the induction of new members into an institution, she notes that the most powerful stories are those that people make them relevant to their own stories. Three steps are in this process: 1.) How a person makes another's story personally relevant, 2.) How a person's own story is retold in the pattern of others, 3.) How a person's story comes to be told within the group as an instance of a normative pattern.

The organization of the illness narratives is interpreted both by the narrator and the listener, as without either of these, narrative cannot exist. The narrator selects and arranges events from collective or symbolic themes. The listener interprets those events, giving some validity and reassurance to the narrator. Each narrative type -- and indeed each narrative -- is unique. This uniqueness extends to each telling of the narrative, because social context alters the presentation and interpretation of the illness narrative.

Performative Identity: What we show others.

If personal identity narratives are internal ways of sense-making, then Performative Identities are external manifestations acted out (or performed) by the individual and perceived by others. (Ageliki 2011; Anderson and Zuiker 2010; Langellier 1999; Riessman 2003) These performances are mostly unconscious and informal, everyday expressions of identity that vary by social context (one does not perform the same in church as a bar), almost like wearing different masks to different places. There can be multiple performative identities based on context: an anime fan may also be an evangelical American Christian or a Wall Street executive. In these cases, the context informs the performance and which version of the personal identity narrative is drawn upon. However, all these identities inform each other constantly.

The interpretation of these performed "selves" is dependent on symbols, as described by Erving Goffman. He describes this symbolic-interactionism perspective in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* as "the ways people interpret the identities of others from symbolic and social clues" (2002:106). The clues can come from many different "sign-vehicles" such as conduct, appearance, clothing, speech, etc. The actor "expresses" him or herself (both intentionally and unintentionally), so that the audience is "impressed" by interpreting the symbols gleaned from interactions.

This idea of performative identity is rooted in performance studies, which has a long history in both the humanities and the social sciences. Richard Schechner traces this broad history in the article *Performance Studies in/for the 21st Century* (2001), specifically through the lens the tragic events on September 11, 2001. Writing almost directly after the terror attacks, the author questions what importance teaching performance studies holds in such a volatile climate. He, after musing, decides that the study of performance is both important and applicable to academia and the real world.

Contemporary performance studies trace roots to a variety of disciplines: English scholarship from the mid-1940s to the mid-1970s leads from Kenneth Burke; Erving Goffman (discussed earlier) and symbolic interactionism; Victor Turner (discussed later); Milton Singer's notion of cultural performance; and Richard Bauman's Verbal Art as Performance in Verbal Arts.

Schechner says,

> In one way or another, all these scholars emphasize how performances mark
> identities, bend and remake time, adorn and reshape the body, tell stories, and
> provide people with the means to play with the worlds they not only inhabit but
> to a large degree construct (2001:162).

He breaks performance studies into four broad categories: 1) In the Arts (theatre, film, etc.); 2) In Business (primarily, performance here means "communication, productivity, efficiency, and

innovation" – e.g. one performs well at a task; 3) In Technology (this is concerned with the performance of technology); and 4) In Personal and Intimate Life. These are the everyday performances, social and sexual, that individuals engage in with each other. It is from this category that the Social Science and Anthropology study performative identity.

Performance is more than doing something. "Take four related existential "situations": 1) being, 2) doing, 3) showing doing, and 4) explaining the showing done. The first is existence itself; the second is what happens to everything that exists; the third is performing; and the fourth is performance studies" (Schechner 2001:164).

While Schechner provides a broad overview of what performance studies can be, the notion of performative identity in anthropology traces back to Victor Turner. Turner studied performance in both formal and informal settings as an anthropologist, writing dozens of articles, books and papers. In a chapter of The Anthropology of Performance (1988), Turner muses on his own work and the work of contemporaries.

First, he divides performance into two categories: "social" performances (including social dramas) and "cultural" performances (including aesthetic or stage dramas). In *Drama, Fields, and Metaphors* Turner (1988:37–41) define social dramas as "units of harmonic or disharmonic social process, arising in conflict situations." When enacted in public, these social dramas play out in four phases: 1.) A breach of normal social interaction; 2.) A crisis in which the breach widens; (3) Redressive action ranging from personal advice and, informal mediation or arbitration to formal juridical and legal machinery. To resolve certain kinds of crisis, public ritual is used; and 4) Either the reintegration of the breached social group, or of the social legitimation of contested breach.

Third, Turner understands that performances are never open-ended, they have diachronic structure; that is a beginning, middle and end. This structure is not that of an abstract system, but is

generated out of the "dialectical oppositions of processes and of levels of process: (Turner and Schechner 1988:42).

Fourth and last, Turner sees social dramas, fully developed, processes for converting particular values and ends into a system (which may be temporary or provisional) of shared or consensual meaning. This plays out in many ways and in an almost infinite number of contexts.

The next generation of anthropologists who studied performance folded narrative theory into personal performance. *Narrating the Self* by Elinor Ochs and Lisa Capps (1996) appeared in the Annual Review of Anthropology and provides a good overview of literature surrounding the interplay between narrative and performative identity. In her own words,

> Narrative and self are inseparable in that narrative is simultaneously born out of experience and gives shape to experience . . . Narrative also interfaces self and society, constituting a crucial resource for socializing emotions, attitudes, and identities, developing interpersonal relationships, and constituting membership in a community. Through various genres and modes; through discourse, grammar, lexicon, and prosody; and through the dynamics of collaborative authorship, narratives bring multiple, partial selves to life (Ochs and Capps 1996:22).

She makes several points about narrative and identity. First, Individuals craft personal narratives to cast themselves as protagonists. This, again, is in concert with the ideas of Joseph Campbell (2008) and Carl Jung (1981). We are the heroes of our own stories. So that, personal narratives are simply stories one tells about himself (typically to others). In this telling, narratives are not usually monomodal, but incorporate two or more communicative modes.

Secondly, she states that "narratives are versions of reality, the embodiment of one or more points of view rather than an objective perspective." This can be seen when tellers and listeners map onto the tale personal experiences.

Third, narratives exist to be told. Narrative and self are made inseparable when related to the understanding that "entities are given meaning through being experienced." Since we ourselves are entities, narrative provides the resource to interpret, express and give ourselves meaning. Fourth, this enactment is mostly seen in informal, everyday performance. However, ritual drama is also a form of enacted narrative.

Finally, Ochs and Capps make the point that narratives (at least non-recorded ones) change based on the context of the telling. The context of the telling also changes the interpretation. The feedback of the listener influences the teller which influences the narrative and again influences the teller in a cycle. This combination of variables points to a virtually infinite range of interpretive frameworks.

Catherine Riessman distinguishes between narrative presentation and performance. Presentation is the content of the narrative itself. The actual course of events, themes and characters selected and emphasized by the informant. Performance comes in the way he structures his account and in his interaction with the listener. His strategic choice of forms of narrative guides the impression we form of him. So, the man presents his own personal narrative in a performative way, expressing what he considers to be his identity. This is then interpreted by the listener.

Kate Anderson and Steven Zuiker in 2010 looked at a similar phenomenon in High School Classrooms. Titled *Performative Identity as a Resource for Classroom Participation: Scientific Shane Vs. Jimmy Neutron*, the article defines performative Identify to serve "as a shared interactional resource for negotiating individual and collective relationships. (2010:300)" These performative

identities are not people, but personas which are relative to the group members at the time of enactment. Through the use of performance, the students enact ways of knowing.

This is seen in a science classroom. The authors looked most closely at "being scientific." How does one act scientific? What resources do the students draw on to portray "being scientific?" The second question is not discussed heavily in the article, but the performance of being scientific is examined closely. Three separate students and the teacher all provide different examples of "being scientific." These performances are used to situate ones "self" in relation to other "selfs." To distinguish an individual from another. "Identities can be collectively objectified by naming, characterizing, and constructing them as artifacts of positioning."

A Quick Ethnographic Example

The best way to make these abstract definitions concrete is by way of ethnographic example. Taylor, one of the informants from my ethnographic fieldwork, is a self-identified anime fan. She is in her mid-twenties, a college graduate, and a small business owner who says she watches anime, usually with her husband, at least fifteen hours a week. She frequents conventions, online social networks, and has begun learning Japanese. By way of her personal identity narrative, Taylor identifies with both anime fan culture and certain common character types that are commonplace in anime storylines.

> I always liked the creative, free girls that are in a lot of anime and
> manga. They always have great ideas and make beautiful things.
> They are fun to be around, but also can be really deep – have great
> ideas and solve problems and stuff like that. I guess if I was an
> anime character, I would want to be that one. A creative free spirit
> kind.

The character type described by Taylor is typical in anime, an archetype (see glossary or Chapter Four for a more in depth discussion of the term "archetype"). This archetype is common in anime and Japanese literature; I have dubbed her the "Creative Free Spirit Girl." In both casual conversation and her non-directed interviews, Taylor talked about herself in these same terms. She expressed herself as creative, fun, free-spirited, but also deep and able to solve problems. When describing her life story, she drew parallels with this archetype and her own identity narrative, using this narrative resource to inform this aspect of her identity.

Taylor also performs this piece of her personal identity narrative, identifying herself to others as an anime fan and as a creative free spirit. For instance, a common anime gesture is the "slide-in surprised" movement, which is often, but not always associated with the creative free spirit. Here, a character literally slides into the frame of action. Her eyes are wide, mouth gaping open. Hands can be up as if in surrender or astonishment, but there is no movement of her face or hands. The character is, in effect, on pause, sliding into the frame, frozen. A slide whistle sound effect typically accompanies.

I observed Taylor performing this gesture, sound effect and all, in every-day conversation, among both anime and non-anime fans. When in the company of anime fans, the group will usually laugh and joke, or repeat this gesture or others from the shared narrative resource, anime. This sends a clear performative message by way of symbolic interactionism: "I am an anime fan," for without the shared narrative resource, this gesture would carry much less weight. Furthermore, by appropriating this specific gesture, she is also identifying herself with the Creative Free Spirit. Other anime fans would likely recognize this mannerism and associate the archetype with it. Even among non-anime fans, when Taylor performs the "slide-in," she typically explains it away as "an anime thing," serving to identify her with anime fan culture. While the symbolic weight may be diminished

in this context, it is still a part of her performative identity and is therefore expressed whenever appropriate.

This is only one small example of a large collection of personal identity narrative features that are present because of narrative resources connected with anime. The "slide-in" gesture is but a solitary action in a repertoire of symbolic interactions that can be adapted and acted out. Anime is, by no means, the only narrative resource or influence on these identity narratives and performative identities, but it is a powerful, observable and rich source. In the next section, I will detail the ethnographic methodology used to analyze the personal identity narratives and performative identities.

Methods of Data Collection

In order to look at the narrative identity of anime fans using the triad of narrative identity as an analytical tool or framework, one must have data to sift through. There are any number of ways to gather this data, but I have chosen to root myself in the anthropological tradition of participant-observation ethnography. In doing so, I was intimately involved with a number of anime fans in Houston, Texas from approximately January 2012 until September 2013. Even before my official participant-observation, I had many friends who were anime fans and considered myself a fan to some degree. Even now, my appreciation for anime has grown and I remain in contact with many informants. Over the course of the year-and-a-half, I attended an anime club at the University of Houston several times, conducted nearly a dozen full-length, non-directed interviews, held numerous casual conversations, attended two conventions, participated in a number of "unofficial" anime gatherings, enjoyed cosplaying, and watch a lot of anime. I got to know my informants well, and they were always eager to share their experiences and deliver input on my research topic.

On a personal note, I believe that ethnography should be more than simple data collection. At its best, this research should give a voice to groups that may not have a voice in certain arenas.

One of the common themes I encountered was the feeling of marginalization by anime fans. While many embrace this marginalization, it is still a very prominent feature. There is also the issue of stereotyping. Many fans believe they are looked at in a certain, stereotypical light. For my part, I want to help dispel some of these myths and give anime fans a platform to tell their own story. I discuss much of this in more detail in Chapters Three and Five.

CHAPTER THREE: PRESENTATION OF DATA

The lights are dim. The scent of popcorn drifts in the air. A soundtrack plays, alternating between intense action, sci-fi adventure, and outlandish comedy. People talk, sure, but only sporadically, and under the rhythm off clacking keyboards. There are about a dozen college students here tonight. They sit scattered around the room in groups of two or three, mostly facing a large screen that flickers with YouTube videos. At 7pm, the leader stands. "Welcome back to Anime No Kai." Over the next four hours, the group watches half a dozen anime episodes with original Japanese soundtrack, plays games, dances to anime theme songs and talk about anime artists, actors and culture. And they can't way until next week to do it all again.

Perhaps you prefer a grander experience? Ten thousand people descend upon Downtown Houston, bravely pushing past the heat, humidity, and traffic of the Gulf Coast city. The entrance line wraps around the convention center. And what a line it is: Men, women, children, business executives, janitors, college students, teenagers and everyone in-between. Friends converse animatedly. Many languages can be heard such as English and Spanish, plus a few invented ones like Elfish and Klingon. Many attendees are dressed; head to toe, in bright costumes. Comicpalooza 2013 is a relatively small convention, and not specifically for anime. Even so, the exhibition floor is crammed with booths selling anime merchandise, holding cosplay competitions, promoting "meetups," and guests attending panels.

Another option is the intimate setting with friends. Six adults, between the ages of 35 and 50, fit themselves in the tiny apartment. One of the friends made pork chops and everyone brought a dish or a drink. Its Monday night – geek night. They laugh at each other's jokes, watch newly imported anime, and show off the artwork they made on their work breaks. Most would think this kind of thing for a younger crowd, but these folks have been enjoying anime consistently together for years – it has become a stable feature of their friendships.

Even beyond these examples, anime fans "do anime" in countless situations, formal and informal, stereotypical and unexpected. It is not a switch that is turned on or off; some activity engaged in on Monday but not on Tuesday. For these fans, anime is part of their identity, part of who they are, and they celebrate, enjoy, and create anime every opportunity they get.

In more than a year of ethnographic study, I have engaged in the process of "doing anime" with several different groups and individuals. We have enjoyed formal anime club meetings, casual get togethers, spur of the moment conversations and even grand conventions. Through interviews and guided discussions, I have also discussed at length the attributes and types of anime fans.

In presenting this data, I have found it convenient to organize the discussion into two major sections: "Typologies of Fans" and "Social Arenas of Fandom". This division is only for exposition sake, not meant to disconnect one from the other. In fact, I have found that each and every element hit upon here is integrally connected to the others; they change, grow, and shift in a fluid fashion. It is also important to note that none of these types or arenas are static or absolute. On the contrary, they present themselves as a spectrum or sliding scale, and are not isolated. First, we will explore how anime fans talk about themselves and fit themselves into a general typology. Next, we will look at the common social arenas in which fans "do anime." In every instance, we are striving to hear the voice of anime fans, and see anime fandom "through their eyes." To that end, I have opted to include many quotes from interviews and casual conversations.

Also, it may seem as if we are getting away from the topic of narrative identity by diving so deeply into the ethnographic data. Indeed, much of what follows is not directly connected to the triad of narrative identity, but it is all part of the fan's identities. Therefore, it is important to splash around in their world for a moment in order to make sense of the analysis to come. Beyond all that, cultural anthropology is about seeing the world through the eyes of others and there are few people I have encountered who see the world in a more interesting way than anime fans.

Fans of Different Stripes, a General Typology

Before we dive into the world of anime fan culture, we must unpack the definition of "anime fan." Anime fans, in my ethnographic experience, speak of themselves in four typological categories: 1.) The casual fan, The devoted fan, the mainstream fan, and an almost mystical weaboo or otaku. In each case, these are not absolute divisions, but points along a spectrum from "non-fan" to the non-existent "fully consumed fan." These types also come from the fans themselves, and any scales used (from 1-10 or 1-5) are rated via self-identification.

The criteria for classifying someone in a certain category differ. Alex knows devoted (or hardcore) fans who definitely "gauge levels of fandom by knowledge. How much do you know about the shows or directors or actors?" Other people categorize by the types of anime watched. Are your favorite shows the standard, action-packed series on Cartoon Network or do you prefer obscure, intimate dramas? Still more fans told me that "whether you watch subbed (subtitled) or dubbed (voice dubbed) anime" really shows what kind of fan you are. Are you dedicated enough to learn Japanese?

It is also important to note that these categories are not meant to divide the group or to separate one "type" of fan from interacting with others. Just the opposite. I do not know that I've ever met a more accepting and open group of people. "Anyone can be a part," remarks Sarah. And, all fans are excited to interact with other fans. It was actually very rare to hear one person try to

define another into a category. It was much more common for the fan to position themselves relative to others by saying what kind of fan *they* are. In each case that follows, the fan self-identified their position.

The Casual Fan

The casual fan is exactly what they sound to be. In terms of interest on a scale of 1 to 5, this fan would be a 3. They know of anime and have seen the more popular shows, perhaps growing up on *Pokémon* or *Digimon* or the stray episode of *Gundum*. They are able to distinguish anime by its very specific, stylized visual attributes, but do not follow any shows religiously. They enjoy many different forms of animation and live action films and television series, not limiting themselves to anime in any way. They know relatively little about the history of anime. They collect no merchandise for the sake of fandom, though they may have some artwork simply because they like it, and would generally wear no paraphernalia. Causal Fans do not cosplay outside of Halloween, and if they ever did cosplay, they would not be limited to anime themes.

Mainstream Fan

Kal-El calls himself a mainstream fan. The difference between a mainstream and casual fan is a thin one. "A casual fan is probably one who watches anime every once in a while, but a mainstream fan has certain shows that they watch as soon as they air." Mainstream fans, inside the anime community, distinguished by two forms of knowledge: First, they have limited knowledge about anime as a whole, but a great deal of knowledge about a few specific shows, typically those that have become internationally popular. Second, the knowledge they have about the show is limited to character, world and plot, usually having little interest in the behind the scenes worlds of writers, directors, and actors.

Devoted Fan.

The devoted fan is marked as the one who is truly devoted or in love with the artfrom, but not in love with the image of being a fan. They feel no need to dress up or advertise their love of anime. That said, in the right contexts like conventions or gatherings, they will often cosplay expertly and do not mind wearing anime paraphernalia like key-chains or t-shirts. If the topic is brought up, they will discuss it at length, but generally do not "force" it on anyone else. They have a very extensive knowledge of anime that moves beyond the characters, worlds and stories from specific shows. They can discuss history, criticism, visual artistry, production and marketing for a diverse collection of series (often hundreds). They tend to like Japan (or "love" it as Taylor Weaver would say), but take pains to make sure their knowledge is correct. They pronounce the Japanese they know fluidly. Devoted fans watch a large variety of anime ranging from the mainstream shows on Cartoon Network, to very difficult to obtain shows that would be considered obscure even in Japan.

Most, but not all, devoted fans pride themselves on watching anime in subtitles instead of dubbed to English. They consider themselves very creative and intelligent and slightly marginalized from society. They, unlike the Weaboo, do not wear this marginalization like a badge but rather accept it and move confidently forward. Devoted fans cosplay and will tend to cosplay in any arena it is acceptable, from fan club meetings to conventions. When they do cosplay, they pride themselves not on playing a specific character from a show. Instead, they will create their own character from archetypes and templates found in anime.

Weaboo and Otaku

The idea of Weaboo and Otaku are difficult ones, mostly because they seem to be almost phantom designations. Anime fans will use the terms and seem to have common images in mind, but when asked, can rarely define the term or identify anyone as Weaboo or Otaku. After looking through a draft of my typological work, one fan said a "Weaboo is a mainstream fan who thinks they

are a devoted fan and has to advertise it to the entire world every chance they get, even though they don't really know what they're talking about." These fans feel the need to "advertise" their love of anime as Robin said:

> Devoted anime fans would say something different about weaboos. Those sorts of 'key indicators' (dress, language, and such) marks you more as *weaboo* or *otaku* rather than as an anime fan. *weaboos* or *otakus* are the ones that need to advertise that they are anime fans through paraphernalia and language. These become mainstream weaboo fans, whereas the hardcore anime fan might dress up to the extreme for conventions, but in day to day life is just themselves.

Another feature of the Weaboo is the "incorrectness" of their knowledge and performance. They mispronounce Japanese; know only a few, more mainstream, shows in detail; and have very little insight into Japanese culture or worldview. For this fan, the anime is about identifying with a movement or identity, rather than the artfrom itself.

This sort of picture is common of how non-anime fans would describe anime fans: like they've "lost it and have fallen into the world." They are disconnected from reality, deluded and escapist to the extreme. They dress up as the characters, wear the merchandise and live in the anime world. In reality, this caricature of person, basically, does not exist. The following table contains general attributes collected from interview and discussion data:

Table 1: General Attributes of Anime Fans

Devoted fan	Weaboo / Otaku	Mainstream Fan	Casual Fan
Goes to conventions	Goes to conventions	May go to conventions	Does not go to conventions
Cosplays at conventions and other arenas, maybe in everyday life, but not always	Cosplays (or at least wears paraphernalia) actively in everyday life.	May cosplay, but one particular show or character	Does not cosplay
When they cosplay, they	Cosplays as a specific	Cosplays a specific	Does not cosplay

invent a character from a character type, not dress up as a cannon character	character	character	
Has extensive knowledge of anime as an artfrom	Has limited knowledge of the artform and may compare it to American animation	Has only surface knowledge of the artform	Has only surface knowledge of the artform
Watches a wide variety of anime, including a lot of obscure, hard to find shows	Watches only two or three shows, typically mainstream shows (like those on Cartoon Network)	Follows one or two shows popularized by American Networks	Does not follow a particular shows
Pronounces the Japanese terms correctly, and may know some Japanese	Pronounces Japanese incorrectly	May be able to pronounce a few Japanese terms	Does not attempt to pronounce Japanese terms
Understands jargon such as *sojin, shonin* and other genre types	May understand the Jargon	Understands very limited Jargon	Has not been introduced to Jargon
Will have deep conversations about anime, but only when the topic is brought up	Dominates conversations, but only talks about one or two shows	Will only talk about a specific show, not anime as an artform	May have a conversation about anime, but very limited
Collects specific types of merchandise from multiple shows (like action figures or cards)	Collects a wide variety of merchandise, but only from one or two shows	May collect some merchandise from one show	Does not collect merchandise

Social Arenas

Anime, Informally

Conversations about anime happen casually while "you hang out with their friends and they're there and it comes up because you have wall scrolls and there's a new disc coming out and yum…" (Robin's words). It seems the only real "mark" of an anime fan is their love for the show; even more so, how much anime makes it into their everyday life. Most fans do not go to regularly planned social activities and may only attend conventions when it's convenient, perhaps once a year. They may carry some paraphernalia (Robin had several anime key chains) that will act as

conversations starters, but more often than not, anime just happens. Take the following story from

Robin:

>I was buying shoes the other day at the mall and I was talking to someone
>
>and I was looking for steampunk boots to go with a costume for a
>
>convention and somehow costumes and conventions led to anime and…off
>
>handedly made a remark about, 'oh, I'll need to show you my pictures of my
>
>Blair costume at some point and we hadn't yet mentioned anime at
>
>all…Blair? I asked, "There's no chance you mean Blair from *Soul Eater,* right?

A lot of times, these casual conversations begin with a discussion of some particular anime

episode or character, but will move into a more broad discussion about anime as an art form or

genre. Fans will recommend shows to each other, swap experiences at conventions, and muse

about anime fan culture. These conversations are not formally structured at all, but can lead to a lot

of deep discussion. Some fans like to mark themselves as anime fans in some way in order to start

these conversations.

Jason, a 39 year old IT professional, holds regular, informal get togethers similar to the one

described in the introduction of this chapter. He has been an anime fan since the late 80s when he

and his friends began collecting and watching anime. His first experience realizing that anime was "a

thing" and not just like all the other cartoons was in 1986 with *RoboTech*. He and his friends became

interested in anime and would borrow un-dubbed, un-translated copies of shows to watch together.

At first, these were more like movie theatre experiences, but after a time they became more

interactive. They would have fun trying to figure out "what the hell is going on" and learning

Japanese words from context. About the same time, he started to get into Manga which was a little

easier to get ahold of, but still very hard to follow consistently. His mother was "a very conservative

Christian [who] didn't like comic books or dungeons and dragons or any of that," but he was able to

keep Manga because they were a "cultural artifact" and not like American comic books. Plus, they were straight sci-fi and not magic. The group felt a little insecure and like there was a bit of a stigma. They were not just into anime, but all sorts of "geeky" things. Later in life, Jason discovered that most of the popular kids were into the same things, but were just better at hiding it.

He and his friends would attend some conventions which opened his eyes to "other people who are into this stuff. That other small isolated groups that could come together." He did see some cosplay but "nothing like today. It was mostly the portly-paratroopers" (which is a reference to WWII re-enactors who are generally not in the shape required to be the elite soldiers they are acting). Most of these cosplay characters where kind of thrown together, but a few were highly sophisticated. He remembered one guy who made a really impressive, big gun with working rounds and everything. He and his friends were not just interested in anime, but also followed Star Trek and role playing games.

Jason calls himself a "lifetime geek" and devoted fan of anime for nearly thirty-years.

Josh has been a friend of mine for years. We share a passion for storytelling and filmmaking among other things. It was in an informal conversation, however, that I learned he was also an anime fan. I noticed him using anime terms. Then anime gestures like "powering up," "energy punch," and the "slide-in" that were discussed in Chapter Four crept into our conversation. Before we knew it, we were deep in discussion about the serialized nature of *One Piece* storytelling.

Josh identifies himself as three on our scale of interest. He is an average fan. "I know more than most people, but it does not take over my life." He was eight or nine when he first heard the word "anime," but remembers seeing anime much younger -- maybe four or five. Cartoons were a big part of his life back then, "just like every other boy." He watched watch *X-men* and *Spiderman* and other Saturday Morning American Cartoons. But, he also watched anime – a lot. It was not just the TV shows that drew him in. Anime was action packed and full of imagination. Exciting heroes,

huge battles, awesome Giant Robots, filled his imagination with adventure. He and his friends would

"run around and do little Kung Fu moves," playing with imaginary swords and fireballs.

His favorite shows at the time were *Gundum* and *Digimon*. He was not really devoted to one

show or single character, or even anime itself. His group of friends watched shows and got together

to talk about the plots and stories, and most of all the fights. He was not really in depth at that age.

In elementary school, it was the "really cool thing," to be into anime. Especially for grade school

boys, "anime was something opposed to normal kid shows." Anime was a lot more violent and

action that appealed to little boys.

It was not until late high school that he would go back and watch the older episodes from

his childhood "for nostalgia sake." He also got into anime that "had more adult themes. They aren't

for kids. They are for adults." The way anime and manga mix spirituality kept Josh hooked through

High School and College. Now, as a film maker, he uses anime influence in his writing because he

can "draw upon a whole lot deeper backgrounds that have been well researched." They inspire him

in his own storytelling. Though he has never considered writing for anime, he says that writing for

the two isn't really any different except for the "subject matter and the ways it's presented to

people." Anime subject matter does not "dumb itself down." It does not "gloss over things," and is

not afraid to talk about things you "would not find in a Saturday Morning Cartoon."

It's not just anime, though. Josh loves video games, bad movies, music, role playing games

and all "that geeky stuff." Anime fan culture is great because it "dips itself into a whole lot of

different areas.

Kal-El's story is a little different. He rated himself a 4 out of 5 on the anime-interest scale,

but follows American comics much more closely. He's always been into comics, anime and sci-fi. He

loves the serial aspect of anime, especially how it's all "basically one big story that never ends." It's

all about plot: twists, turns, unexpected betrayals, unknown allies, and deep, rich, and dark themes.

He also follows video games though he does not necessarily like online Role Playing Games. For him, fandom is not as much about becoming a character or getting lost in the universe of the story, as it is about forgetting all the troubles of this world. He uses comics, anime and video games as a stress release. He does not cosplay, though wears paraphernalia that relate to anime and comics. If he ever did cosplay for a convention, though, he would go all out.

Kal-El loves talking about his shows, especially with someone who "really knows their stuff." He can get pretty detailed with the history and storylines. Anime is also fun because it shows you things that are "just impossible, but you can believe it because they do it so well." He likes that it lets him hold onto a little bit of his childhood which is important to him now that he is a junior in college and facing a looming adulthood. Several of these themes will emerge again and again: Anime is not only for children, anime fans can feel marginalized, etc. which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Anime happens anywhere and everywhere. All it takes is a spark between two or more people that signifies, "wait, you like anime?" Once the pair realizes their common affection, they will often talk and reminisce for hours. Often the individuals do not know each other well. What they share is a common link to a collective body of knowledge complete with visual symbols, jargon, gestures, and performance features. Whether a fan is intentionally displaying these features, or unintentionally absorbing these features into their personal performances, anime fandom is part of the substance of the fans identity. Because of this, anime fandom is "done" almost anywhere.

Anime With Purpose

There are times, however, when anime is intentionally the reason behind the gathering. fan clubs abound in both virtual and real spaces, often with overlap. One person may belong to multiple anime fan spheres. In my experience, fan clubs fall into the following broad categories:

1. Viewing Parties

2. Creative Groups (fanfiction, fan art, etc.)

3. Social Gatherings

4. Discussions and Panels

5. General (non-anime specific) "Geek Fests."

6. Formal Conventions (discussed in the next section)

General "Geek Fests" are too broad for the purposes of this thesis, however it is important to note that a large number of anime fans also consider themselves fans of "geekdom" which includes everything from sci-fi to computer humor and science projects. It is very common for anime to play a significant role in these types of gatherings.

Viewing Parties. These gatherings more or less imitate the movie-going experience. The room is dark. Chairs are set in rows and aisles facing a large projector screen. The purpose of these gatherings are to *watch* anime, often anime that is difficult to find by conventional means. Members will combine resources to purchase expensive shows. There is little discussion or anything else that happens. Just about 4 or 5 hours of anime. These types of gatherings are becoming less frequent as the internet makes available all sorts of previously difficult to obtain anime. Still, the fact that people still get together to watch anime, when it would be easier in isolation at home, shows that sociality is an important factor.

Creative Groups. For many fans, anime is a tool to be creative. As discussed in Chapter Four, one of the striking commonalities between nearly all anime fans I encountered was artistic or creative expression. Anime fans love to create new things: stories, art, manga, clothing, music, films, and even food. These gatherings are about sharing your creations with like-minds. Often there is a critique circle, especially if most of the fans are working on the same type of craft like fanfiction. Fans will give suggestions, feedback and praise over others' creative endeavors.

Social Gatherings. The purpose of these "meetups" are simply to meet new people. Meetup.com has become a popular venue for coordinating these meets. Fans usually attend alone or in small groups and look forward to discovering others who are "as weird as I am" (Robin). Often, this is the very means that someone uses to get into anime. For instance, Alex was a nominal fan until he moved to a new city and went to a few meetups. He made friends and became more interested in anime at the same time.

Discussions and Panels. The most formal of the social gatherings, these are organized discussions, lectures and panels surrounding anime topics. These are most common at conventions, but are often found in larger cities on a monthly or semi-monthly basis. A group will, again, share resources to bring in a celebrity or expert on a specific topic, secure a lecture area and hold a symposium of sort. There is almost always a mixer or informal gathering before or after.

Hybrids. No meeting I attended was a pure expression of any of the above. In fact, most meetings include elements of each, but with emphasis on one or two. For instance: *Anime No Kai* is a student-led anime organization at the University of Houston that exists to "celebrate Japanese culture." While their weekly meetings are mostly viewing parties, they also hold social gatherings like Christmas parties. In their weekly meetings long discussions take place and individual fans will share their creative expressions publically by reading fanfiction or talking about their artwork.

It is also worth noting that many of these groups are actively involved in social justice and fundraising campaigns. For example, when the earthquake and tsunami hit Japan in 2011, *Anime No Kai* worked diligently to raise support money.

Alex Rodriguez. Alex rates his interest in anime at 7 out of 10, though he did not get into watching anime until he was 21, about 11 years ago. His Bible college roommate introduced him to his first anime, Ninja Scroll, and the second anime was Akira. This particular Bible College did not allow Televisions in the dorm rooms. He and his friends would sneak out and rent DVD and have a

Tuesday movie night, watching the shows on Play Station systems. The friends would get together

with "other people who we trusted, since we weren't really allowed to watch movies."

When Alex was still learning about anime in the early 2000s, anime was still "kind of

undercover. It hadn't hit the mainstream yet." Another good friend of Alex's did not get into anime

until he started watching it on Adult Swim. Then he came to Alex, "and was like 'you gotta watch

this.'" Alex replied, "dude, I watched that four years ago when it first came out." Alex started

showing him other anime, which brought him and his girlfriend into anime and even cosplay. When

he first got involved in anime, he did not realize there was even a larger community.

Alex did not get really involved in the "anime community" until he moved to Houston in

2006, seven years ago. When he moved to Houston, and left the church organization he was a part

of due a lot to changing doctrinal beliefs, his family "kinda shunned him." During that time when he

was 26, he was looking for a community he "could be involved with." Looking for communities, he

found an anime Meet Up Group on meetup.com. At the time it was about 15-30 members at any

given time. Alex was involved with them for about 2 years. He made a couple good friends there and

even got into a cover band with another member he met at the anime club. During this period, he

started "going to the conventions and getting involved in the community."

That sort of trend is pretty common, in his experience. People will get into anime without

realizing there "is this subculture and even subcultures within that" like photographers, and manga

people, and artists. He really enjoyed "learning this new culture."

His meet up group called him a "normie because he was too normal, too mainstream, they

didn't understand how he liked this quirky thing." His friend Jules even said, "I don't know why

you're into this, you're too normal, all the rest of us are freaks and geeks and I could tell you weren't

the guy who got picked on in high school." In the meet up group, they considered themselves the

fringe group: the geeks, the nerds from high school. Now they have banded together. Alex did not

know why they made "this kind of assertion" he just thought they were cool people and he liked hanging out with them. He is not able to be involved in the group like he did at the time (between 26 and 28), but he still carries some of those acquaintances.

Sarah, now a college Senior, first became an anime fain her junior year of High School. At first she was "like, okay, this is pretty cool." It did not take long for her to get to "wow, I love this stuff!" She had seen anime like *Pokémon* even as a kid, but she was not really aware of anime as a separate thing until a couple friends "slowly drove her towards that way." She also got into Manga pretty heavily. *Full Metal Sagashite* was the first anime she really got into and she had read the manga first. Again, it was a friend who encouraged her to watch the anime at the library, which was the only place she could get enough internet service. Sarah is eclectic in her tastes of anime. She likes sports, music, drama, comedy and even sci-fi. For her, the character development is the most important.

Her first real encounter with anime fandom, and subbed versions of anime, was as a college freshman when she found *Anime No Kai.* Sarah is creative. She draws some anime fan art and fanfiction, but cosplay is her real cup of tea. She does it "any chance she gets," sometimes on campus, but mostly at conventions or meetups. She belongs to several groups, including leadership at Anime No Kai and loves Houston Meetups about once a month; the same sort of thing Alex was talking about earlier. At these meetings, there is a lot of crossover interests like video games, comic books, and movies.

Conventions and these meetups, especially the one where cosplay is prominent, "can be pretty crazy with people dancing in the halls and some cosplay that is really good." And, cosplay is therapeutic. When she is stressed or scared or hurt, cosplay gives her a release to "become someone else." She tries to act like the character she is playing, but it "doesn't always work out." Her best friends have become those who she does anime with, and especially cosplay.

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Anime at Conventions

Conventions are a different sort of formal interaction. Though not all conventions are anime conventions, many other sci-fi, comic and popular conventions will involve anime material. Typically, no matter the type of convention, the focus is on merchandise, social interaction, fan exhibitions, panels and celebrity guests. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

Merchandise is probably the heart and soul of the anime convention. Specific shows or studios will set up booths to promote the DVD collections, art, manga and other merchandise associated with their show. Third party and unassociated vendors will promote general anime merchandise, often including homemade or independently produced art, costumes, figurines and music.

Social interaction plays an important part in conventions as well. Many fans come to these conventions to, as Josh said, "geek out without anyone judging you". They meet new people, put faces to virtual identities and "express yourself in a way that you just can't on normal days" (Katy). Contrary to popular belief most fans that cosplay and perform at anime conventions have no delusions about their own identity. They are not, "deluded, out in the clouds or lost in space but simply looking forward to meeting people who like the same shows you do" as Robin said.

Fan exhibitions play an important role in convention culture. Typically, this involves the reading of fanfiction, though that role has been declining since most fanfiction has moved to the internet. Still, many popular fanfiction authors will be invited to read popular stories. Exhibitions also include crafts and art. Fans will create any number of items found in popular anime, or make something entire new, borrowing from the aesthetic and universe of an anime show. This all fits in with merchandise. Many of these items are sold on the exhibition floor. Fans take a special kind of pride in their creations and often consider themselves to be filling in holes in the story or the world or contributing to back or forward story.

Panels and **Celebrity Guests** often go hand in hand. Panels are organized lectures, discussions or question and answer sessions with special guests. The majority of these panels are given by directors, artists, producers and others integral in the creation of anime and associated materials. For instance, a typical convention will include panels on "Beginning Manga Drawing," "Voice Acting for Anime," "Producing Your Own Anime," "The Anime Story," "Special Effects in Anime," and "How Anime Uses the Multiverse." Other panels will center on fandom: "Cosplay Competition," "Cosplay 101," "Step Into Fanfiction," and the like. Still more panels will be of a more specific or technical nature. "Creating Fictional Languages and "Illustrative Modes of Anime Form" are examples.

While these types of panels make up the bulk of the offerings, the most popular are always the celebrity guests. These guests often include voice actors, directors, and creators. Fans will pack these rooms to hear a short talk and then ask questions. Most questions are about upcoming shows or open-ended questions in current storylines. Some are more typical, "Where do you get your ideas?" and "What is your favorite episode?" are almost always asked. In these panels, celebrities will read popular scenes and most will sign autographs.

Some fans become huge fans of one or two famous anime voice over artists.

My old coworker said his fans wrote him letters daily and followed his every

career choice.

Conventions typically only last a day or two and nearly always include associated media such as role playing games, comics, feature films, underground music and independent art. People from all walks of life frequent these conventions including "My friend who is a neural surgeon 43 years old, he's very wealthy and independent." When the convention is over, the fans will return to their everyday lives with little or no trace that they ever attended.

The socialization aspect of anime fan culture is important to many fans. Not because they lack other friends, are socially awkward or incapable of interacting with others; but because they feel an "infections passion" for something and like to share it. As Robin put it, mainstream American culture cartoons tend to have a more childish association with them. So,

> your mainstream American is more inclined to develop grown up interests
>
> as they grow up. Whereas it's usually the more marginalized individuals who
>
> don't see that distinction as being important. Its video games and anime
>
> and comic books and all of these things are still part of our identity, why
>
> should we have to give them up because we turned eighteen? In our
>
> particular country, there's a culture sense that only certain individuals can
>
> cling to childhood hobbies and continue pursuing them.

All these social arenas allow anime fans to interact with others who feel marginalized from the mainstream by their interest in what may be deemed a more juvenile, slightly less acceptable hobby.

Robin has watched anime for about five years and rates her interest in anime as a five on the one to five scale -- she loves it and finds it "delightful." She even sleeps with an anime Bone Dragon over her bead that acts as a dream catcher to guard her dreams. She first heard about anime when she was little and saw her brother drawing *Hentai* girls in skimpy outfits. She had no interest in anime at that point. However, when her ex-fiancé and she began dating, she saw that he was into anime. Five months into the relationship, she developed a kidney infection and was confined to home where her boyfriend fed her anime and she fell in love with it and has "indulged it increasingly ever since." She likes anime, for one, because of the visual style. The lines are bolder, which helps her distinguish depth and makes it easier to follow. She sometimes has difficulty with American comics and animation because it is harder to perceive that depth.

"Anything that's shared is more enjoyable than alone." Watching anime together was an "enormous feature of her and her fiancé's relationship." She watches anime with her best friend, though her friend is very specific in her tastes and mostly likes Americanized anime and would probably rate herself a 3 of 5, "watches occasionally." Her wider group of friends all enjoy at least some anime, and she can "at least bully her friends (jokingly) into watching," her key anime favorites.

Anime is best when it "pulls the ground from underneath" her. The anime she likes gives her plots that are unpredictable to her. Character development is one of the big strengths of anime. The visuals are nice, but even though the pictures are pretty, that does not really matter to her as it's the kind of characters and the kind of storylines that really hook Robin.

Robin is a writer, mostly of fantasy. Anime lends itself to modern fantasy better than "true" fantasy. That's the kind of anime she would do, something akin to Magical Realism which is a very strong point of anime. A modern Faery tale perhaps. She also does not have a single favorite, but a list. To her, you must take into account both the quality and quantity of an anime. The quality is rated on a 0 to 1 scale (.5, .75) and then multiplied by the number of episodes giving it a rank index. So, a show like Romeo and Juliet may earn a 1 in quality, there are only 26 episodes. Bleach may rank a .75 in quality, but multiply by the 300 something episodes that have aired.

She has never known anyone who was into anime but not into video games. Artistic people may be more drawn to anime just because of the medium it's in. She does not know a single anime fan who is not also an artist, writer or actor. Anime is "amazing and people should be more open minded to it." There are so many stories and genres; there is something out there for everyone.

Katy is "addicted to Japanese culture," which came from her love of anime. She claimed to be a 10 on a scale of 1 to 5 and wears the badge "anime fan" proudly. She and her fiancé discovered anime together, just as with Robin, her boyfriend introduced her to it. That said, she has now

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"passed him up" in her love of anime. For her, like Robin, it is the obscure anime she finds most intriguing, though not for the sake of the show itself. She enjoys anime mostly because it helps her feel Japanese and get connected with Japanese culture. She has discovered music, art, television and even a lot of the language through and because of anime. She reads manga and actually appreciates it more than the anime they produce.

She has been to numerous conventions and has cosplayed at most. She has, occasionally, cosplayed in everyday life though that is usually by request or a group decision for all her friends to cosplay on the same day. To her, cosplay is just "fun. You get to be someone else, you get to act differently. You get to dress up. How is that anything but fun?" Katy also admitted that she has picked up mannerisms common to anime characters. This was unintentional at first, but after it was pointed out to her, she began incorporating them into her speech and nonverbal communication on purpose. "It's just a way to take what I love and put it everywhere."

Katy is definitely an artist, a senior in the Graphic Arts program at the University of Houston. She has drawn a lot of inspiration from anime in her work. She likes the bold lines, color play and angular design of the characters. Plus, anime gives her a freedom of expression that she does not seem to get from mainstream American art. The rules are different, "you can play with shapes differently and not everything needs to be anchored to the same style and space. You can mix and match things in interesting ways. That's why I love the art."

More About Cosplay

I have mentioned Cosplay in many of these social arenas, but the topic deserves a little more depth, especially concerning our focus on identity management. Cosplay "involves people dressing up and acting as their favorite Japanese anime and video game characters within their normal life" (Lipke 2007). The common understanding is that cosplay is performed almost exclusively by young adults or adolescents who have a hard time accepting the pressures of

"growing up" and wish to hold onto a bit of their childhood. (Benesh-Liu 2007) However, this is not strictly the case. Many adults cosplay in certain arenas. (Gustines 2007; Gn 2011; Brehm-Heeger, et al. 2007) Cosplay can be found in many different fan cultures (virtually all of them, truth be told), but is especially important in anime fandom. This may be because of the vast amount of characters in the, literally, thousands of anime and manga franchises. Also, cosplay is an important part of Japanese fandom and extremely popular in parts of Japan. It is a myth, however, that cosplay came to the States through anime. In fact, dressing up and acting as a favorite character has always been a part of fandom. (Brehm-Heeger, Conway, and Vale Winter2007)

Most cosplay happens at conventions and formal gatherings, however those that insiders would consider weaboos feel the need to cosplay in everyday life, again to advertise their love of anime. The weaboo cosplay will be less imaginative, more concrete and based on specific, non-original characters and modes.

The reasons people cosplay are various, but generally revolve around appreciation for the characters, which ties into the extensive fan culture of anime. Cosplayers may like the attitude of the character, their backstory, or physical looks; perhaps they identify with the character in some way. In research performed by Benesh-Liu, one anime fan, Dennis who cosplayed as Sogeking from the anime series *One Piece*, commented offhandedly that with anime, "Watching is escapism, you want to be a part of it." Cosplay allows a unique chance to interact with this fantasy world. (Benesh-Liu 2007)

Cosplaying is also a way to interact with people. Tony remarks that cosplaying, "makes you feel like a celebrity for a day." (Benesh-Liu 2007) The most enthusiastic fans make their own costumes and admit to trying to find excuses to cosplay. They determine what to wear through experience, from whatever's popular or well received. To these cosplayers, exhibitionism is a factor

Most cosplayers produce their own outfits, or with the help of friends and family. Sometimes the cosplayer will make either the clothes or the props, and have someone else they know with the necessary skills produce the missing pieces. The construction process can take anywhere from days to months, spread out or concentrated. Clothes are made either by sewing or purchased objects which are then modified. Prop items or armor usually are created from simple materials like PVC, foam, or cardboard. This improvisation is essential to the costume-making process. (Benesh-Liu 2007)

From the interviews conducted, meetings observed and surveys given, it can be shown that cosplay occurs with a variety of different kinds of persona, however these personas do have certain commonalities.

1. Cosplayed characters share a certain "anime aesthetic" that is signature to the visual style of anime and manga; particularly bold lines, sharp angles and femininity or *kawaii* (the Japanese word roughly translated as "cute" or "childlike").

2. These personas are fleshed out, almost always having names, personality traits, backstories and positioning inside a grander narrative like the show they were derived from.

3. The characters often have some sort of supernatural, fantasy or sci-fi characteristic such as the ability to use magic, pilot a starship or do battle.

The characters are created from three source materials. Specific cosplay characters are pulled from the fan's favorite anime show or manga comic. For instance, a fan may cosplay Lelouch from *Code Geass* by dressing up as him, assuming his mannerisms and very memorable speech patterns, and taking on his name. Here, the fan is performing the character, responding as he or she believes Lelouch would respond in a given situation.

Cosplay, here, is dressing and performing as a specific anime character. Avatarplay, I will define as a form of cosplay in which the individual creates a unique character based on established

traits from popular media; or creating a new character from a base of narrative resources and narrative archetypes. Here, the fan does not become his or her favorite character, they develop a completely original persona based on their favorite bits of character, world and fandom.

Most often, and once the fan is a little deeper in fan culture, she will cosplay from an archetype or character type in an anime show. Several archetypes appear in anime, often drawn from Japanese mythology or culture. Some of these include the Mentor, the Eternal Child, or the Socialite Princess. Assassins and ninjas are also very prevalent in anime, nearly every show has some form of these characters. So, fans will create their own expression of one or more of these archetypes. Similarly, a fan may choose to cosplay a specific character type. For example, Robin talked about cosplaying as a Soul Eater from the show *Soul Eaters*. This is a kind of character who is constantly on the hunt for new souls to bring back to the Soul Society. There are many Soul Eaters in the show, so, the fan will create their own Soul Eater.

Sometimes, fans will cosplay as either a specific character or character type from non-cannon anime material. Cannon is considered anime produced by Japanese studios and broadcast originally on Japanese television. Many of these shows are drawn from manga that can also be considered cannon because they are created by the same authors who first gave birth to the characters or stories. Fanfiction is a fan's retooling of this cannon material and fanfiction is an extremely popular aspect of anime fandom. Suffice it to say, a wide variety of new characters and character types exist on popular fanfiction websites like Fanfiction.net. Some fans identify strongly with these characters and will cosplay them instead of cannon characters.

An example of this is the *Airship Dionysus.* The *Airship Dionysus* is a fictional steampunk airship (dirigible) with its own story. The *Dionysus* is a travelling circus and secret pirate vessel that commandeers many members of its crew. The crew travels the world, sometimes friends and sometimes enemies, each with his or her own story and goals. Each member of the steampunk club

takes on one of the persona of a crew member. Each member has an individual story. The crew gets together in real space of a member's house and discusses the overarching story, enjoy steampunk and anime, and socialize. Often, the club will meet with other clubs with similar stories.

Gender and Cosplay. Cosplay is not limited by gender roles. Many fans will portray a character of the opposite sex. Megan (another of Benesh-Liu's interviewees), explains that to her mind, many of these characters are androgynous. It is true that in many Japanese anime there is an abundance of *bishounen* (beautiful youth), who are very attractive. Most male characters are also feminine-looking. Because of this, it is often the case that a female will play the part of a male, better than a male would. It could also be argued that there is far more diversity in male characters, whereas most often female characters are quite limited in their roles. Whichever the case, it is common to see females dressing as male characters, but unusual to see the opposite. Sometimes, cosplayers may choose a character simply because they believe they have the right figure for the costume.

This is rarely about expressing gender roles. As Joel Gn puts it,

> Cosplayers often have an ambiguous appearance which may seem to challenge the essential differences of the gendered body, yet it should be noted that the physical imitation of a fictitious character or artificial body does not directly translate into an expression of the individual's gender identity. Rather, it is suggested that the cosplay performance denotes a consumption of the image which provokes the need for an alternative reading on deviance. (2011)

And deviance is an important part of cosplay. Robin and Katy both agreed that a big part of cosplay is "doing what you aren't allowed to do normally." It grants the ability to

hold onto something that society says you must loose as you grow up; things like dressing up as a "fairy tale princess or dragon keeper or Soul Eater."

One of the primary reasons for cosplay involves identity management. It's a way of identifying yourself as a fan to other fans. Cosplay often shows, "the complex and often contradictory nature of the fandom community to its largely knowing audience. In particular fans express the importance of and the ongoing need for community" (Duchesne Winter2005). The more detailed the cosplay, the more you know about anime, the more you watch, and the more you love it. At a convention, one can identify as a fan by mere presence, having bought one's way into the convention. The purchase of a modestly priced bauble adds to the construction of this identity. These identity markers and can eventually become as elaborate as a store-bought or home-made costume. With each level of intricacy, the cosplayer is identifying more strongly with anime, anime fandom, and the invented persona. (Duchesne Winter2005)The kind of character you choose gets to say something about who you are and who you wish to be. Cosplay can be therapeutic and fun.

Cosplay and Online Avatars. It has been suggested that cosplay bears resemblance to online avatars as described in Boellstorff's *Coming of Age in the Second Life* (2008), especially his concept of Avatars and Alts. Though this was not the primary focus of this ethnography, there are some distinct similarities and differences. Cosplay happens in "real space" as opposed to "cyber space." There are very real physical restrictions concerning cosplay, such as body type, skin color, height, and materials available. These restrictions do not exist in the virtual avatar. Cosplay also appears to be more about socialization. My informants discussed enjoying cosplay because they could "hang out with others who like the same things," "be creative with their friends," and generally show off their skill. It is about socialization. Avatars, on the other hand, seemed to be more about a fantasized version of themselves.

CHAPTER FOUR: USING THE TRIAD OF NARRATIVE IDENTITY

Now that we have seen the ethnographic data is some "raw" sense, we turn to the concept of the triad of narrative identity and our central question: "how do anime fans use anime to perform their personal identity narratives?" Using the framework proposed in Chapter Two as a workbook of sorts, we will discuss each component in turn with examples from the data. In this way be put flesh on the skeleton.

First, I define sets of narrative resources from the anime itself. These are drawn from existing research of anime, Japanese literature, and fan studies. Second, I look at the personal identity narratives by investigating interviews and life stories in light of these narrative resources. Here, we will see how individuals use Narrative resources in their personal identity narratives. Third, observations of personal performances are lined up with the narrative resources and examples of how these are enacted are given. Fourth, a few final conclusions are drawn. Last, reflections on how to better use the framework are introduced.

Narrative Resources

Anime is an extremely prolific and diverse artfrom. Because of the sheer amount of stories, signs, symbols, and elements, the number of narrative resources is immense. In order to make things more manageable, I have broken these resources into multidimensional categories. Broadly, there are resources that seem to be directed more toward the personal identity narrative, and others focused at the performative identity and audience interpretation. It is also important to note that not all of these elements are directly related to the story elements of the narrative, but may be related to the visual nature of anime: images, sounds, gestures, and the like.

On the identity narrative side of things, the interpretation of the data found archetypes, life stories, and circumstantial elements to be most relevant. For performance and interpretation, icons,

props and costumes, language, gestures, group associations, decoration of personal space, and self-identification were the most prominent.

Personal Identity Narratives

Archetypes.

For the purposes of this thesis, I will define archetype as a prototype character upon which specific characters are created as implementation. Using a Jungian and Vygostkian understanding, many of these archetypes are shared in the collective unconscious of groups of people or whole civilizations.

Joseph Campbell investigated world mythology for common themes. He introduced the concept of "monomyth" which lays out a number of stages that the hero of a myth goes through from the "ordinary world" to "resurrection" (2008). In this work, he also discussed basic archetypes, or reoccurring character types, that made the foundation for these myths. Carl Jung (Jung 1981) worked in conjunction with these concepts, generating a long list of archetypes that reside in the "collective unconscious" and are manifested in myths. Christopher Vogler (2007) expanded and combined these concepts in a workbook for screenwriters.

This is decidedly different than Bronisław Malinowski's ideas of myth being connected to ritual (1971). While those ideas have a lot of validity, I used Joseph Campbell and Carl Jung as the baseline for archetypal discussions because they focused more on literature and character types apart from rituals or enactment. The narrative resource identified as "archetype" therefore is a disembodied set of symbols and base characteristics that is given form in the integration to personal identity narrative and performative identity. It bears noting that the idea of folkoric ostension (Dégh and Vázsonyi 1983; Lindahl 2005; Ellis 1989) is also relevant. There individuals enact folklore *stories* in ritual ways. Here individuals enact archetypal characteristics in symbolic-interactionst ways.

Studies in Japanese literature, film, and anime have discussed Japanese specific archetypes (Barrett 1989; Antoni 1991; Metevelis 2002). More importantly, at least for this process, is an examination of interviews and discussions with my subjects. Many of them spoke about familiar characters as repeating types. "Every anime has the quiet, mysterious guy" said Katy. A more in depth look at these interviews, and a comparison with some of the above sources illuminated a few archetypes found in anime. This is by no means a complete list, and is not intended as such. Instead, this is the beginnings of patterns that were found in interviews. Each of these character types were mentioned by multiple participants.

Table 2: Narrative Resources – Archetypes Discussed by Informants

Archetype	Description
Creative Free Spirit	Usually a teenage girl who is very creative and does not take well to the rules. Not rebellious, but absent minded and does what she pleases. Typically compassionate.
Lone Hero	Almost always a male. This young man is similar to the Wild West Heroes in American literature. They come seemingly from nowhere, have few attachments, and in some way save the day.
Wise Old Man	One of the most common archetypes mentioned in any literature, the Wise Old Man or Woman acts as a mentor.
Renegade Drifter	Similar to the Lone Hero, the Renegade drifter's motives are more dubious and he/she typically has shape shifter or scoundrel qualities. You never know which side they are on.
Genius Geek	A typically young, absent minded genius. Almost always befuddled around the opposite sex, wise beyond their years, childish and proficient in math and science.
Shy and Deep Poet	This person may or may not actually be a poet, but they are very shy even though they are wise beyond their years. Typically, this character has a romantic interest in an older character, but is too afraid to say anything. The anime convention of the "inner dialogue" makes this archetype especially powerful.

This list was culminated mostly from asking "what are some common anime characters?" Many, many were listed. The above five were selected here because they also lined up with how

participants described themselves, their personal life story, or their personal narrative. In some

cases, participants flat-out said, "I'm like the Creative Free Spirit Girl" as in Katy's case.

Others described the circumstances of their lives in similar terms with a specific archetype.

In one participant's words, "A lot of times I find myself helping people who I do not even really

know. I just give them rides or directions or whatever." And later, "I do not really have a lot of

friends. I do not really want a lot of friends. I just kinda go through life and see what happens. I love

it that way." Earlier in the interview, this participant talked about the lone hero archetype, and

identified some specific characters as his favorites.

For another participant, in a few casual conversations, she described her feelings in parallel

to the Shy and Deep Poet.

> I have all these thoughts in my head. So many thoughts that I don't even
>
> know what to do with them. Most people would never know it. They don't
>
> know how much I think or how much I do art. It's like I'm shy, but I'm not.
>
> I'm not scared of people. I just don't want to say everything that I think like
>
> some other people do. Once you get to know me you see how deep I am. I
>
> probably look weird or boring at first.

Again, in this participant's interview, one of the archetypes she described was the Shy and

Deep Poet. In both of these cases, they made several references to their lives being "like" specific

characters. Also in both of these cases, the participant was well aware of this. They wanted to be

like these characters in at least some fashion.

In asking participants to recount their life stories, they seemed to rewrite their own story or

make a conscious effort to point out how their personal identity narrative involved a mixture of

narrative resources from the storyworld of anime. In the same way that Linde suggested new

employees adopted elements to training narratives and accounts of former employees, anime fans

seem to have adopted elements of anime into their personal identity narrative in a cobbled fashion.

Performative Identities

Icons.

There are many iconographic features found in anime that can be adopted by anime fans to

perform their own identities and interpret the performed identities of others. In the texts, these are

used as shorthand to quickly and efficiently relay an emotional state, or to implement a comedic

device. Many of these icons have roots in manga.

Table 3: Narrative Resources – Performative Icons

Feature	Description
Face Fault	Shocked or surprised with extreme exaggeration
Vein mark	Angry characters spontaneously form throbbing veins or stress marks
Mallet	Angry women will spontaneously summon a mallet, usually used for slapstick comedy
Bloody Nose	Male characters will get bloody noses in the presence of female love interests
Sweat Drop or **Squiggle Blush**	When embarrassed or stressed
Akanbe Face	Childish taunt, character pulls down eyelid with a finger to expose the red skin
X Eyes	X-ed out eyes to indicate knock out or even illness
Plastic Eyes	Vacant eyes or non-reflective eyes that indicate semi consciousness

Performing Icons

So how are these narrative resources expressed through performance in a way that the

audience interprets them correctly? In most cases, the fan over-exaggerated an icon as a gesture in

some comedic way. For instance, Katy was in a circle of friends that did not entirely consist of anime

fans when she tripped over her words, mistakenly saying gibberish. The group chuckled, as did she.

Katy then, spontaneously, drew a sweat drop on her cheek and mimicked it falling to the ground,

saying "droop" in the process. The motion lasted less than a second. The other anime fan in the group chuckled again, but most of the group just moved on. The topic changed.

In another instance, in a college lounge that included several couches, Sarah was lying with her eyes closed. Two others who were fans approached and asked her if she wanted to go to lunch. Without opening her eyes, Sarah drew small x-es over her eyelids. "Come on," one friend chided. "We're meeting the others." Sarah again drew the x-es, indicating that she was not feeling well. This time she smiled. The friend who had chided Sarah "harrumphed" and "spontaneously summoned" an imaginary mallet to "konk Sarah over the head." All three friends laughed, but Sarah stayed on the couch while I and the other friends proceeded to lunch.

A final example is from a convention experience at ComicPalooza in Houston, Texas. In this case, I was alone and wandering through an anime section of the exhibition hall. I noticed a group of fans in cosplay that I recognized as anime-centric, though I could not identify specific characters. One of the members, in some sort of joke, pulled down the skin under her eye at another member. Again, the group laughed.

Props, Costumes, and Self-Adornation

Probably the most common and simplest performance feature I investigated, this can range from simply wearing a Soul Reaper necklace to adorning a three-hundred dollar, self-made cosplay outfit. Robin talks about experiences meeting a new fan due to self-adornation.

> I don't cosplay except in conventions usually, but I do like jewelry and I have
> some anime jewelry. My Bone Dragon necklace is my favorite and I'm
> almost always wearing it. Most people don't really know what it is, or they
> just think it's a cool dragon or something. You have to look pretty close to
> see what it is. Or, you have to really like anime and that show [*Bleach*].

Sometimes, I'll be somewhere and a total stranger will say, "is that Bone

Dragon from *Bleach*?" I'll say, "yep!" and we start talking.

David actually has an anime tattoo: a small Gundum Raider (giant Robot used to fight

interstellar battles in the anime universe *Gundum*). It is hidden on his upper arm, typically covered

by a t-shirt. He says he got it "when he was younger," but does not really regret the decision. "It's a

great conversation starter." Most would not typically recognize the meaning.

It is also worth noting that no significant correlation between the level of fandom (devoted,

mainstream, etc.) was found. A devoted fan or casual fan may wear the exact same t-shirt. Full

cosplay and avatar play is where typological distinctions start to grow, but only in the complexity or

"accuracy" of the costume. Remember, also, that casual or mainstream fans may cosplay, but not

necessarily to anime themes. Robin talks about the illusive Weaboo and Otaku purposefully dressing

up or wearing a lot of "anime merch" to "advertise" that they are anime fans. "Those external,

obvious banners rather than it just being a personal hobby. It's like they have to have a banner on

their head that screams I am an anime fan!" For the most part, costuming, props, and self-

adornation are very subtle and much more likely to be used as performance features in daily life:

simple key-rings, t-shirts under jackets, or a small tattoo that is usually hidden from view. Cosplay

may take a lot more planning and effort, but amount of time "performing" these grand incidents are

much less than simple day to day self-adornation.

Gestures

Most gestural performances I encountered were part of the iconographic performances.

One noteworthy exception included an inside joke among Anime No Kai members. In their weekly

meetings, they were watching a show which included a young girl with an almost trademark gesture.

She would touch someone's nose and say "too-too-roo" and then laugh. It was a sign of affection

that some members of the group began replicating. As a sign of positive re-enforcement, a greeting, or just to get a laugh, individuals would "too-too-roo" each other.

Another gesture was one of Katy's favorites, and one of the observations that initially got me interested in the topic. The "quick ethnographic example" described at the end of Chapter Two included Katy's "Slide In Surprised" Gesture, after which she almost always qualified the action with "it's an anime thing."

One thing that separates gestures from icon performance, is that many fans will imitate trademark gestures from specific characters in specific anime shows. This is done, especially in contexts of other anime fans, in order to draw a connection between themselves and the character. This can also be used to perform personal identity narratives that are built from archetypes. For example, Kal-El connected with the "Lone Hero" archetype in his personal life story, interview and personal identity narrative. Roronoa Zoro is an example of that archetype in *One Piece*, a show he follows closely. A common gesture Roronoa will perform is to raise his hand as if he has a sword and beacon an adversary to "swashbuckle," even though Roronoa is unarmed. On at least two occasions, I have observed Kal-El performing this gesture.

Language

Language has long been regarded as a gateway to identification and power. People who can "talk the talk" are considered part of the group, where those who do not know the right words, speak with the wrong accent, or do not understand the "code" is left to the realm of outsiders. This phenomenon is present in anime fandom as well, and I look at it as a performance feature. One way for fans to identify themselves both to insiders and outsiders is through language.

Jargon

The most common performance feature is the use of specialized vocabulary. Several anime-specific terms exist and the knowledge and use of these terms will mark the individual as a member of the group. Some of these jargon terms include:

Table 4: Narrative Resources - Jargon

Term	Definition
Con	A convention
AniCon	An anime specific convention
Dubbed	Anime that has been dubbed into English
Subbed	Anime with the original soundtrack that uses English subtitles
Cel	From "Celluloid." An animation term that indicates animation that is hand-drawn as opposed to computer generated.
"Giant Robot"	A sub-genre of anime sci-fi
Cosplay	The art of dressing up as an anime character
Cos	The costume used in cosplay
Merch	Merchandise associated with anime
Disc	A volume of an anime series. Used to come out on LaserDisc or DVD. Typically contains 4 to 6 episodes
Weaboo	(or Otaku). Someone who has lost touch with reality in their love of anime
Mech or **Cyborg**	An anime sub-genre of science fiction in which characters have technological implants
Titles	Beginning and Ending scenes, usually music sequences with credits

This list is by no means complete, only an example. Fans will use these terms while performing their personal identity narratives to indicate both their participation in anime fandom, and as a way to gauge the participation of others. In many of my interviews, subjects stated that the knowledge of anime and anime fan culture is the best indicator of the level of fandom. As Alex said,

> some of these guys know everything about anime. All the directors
>
> and voice actors. The words. The styles. The stories. Everything.
>
> When they talk to you, it's like they're talking in a different language
>
> sometimes and that's how they know if you're a fan. Can you keep
>
> up?

Another example comes from David, who is the oldest subject I interviewed at 47 years of age. He talked about how the terms have changed. "We used to get anime on LaserDiscs that were imported and very expensive. Several people would have to chip in for a single series. We just called them discs. I do not know what they call them anymore."

In reply, I told him that another of my participants, Robin (who is in her twenties), mentioned "discs." She said, "you just hang out with your friends, and they're there and it just comes up because you have wall scrolls and the new disc is coming out, and yum."

David just laughed at that. He was pleased to see the jargon had not changed entirely.

Mimicry (repeating direct lines)

In some cases, as with the gestural example above, quoted lines are used as an "inside joke." This can be from the simplest work, like mimicking Picachu's "*picachu*." For example, ComicPalooza is held, every year, at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston, Texas. The front area has several escalators that move between the first and second floors. As the main entry way into the Exhibit Hall, many hundreds of people are passing through this area at any given time. This convention is not solely an anime convention. While I was there, I observed, on two separate occasions, one group shout out "*Picachu*!" and another, seemingly unrelated, group reply in kind. This call and response may go on two or three times with different groups of people joining in. Not everyone in the lobby even understood the reference.

Jason talks about a similar experience with mimicry. He and his friends would watch a lot of "cheesy sci-fi with stupid jokes." According to him, in class, he and his peers would quote these "cheesy jokes" and then laugh hysterically at them. Two such jokes were:

1. One of the characters from a popular anime was named Road Buster, but in Japanese it sounded like road-a-bust-a. As an inside joke, they would repeat or mimic this to make his

circle laugh while the others around did not understand. Once, another classmate overheard this and thought they said "roll the pasta."

2. Another joke was from an anime where a character asked for a monkey wrench, but it sounded like moonkee-wrenchee. This became a joke whenever they were asking for something, or just to introduce into conversation for a laugh

Japanese

Katy says that she loves anime, but she "really, really loves Japan." She is not alone. Many of those I interviewed spoke of their love of Japanese food, culture, media, land, and language. In every case, this love of Japan began with anime. Also in every case, the individual also spoke about learning basic Japanese through watching "subbed" anime. In almost every case, the individual described knowledge of the Japanese language as a "key-indicator" of the "level of fandom" on a pre-interview survey or non-directed interview. The one exceptional case mentioned "no" key-indicators. In any case, it seemed apparent that knowing even a little Japanese marks you as an anime fan. This is interestingly shown in a Japanese friend of mine. She describes that, as soon as she mentions that speaks Japanese as a second language, everyone "assumes" she is an anime fan. Both insiders and outsiders "tag" her as a "hardcore" fan even though she does not particularly like anime and does not consider herself a fan. In fact, she learned Japanese while her father was stationed in Japan during a tour in the army.

Group Associations

Performance of a personal identity narrative is, by definition, a social activity. There must exist both a performer and audience. That is not, however the only social aspect of performance. In this case, many subjects associated with specific groups as a means to perform their personal identity narratives. These groups can be both online or offline.

For instance, Robin is an artist who has created numerous works of art based on anime characters and themes. She is also part of an online chat group that shares, critiques, and discusses fan art. In our conversation, she twice mentioned that she was part of this group. Inclusion in this group solidifies not only her identity as an anime fan, but also as an artist, and a fan artist specifically. When in conversation with someone who does not know of the group, bringing it up gives her the opportunity to describe the group and, therefore, her interest in anime and fan art.

An offline example is exhibited in Sarah. When asked, "how much of a fan of anime are you?" she replied, "I'm one of the leaders of Anime No Kai." While she did go on to mention other indicators and eventually rank herself as a 10 on a scale of 1 to 5, this group association seemed to be enough. The fact that she was willing to put in significant amounts of time (the meetings themselves take about 10 hours a week) with this group was an indicator of her love of anime and anime fandom. She also wears paraphernalia that advertises Anime No Kai. This opens up conversations about anime.

One last example comes from Alex in a slightly different way. His personal identity narrative and life story both involve anime groups in a very core way. He came to anime through social means, an informal group of friends in college. This group association was important to him because they were "fans" but not "hardcore fans." It was not until he came to Houston and discovered a "meetup group" that got together once a week to socialize and discuss anime, that he realized this was "a bigger thing than just movies and T.V. shows." In this group, he made lots of friends and met many different people from many different "walks of life." In his own words, "I started because of the anime, but stayed because of the people." So, these group identifications are a core part of his personal identity narrative. By performing or broadcasting that he is a part of a larger collective of people, he is aligning himself with anime fandom.

Decoration of Personal Space

This is a very common way for fans to express their fandom. (As a non-anime example, my fiancé has no less than 20 Houston Texans decorations in her home and car). In my ethnographic experience, these decorations include items like bumper stickers, wall posters, hanging clothing, wall paint, hanging paintings, artwork, sculptures, trinkets, and dishware. In fact, at ComicPalooza, there were three booths set up that sold nothing but items for the decoration of personal space. In addition, at least ten booths sold additional merchandise that was intended to "make your room an anime cave (according to one merchandise booth)."

It seems that fans do this for both internal and external reasons.

Internal reasons means for themselves. Jason talked about having anime posters (frames from specific movies) on his walls because they "cheer him up." Robin also talks about how much she likes "her *picachu* dolls to greet her after a hard day." External reasons can be summed up in Katy's quote, "when people go into my apartment, I want them to know I bleed Japan and anime." Another friend joked that it looked like "anime threw up all over Katy's apartment."

This performance feature is not limited to homes and cars. Any personal space can be decorated. Robin has several anime stickers and drawings on her notebooks. Josh has anime bumper stickers on the sides of his camera cases. Jason has pictures of he and his fiancé at conventions in his office. In all of these instances, the fans choose to perform their personal identity narratives in ways that are unique to themselves. Those who are artists display artwork. Others who are more "known for" their sense of humor will have odd trinkets or pithy bumper stickers.

Reflections

We have seen how anime fans use anime episodes, characters, aesthetics, and other elements of media and fandom; how they incorporate these elements into their personal identity narratives; and how they perform these identity narratives to both insiders and outsiders. This is by

no means a complete set of examples. Indeed, the subject pool was relatively small. It was not

meant, however, to be generalizable. Instead, we were striving for an example of how to use an

analytic framework to investigate the ways narrative and identity intersects.

Next, in Chapter Five, we will widen our focus by reviewing my previous work regarding

Stories for Educational Purposes, make some final reflections on the analytical framework, and

suggest potential further directions for research of this type.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND APPLICATION

We have discussed the problem at stake, reviewed literature of previous scholarly works, examined "raw" ethnographic data, and analyzed that data in light of the triad of narrative identity analytical framework. Now, what conclusions can we safely draw from this ethnography, and why does any of it matter? First, in a purely ethnographic sense, there were fascinating similarities among the different fans I encountered. These conclusions, though largely independent of the triad of narrative identity, are important to shed light on anime fans and, therefore, useful in the realms of anime studies and fan studies. After discussing these commonalities, I will turn to basic conclusions about narrative as identity and performance before critiquing the framework itself, and ending with a proposed application and further directions.

Common Threads in Anime Fans

All participants:

- Became interested in anime through social means

- Have gone to Comic cons or anime conventions

- Acknowledge that a set of jargon exists, but had varying success describing it

- Are artists and/or writers

- Play Role Playing Games and video games

- Mentioned "geeking out" and dressing up at conventions without people judging you

- Read manga

- Mentioned supernatural or fantasy elements as important to anime

- Say that the variety of shows watched and the knowledge of anime is the best indicator of devoted fan verses a bandwagon fan

- Mentioned complex storylines and deep character development as hooks

- Discuss anime with their friends

- Mentioned the bold, rich, deep shadow visual style in anime

- Mentioned over exaggerated mannerisms and drawing as part of the visual style

- Mentioned that most anime fans feel marginalized from society, and often this marginalization is either self-imposed or worn as a badge of pride

- Mentioned that correct pronunciation of Japanese terms as a badge of a devoted fan

- Acknowledged Weaboos

- Encouraged people to give anime a try

Again, none of these examples are meant to be a picture of an anime fan. Rather, these case studies are intended to show the diversity of anime fans even among such a narrow sample group as University of Houston undergraduate students. Josh, Robin, Katy and Alex all identified themselves as artists in some way; spoke of other media such as comics and video games as common crossovers; asked people to "give anime a chance;" cosplay, go to conventions and consider themselves marginalized from society. What's more, they all embrace this marginalization, sometimes wearing it as a badge of honor. Perhaps Robin explained this best when she described a friend who calls himself, "King of the outcasts" and proud of it.

Sociality

Absolutely every anime fan I had a conversation with talked at length about coming to anime through social means. That is, no one simply turned on the T.V., saw a show, and became hooked. In most cases, it was a group of friends who became interested in anime as children or teenagers. They considered themselves a little "outcast" already and spoke of anime both pushing them further from mainstream society and bringing them closer to their group of friends. In two cases, Robin and Katy, it was their boyfriend who introduced them to anime.

This sociality is important. While not all the participants were actively engaged in regular group activities, each did speak fondly of watching anime with friends, and even more fondly of

reliving anime with friends later. They enjoy discussing, re-enacting, and mimicking, quoting and creating anime with others. Another important feature to note (that probably should have its own thesis) is that many fans choose to watch anime together, even though it is somewhat counter-intuitive. Before the internet, anime groups existed because individuals had to pool their resources to attain the anime discs. Now with the internet, it is easier to get anime online than it is to buy DVDs. When watching is solitude, the individual has total control over what, when and how much they watch. This control is totally sacrificed in a group setting. However, fans still meet to watch anime together. This implies that these meetings are not for watching anime, but for social purposes, even if the group does little more than sit in a dark room and watch anime "theater-style."

Anime Fans and Marginalization from Mainstream Society

To generalize, people who are attracted to anime are those who are marginalized in one form or another. Mainstream American culture cartoons tend to have a more childish association with them. So, as Robin said,

> your mainstream American is more inclined to develop grown up interests
>
> as they grow up. Whereas it's usually the more marginalized individuals who
>
> don't see that distinction as being important. It's video games and anime
>
> and comic books and all of these things are still part of our identity, why
>
> should we have to give them up because we turned eighteen? In our
>
> particular country, there's a culture sense that only certain individuals can
>
> cling to childhood hobbies and continue pursuing them.

For her, anime gives her (and her friends) the ability to embrace things that mainstream America considers childish. Anime opens the door for her to play video games and dress up as her favorite characters, things she feels is important, but not held in mainstream value.

Josh sees anime in an opposite manner. For him, anime is a tool for being more adult. He watched anime as a kid because it was more violent and action packed than "normal kid shows." It allowed him to associate with an older group of peers. Now, as a young adult, Josh follows anime because the storylines are more complex, deeper and more mature than many shows in American primetime. For Josh and his friends, anime is a door to adulthood.

Both of these interviews indicated that anime fans consider themselves marginalized from society. Anime gives these marginalized members a common ground to find others who feel marginalized in similar ways. Those who want to hold onto their childhood can enjoy those things together, while those who want to express a more adult outlook can enjoy those things together.

It should be noted that, while all data indicates marginalization, most of the data shows a self or perceived marginalization. Furthermore, the fans do not seem to mind being marginalized. Many wear it as a kind of badge. Also, most fans have the ability to exist in multiple contexts, perhaps projecting more marginalization around fellow fans than they feel or project in other social circles.

Fiske describes this marginalization when discussing fandom:

> Fandom…selects from the repertoire of mass-produced and mass-distributed entertainment certain performers, narratives or genres and then takes them into the culture of a self-selected fraction of the people. [These selections] are then reworked into an intensely pleasurable [sub] culture that is both similar to, yet significantly different from, the culture of more 'normal' popular audiences. (1992)

Here, anime fans not only take one step away from mainstream culture by devoting themselves to certain "performers, narratives or genres," but ostracize themselves even more by connecting with a foreign culture (Japan) that is not their own or may even be invented (Stromberg

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1999). This disconnection from the popular culture makes the connection to the sub culture that much more powerful, intensifies the devotion to the media and serves to further marginalize the individual. This is rarely scorned by members of the fan community. Just the opposite, they embrace this marginalization, sometimes wearing it as a badge of honor. Perhaps Robin explained this best when she described a friend who calls himself, "king of the outcasts and proud of it."

When describing this marginalization, the fans I interviewed actually used the word "marginalized," "outcast," or "outsider." It is also important to note that one informant, Jason, described that "some of the popular kids" were also fans of anime, they were just "better at hiding it." These popular kids were seen as more successful in the "typical" social situations of adolescent males. This would suggest that there is not necessarily a connection between anime and marginalization, but perhaps one between anime fandom and marginalization. More research would have to be done to investigate this question.

Adultizing and Childizing

Anime means different things to different fans; is attractive for different reasons; allows them to express and align themselves in different ways. One prime example of this is in how anime fans adultize and childize the shows to express a piece (or mode) of their identity they either feel is under-represented or not valued by the larger, mainstream society. The best way to describe this phenomenon is to let the fans speak for themselves.

To Robin, mainstream cartoons have a more childish association with them:

> Your mainstream American is more inclined to develop grown up interests
>
> as they grow up. Whereas its usually the more marginalized individuals who
>
> don't see that distinction as being important. It's video games and anime
>
> and comic books and all of these things are still part of our identity, why
>
> should we have to give them up because we turned eighteen? In our

particular country, there's a culture sense that only certain individuals can

cling to childhood hobbies and continue pursuing them.

For Robin, anime gives her the ability to embrace things that mainstream America considers

childish. Anime opens the door for her to play video games and dress up as her favorite characters,

things she feels is important, but not held in mainstream value.

Katy agrees. She is the only one of the interviewees who has cosplayed in everyday life

outside conventions or meetings. To her, cosplay is just "fun. You get to be someone else, you get to

act differently, and you get to dress up. How is that anything but fun?" She admits that anime fans

tend to be more "juvenile" than the average, indulging in video games and comic books that the

general society has relegated to childish obsessions that have little role in the adult's identity. She

uses anime and anime fandom to connect with others who agree that these things are harmless and

fun, and who like to "be a kid for as long as they can."

Josh sees anime in an opposite manner. For him, anime is a tool for being more adult. He

watched anime as a kid because it was more violent and action packed than "normal kid shows." It

allowed him to associate with an older group of peers. Now, as a young adult, Josh follows anime

because the storylines are more complex, deeper and more "grown up" than many shows in

American primetime. The shows have "adult themes that are not for kids. They are for adults."

Anime subject matter does not "dumb itself down." It does not "gloss over things," and is not afraid

to talk about things you "wouldn't find in" general American television. He associates adulthood

with complexity and "saying it like it is;" with not being afraid of dark material, sexual content and

long, intricate plotlines because those are things that are beyond the reach of children. For Josh,

anime is a door to adulthood.

Katy was, admittedly, more complicated. In some ways he acknowledged that anime helps

him feel better about indulging in "childish" things like video games and comic books. On the

reverse side, he appreciates anime for the complexity Josh identifies as adult. In other conversations

and interaction with Katy, it is apparent that he uses anime in both ways in different contexts. The

content of anime opens doors for him to discuss philosophy, history, spirituality and dark, sexual

themes that he calls "grown up things." However, the form of anime indulges his appetite for

"crossover mediums" (other activities most anime fans have in common) like video games. He has

learned to almost code switch his use of anime depending on if he wants to position himself as adult

or child.

Anime is especially good at navigating this paradox in Western society for a number of

reasons. It is true that anime are cartoons, which in American mainstream, are relegated to children.

Anime can be very bright and fast paced, appealing to younger audiences. Anime also intersects

with a number of crossovers that the mainstream would call childish. However, the storylines,

characters and themes can be very adult. It is interesting to note that, in Japan, this distinction

becomes much less defined. Cartoon animation does not have the assignment as a child's medium.

Instead, specific shows are marketed to specific age groups, similar to American sitcoms.

Japanese culture also idolizes the *Bishōnen* or *bishi* which is the glamorized "beautiful young

boy." To western audiences, this *bishi* would appear more childlike and feminine. The Japanese idea

of *kawaii* is also important. Roughly translated as "cute in a childlike way," *kawaii* is an example of

an aesthetic of youthfulness. Both of these ideals are glamorized in Japanese pop culture, including

anime. Characters are designed with a *bishi* and *kawaii* look, young traits are encouraged, Japanese

have even been known to become a sort of "fake child" when interacting with the idea of cuteness

or children. (Burdelski and Mitsuhashi 2010)

Conclusions about Narrative Identity

John D. Niles called human kind *Homo Narrans*, or "storytelling man." (Niles 2010) I have

never been more convinced of that, and I am more committed than ever to the idea of narrative

being *the* primary sense making structure between individuals. That said, it would be impractical and irresponsible to draw many generalizable or universal conclusions from a piece such as this. The group was too small, there were too many other variables, and, frankly, that was not the aim. Instead, we can discuss some interesting themes that emerged that may shed light on the idea of narrative identity and the role stories play in shaping identity and guiding behavior.

1. Narrative identities are cobbled together like a patchwork quilt, *never* a straight shot. Each person I encountered utilized dozens, if not hundreds of narrative elements to fashion a unique personal identity narrative.

2. Narrative identities are fluid. They change and grow as new narrative elements are assimilated, others are shifted, and some are expelled all together. With each new experience processed as a narrative, the individual adapts or reacts in an ever changing, beautifully unpredictable way.

3. Performative Identities change depending on context. This may be conscious, subconscious or both. When performing personal identity narratives, the performer is acutely aware of both the setting and the audience and adapts to service both.

4. Narrative identities change depending on context. Not only do performances change, but the internal story itself undergoes transformation.

5. Even the most diehard fan is not limited to anime for narrative resources. Every single participant I encountered also mentioned stories from other mediums, cultures, shows, and instances.

6. Fictionalized stories can be just as powerful as those perceived to be nonfiction. Fans know that the characters, settings, and plots in anime are fictitious, but that does not impede them from adapting these elements and performing them just as

efficiently as they do elements from sources like family lore and formal education, both of which are narrative in nature.

7. People are not oblivious to this process. This is not some magic, underlying concept that individuals do not realize. They are aware that they adapt themselves using anime, that they have a personal identity narrative, and the nuances of performing with narrative resources.

8. The elements of the triad are constantly informing each other in exchange.

9. There was little difference in cyber versus "real life" interaction. Granted, this was not a focus of this study, but it seemed to be true so far.

Overall, the data clearly supported the idea that fictionalized narratives play a very important role in narrative identity, and the framework displayed one method (perhaps in need of tuning) to dissect that identity. Anime identity, however, is just one identity of many. One may also have a football fan identity alongside father, husband, and son identities. These multiple identities co-exist. At times, certain identities take precedence based on context. To take this further, these diverse identities inform each other in a complicated exchange. One does not stop being an anime fan at church, one may just perform the identity in a different way, or not emphasize that facet of the personal identity narrative.

How to Better Use the Analytical Framework

From the start, this thesis was meant, primarily, to be a testing ground for an experimental framework – a way to analyze data relating to the intersections of narrative, identity and performance. We would be remiss, now that we have utilized this framework, not to dig into the process itself and search for improvements.

Certainly even a small ethnography as this one produces copious amounts of data. Here there were less than a dozen full length interviews, participation in maybe a dozen formal events,

and numerous (but limited) casual conversations and informal gatherings. Still, condensing observations and description into a manageable format was difficult. Even more arduous was the task of categorizing those observations, interviews and conversations into the framework. What follows are a few lessons learned and intended improvements for next time:

1.) **Plan Ahead** – I had very little idea where the framework was going to end up, or even what categories were going to be included underneath each component. I had the vague sense that archetypes would be important, but that was essentially all the "mapping" I did of the analysis framework. In the future, I may be beneficial to do more extensive groundwork in this area before conducting the build of the ethnographic research. This is a difficult balancing act because conclusions and analysis must be fluid, and from the data, less you find only what you are looking for. A more inductive approach is generally advisable in this kind of research. However, a *more* fleshed out triad would have helped me look at certain interactions more closely. Perhaps the key is to begin with a light "template" of a framework that includes the most basic and widespread elements and then allow the shape to grow in a more fluid way.

2.) **Source Appropriately** – In going through Chapter Four, I cannot stress the importance of building on the work of others. Scholars have been looking at archetypes, narrative, and any number of other elements for thousands of years. There is no need to reinvent the wheel, and if I had done more groundwork in the literature, it would have been much easier to work through the framework. This was especially true of archetypes and performance.

3.) **Community Feedback** – Toward the end of the ethnography, when I was working very closely with a limited number of highly-involved participants, I began asking their feedback on my emerging conclusions. I wish I had done this much sooner. I found that fans had much to say about how their own identity was constructed, and abundant observations of these phenomena among others.

4.) **Focus More on Identity Narrative** – At the outset, my focus was primarily on the narrative resources. It made sense to me, being a storyteller myself. However, it was not long before I found that personal identity narratives were at the core of the triad, as they mold the assimilation of new narrative resources and fuel the performative identities.

Educational Storytelling and an Applied Approach

This ethnography is part of a much larger endeavor looking at the question: how can we intentionally create and use stories to teach, heal, and transform lives. Previously, I explored aspects of this question in education with my thesis, "The Values and Principles of Educational Storytelling." In it, I explored common principles of successful stories that teach both macro and micro principles. Macro-principles are those of a moralistic, religious, behavioral, or identity management nature; micro-principles are those skill and repetition based items such as mathematics. Now, five years later, I wonder if those terms should be revisited, perhaps mores-knowledge, and process-knowledge? Ultimately, the model constructed was an adaptation of Joseph Campbell's "Hero's Journey," and the educational principles of Vygotsky.

At its core was the concept of "hero-audience bonding," where the audience forms an empathetic link with the hero, and vicariously travels through the story as well, learning the same lessons and facing the same challenges. In light of the current study involving personal identity narratives, I find a strong correlation. In many ways, my informants "bonded" with the characters from which they borrowed elements to incorporate into their own personal identity narratives.

So, why does any of this matter? I am of the mind that research is somewhat hollow without at least the potential for application in the real world – or some application that improves society. My next step is in this direction, by comparing the conclusions of this work with the conclusions of my previous work to see how I may enhance the model of educational storytelling. Specifically, by comparing the concept of hero-audience bonding with that of the personal identity narrative, I hope

to investigate commonalities in process that may be integrated into constructed stories. That is, allow us to create characters that are more "bondable" and better at being adapted into personal identity narratives.

Another important aspect of my previous study was the mode in which the educational story was presented and its relation to the audience's learning style as clarified by Howard Gardner in *Frames of Mind* (1985). In "The Value and Principles of Educational Storytelling", I conclude that,

> There is another factor involved in determining the presentation
>
> medium: learning profile. This includes interest, experience, and
>
> dominant intelligence. Interest and experience largely determine
>
> the attributes of setting and character for the story. Certain crafts
>
> lend themselves to specific intelligences. For instance, theatre
>
> involves a lot of movement, a hallmark of the Body-Kinesthetic
>
> intelligence. In also includes cooperation and social aspects which
>
> involve interpersonal intelligence. (Wilson 2008)

Therefore, certain learners react better to stories "told" in certain mediums or modes. As a next step in the application of this study, I would like to continue with my current participants and look at their dominant learning style and/or intelligence. How do these corroborate with the pieces they have cobbled into their personal identity narratives?

Further Directions

So, where does one go from here? Certainly there is potential to take this study even further by increasing the number of informants and doing deeper ethnographic work. It would be especially interesting to see how these identity narratives and performances change over time, and how an evolving group dynamic changes the narrative resources and interactions. Many of my subjects were

college students in college groups which, obviously, have high turnover rates. Longitudinal participant-observation ethnography may prove invaluable.

There is also the option to replicate this study, or a modified version of it, with other groups of anime fans. This could be identified either geographically (say a group of fans in Los Angeles or Mumbai), or in a cyber-sense, performing similar research that focuses on online, social interaction. By the same token, a study of this sort is not at all limited to the world of anime fandom. Any number of other media-centric communities of practice would be applicable. While doing this ethnographic work, I found the fanworld of Steampunk to be particularly fascinating. One does not need to stay inside media subcultures, either. Football fans, music fans, and writing groups all have narrative at the core of their communities of practice.

It would be most beneficial, however, to adapt a study of this kind outside the realm of fan studies. The central premise here is that narratives play a key role in the way we construct our identities, perform our *selves*, and (ultimately) view the world. That phenomenon is not limited to groups or individuals who adore certain, fictionalized stories. Narratives are everywhere, be them fictionalized, non-fiction, or (most often) somewhere along the spectrum. As was earlier, narrative is one of the primary sense making structures. We have seen that storytelling in education can have a profound impact on both mores-driven and process-oriented learning.

So, after discussing the potentials, where do I intend to direct my future scholarly endeavors? I believe the data has shown that stories can be a powerful shaper of identity, behavior, and worldview. I intend to hone this framework to use it in other contexts, hoping to find some common denominators. Ultimately, piggy-backing on the work in Educational Storytelling, I want to contribute to the conversation "how can stories be intentionally constructed and used to teach, heal, and transform."

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

As this thesis deals with a highly specific ethnographic group while at the same time drawing on several disciplines in order to propose a theory of narrative identity and a framework to describe narrative identity, there are many terms. Some of these terms are anime and fan studies specific, others have been used for centuries with many definitions attached. The following is a simple list of some terms used in this project with the usage for this thesis. I do not claim to offer the definitive definition for these terms. Please note that anime-specific terms are *in italics*

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Adultizing: Viewing anime as more "adult" that "childish" and identifying with anime partly because of the allure to be an adult. Many anime fans enjoy anime because the "adultize" it.

Anime Fandom/Fanculture: A subculture or popular culture centered on anime television shows, movies, and other media. Groups and individuals typically celebrate anime through gatherings, cosplay, creative expression, and discussion. This is a world-wide phenomenon and varies greatly from region to region.

Anime: animation from Japan, typically characterized by stark color, vivid lines, action-packed scenes, and complex storylines.

Archetype: A prototype character upon which specific characters are created as implementation. Using a Jungian and Vygostkian understanding, many of these archetypes are shared in the collective unconscious of groups of people or whole civilizations.

Avatarplay: A form of cosplay in which the individual creates a unique character based on established traits from popular media.

Childize: Viewing anime as more "childish" than "adult" and identifying anime partly because they want to connect with the "inner or lost child." Many fans enjoy anime partly because they "childize" it.

Collective Memory: A shared pool of information held by a group of two or more individuals, typically in the form of a shared narrative.

Community of Practice: A group of two or more people in a social setting that offers social resources. This community then becomes an arena in which individuals use common social-symbolic tools to construct, perform, and test their identities.

Con: Convention; a large gathering of fans to celebrate (typically) many forms of popular media.

Cosplay: "costume-play." The act of dressing up and acting like a character or character type from popular media.

Disc: A single digital disc containing one or more episodes from an anime television show, or an anime movie.

Fan Studies: The methodological study (usually in the Humanities or Social Sciences) of individuals and groups who have fanatical devotion to a specific artform, game, media, or text.

Fanfiction: Fan created texts that pay homage to, expand, contradict, or directly interact with (in a mimicking fashion) some more popular text.

Hentai: anime or manga with adult, often graphic themes.

Identity: socially constructed, socially maintained, and socially transformed meanings a person attributes to himself or herself and projects to others.

Manga: Japanese comic books, usually very serialized, long-running and complex. Most anime is based off of Manga or have companion Manga series.

Mech: Anime genre involving "Giant" or "Real" Robots, often with human pilots.

Meetup: A gathering of people to celebrate a specific type of popular media. Usually, the participants are largely unknown to each other prior to the meetup.

Merch: "Merchandise" celebrating a particular form of popular media or musical group.

Narrative Acquisition: The process by which individuals adopt, adapt and perpetuate the group narrative.

Narrative Identity (Theory of): The interplay between narratives and social identity construction in which individuals incorporate elements from narratives (fictionalized, social, and others) into their personal identity narrative and attempt to project this identity narrative by way of a performative identity. *See also Triad of Narrative Identity.*

Narrative Induction: Coined by Charlotte Linde, this is the process by which outsiders join a group and begin adopting elements of the groups shared narrative into their own personal identity narratives.

Narrative Resources: Socially shared narrative elements that provide symbolic points of reference, context, and content for fashioning identity and for performing identity. These elements or resources come from a shared "reservoir" that may be folkloric in nature, part of popular media, or shared in some other way.

Narrative Schema: James Wertsch's term for the web and reservoir of narrative resources that exists inside the collective memory of a group of individuals.

Narrative: The central sense-making structure that allows human beings to arrange, categorize and present symbolic idea using the elements of story.

Otaku: Japanese concept for someone who is so devoted to anime that they have lost touch with reality. *See also Weaboo.*

Performance: Related to *Presentation*. Performance is the way in which an individual structures his or her account via interaction with the listener. *Presentation* is the substance of the account.

Performative Identity: The portion of identity that is expressed to an audience and interpreted using shared narrative resource. The "me" that I want others to see and try to express through performance, self-adornation, and projection. *See also Theory of Narrative Identity.*

Personal Identity Narrative: The cobbled together story we tell ourselves, about ourselves. An internal description of who we are that changes depending on context. Created, in part, from shared narrative resources. *See also Theory of Narrative Identity.*

Presentation: Related to *Performance*. Presentation is the content of the narrative itself. The actual course of events, themes and characters selected and emphasized by the informant. *Performance* is the structure of the account.

Seijin: Anime or manga with adult, often graphic themes.

Seinen: Anime or manga for young adults.

Self: The "me" that is perceived by others. Similar in concept to the "person." Described by Irving Goffman.

Shonen: Anime or manga for boys up to 18.

Sojo: Anime or manga for girls.

Story: The presentation of events, whether real or fictitious, involving three primary elements: plotting, character, and setting.

Triad of Narrative Identity: An analytical framework helpful in analyzing narrative identity. The framework is a guide to describing the connectedness between the shaping and projecting of narrative identity using narrative resources. *See also Theory of Narrative Identity, Personal Identity Narrative, and Narrative Resources.*

Weaboo: (according to ethnographic interviews) A mainstream anime fan who thinks they are a devoted fan and has to advertise it to the entire world every chance they get, even though they do not really know what they're talking about. *See also Otaku.*

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