

Animating Transcultural Communities:
Animation Fandom in North America and East Asia from 1906–2010

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the role that animation plays in the formation of transcultural fan communities. A “transcultural fan community” is defined as a group in which members from many national, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds find a sense of connection across difference, engaging with each other through a mutual interest in animation while negotiating the frictions that result from their differing social and historical contexts. The transcultural model acts as an intervention into polarized academic discourses on media globalization which frame animation as either structural neo-imperial domination or as a wellspring of active, resistant readings. Rather than focusing on top-down oppression or bottom-up resistance, this dissertation demonstrates that it is in the intersections and conflicts between different *uses* of texts that transcultural fan communities are born.

The methodologies of this dissertations are drawn from film/media studies, cultural studies, and ethnography. The first two parts employ textual close reading and historical research to show how film animation in the early twentieth century (mainly works by the Fleischer Brothers, Ōfuji Noburō, Walt Disney, and Seo Mitsuyo) and television animation in the late twentieth century (such as *The Jetsons*, *Astro Boy* and *Cowboy Bebop*) depicted and generated nationally and ethnically diverse audiences. Exactly how such diversity was handled varied according to the specific animation producers, distributors, and consumers involved. And yet, all of these cases exemplify models of textual engagement and modes of globalization that have a continuing influence today.

Building on the basis of twentieth-century animation, the third part of the dissertation illustrates the risks and potentials that attend media globalization in the Internet era of the early twenty-first century. The web media texts *There She Is!!* (2003) and *Hetalia: Axis Powers* (2006) are analyzed alongside results from a survey of animation fans conducted online and at fan events in Canada, the United States, and Japan between July 2009 and September 2010. This dissertation thus demonstrates the different ways of living together in the world generated by the global crossings and clashes of social life and mediated imaginaries today.

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A Note on Translation

In presenting Japanese, Korean, and Chinese-language names, I have elected to list family names first and given names second, as is the practice in those languages (e.g. AZUMA Hiroki, KIM In-Tae, CHUA Beng Huat). The exceptions are cases where authors have published works written in English and given their own name in Western order. In these cases, I have followed the authors' preferences and placed the family name second (e.g. Koichi IWABUCHI, Joon-Yang KIM, Kelly HU).

Japanese names and terms are romanized using the revised Hepburn system for the syllabic n and long vowels (e.g. Ōfuji Noburō instead of Oofuji Noburou), with exceptions made where official transliterations require otherwise (e.g. *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper rather than *Asahi Shinbun*; Kenichi Ohmae rather than Ken'ichi Ōmae).

All translations of Japanese article and book titles are my own unless otherwise indicated in the Works Cited list.

Introduction

The work you are now reading began, as so many do, with the confluence of a passion and a pitch. I have been a fan of animation, and in particular of the Japanese style of animation called *anime*, for quite literally as long as I can remember. I grew up in the 1980s watching translated Japanese children's cartoons on Canadian cable television. As a teenager, I used my continuing interest in more mature, less widely-available anime as a way of making friends with classmates who were "in the know" and with fans in different parts of the world via the Internet. Understanding animation to be a part of my private life, it surprised me to learn, peripherally over the course of two degrees in English literature, that disciplines such as film studies and cultural studies took animation as a serious object of study, providing many perspectives that I had not formerly considered.

The personal was suddenly political for me—at least, political in certain academic ways. In classes on popular film and in independent readings of cultural theory anthologies, I found my individual passions to be caught up in an ongoing debate as to whether mass media conscript their audiences wholesale into a "culture industry" that is "infecting everything with sameness" (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002, 94)—an oft-cited and elaborated model among contemporary New Left thinkers—or whether it provides viewers with the opportunity to form an "alternative social community" (Jenkins 1992, 2) of resistant readers, in the 1960s style of the Birmingham school of cultural studies. Such debates were hardly new by the early 2000s, but they have proven persistent in scholarship about animated media. They struck me then, and continue to haunt me now, with the pressing question that motivates this thesis: what can one *do* with animation? To elaborate, how can the example of animated media be used by scholars to intervene in

such polarized discourses of oppression and resistance, of monolithic sameness and radical alternatives? How can animation be used by fans to make connections that matter at personal and social levels? And how can academic and fan perspectives be brought together to “animate,” to illustrate and to set in motion, community?

My idea, the pitch I made to graduate programs and funding agencies, was to look at animation in conjunction with globalization. Being interested in Japanese animation, I found the English-language cultural studies debates cited above to be limited, explicitly or implicitly, to American and European perspectives in ways not suited to my needs. At the same time, some works designed to identify and explain the “Japanese” elements of film or animation tend to paint anime as “Japan talking directly to itself, reinforcing its cultural myths and preferred modes of behaviour” (Drazen 2003, viii), as if these myths and behaviours were unchanging and isolate. Though I am beginning from the perspective of an anime fan in Canada, my interest is *not* in talking about “Japanese animation in North America,” as if anime represents a unitary, unique Japanese culture and North America the separate environment it enters. Rather, I am addressing the *processes of exchange* by which animators and audiences in different locations in North America and East Asia have historically constructed and continue to create different yet mutually-influencing ideas of “animation,” “(trans)culture,” “fans” and “community.” In order to illustrate these processes, I draw on the scholarly resources of globalization theory, which is primarily concerned with the kind of global exchanges and interconnections John Tomlinson describes as “complex connectivity” (1999, 2).

That is not to say that “globalization theory” is a single coherent body of thought free from the kinds of debates found in cultural studies. Within the vast, interdisciplinary

enterprise of studying globalization, structural top-down models of “Americanization” are common, and are just as often opposed by proponents of bottom-up active appropriations of the global by local agents. For critics such as Lee Artz, media globalization is best understood as “Disneyfication,” the dominance of American-style “corporate media hegemony” (2003, 3) and “Disney’s menu for global hierarchy” (2005, 75). For scholars of Asian culture such as Susan J. Napier, however, the world of global media includes many national producers and critical voices, such as Japanese anime, whose Asian and North American viewers, she claims, participate in the “strongly grassroots activity” (2007, 150) of building cross-cultural fandom.

My goal in rehearsing these duelling banjos of oppression and resistance is not to entrench the split between them but to consider other ways of thinking through them by placing them in dialogue, revealing how each potentially enables and undermines the other. In this effort I follow scholars such as David Buckingham and Julian Sefton-Green, who argue in their article “Structure, Agency, and Pedagogy in Children’s Media Culture” that we must recognize the ways in which “structure and agency are interrelated and mutually interdependent” (2004, 24) in animated media and globalization alike. Along with re-cognizing (knowing again, iterating) such mutual interdependence at a theoretical level, we must also re-imagine or envision anew how children’s and adults’ global media cultures might practically work in a world of intertwined agency and structure.

The main conceptual tool I am using to re-imagine the media cultures of animation is a model I term the “transcultural animation fan community.” I define a “transcultural fan community” as a group in which people from many national, cultural,

ethnic, gendered, and other personal backgrounds find a sense of connection across difference, engaging with each other through a shared interest while negotiating the frictions that result from their differing social and historical contexts. Transcultural *animation* fan communities are ones in which members of different backgrounds interact with and through animated texts in mutual, if sometimes asymmetrical, collaborations. Such collaborations may involve animation/art production at amateur and semi-professional levels, or they may be based in everyday practices of viewing and commentary, such as posting to blogs or bulletin board systems (BBS), to name just a few of the commonest practices. “Collaboration” can also take on a darker connotation of complicity, since even the kinds of active production/consumption lauded in fan studies may allow fans in some cases to affirm oppressive discourses such as racism and homophobia and to participate without reflection in compulsive consumerism. At base, however, the activity of a transcultural animation fan community allows the different perspectives of participants, who may not be equally positioned in terms of language ability or social status in a given collaboration, to come into conjunction—even into conflict—through a many-to-many forum of communication. The simultaneous mutuality and asymmetry of the engagement, as I will demonstrate, is what sets transcultural animation fan communities apart from earlier modes of animation fandom.

This kind of animation fan community is a relatively new phenomenon, being enabled by the multidirectional communications technologies of the Internet available to many (though certainly not all) inhabitants of North America and East Asia since the turn of the millennium. At present, many transcultural communities are only just emerging, and their full impacts have yet to be determined. In looking at the ongoing processes of

their formation, however, I hope to show that transcultural animation fan community serves as one small example of the larger changing environment of media globalization. In North America and East Asia, this global media environment is increasingly commercialized and subject to different kinds of institutional control (Iwabuchi 2010, Sarikakis and Thussu 2006), and yet it is still shot through with eclectic, creative potentials (Georgiou 2006, Ito 2010). It is not fully liberatory, but neither is it hopelessly domineering. Transcultural animation fan community, in encouraging a recognition and re-imagining of both the problems and potentials of contemporary media globalization, provides a valuable means for media users, including fans, scholars, and aca-fans, to work through the frictions of global cultural exchange to form productive collaborations across difference. This is what it means to “animate transcultural communities.”

That said, transcultural animation fan communities did not spring fully-formed out of the brow of twenty-first century American and Asian Internet spheres. They have their roots in a number of previous forms of media technology and media globalization, beginning with the birth of film animation at the turn of the twentieth century.¹ To ignore the historical formations out of which contemporary transcultural animation fan communities were born risks creating a model that is shallow at best and totalizing at worst, overlooking how uses of animation change over time as well as between places. Throughout my thesis, I argue that changes in material media technologies and in

¹ There may be even earlier social groups united by an interest in pre-cinematic visual technologies or animation-like performances such as shadow-plays. But before animation came into being as a cinematic genre between 1898 and 1906 (Crafton 1993, 6-9, 21), these groups could not be properly termed “animation fan communities,” and should be called something else, such as “zoetrope hobbyists” or “*utsushi-e* [Japanese magic lantern] audiences.” For that reason, I have chosen to begin with film animation in the early twentieth century, starting more specifically in 1906-7 with the earliest verifiable hand-drawn animated films in the West and somewhat less-verifiable experiments in Japan. Readers interested in the international influences of earlier visual media such as painting and printmaking on animation should consult Susan J. Napier’s *From Impressionism to Anime* (2007).

geopolitical conditions across time have a strong impact on what kinds of individual viewing positions and collective communities can form around animation.

For instance, in the early twentieth century, the growth of film animation and the trade routes it followed played a key role in how animators in Japan and America positioned themselves as *international* creators, often through imperialist discourses. In the decades following the end of World War II, however, film production was challenged by television, and along with discourses of postmodernity and economies of multinational capitalism, the mode of media globalization known as *postnationalism* arose. The postnational media climate, as I show, allowed for ever-broader communities of fans, and also “communities of consumers” (Chua 2006, 27). It is out of these two major technological shifts that the third generation, that of *transcultural* Internet animation fandom, was created around the turn of the millennium. I explore such shifts thoroughly, devoting a section of my thesis to each era, in order to clarify how previous discourses about global media and community are being transformed (or in some cases, reinforced) in the twenty-first century.

To be clear, I do not propose an absolute rupture between each era, as if the ideas and technologies of the early twentieth century suddenly ceased to have relevance after 1945. Neither do I believe that new media technologies absolutely *determine* the content or use of animation in the same way all over the world. As Thomas Lamarre argues in his 2009 book *The Anime Machine*, when discussing the development of animation we should be cautious about applying the strict ruptures of the “modernity thesis” and the underlying technological determinism of the “specificity thesis” that so often accompanies it. The specificity thesis of film theory, which gives primary importance to

the mechanical properties of media technologies when discussing their effects on audiences, was first used by early filmmakers attempting to establish the unique artistic properties of their medium and is often the target of critiques of technological determinism and universalism in contemporary film studies. That said, however, I agree with Lamarre's caveat that "at some level it is impossible to separate questions about material specificity (of cinema or animation) from questions about material conditions or historical formations (modernity or postmodernity)" (2009, xxiii). If the media technologies of animation, as they were formed and reformed drastically in various locations over the course of the twentieth century, do not completely determine the content and effects of cartoons, they do undeniably involve different physical practices of both animating and viewing. Therefore, they must provide at least some new avenues for interaction between creators and audiences, and among audience members themselves.

Each chapter in this thesis, addressing the links between media, audiences, and historical formations of globalization, works to answer the question: exactly how do animation fan communities form across difference through new media technologies and changing geopolitical conditions in North America (the United States and Canada) and East Asia (mainly Japan and South Korea) at different points between 1906 and 2010? Showing how diversely positioned creators, critics, and fans *have done* things with animation provides a solid base for determining what we *can do* now to address the continuing historical issues and emerging transformative potentials of transcultural animation fan communities.

1) Methodologies and Structure

Interdisciplinarity

It is one thing to make grand proclamations about transcultural animation fan communities, but another thing to back them up with solid evidence. How does one study such a complex process, involving so many different aspects of animation production, distribution, and consumption? In order to do justice to the intersecting areas of animation's texts, technologies, geopolitical cultures, and usages highlighted so far, I find it necessary to use an interdisciplinary approach. The aim is not to try and pack in everything about my subject (far from it!), but rather to focus my research through a manageable set of necessary concepts and approaches that, while interrelated, are not all available in one discipline. As Julie Thompson Klein explains, those doing interdisciplinary work “do not claim expertise in all areas. They identify information, concepts or theories, methods or tools relevant to understanding a particular problem,” but without expecting to find an “interdisciplinary Esperanto” (2005, 68). While it is necessary to acquire some understanding of each discipline's “basic concepts, modes of inquiry, terms, observational categories” (68) and so on in order to avoid superficial or careless misapplications, the goal is not to become master of it all, the humanist *homo universalis*. It is rather to recognize that problems with multiple aspects should be addressed in multiple voices—within reasonable limits, and for a focused purpose.

In order to answer my main research question, “how do animation fan communities form across historical, geographical, and cultural differences?”, I have broken this question down into four sub-questions which will recur as axes of inquiry throughout my thesis. Each sub-question addresses a specific aspect of my main problem,

namely: 1) the narrative and visual content of animated texts, 2) animation media technologies, 3) cultural/geopolitical contexts, and 4) viewers' individual and collective uses of animation. These questions are:

1) How do particular animated texts visually depict, create, and/or enable certain spectator positions, such as the national audience, the child fan, the adult fan, or (to use the Japanese terms for male and female fans) the *otaku* or *fujoshi*?

2) How do the material properties of changing media technologies (e.g. film, television, Internet) allow for different kinds of exchange between local and global animation audiences?

3) How do discourses of collective identity such as nationality, ethnicity, age, and gender influence viewers' uses of animated texts in community formation?

4) How much agency do individual viewers have in their readings and social uses of texts, and how much are such uses directed by the institutional and economic structures of animation production and distribution?

Each of these questions, taking in a different facet of animation's global travel, requires slightly different disciplinary resources. For instance, the first question listed here deals with the specific content of American, Japanese, and South Korean animated texts, especially those that self-reflexively depict cartoon audiences, and so generate certain ideas of what viewing practices are proper or improper for which spectators. To address this question, I draw on the resources of my "home" disciplines, English literary criticism and film studies. In particular, I use the technique of close reading visual texts to discover the links between their aesthetic and narrative properties and their possible meanings or effects on readers/viewers. On one hand, scholars of Asian film such as

Aaron Gerow have productively studied Japanese cinema using Foucauldian genealogical approaches that turn from narrative analyses of films themselves as “things” (Gerow 2010, 7) to focus attention on the discursive foundations of cinema itself. By close-reading reflexive films that depict their own materials and audiences, however, I demonstrate how particular animated texts, in their aesthetic and narrative techniques, themselves functioned as commentaries on film technologies and discourses around spectatorship, providing visible models which could be taken up or resisted by audience members in their practices of community formation. My methodology here is grounded in the style of literary/film criticism that has grown up since the “theory wars” of the 1980s, in which emphasis is placed not on pure formalism, as in the method of New Criticism, but on the interaction of artistic form and social practice.

The second question listed above asks how the contents and effects of animation are shaped by specific media technologies, such as television and the Internet. Answering this question involves venturing out of film studies into sub-disciplines of media studies such as television and “new media” studies. These sub-disciplines are themselves diverse in methodology. Lev Manovich argues that “new media represents a convergence of two separate historical trajectories: computing and media technologies” (Manovich 2001, 20), so that work in this area may be highly technical and quantitative in nature, or it may be more interpretive, shading into sociologies of new media. Likewise, Lynn Spiegel and Jan Olsson define television studies as an “interdiscipline” formed (or fragmented) by “at least five critical paradigms” (Spiegel and Olsson 2006, 8), ranging from literary-style textual analysis to quantitative mass communications research. Spiegel and Olsson do find,

however, that cultural studies provides a single overarching paradigm for television studies, stating that

In the 1970s and 1980s (the truly formative years of television studies) British cultural studies was particularly important in redirecting the kinds of questions that scholars posed about television. Above all, cultural studies...played a major role in redefining the established assumptions about media's relation to its publics. (8)

The value of television and new media studies, then, lies in the crucial link they make between overall questions about the possible uses of media and their specific technological properties, an approach which ties into and expands on my first question about animation's reflexive aesthetics.

The third question, addressing the role of factors such as nationality, ethnicity, age, and gender in transcultural community, is one that falls more squarely into the "interdiscipline" of cultural studies described above. As Spigel and Olsson note, media-related cultural studies since the 1960s has been focused on "looking at what audiences did with the media—how media formed the means through which people (especially, in the British context, the working classes) expressed their culture" (8). Along with class, cultural studies has grown to include many strands of feminist, postcolonial, queer, disability, and critical race theory. The diversification of cultural studies in recent years is one inspiration for my transcultural and intersectional approach to animation fandom.

As I noted earlier, however, the overall theoretical paradigms cultural studies draws on often reach back to movements such as the British Birmingham school, the American Chicago school of sociology, the German Frankfurt school of Marxist criticism, and continental (often French) philosophy. The foundationally Eurocentric orientation of what is generally called "theory" underlies studies of media culture as well. For instance,

film scholar Andrew Higson, looking back on his own 1980s work, criticized his past self's tendency to extrapolate a theory of "national cinema" from his own "knowledge of just one national cinema (British cinema)" (2000, 63). This Eurocentrism has been a troubling trend in the field of cultural theory.

In asking questions about nationality, ethnicity, and gender in *transcultural* animation fan communities, I have found it necessary to use not only the texts and methodologies of Western cultural studies, but also those that fall more often under the discipline of "Asian Studies." Margaret Hillenbrand points out in her 2010 editorial "Communitarianism, or, how to build East Asian theory" that even Asian-language works on East Asia, not to mention those in English-language journals, still rely heavily on Western thinkers such as Michel Foucault and Fredric Jameson to provide their theoretical frameworks. But at the same time, in promoting language learning and translations across areas and disciplines, Asian Studies departments do have some potential to encourage a wider acceptance of "East Asian theory," a kind of theory which is not purged of all "foreign" influences (as was the goal of some 1980s and '90s Chinese academics) but provides more opportunity for those writing transnationally on and from East Asia to be heard.

A crucial part of my methodology drawn from Asian Studies has been to learn Japanese to the best of my ability over the past four years and to conduct research in Japan, working in collaboration with Japanese scholars and fans. Using a multilingual, multisite research methodology has allowed me to experience first-hand how broad cultural studies concepts such as "nationality," "ethnicity," and "gender" are not universal categories, but rather forms of identification which develop and intersect in

distinct ways within/across cultural and geographical contexts. The practices of female fandom considered in chapter 6, for instance, were a later addition to this thesis based on the particular gendered performances I noticed and sometimes adopted myself among anime fans in Japan. The linguistic and personal resources I gained through my interdisciplinary encounter with Asian studies methods have helped to deepen my understanding of the various contexts of anime (even if it is to realize how little I still understand), and so to produce a more thoroughly transcultural study of animation fan communities.

The fourth and final focusing question, “How much agency do individual viewers have in their use of texts, and how much are such uses directed or controlled by the institutional and economic structures of animation?” is also a cultural studies-based question. It is derived in particular from the debates between the “cultural studies” and “political economy” positions briefly outlined in my opening paragraphs (see also Grossberg 1995, Curran and Morley 2006). Having spoken so much of theory and theoretical schools, however, the question now becomes: what about practice? How can one tell if the audience is being “active” or “passive”? Who is in “the audience”?

In an attempt to find out at least some of this information, the final discipline I draw on is ethnography, especially ethnographic fan studies. The particular ethnographic methodologies and research tools used are described in more detail below. The purpose of using ethnography is to bring together the three approaches introduced so far—the close reading of texts drawn from English and film studies, the linkage of technologies and social impacts found in media studies, and the multilingual analysis of diverse social contexts found in (trans)cultural Asian studies—and ground them in some empirical data.

In following the disciplinary approaches above, I have claimed that some factor, aesthetic, technological, or cultural (or more likely a combination of the three) impels or enables people to form communities around animation. But I have not shown it. I have not cited any evidence of community among animation fans. Fan ethnography provides the academic tools to find out how it is that actual animation users use animation—once again, within reasonable limits, and within the purview of my focused study.

Ethnographic Methods: Surveying and Participant Observation

In order to collect empirical data about how animation fans around the world form communities through animated media in the twenty-first century, I conducted an ethnographic study that included a survey and participant observation at fan events in Canada, the United States, and Japan. The intention of my thesis was never to provide an analysis of this data alone, but to use it as supporting and challenging evidence within an integrated argument about the formation of transcultural animation fan communities. As such, the most relevant data from the survey are incorporated into chapters 4, 5, and 6, and considered in the context of the birth and development of transcultural community. For purposes of openness, however, I provide copies of the consent and questionnaire forms and fuller statistics about the respondents in appendices. I will also clarify here how I designed my research and collected responses.

The survey, a questionnaire titled “Animating Transcultural Communities,” ran from July 2009 through September 2010 on the website Survey Monkey. Its purpose was to solicit basic statistical data and detailed qualitative responses about animation consumption and community from self-identified fans all over the world, but particularly in the target regions of North America and Japan. To that end, I created two versions of

the questionnaire form in English and Japanese and timed their runs to coincide with major recruiting events in each region. The survey was conducted in English from July 2009 through February 2010, during which time I attended fan events in Canada and the United States. I then ran it in Japanese from February 2010 through September 2010 to correspond with a research trip to Japan from June 15–August 25, 2010.²

The specific events at which I recruited respondents were Ai-Kon, a medium-sized anime fan convention with 2180 paying attendees held in Winnipeg, Manitoba, July 24–26, 2009; Schoolgirls and Mobilesuits, a small-scale hybrid fan convention/academic conference on Japanese pop culture held in Minneapolis at the Minnesota College of Art and Design, September 25–27, 2009; and Comic Market (Comiket), a famously massive anime convention held in Tokyo, August 13–15, 2010, with a turnstile attendance of 560,000 people. In addition to special events, which not all fans may be able to attend, I also recruited respondents in everyday settings where anime is the focus of social interactions, in clubs such as the University of Manitoba’s UM Anime group, and in classrooms, including a class I attended at Wako University on the anime director Oshii Mamoru. The aim was to obtain a diverse sample of participants by recruiting in settings with different structures of access and purposes. In-person recruiting at these events was usually conducted by explaining my study during the course of a short casual conversation and offering potential respondents a “business card” with my name and university affiliation clearly stated directing them to the online form. Though I printed out paper copies of the questionnaire to have on hand, respondents overwhelmingly preferred the online version, as not a single paper form was ever completed.

² This trip was hosted by Dr. Ueno Toshiya at the Department of Transcultural Studies, Wako University, Tokyo, and co-funded by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Online responses also allowed me to determine the extent to which the local and regional experiences of in-person fandom are part of a larger mediated fandom online, a crucial aspect of transcultural communities. To this end, I recruited respondents in selected “virtual communities” to which I belong. I posted links to both the English and Japanese-language versions of my survey on my dedicated anime research blog, which were in turn linked or passed on by fellow bloggers. I also sent the links to e-mail lists such as the Miyazaki Mailing List and to acquaintances who would pass it on to friends or students via e-mail. Recruiting digitally, I collected responses from 31 countries in North and South America, Europe, Asia, Australia, and the Middle East. While many of these regions are not the focus of my research for reasons of space, I have incorporated their perspectives where possible as reflections of the geographical and cultural spread of animation fan community online. Ultimately, I had a total of 241 responses, of which 139 were complete (see Appendix 3).

In design, the survey was addressed to self-identified animation fans between the ages of 18 and 30. It was aimed at those who, like myself, were children or young adults in the transitional period between analog and digital media in the 1990s, and so participated in what media scholar Azuma Hiroki (2009) has represented as a generational shift in anime fandom, which I am terming the shift between postnational and transnational fan culture. The questionnaire form consisted of 34 questions divided into four sections asking about respondents’ animation preferences and usage, their definitions and experiences of fans and fan community, their interest in animation-related media, and a short section for personal information. I designed the survey to elicit more qualitative than quantitative results, asking open-ended questions as well as yes/no or

multiple choice questions. In this way, I hoped to encourage people to tell me stories about their experiences of animation, which I could interpret using “narrative analysis” (Reissman 1994) techniques that pay attention to the rhetoric respondents use and the ways they frame or narrate their opinions. This qualitative interpretive method, crossing over between ethnography and literary studies, is in keeping with my interdisciplinary approach.

Another qualitative ethnographic method I employed to aid in gathering and interpreting my data was that of participant observation. In participant observation, the researcher “combines subjective knowledge gained through personal involvement and objective knowledge acquired by disciplined record of what one has seen” (Andersen and Taylor 2008, 37). This method was especially useful to me because “the subjective component supplies a dimension of information that is completely lacking in survey data and similar techniques” (37), allowing me to provide richer and more accurate interpretations of the survey data based on a deeper understanding of the contexts in which it was collected.

Indeed, I found participating in fan events to be both personally fulfilling and to result in more successful recruiting. For instance, when attending the fan conventions Ai-Kon in Winnipeg and Comiket in Tokyo, I joined in the anime subcultural practice known as “costume play” or “cosplay”: that is, dressing up and taking on some of the attitudes of one’s favourite anime (or manga, or game) character. Cosplay, as a social performance that allows fans of certain works to recognize each other instantly, greatly facilitated the recruiting process. This was especially the case at Comiket in Japan, where I “cosplayed” a character recognizable to fans of all levels: Arrietty from the film *The*

Borrower Arrietty, a blockbuster hit released by Japan's most famous anime studio, Studio Ghibli, in the summer of 2010. The moment I left the changing rooms in Arrietty's signature red dress and clothespin hair clip, I was spotted in the shoulder-to-shoulder crowd by a young Japanese woman who beamed at me in delight, exclaiming, "Arrietty! *Kawaii!*" ("How cute!"). As I passed along the aisles of wooden tables stacked high with fan-made comics, members of the artists' circles staffing them called out to me time and again by "name" and actively struck up conversations. To be approached by other fans as well as approaching them myself, to find both of us making the effort to talk about ourselves and anime despite my far from flawless spoken Japanese, lent a much greater sense of mutuality to my ethnographic method. The technique of participant observation thus contributed substantially to my impression of transcultural fandom as a form of connection across difference that allows for exchange between those with differing backgrounds and linguistic abilities.

My participation in animation fan communities during my research also extended to the online realm. Since 2006, I have been a member of a number of general and academic mailing lists on animation, including the aforementioned Miyazaki Mailing List and the Animation Journal mailing list moderated by Dr. Maureen Furniss. Like so many other fans, my daily Internet surfing routine includes checking a number of alternative news sources such as blogs, message boards, and dedicated anime news websites to stay apprised of issues of interest to the community. On January 7, 2007, I also began writing an animation-focused blog titled "Academic Anime,"³ hosted through the LiveJournal website. I post to the blog on a weekly (or, during busy periods, bi-weekly) basis with

³ The blog is available at <http://merin-chan.livejournal.com/> and is mostly open to the public, although some personal entries are protected under a "friends only" lock for reasons of professionalism.

reviews of animated works and academic publications on anime, conference reports, occasional translations of Japanese news items, links to others' blogs and videos, and my personal thoughts on being an anime fan in academia. The blog was meant to act as a writing exercise, but certain posts, receiving supportive, constructively critical comments from fellow fans and graduate students, have been expanded and included in this thesis. Though not formal research, these everyday practices of fandom have contributed to my sense of the online animation fan community today.

Ethical Ethnography and Academic Privilege:

If I have painted a glowing portrait of the seemingly mutual encounters of my participant observation, I must acknowledge now that I am not *only* a fan. I am also an academic. As such, I recognize that a certain academic privilege undergirds my ability to describe fans, whether through statistical data or thick description. The question of privilege has been especially worrisome to me as an aspiring scholar of Japanese popular culture. Many times I have questioned my own motives. Do I enjoy Japanese animation out of a secret desire for exoticism, for a “difference” that comfortably assumes my own (white, Western, middle class) position as the norm? To what degree are my efforts to speak *about* something called “Japanese popular culture” in fact speaking *for* it, reifying any number of divergent experiences into an image that suits my purposes and desires? Are even my efforts to learn the Japanese language and to speak with Japanese scholars and fans only rooted in a need to get to a purer source, an “authentic” voice that I can proudly cite here in my thesis, for my gain?

In *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak raises just these issues. In particular, she criticizes Roland Barthes' autobiographical and

philosophical musings on Japan in *Empire of Signs* for taking on the “clear-headed innocent arrogance of a subject position that claims the other as grounds for difference” (1999, 345). Tracking the first phrases of his opening paragraph, she points out that even as he denies any attempt at finding a true “Oriental essence,” he justifies his own writing by saying progressively, “I want, I can, I will” (343).⁴ Reading Spivak’s critique as a cautionary tale, I am filled with doubt, asking: from what position can I speak about Japanese fans without “claiming the other as grounds for difference?” Should I even take the risk? Perhaps I should have kept my focus on “Japanese animation in North America” after all, looked only at Canadian fans, the more local and like myself the better.

My impulse towards a kind of “ethical retreat” is not what Spivak advocates at all. In interviews she has stated that it is equally problematic to simply say “O.K., sorry, we are just very good white people, therefore we do not speak for the blacks” (1990, 121) or “I am only a bourgeois white male, I can’t speak” (1990, 62). It is “this sort of breast-beating,” Spivak claims, “which stops the possibility of social change,” because it generates a “sanctioned ignorance” (1999, 2) of other cultures and allows researchers to continue their work without questioning their own privilege as hegemonic discourse holders. What Spivak advocates instead is a deconstructive approach, which “allows you to look at the ways in which you are complicit with what you are so carefully and cleanly opposing” (1990, 122). This self-reflexive tactic of “unlearning one’s privilege as one’s loss” (1996, 4) is one I will try to use as well, especially in recognizing not only the

⁴ The exact passage she critiques runs: “If I want to imagine a fictive nation, I can give it an invented name, treat it declaratively as a novelistic object...so as to compromise no real country by my fantasy. [...] I can also—though in no way claiming to represent reality itself (these being the major gestures of a Western discourse)—isolate somewhere in the world (*faraway*) a certain number of features...and out of these features deliberately form a system. It is this system which I shall call: Japan” (Barthes 1982, 3).

mutualities but also the *asymmetries* on which transcultural animation fandom is founded, and in which I am positioned in many ways depending on the context.

As a part of the effort to unlearn my privilege as loss, I have also had to consider where I stand in relation to my fan respondents as an academic employing the methods of ethnography and textual analysis. Like literary studies, ethnography has long been part of the scientific projects of meaning-making that grew out of Enlightenment humanism, projects that have been widely implicated in patriarchal and imperialist projects. While the “crisis of representation” brought about by feminist and postcolonial critiques has caused many ethnographers to rethink their approach at a theoretical level, the old paradigms are still in evidence in many of the standard guides I consulted in designing my survey. Floyd Fowler Jr.’s *Improving Survey Design*, for instance, advocates that researchers “communicate as clearly as possible the priority of response accuracy” and “reduce the role of an interviewer in the data collection process” (1995, 30) in order to assure the purity of the data. This positivist paradigm stresses measurability, objectivity, and accuracy as the primary goals of research.

By contrast, I have attempted to balance the objectivity that was required in my survey design with recruiting methods such as participant observation which recognize the value of subjective knowledge. In this regard I was inspired by scholars of the “new ethnography” such as H.L. Goodall, who suggests that we “think of the new ethnography as writing that *rhetorically enables intimacy in the study of culture*” (2000, 14). Following Goodall’s self-reflexive and semi-autobiographical “first-person” approach, I have viewed myself as both a fan and an academic, and my “aca-fan” ethnography almost as an auto-ethnography. At the same time, I must admit that even in my attempts to refuse

positivism and take up a subjective, hybrid position, I still remain within an academic institution and write in academic ways. Matt Hills addresses this issue at length in his book *Fan Cultures*, where he points out that “Any and all attempts at hybridising and combining ‘fan’ and ‘academic’ identities/subjectivities must...remain sensitive to those institutional contexts which disqualify certain ways of speaking and certain ways of presenting the self” (2002, 20) and encourage others, such as the “imagined subjectivity” of the scholar as “a resolutely rational subject, devoted to argumentation and persuasion” (3). To recognize and remain sensitive to an “academic imagined subjectivity,” however, is not to reify it, to assert that it is always and everywhere uniform and incontestable. That in itself would be a form of “sanctioned ignorance,” as if to say “I am just a very good (rational Western) academic, therefore I can’t speak for the fans.” While I must still write within a certain academic format, then, I hope that one of the “cultures” that can be re-imagined through intersection with transcultural fan community is the academic culture of studying fans itself, and my ambivalent position within it—however much I may still *structure* my arguments for such intersections through the acceptable interdisciplinarity of various scholarly frameworks for now.

Structure and Texts:

In terms of structure, this thesis is designed to answer the question “how do animation fans form communities across difference under changing geopolitical and historical conditions?” by tracing such changes through three parts, each of which is dedicated to a different historical period, mode of globalization, and medium. The first part addresses the era of international film animation in the decades before and during World War II. The second looks at postnational television animation and the different

peripheral technologies such as the VCR and the DVD player that grew up around it between 1960 and 1998. And the third considers the transnational and transcultural shifts of digital visual cultures since the year 2000. As I have noted, these periodizations are not absolute and exclusive. I do not want to lock each era, medium, and mode of globalization into a deterministic and totalizing whole, as if film animation can only be international in one way, having developed at one time. Rather, I want to pay attention to how discourses of, say, “modernity,” the “international,” and “cinema” were created in uneven yet interlinking ways in North America and East Asia at different rates of change, and to demonstrate the kinds of animation fan communities they enabled.

To prevent the three parts of my thesis from imposing a single static view of “*the* early twentieth century” or “*the* postmodern era,” I have split each part into two chapters which dialogically highlight different trends in animation within the broad era covered, be they trends towards affirming locally or globally dominant discourses, or attempts to work against or through such discourses in various ways. While the overall thrust of the thesis progresses chronologically from earlier to later works, each chapter provides particular cases from North America, Japan, and/or South Korea that cut across the progressive, developmental format by revealing the many contesting approaches to “modern internationalization” or “transcultural community” that exist at any given time. In this way, my structure aims to provide a “trans-historical” as well as transcultural view.

The first part on “Animation and the Miraculous Cinema” contains two chapters which demonstrate the utopian internationalist and imperialist drives of American and Japanese animation in the years between 1906 and 1945. Chapter 1, “Cartoon Internationale,” establishes the trope of reflexivity, in which film works represented their

own materials, creators, and audiences, as an important element of animated short films in the silent and early sound eras in America and Japan. Reflexive films serve to demonstrate the ways in which filmmakers attempted to “animate”—to depict and inspire to action—audiences at both national and international levels. Using cartoons that show celluloid stars as globe-trotting, hybridized ambassadors to national and international audiences, such as the Fleischer Brother’s Betty Boop short “A Language All My Own” (1935) and Ōfuji Noburō’s “Defeat of the Tengu” (1934), I demonstrate the budding cosmopolitanism of international film animation. That said, however, this chapter does not fail to recognize the imperialistic economic and political motivations that shaped film animation’s global routes of circulation and reception.

Chapter 2, “World War Cute,” delves more deeply into issues of cinematic imperialism by considering how early American and Japanese animation’s reflexive tactics of representing audiences in other nations came to be used in World War II propaganda films. Propaganda shorts and features by the Walt Disney Studios, such as “Education for Death” (1943), *Saludos Amigos* (1942), and *The Three Caballeros* (1944), and by Seo Mitsuyo, such as “Momotarō’s Sea Eagles” (1943) and *Momotarō’s Divine Ocean Warriors* (1945), demonstrate the complex play of connection and distinction that arose when animators attempted to simultaneously build international links between imperial subject-viewers of different races and cultures and to establish their own nations as natural imperial rulers. The overall purpose of chapters 1 and 2 is to establish animation’s potential to reflexively represent and appeal to viewers of diverse backgrounds, and to highlight its complicities in national and international discourses that divide as much as unite their animated audiences. These early chapters establish models

of animated engagement within and between North America and Japan that will be both refused and reused in later works.

Part Two on “Television Animation in the Age of ‘Posts’” reveals how certain tropes of cinematic animation, such as the reflexive depiction of audiences, continued into the post-war period but also changed drastically with the coming of television and of globalized, postnational structures of media distribution. Its two chapters provide two different perspectives on TV audiences: that of the “couch potato” and that of the “channel surfer.” Chapter 3 addresses the “couch potato” trope by showing how science fiction programs such as Hanna-Barbera’s *The Jetsons* (1962) and Tezuka Osamu’s *Astro Boy* (1963) participated in global media economies that depicted children as manipulable consumers of homogenized, “culturally odorless” (Iwabuchi 2002b, 24) cartoons and sponsored products. The child fan, as a demographic that cut across former organizations of (inter)national audiences, is shown as capable of participating mainly in organized fan clubs and televised games with a widespread reach, often to the multinational distributors’ economic gain. Even such commercialized participation, however, may hold nascent potential for active engagements in fan community among those who grow up with global media.

Chapter 4 expands on the potential of children’s fan clubs to look at the birth of adult anime fan communities in North America and Japan in the 1970s–90s. Exploring the underground media economies enabled by TV, VCR, and DVD technologies, I show how fans built a sense of community—or, a “community of sentiment” (Appadurai 1996, 8)—across geographical distance based on a shared interest in a common genre: science fiction anime. This mobile community of “channel surfers” spanned national, cultural and

linguistic differences, in a clear precursor of transcultural animation fan communities. At the same time, however, such communities also faced various frictions and difficulties in maintaining a mutual exchange of views. Watanabe Shinichirō's 1998 science fiction anime series *Cowboy Bebop* provides a perfect example of the flows and frictions of the postnational media environment, illustrating the kinds of communities that can flourish and fail through changing media technologies. Though they may seem quite polarized in approach, these two chapters are united by a close attention to the formation of fan communities through affective engagement, and so provide the immediate historical and theoretical bases necessary to understand transcultural animation fan communities.

The third and final part features two "Online Conversations Across Difference" that have taken place around web animation since the year 2000. It explores the twenty-first century formation of transcultural animation fan communities, which are not merely dualistic but multiple in their perspectives. It expands the earlier America/Japan focus to look at the complex cultural exchanges between South Korean and Japanese fans, as well as between these regions and North America. Chapter 5, "Love at First Site," focuses on the South Korean Flash animation series *There She Is!!* (2003–08). Linking the dilemmas represented in the shorts to evidence of how fans themselves work through them on the website's multilingual bulletin board, it reveals how the process of forming transcultural community is not a smooth one, but is fraught with the tensions of ongoing social and historical issues. This chapter also demonstrates, however, that working through such frictions in an online forum that allows for mutual, if asymmetrical, negotiations is productive and in fact constitutive of transcultural community.

Chapter 6, “World Conflict/World Conference,” places the online realm of transcultural fan community described in Chapter 5 in context with the media economies of film and television discussed in earlier chapters. It shows how earlier ideas of media and community are both reified and transformed within a new visual environment of “media mixing.” To that end, it considers a work that spans many media platforms: the web manga/print manga/web anime/theatrical film *Hetalia: Axis Powers* (2006–pres.), by Himaruya Hidekaz. *Hetalia*, in its many versions, is a prime example of the multimedia marketing strategy referred to as “convergence culture” (Jenkins 2008) in America or the “contents industry” (Azuma 2007) in Japan. As part of its particular market niche, *Hetalia* is also targeted to female fans in both East Asia and North America. Women’s collective uses (and abuses) of multimedia texts reveal the ways in which gendered cultures are integrated into and transformed by online collaborations across difference. The aim of these chapters is to illustrate the many semi-autonomous cultures of nation, language, ethnicity, and gender along which animation fandom is still divided, while revealing the points of cross-over that make such communities transcultural.

This structure is not intended to provide any sort of comprehensive coverage, or to map out animation trends as a linear narrative of progressive development. I simply wish to demonstrate that “animation” is not a single cohesive entity with the same nature and effects in all times and places. From the international films of the 1930s to the interactive web-cartoons of the new millennium, what we call “animation” varies according to many specific, historically situated contexts, including economies of production, technologies of distribution, and imaginative experiences of reception. By

highlighting these contexts, we can begin to understand what it is that creates the linkages of transcultural fandom, and consider the longer-term impacts it may have.

In discussing the potential impact of transcultural fandom, the six chapters of this thesis avoid making definitive proclamations about the ultimate positive or negative effects of transcultural animation fan community. Rather, they use each case as an example of the challenges and prospects animation presents for those working on/within media globalization and mediated community. They lay out what media users *can do* with animation in the future, but not necessarily what they *should* do. The intention of this work is to suggest some ways of re-imagining the divides between oppressive vs. liberatory views of media and top-down vs. bottom-up globalization, between “aca” vs. “fan” engagements, and between English vs. Asian-language fandoms. I hope the textual analyses and conceptual tools I provide will prove useful in this regard.

2) Terms and Definitions

The main conceptual tool of this thesis is its very topic, the model of the transcultural animation fan community. Before I can demonstrate how this model works in practice, however, I should clarify how I am using each of the terms that comprise it: “transcultural,” “animation,” “fan,” and “community.” The work of my thesis will be to show the intersections of these terms through concrete examples that question and refine the broad propositions set out so far. For now, however, I will show why and how I use each term individually.

Transcultural:

I would like to begin by saying that the transcultural is one possible mode of globalization. But this definition generates more problems than solutions. After all, “globalization” is one of those keywords that seem nearly impossible to define. As in Raymond Williams’ statement on “culture,” the sheer number of approaches to globalization suggests that “the problems of its meanings [are] inextricably bound up with the problems it [is] being used to discuss” (1983, 15). For economists, globalization is an economic problem, tied up in trade agreements and organizations such as the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC.) Anthropologists such as Arjun Appadurai, having “a professional tendency to privilege the cultural as the key diacritic,” focus on “the *cultural* dimensions of globalization” (1996, 11-2), a tendency common to the humanities (and to my own approach.) For those in media and communications studies, advances in communication technologies are key to globalization, generating definitions such as that of John Tomlinson, who sees globalization as “*complex connectivity*” or “the rapidly developing and ever-densening network of interconnections and interdependences that characterize modern social life” (1999, 2). For every problem, there is another definition, and for every definition, there is a disagreement.

What all of these approaches must address at some point, however, is the issue of the nation-state. Even in approaches that turn away from the nation to claim that we must instead consider the region (Iwabuchi 2002), the hemisphere (Kurasawa 2008), or global flows (Appadurai 1996), globalization is seen to enact a change in how we understand the

relevance of national economies, borders, identities, and cultures. This change may be figured as a recent development, a rupture brought about by industrialization, the rise of media culture, or a dramatic shift in the balance of political power such as the collapse of the Soviet Union. Or it may be seen as a part of a historical continuity, a process that has existed since the earliest migrations, and that we are only now coming to call “globalization.” Whether it is perceived as an age-old condition or an “epochal shift,” as Saskia Sassen has argued, “globalization is taking place inside the national to a far larger extent than is usually recognized” (2006, 1). For that reason, I will discuss globalization here by looking at three different ways in which nations and their interactions have been conceived: internationalism, postnationalism, and transnationalism.

Internationalism, to my mind, is based on the classic conception put forward by Benedict Anderson: the nation as “an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (1991, 6). This view of nationalism supposes a “unisonance” (145) or univocal quality created and promoted by print media, such as the newspaper and novel, and also by national or popular songs, such as anthems, which allow citizens to form a common sense of identity together with millions of people they have never met. Anderson’s ideas about “imagined communities” are thus foundational for thinking about both the social and the “virtual” aspects of nationalism, particularly where media are concerned.

Still, in his focus on sovereignty and unity, Anderson’s work follows the classic modernist theories of International Relations laid out since the 1920s, which take the 1648 Peace of Westphalia as their basic model of nation-building by assuming a “division of political authority into territorially distinct sovereign states” (Deibert 1997,

8). While some theorists still use this international approach, particularly when thinking about the continuing imperial structures of global domination, others have made a definite break with the Westphalian model. Ronald J. Deibert cites a trend among International Relations theorists towards considering the “present era” (generally, the later twentieth century; specifically, the mid-1990s) as “one in which fundamental transformation is occurring”; a “historical breakpoint” (1). Arjun Appadurai, too, argues for a “general rupture in the tenor of intersocietal relations” (1996, 2), which he calls the “emergence of a postnational political world” (22).

In order to formulate this postnational world, Appadurai draws on Anderson’s dimension of the imaginary, but sees it as a “social practice” (31) acted out through a number of intersecting dimensions of cultural flows or -scapes. There are financescapes of capitalism, ethnoscapes of immigration and diaspora, and mediascapes of information and imagery, among others. These -scapes radically alter how people may form communities and understand themselves together, with the result that “we are in the process of moving to a global order in which the nation-state has become obsolete and other formations for allegiance and identity have taken its place.” Furthermore, “what are emerging are strong alternatives for the organization of global traffic in resources, images and ideas—forms that either contest the nation-state actively or constitute peaceful alternatives for large-scale political loyalties” (169). It is a powerful model of community formation for the mid-to-late twentieth century, and one I find particularly applicable to the growth of the global anime fandom.

Still, critics such as Imre Szeman (1997) have taken Appadurai to task for the optimism of his global flows model. It seems necessary to me to consider the points at

which global flows are blocked or diverted, to take into account the persistent national, linguistic, and class-based barriers that create asymmetries of power even among fans, as well as the opportunities that continued engagements with the nation-state might offer. In short, what is required is a middle way between the limitations of the international mindset on the one hand, and the free-flowing agency of Appadurai's postnationalism on the other. In my understanding, this third way may be possible through a careful consideration of globalization as *transnational*.

Transnationalism is not simply another word for postnationalism or the flow of information and people across the fading borders of a globalized world. Rather, it takes into account the friction that ethnographer Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing describes as a key feature of globalization. Tsing defines friction as "the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference" (2005, 4). In her case studies based on fieldwork in Indonesian rainforests, she recognizes that globalization is often economically and socially oppressive. But she also shows that there is still hope for contestation in and through the very sites of inequality. Even those who are unequally positioned within a single situation can form coalitions or collaborations, as Western environmental activists and indigenous rainforest inhabitants did when protesting Japanese logging in Indonesia in the 1990s. That is not to say that transnational collaborations are simply acts of uniting "us" against "them" to achieve a common goal. Tsing argues that "There is no reason to assume that collaborators share common goals. In transnational collaborations, overlapping but discrepant forms of cosmopolitanism may inform contributors, allowing them to converse—but across difference."(13) This concept of collaborative friction thus adds a dimension of constructive "cross-talk"

(Brydon 2004, 70) to Appadurai's communities of sentiment, without falling into the limited, homogeneous structures of internationalism.

What, then, is transculturalism? In short, it is the cultural dimension of transnationalism. Though there is often slippage between "nation" and "culture," these two things are not necessarily the same. We may speak, for instance, of youth culture as a formation that is nationally inflected, but primarily determined by a non-national category: age. Or, we may speak of women's culture, or of a series of women's cultures with different orientations and contexts, but still linked by various discourses of gender and femininity. We may also speak of a given fan culture in this light, as something that exists differently in different nations, but has similarities based on consumption of the same texts, overlapping forms of interpretation, and so on.

Just as I have distinguished the various forms of nationalism, it is important to distinguish different approaches to "-culturalism." There is, for instance, the conception of "multiculturalism" (another key word in itself!) as the co-existence of well-defined groups based on factors such as ethnicity, gender, or sexuality, groups which exist and interact with each other as fairly autonomous entities. Multiculturalism can be a strong basis for identity movements if undertaken *strategically*, as Spivak would say, but it can also lead to a sort of self-segregation (Bissoondath 1994) or create fixed categories of minorities by assuming an unmarked majority which silently holds power (Mackey 1999).

If multiculturalism can be thought of as broadly parallel to internationalism in its risks and benefits, then there is also a postnationalism of culture: "the postcultural notion that 'cultures' can be chosen, administered, taught, distributed and bureaucratized rather than simply inherited, felt and lived" (During 2002, n.p). This strongly constructivist and

postmodern approach likewise has benefits and problems. On one hand, it can overcome the sort of essentialisms and simplifications that multiculturalism so often assumes. But if taken too far, it can separate people from the local, situated experiences that may give them strength. Postculturalism is also particularly adaptable to the needs of commercial culture. For instance, Koichi Iwabuchi has argued that Japanese popular culture creators working in regional and global markets often produce texts that adopt material from other cultures so freely and constantly that their works end up as “culturally odourless” (2002, 24) commodities, turning hybridity into a form of corporate “hybridism.”

I thus propose transculturalism as a term that cuts across these two options. As a form of collaboration across difference, it does not entail the creation of a holistic unity in which all are purported to be “equal” no matter their actual histories or lived experiences of discrimination. Neither does it divide people into isolated cultural groups based on essentialized ideas of ethnicity, nation, or gender. It is rather a process of crossing, of “interconnection across difference” (Tsing 2005, 4) in the transnational mode. Following the position of Laura Briggs, Gladys McCormick, and J.T. Way on transnationalism, I consider transculturalism as “a category of analysis” (2008, 625) that does conceptual work similar to the term “gender” (as versus biological “sex”) in feminist theory, providing the “conceptual acid” that “compel[s] us to acknowledge that the nation [or, culture], like sex, is a thing contested, interrupted, and always shot through with contradiction” (627). Recognizing that transnationalism and transculturalism are themselves contested concepts, I do not intend to fix them into rigid definitions. I am rather using them descriptively to think through the changes and continuities in animation fan communities in various contexts over the past century.

Animation:

Compared to “transcultural,” “animation” is a much less disputed term, though it too is not without its subtleties. Etymologically speaking, to “animate” is to give life, spirit (*animus*), or motion. As such, animation is often theorized in its relations to movement. Gilles Deleuze, in the opening pages of his *Cinema 1: The Movement Image* states that

the cartoon film, if it belongs fully to cinema, does so because the drawing no longer constitutes a pose or a completed figure, but the description of a figure which is always in the process of being formed or dissolving through the movement of lines and points taken at any-instant-whatevers of their course. [...] It does not give us a figure described in a unique moment, but the continuity of the movement which describes the figure” (1987, 5).

Deleuze’s theoretical statement echoes the oft-quoted 1968 axiom of practicing animator Norman McLaren that “Animation is not the art of drawings that move but the art of movements that are drawn” (Furniss 1999, 5). Looking at the “movement which describes the figure” or at “movements that are drawn” takes on a double sense in the study of transcultural animation fan communities, which are, as I have just described them, based on a “process of crossing,” a form of mobility, however frictive or diverted it may be. In using the phrase “*animating* transcultural community,” I speak not only of animation’s technological properties but also of its capacity to act as a motive force for the re-imagining of community.

Animated movements, being social as well as technical, are not the same in every time, place, or medium. While scholars of animation sometimes find it necessary as a definitional step to discover the essential features or universal practices of cartoons and their fans in order to justify studying them at all, this can lead to approaches that are at

once very wide-ranging and yet limiting in what they value and how they value it. Paul Wells, for instance, defines animation most broadly as “the artificial creation of the illusion of movement in inanimate lines and forms” (Wells 1998, 10). This definition takes in many different methods and technologies, including precursors of animation such as flipbooks and optical toys, stop-motion filming, and painting or scratching images directly onto film stock, as well as the photography of drawings on paper or celluloid. Wells’ initial definition places no restrictions on content, style, audience, or distribution medium, though he does go on to divide animation into categories of “orthodox animation,” that which uses continuous narratives and unified, representational styles, “experimental animation,” which reaches its peak in non-narrative abstraction, and “developmental animation,” a middle ground between the two extremes. While it seems to embrace almost anything, Wells’ formalist approach to animation is one that favours experimental cinematic works with “artistic merit” over televised popular culture, which he dismisses as “cheaply produced, highly industrialized cel animation made in the USA and Japan [that] has colonised television schedules and perhaps, more importantly, the imaginations of viewers” (35). The tendency to value the cinematic *auteur* and devalue the television hacks and masses is common to much animation scholarship in the West and some (though not as much) in Japan.

Early Western reporting and scholarship on Japanese anime, likewise, has often relied on comparisons with the Golden Age of cinematic animation, especially that of Walt Disney’s studio, in order to define anime’s formal properties. In contrast to full animation, anime is singled out for its use of less fluid and naturalistic limited animation techniques, as well as for thematic properties such as a higher incidence of sex and

violence. As Susan J. Napier argues, this strategy “minimizes the variety of the form” (2005, 6) of anime by focusing only on highly polarized examples which are either like cinematic Disney animation (children’s cartoons) or radically unlike it (violent pornography), rather than exploring the many different media and genres in between, from slice-of-life television comedies to surreal art films. Furthermore, besides the major axis of child/adult-oriented works, this approach speaks very little to how situated audiences use animation in various media.

In this thesis, I will be studying animation not through a single formalized definition, but through other movements: the movements of audience usages and of the technological changes that enable them. In general, I focus on what Wells calls “orthodox animation”: cel-style narrative works. *Kirigami* or paper cut-out animation and computer generated (CG) animation will also be considered as techniques popular in their age, but abstract/experimental techniques, stop-motion, and puppetry will not be addressed at any length. This is not because there is an essential value difference between the styles, but because experimental animation is often put to different *discursive usages* than cel and CG styles. Abstraction in particular is still connected more to the fine arts and the world of “high culture” than narrative cel-style and CG animation, which are associated with the forms of community I wish to address. My survey, for instance, was targeted to self-identified animation *fans*, and while a handful did name works such as Frederic Back’s Expressionistic short “The Man Who Planted Trees” (1987) as among their favourites, the vast majority selected works of cel-style and CG animation (along with a few popular narrative stop-motion feature films). Since cel-style and CG are the ones that fans concentrate on and use to form communities, they are my primary concern here.

Within the corpus of cel-style animation, I focus on three different intersections of animation and technology: cinematic animation, television animation, and web animation. Cinematic animation is here understood as works produced for and viewed through projection in a film theatre. Since the early days of cinematic animation, there have been many competing techniques in North America and Japan for creating movement, including drawing an entire slightly different page, background and all, for every frame of film (a technique used by Émile Cohl starting in 1908 and in Kitayama Seitarō's "changing paper method" [*suikōhō*] first employed between 1917 and 1921), and using different sheets, either torn off or overlaid, for static and moving elements (such as Raoul Barré's 1912 "slash system" or Kitayama's "cut-out method," [*kirinukihō*]).⁵

The system that became dominant by the mid-1930s in both Japanese and North American studios, however, was the technique of drawing and painting on clear celluloid sheets patented by Earl Hurd in 1914,⁶ for which "cel-style" is named. As Lamarre ably describes in *The Anime Machine*, the major technological apparatuses used in cel-style production in both America and Japan were the animation stand, which allowed sheets of celluloid representing background, midground, foreground and to be evenly stacked in layers for photography, and later the multiplane camera, in which the distance between each layer could be adjusted independently to create a greater sense of "movement into depth" (2009, 19). In describing the kind of movement-into-depth that the multiplane camera allowed, Lamarre follows the basic argument (though not the deterministic

⁵ For more on Cohl and Barré, see Crafton, pg. 61 and 194. For more on early animation techniques in Japan, in see Watanabe and Yamaguchi, pg. 13.

⁶ In fact, celluloid had been employed by earlier animators such as Émile Cohl for atmospheric effects, and its use in creating motion was suggested in a mid-1914 patent application by John Bray, which mainly concerned animation on paper. It was Hurd's December 1914 patent application, however, that "define[d] the technique of modern cel animation" (Crafton 1993, 150).

overtones) of Paul Virilio's theorization of "cinematism," "the use of mobile apparatuses of perception, which serve (1) to give the viewer a sense of standing over and above the world and thus of controlling it, and (2) to collapse the distance between viewer and target, in the manner of the ballistic logic of instant strike or instant hit" (Lamarre 2009, 5). The kinds of national and international spectator positions that may be formed through such movements will be discussed in chapter 2 on propaganda animation.

As Lamarre argues, the animation stand, in layering cels, also offered the potential for another kind of movement, which unlike "cinematism" is "not about movement into depth but movement *on and between surfaces*" (7). He calls this planar movement animetism or the "animetic interval" (7). The tendency to animetism is found in cinematic animation as well, but it is especially evident in television series, the second medium I address. As I show at more length in chapter 3, television animators of the 1960s relied heavily on cost-cutting techniques such as panning the camera across a single still image to create movement rather than animating it directly, resulting in works that tend more to flat compositing than depth. While Lamarre considers limited animation theoretically as an instance of Deleuze's "time-image," I will be looking more at television animation as a postnational industrial practice, in connection to practices of distribution and consumption and not only to production or style. Television animation, defined most simply as works produced for consumption through terrestrial or satellite television broadcast, is thus considered primarily through its usages by both corporations and fans to form different kinds of collective identities.

In contrast to both cinematic and television animation, which share some material properties, CG animation represents a different technological intersection: the new media

intersection Manovich describes with digital computing. There are many different kinds of CG animation, from 3D modeling programs used in engineering to the motion-capture technologies used to generate photorealistic digital characters in live-action cinematic films. In keeping with my focus on changing media and fan audiences, however, I look specifically at two forms of narrative animation produced to be downloaded and/or viewed streaming on the Internet: Flash cartoons and web anime.

Flash cartoons are animated works created using the Adobe Flash (formerly Macromedia Flash) program. Launched in 1997,⁷ when most Internet Service Providers (ISPs) operated through dial-up connections, Flash allowed animators to create videos with file sizes small enough to load in a reasonable amount of time. It did this by using a technique called vector mapping (calculating shapes mathematically) rather than rasterized images (storing colour information for each pixel individually), resulting in planar graphic styles similar to the “animetic” limited animation found in commercial television animation. As a program available to amateurs as well as professionals, however, Flash enables very different online economies of animation production and distribution among fans themselves, and this is the aspect of it on which I concentrate.

Of course, professional companies also use the Internet to distribute animation. This is notably true in the case of “web anime,” Japanese Internet animation which may be made by professional television studios such as Kyoto Animation as a tie-in to an existing program. It uses a combination of simple cel-style and computer-generated imagery that is easily streamed through broadband connections, and later distributed on

⁷ In fact, Flash began as a simple animation program launched in 1996 by FutureWave Software under the name “FutureSplash.” It was quickly popularized by its use in Microsoft’s MSN homepage and was then acquired in 1997 by Macromedia and relaunched as “Macromedia Flash 1.0,” a multimedia authoring tool. For more on the history of Flash, especially in website design, see Megan Sapnar Ankerson’s 2009 article “Historicizing Web Design: Software, Style and the Look of the Web” in Staiger and Hake, 192-203.

DVD for television viewing. While new media animation in some ways represents a radical break from earlier forms, in other ways film, television, and web animations remain very much linked. The balance of rupture and continuity in media formats, as well as forms of globalization and community, thus plays a key role in my description of animation's movements, both technological and social.

Fan:

Given all the emphasis placed on animation's social uses, I would now like to turn to those who make social use of animation: the fans. To this point I have used the term "fan" neutrally and unproblematically, counting on a common recognition of the term as someone who enjoys and is dedicated to a particular text, genre, performer, etc. But as fan studies and otaku studies evolved into sub-fields of their own in the 1980s and early 1990s in North America and Japan, scholarly attempts to define the particular practices and attitudes that make a fan a fan proliferated, resulting in an ever-increasing number of definitions spanning several generations of fan studies.

The first generation of Western fan scholars was active in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and includes authors such as Camille Bacon-Smith, John Fiske, Henry Jenkins, and Janice Radway, among others. Their works are mainly concerned with contesting popular and etymological associations of "fans" with "fanatics," devotees overcome by an "excessive and mistaken enthusiasm" (Jenkins 1992, 12) which renders them either dangerously obsessed or pathetically duped, or both at once. Negative conceptions of fans in the West since the 1920s extended beyond individuals as well, since "the concept of the fan involves images of social and psychological pathology" that manifest in tropes of the "hysterical crowd" as well as the "obsessed individual" (Jensen 1992, 9). These

negative discourses create a definitional lose-lose situation, with the fan caught between action and inaction, self and society. The active solitary fan is a lone maniac, while the passive solitary fan is an isolated loser who should “get a life”; collectively active fans are hysterical (often female) mobs, while the great mass of passive fans are duped audiences hypnotized into uncritical acceptance of the culture industry.

In response to such stereotypes, scholars of fandom—particularly Jenkins in his *Textual Poachers*—tended to reappropriate and revalue the definitional terms to create an equal but opposite win-win situation. The fan as “textual poacher” is a creative actor within consumer culture. She (and women are most often the focus of early American fan studies) reaffirms her sense of “commonality and community” (Jenkins 1992, 58) by sharing her individual affective experiences of viewing “alone, with a box of hankies nearby” (58). She writes fan fiction or creates art in order to express her own preferences and personal views of the object of her fandom, but she also works within the collectively-determined fan “metatext” or “fanon” that is created parallel to the canon of a media text. In this positive revaluation, fans are productive in reception and together in individuality. First generation fan scholars thus often worked by taking the tropes and characterizations of dominant discourse and transforming them into the polar opposites of the criticisms launched against them.

While the construction of the fan given above is generally based on American and British examples, we might also see the Japanese *otaku* as defined by a similar, but not identical, history of extreme negativism followed by reappropriation. Ideas of isolation and sociality are still key in Japanese portraits of *otaku*, as are the figures of the passive, infantile fan and the dangerous criminal. But due to the particular socio-historical

conditions in which the otaku subculture arose, the way these attributes are framed and emphasized differ in some points from the Western concept of the fan.

For instance, unlike the term “fan,” which has its roots in ideas of “fanatical” religious excess and abandon, “otaku” is a formal second person pronoun literally meaning “your residence.” It was first used to characterize anime and manga fans as awkward “social rejects” (Galbraith and Lamarre 2010, 363) in a 1983 *Manga Burikko* magazine column by Nakamori Akio titled “Studying ‘Otaku.’” It has since come to denote an obsession with anything from trains to military paraphernalia, though it retains a special connection to anime subculture. A sort of wordplay, it refers “both to someone who is not accustomed to close friendships and therefore tries to communicate with peers using this distant and overly formal form of address, and to someone who spends most of his or her time alone at home” (Kinsella 1998, 310-11).

As Sharon Kinsella describes, this image of the loner otaku coined and debated in subcultural circles was lifted to the level of a mass media panic by the 1988–89 case of the serial child-murderer Miyazaki Tsutomu, whose cache of amateur manga and anime provoked widespread concern about the dangers of otaku who “cannot make the transition from a fantasy world of videos and manga to reality” (1998, 309). While the delusional maniac figure is also found in sensationalistic Western reporting (for instance, on John Lennon’s killer Mark David Chapman), it is interesting to note that the Japanese press focused not only on Miyazaki himself, but on otaku as an entire generation of anti-social, infantile, and isolated youths, also called the “*shinjinrui*” or “new type people,” who were not exposed to the harsh realities of WWII or the scarcities of the reconstruction period. While some of the negative discourses around fans and otaku are

the same, then, their slant is slightly different, with otaku appearing as symptomatic of a particular generational shift within post-war Japan.

The negative popular discourse around otaku, as with that around fans, has been contested by scholars who attempted to reclaim or recast the otaku image in the years following the Miyazaki incident. The premier scholar of “otakuology” (*otakugaku*) in the 1990s was anime producer and critic Okada Toshio, co-founder of the Gainax animation studio and also of what Lamarre describes as the “Gainax discourse” on anime. The Gainax discourse, like Western fan studies, emphasizes that “Producers are, above all, fans; and fans are budding producers” (Lamarre 2006, 367). This production, however, is not seen to be enabled primarily by social practices of community building, as in Jenkins’ work, but by a particular canon of male-created and -targeted science fiction anime texts and the aesthetics of “dense, nonhierarchized visual space” (366) they exemplify. The result is a somewhat ahistorical portrait of animation fandom, and also one that is much more male-biased than early work on North American fandom. In Japan, then, we may see both crossover and distinction in the definition and handling of fans among first-generation scholars and those who draw on them.

Such revaluations, while useful for combating overly negative fan stereotypes and “otaku-bashing,” have not passed unquestioned in later generations of fan studies. As Jonathan Gray, Cornel Sandvoss, and C. Lee Harrington argue, the “Fandom is Beautiful” approach of American first-wave fan scholars “did not deconstruct the binary structure in which the fan had been placed so much as they tried to differently value the fan’s place in said binary” (2007, 3). Instead of being entirely negative, fans become a bit too entirely positive, overlooking the complexities and complicities of fan production.

This resulted in a second wave of fan scholarship in the late '90s and early 2000s which “highlighted the replication of social and cultural hierarchies within fan- and subcultures” (6). In English-language scholarship, second wave authors such as Cheryl Harris, Mark Jancovich and Sarah Thornton argued that “fans are not seen as a counterforce to existing social hierarchies and structures but, in sharp contrast, as agents of maintaining social and cultural systems of classification and thus existing hierarchies” (Grey et al. 6). Criticisms of anime for maintaining a political and economic structure of Japanese “cultural nationalism,” such as that launched by Ōtsuka Eiji and Ōsawa Nobuaki in their 2005 book *Why Is 'Japanimation' Failing?*, likewise represent a break from celebratory official policies and scholarly discourses alike. The phrases “sharp contrast” and “break,” however, suggest yet another swing of the binary pendulum, this time from agency back to structural control.

Such sharply divided positions have produced a third wave of fan scholars who focus on the very problem of dualisms. Grey et al. find the hallmark of the third wave to be its attention to fandom, not as a special category, but as “the fabric of our everyday lives” (9), with fan studies “providing answers to the pressing issues of global modernity” (9). I agree with their description, but would like to add that a major contribution of third wave scholars (and, I hope, of my own work) is the care they take in self-reflexively addressing the “moral dualisms” of fan studies as an academic discipline which relies on identifying “‘good’ and ‘bad’ instances of popular culture” and dividing fans into the institutionally acceptable categories of “resistant” or “complicit” readers (Hills 2002, xii).

Such careful attention to how fandom is discursively framed is particularly required in the contemporary field of “otaku studies” (*otakuron*). This is because even

very recent scholarship in Japan still tends to pathologize otaku as isolated loners comparable to another notorious anti-social group in Japan, the *hikikomori* or “social recluses” who refuse to leave their houses (Saitō 2009), and to frame all otaku in generalizations such as “a culture in which the major theme is the avoidance of others” (Kashimura 2007, 341). The need to go beyond such tropes is pointed out by Tagawa Takahiro in his 2009 article “Direction of Otaku Studies,” which pays attention to the question of *who* defines otaku and how they do it. In particular, he notes the masculinist bias of otaku studies, and calls for a greater attention to the subculture of female fans of homoerotic works known as *fujoshi*, or “rotten women.” The project of studying *fujoshi* is in fact already well under way among female scholars such as Kotani Mari and Antonia Levi, and it is one I take up and question in chapter 6, where a fuller definition of *fujoshi* may be found. Finally, however, Tagawa suggests that we ask not “what are otaku?” (or *fujoshi*), but rather “how do otaku live?” (2009, 79), as male or as female fans, personally and socially. Tagawa’s position has resonance with Hills’ commitment to looking more at “what fandom does culturally” than “how fandom can be fitted into academic norms of ‘resistant’ or ‘complicit’ readings” (2002, xii). It is within these currents of third-generation fan and otaku studies that my understanding of fandom is positioned.

Community:

The issue of community is of great importance in fan studies. When Western scholars such as Henry Jenkins sought to grant fans a level of academic acceptability in the mid-’90s, they often did it by relying on the trope of community. This should perhaps come as no surprise. Nicholas Jankowski posits that the term has historically been one of the

“most fundamental and far-reaching concepts of sociology” (citing Nisbet’s 1966 pronouncement), and remains “central to present day studies of the Internet” (Jankowski 2002, 37) and media generally, both fields on which fan studies draws heavily. Indeed, “community” has been so widely and differently defined in everything from business to journalism to activism that many scholars have begun to criticize its overuse, particularly in relation to new media. Some find it too loaded, preferring terms such as “network,” (Castells 2010), while others have “decried [both “community” and “network”] as being so diverse in their understandings and applications as to be almost useless” (Willson 2010, 749). There have been calls for redefinitions and protestations of the need to get “beyond the diluted community concept” (Fernback 2007, 49).

I would argue, however, that like globalization, “community” is a difficult concept to grasp not because it has no meaning or too many meanings, but because it is a keyword with context-specific definitions. It is only useful when it is in use, being considered in relation to some problem, text, or practice, rather as an abstract set of norms or a typology of generalized human interaction. For that reason, as with my other key concepts, I do not propose to give yet another universal (re)definition of this slippery concept, but only to show how the term operates at a particular juncture: in the meeting with transcultural animation fans.

That said, I will go over a few of the classic conceptions of community here to set the stage. In discussing the possibility of media communities, both Jankowski (2002) and Fernback (1999) begin by tracing the concept’s sociological lineage to Ferdinand Tönnies’ 1887 distinction between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, or, “community” and “society.” Tönnies describes *Gemeinschaft* as located in the “real and organic life” (33)

of the nuclear family, the home, and the village. It is natural, old, stable, intimate, and characterized by a “perfect unity of human wills” (37), or *Wessenwille* (natural will). In contrast to this, *Gesellschaft* is an “imaginary and mechanical structure” (33) based on the exchange of commodities between equal but separate individuals. This is the realm of “public life—it is the world itself” (33). It is artificial, new, temporary, foreign (“One goes into *Gesellschaft* as one goes into a strange country” [34]), and characterized by the rational will (*Kurwille*) of progress and individualism, a perspective clearly influenced by the rapid industrialization that accompanied the rise of the German Empire starting in the 1870s. In short, “in the *Gemeinschaft* [people] remain essentially united in spite of all separating factors, whereas in the *Gesellschaft* they are essentially separated in spite of all uniting factors” (65).

If this all sounds somehow familiar, it’s no wonder. These polarities of unity and diversity, intimacy and distance, collectivity and individuality recur in European and American scholarship throughout the twentieth century, from Georg Simmel’s mid-century discussions of the alienating impact of urban modernity to the distinctions between “organic” and “virtual” communities drawn by media scholars of the “Digital Revolution” era, the 1980s and 1990s. Some follow Tönnies directly in defining community only as immediate, face-to-face contact, and condemn mass media communications as manipulative “pseudo-Gemeinschaft” (Beniger 1987, 357) or a mere “myth of virtual community” (Lockard 1997, 219).

Others argue that it is precisely the disembodied, deterritorialized, equalizing, and pluralizing aspect of the internet that make it an ideal “public sphere,” enabling the democratic spread of rational discourse beyond the limited interactions of Jürgen

Habermas' face-to-face seventeenth-century coffee houses. Mark Poster, for instance, claims that the "salient characteristic of Internet community is the diminution of prevailing hierarchies of race, class, and gender. What appears in the embodied world as irreducible hierarchy plays a lesser role in...cyberspace" (1997, 213). The terms have been revalued and renamed, it seems, but the binary remains: organic communities are "tied to place and time," "total singular" in cultural identity, and "homogeneous," while virtual communities are "not tied to place and time," "partial plural," and "heterogeneous" (Jankowski 2002, 37), for better or for worse.

This is only one particular European lineage of thought on community. What happens when we step away from European languages such as German and English and consider how community is defined in another language, Japanese? As with the term "otaku" there are both similarities and differences in terminology and approach.

Among the most influential thinkers on Japanese community was Yanagita Kunio, the early twentieth-century folklorist, founder of Japanese native ethnology, and author of the famous collection of folktales *Tōno Monogatari* (Tales of Tōno, 1912). Yanagita was also a key figure in "the construction of a new 'science' of community studies (*kyōdōgaku*) [that] was supposed to make up for the deficits of a historical method that suppressed knowledge about the folk and remained silent about the details of their everyday life" (Harootunian 1998, 151). His goal was to "return to the community within the community" (155) by becoming a part of it, rather than observing as an outsider.

It is telling that the term used for "community" in this new science, *kyōdōtai*, is created from the characters 共同体, which literally mean something like "a body of uniform togetherness." Even as he purported to record from a more truthful insider

position, Yanagita also *created* the communities of mountain-dwellers and Okinawans he studied as *jōmin*, “abiding people,” the “common people living in the ‘villages’ (*kyōdō*) of Japan.” Despite their differences, these people became “an imaginative reconstruction of essential Japanese life” (Hashimoto 1998, 138), rooted in a place “where true Japaneseness still lived, even though fragmented, in the customs and habits of rural life” (135) untainted by the modernization of the metropolitan centres. Though he does not name and formalize the binary, Yanagita is clearly responding to the same sorts of historical conditions, such as rapid industrialization and urban growth, that motivated Tönnies to distinguish between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. Indeed, when it is translated in English texts, *kyōdōtai* is often rendered as *Gemeinschaft*.⁸

Still, the overall conceptions of community in Germany and Japan are by no means identical. Other Japanese terms for community draw out some of the differences in how it was conceived. Whereas *kyōdōtai* carries formal, scientific connotations, a more emotionally and socially resonant term—a Japanese keyword—is *furusato* (故郷). The characters literally mean “old village,” suggesting a holistic picture of rice paddies and rural living in many ways reminiscent of *Gemeinschaft*. Marilyn Ivy, however, has argued that “*furusato*” may be best translated as “home” or “old homeplace”: “the place where one was born and raised, a place where one used to live and with which one is deeply familiar, or simply the place one identifies as home” (1995, 103). Far more than just a practical naming of one’s hometown, *furusato* it is a highly ambivalent, uncanny place that is both inhabited and imagined. Tönnies stresses the importance of immediacy and proximity when he writes that *Gemeinschaft* may “persist during separation from the

⁸ See, for instance, *The Cambridge History of Japan: The Nineteenth Century* (1989), which cross-lists “*Gemeinschaft*” and “*kyōdōtai*” in its index on pgs. 526-7.

locality, but it then needs to be supported still more than ever by well-defined habits of reunion and sacred customs” (43). It is, as he says, unity that persists *in spite of* separation through continued physical contact and shared mores. In contrast, Kamishima Jirō, writing on *furusato*, states that “those who are living continuously in the place where they were born don’t usually call that place ‘furusato’” (qtd. in Ivy 104). Rather, *furusato* is the home that can only be known *through* the away, the place that is already lost and only partly recovered.

This desire for the recovery of a phantasmic community was already present in much of Yanagita’s folkloric writing, as Ivy also shows in her section on the “Modern Uncanny” (80-87). But it has become prominent in Japanese media since the 1970s, in government programs of “building furusato” (*furusato zukuri*) and in the proliferation of advertisements that promote certain tourist destinations as “substitute homelands” or *daiyō furusato* (Ivy 104). Ivy’s examples of such homelands are all located in Japan, and are linked very closely to Japanese national identity, including capitals like Kyoto and folkloric sites like Tōno (the setting of Yanagita’s *Tales of Tōno*) which claim to be the “furusato of Japan” (104). But Michael Rea, in his article “A Furusato Away from Home” has also described the emergence of Japanese-language advertising that promotes certain foreign sites as *furusato*: the English country cottage of Beatrix Potter and the home of Lucy Maud Montgomery in Prince Edward Island, Canada. Japanese tourism to these foreign sites builds on a sense of poignant, nostalgic familiarity based on media. As Rea notes in passing, many Japanese girls develop a deep affinity with Montgomery’s Anne of Green Gables through Japanese films, plays, anime, and manga about her, as well as through translations of the novels (2000, 651). While Rea focuses on Japanese

perceptions of these sites as “natural,” we may also see how these “substitute homelands” abroad point to a sense of community based on mediated places, akin to Appadurai’s “communities of sentiment.” The uncanny *furusato*, already a mediation between the strange and the familiar, thus poses a challenge to the sharp distinctions between organic/virtual and place-based/placeless community that characterize some conceptions of media communities in Western theory.

Of course, Tönnies and Yanagita have been the subject of much research, and many theorists of community have critiqued the conception of essentialized, natural, homogenous, and purely local community that an overly simplistic reading of these two authors can promote. As I have described, Anderson has already provided one way to think of nations as “imagined communities,” albeit one that returns to ideas of “unisonance” (1991, 145). Philosophers such as Giorgio Agamben and Jean-Luc Nancy have gone farther in theorizing a community in which “humans co-belong without any representable condition of belonging,” or a “community of others” (Durrant 2004, 112). In terms of studying “cybercommunity,” too, scholars such as Fernback suggest that “rather than asking whether or not cybercommunity is or isn’t real community, a long-term perspective on the cultural significance of cybercommunity focuses on how some users of online technology have created meaningful constructs of social interaction in the online arena” (2007, 63).

We need not go “beyond the diluted community concept” to accomplish this focus on processes and usages. Rather, as Diana Brydon and William Coleman suggest, we should also consider practices of “renegotiating community,” turning attention to “the ways in which communities renegotiate their identities and their functions within

changing global circumstances, sometimes finding new ways to cooperate across differences and forging new alliances and sometimes solidifying older patterns of exclusion” (2009, 17). I argue that transcultural animation fan communities are one such site of renegotiation. Like other communities, they are practices of inclusion and exclusion. They are grounded in local, embodied experience and in the social “work of the imagination” (Appadurai 1996, 5). They are commercial and personal, a place where top-down and bottom-up modes of social organization clash/converge. They are various but linked. All these things, as I demonstrate in the coming pages, are part of transcultural animation fan communities.

The Feeling of Fandom: Standing Shifting

To conclude this introduction, I would like to return to its beginnings. To my beginnings. “I have been a fan of animation, and in particular, of the Japanese style of animation called anime, for quite literally as long as I can remember,” I wrote. But what kind of basis does a youth like mine, spent in an ordinary place between immediate and mediated worlds, provide for considering transcultural animation fan communities?

In one of the earliest memories I have, I am maybe four years old. I am standing in the living room of my first home, a cooperative housing unit in Halifax, Nova Scotia, wearing my favourite dress shoes, navy-blue velvet with a silver metal butterfly on each toe. It is Sunday morning, and my mother is out in the entrance getting ready to go to church. She has called me once already to come get my coat on, but I am not going. Instead, I am watching TV. No, not just watching: I am absolutely fascinated by a cartoon. I can’t say why in words, but it seems to me that this cartoon is different than anything I

have ever seen before. The way the characters look and move, the entire world they live in, is somehow instantly appealing to me. Plus, the cartoon heroes have giant robots shaped like lions, and what could be better than robots shaped like lions? I am suddenly aware of the sensation of standing there on my two sturdy little legs (strange, to remember having that different body) and wavering, as if balancing on the middle of a teeter-totter. I need to leave, but I just have to stay and watch this.

I do not remember ever actually going. I only recall a sort of kinetic impression, a sense of shifting my weight and intentions towards the door and then hanging back in wondering preoccupation, going both ways at once. Children look like they are just stalling when they do this, but it was not at all my intention to be defiant or to purposely delay going. It was just that, at that moment, I was caught in the tension between my family's familiar routines and my need to figure out this strange image on the television. I can still feel this movement in my body somehow: a shifting back and forth, even with the solid stance of my flat little velvet shoes planted on the living room floor.

The cartoon, as I learned afterwards, was called *Voltron: Defenders of the Universe* (1984). It was a program spliced together by American television producer Peter Keefe from two completely different Japanese animated series, designed mainly to sell plastic transforming-robot toys. I estimate that I saw it on Canadian cable television around 1986, and like almost all the programs I enjoyed in the 1980s, it was what is often dismissively called a "half-hour toy commercial." Still, I saw something else in this cartoon cash-in. A vision of a new style, maybe. A mode of affective engagement. It spurred in me an interest in something both familiar and foreign: the popular culture of a country a world away that was very much a part of my life at home, the place and time

that formed me. Though I didn't realize the program's origins then, when I look back now, it seems to me that I grew up with my feet in two different worlds: one in my local community in Canada, and one in the world of global media.

In the chapters to follow, I hope to expand on the feeling that was my introduction to the world of anime: the feeling of “standing shifting.” I want to maintain that sudden, striking awareness I felt standing before the television in my first childhood home: the self-consciousness of being situated in a particular place and a particular body, but also of looking out for something else, another position, another virtual embodiment. Such a dual stance remains important to me, as I must continue to stand shifting between the divergent vocabularies of professional and personal interest, balancing the requirements of my degree in English Literature, my sense of responsibility to animation fans, and my passionate love of animation, along with the ideas and sensitivities of different disciplines, social groups, and cultures. “Standing shifting” is an unsettling way to write. Unlike the kind of “standing firm” I was taught in essay-writing classes, in which argumentation follows from a pre-given set of definitions supported by corroborating evidence, it means acknowledging situatedness but remaining flexible, open to challenge and contradiction. I may not succeed in sustaining this demanding stance. Still, I hope that in the attempt, I can illustrate the benefits of such an approach, and provide more flexible grounds of study and discussion for all of those who participate in animating transcultural fan communities.

Part 1: Animation and the Miraculous Cinema

The miraculous Cinema! ...Having no language, being equally intelligible to the savages of St. Petersburg and the savages of Calcutta, it truly becomes the genius of international contact, brings the ends of the earth and the spheres of souls nearer, and gathers the whole of quivering humanity into a single stream. The great Cinema! ...It copes with everything, conquers everything, conveys everything.

-Leonid Andreyev, 1911 (qtd. in Reeves 2003, 3)

Rather than ask at what point film became a global medium, I would like to begin this section on cinematic animation by asking: was there ever a point at which film was *not* a global medium? A quick survey of the history of film reveals that moving picture technologies were themselves internationally mobile from their inception. Supported by the vast networks of imperial trade established by the end of the nineteenth century, Edison's Kinetoscope and the Lumière brothers' *cinématographe* spread with a speed and scope that remain impressive today. Within two months of the first commercial *cinématographe* screening in Paris on December 28, 1895, the Lumières' program was being shown in London. A few more months and it reached Central Europe and the United States (April 1896), Canada (June 1896), and Russia (July 1896). By 1897, the *cinématographe* had been demonstrated on every continent except Antarctica, with screenings in Alexandria, Bangkok, Bombay, Buenos Aires, Osaka, and Sydney.

Along with film programming, filmmaking equipment and technological innovations also travelled quickly. Edison's Kinetoscope had been demonstrated in Kobe, Japan by 1895, and in 1897, the same year the *cinématographe* debuted in Osaka, photographer Asano Shirō imported a motion-picture camera and began filming street scenes and geisha (Richie 2005, 17). In the next decade, technological elaborations on live-action filming, such as the first animated "trick films" featuring objects or drawings

shot a frame at a time, spread equally as fast. James Stuart Blackton's 1907 stop-motion animated "The Haunted Hotel," for instance, created a sensation in Paris within four months of its American debut (Crafton 1993, 14-16), while Frenchman Émile Cohl's 1908 hand-drawn "Fantoché" films had their Japanese release in 1910 at the Imperial Theatre in Asakusa, Tokyo (Yamaguchi and Watanabe 1977, 8). Indeed, Japanese hobbyists may have been experimenting with drawing directly onto the 35mm film first used in Edison's Kinetoscope as early as 1907.¹ Based on these well-known facts, it would seem quite easy to say that the production, distribution, and consumption of film was a global venture from the start.

Such general assertions about film's global travels, however, raise the question: exactly how was this miracle of mobile cinema accomplished? The demonstrations of the Lumière brothers' *cinématographe* suggest their assiduous efforts to create a widespread market for movies, efforts that were taken up by Hollywood filmmakers such as D.W. Griffith in the 1910s and Walt Disney in the 1930s. But does distribution to various particular sites—mainly urban capitals linked to the distributing nations through certain economic ties—make a medium "global"? Through what structures of trade and discourses of (inter)nationalism were film images and apparatuses circulated? How did the mobile works themselves depict the relationship between audiences and media, nations and films, world and cinema? And how did such depictions change along with the changing film technologies and geopolitical conditions of the early twentieth century?

¹ "Japan's Oldest? Meiji Era Animation Film Discovered in Kyoto." ["日本最古? 明治時代のアニメフィルム、京都で発見."] *Asahi Shimbun*, August 31, 2005, n.p. It should be noted that the dating of this film to 1907 is speculative and has not been confirmed in independent reports. It may not be much older than the earliest documented Taishō-era Japanese shorts, created beginning in 1917. Still, the technique of drawing directly onto film stock is notable, since pre-cel animation in Japan and the U.S. was generally created by photographing paper drawings and/or cut-outs (Crafton 61; Yamaguchi and Watanabe 9).

Part 1 of this thesis, “Animation and the Miraculous Cinema,” aims to answer such questions by focusing on the production of animated films for inter/national markets in the Americas and Japan before the end of World War II. I have selected questions about how film animation circulated, who had agency in that process, and what role national identity played in the early twentieth century because media circulation, agency, and national identity are all issues with ongoing currency for the study of media globalization. For instance, playwright and screenwriter Leonid Andreyev’s paean to “the miraculous Cinema,” quoted in my epigraph, strikingly evokes cinema’s utopian capacity to transcend geographic borders and connect the world, an aspiration also common in 1990s rhetoric about the World Wide Web.² At the same time, however, his image of cinema as a technology that draws all the “savages” of the world into a “single stream” can be criticized for relying on a homogenizing, even colonizing, vocabulary, just as more recent media globalization has been criticized as neo-imperial by Marxist anticolonial thinkers such as Armand Mattelart (1971, 2003). Andreyev describes film as a medium that “copes with,” “conquers,” and “conveys”: that is, a form that interlinks cultural problems or anxieties that must be managed, political issues of territory and domination, and questions of communication across all the “ends of the earth.” The links between culture, geopolitics, and media, and the complex play between their empowering and oppressive potentials, are an important concern for globalization studies in general, and for my research on transcultural animation fan communities in particular.

² In particular, Andreyev’s insistence on a silent cinema “without language” that reaches everyone equally foreshadows MCI Communication’s 1997 commercial for their Internet service, which claimed to allow people to “communicate mind to mind” in a space without ethnicity, gender, or disability. In both cases, differences in visual/iconographic communication styles and written language, along with issues of physical access, are elided in order to create a sense of mediated (comm)unity. For more on the 1997 MCI commercial, see pgs. 215-18 of the current thesis.

That said, I do not intend to claim that animation was “always already” global, in the ahistorical, totalizing sense that phrase takes on when used carelessly (as if to say, “I see globality this way now, so this is the way it has always been.”) Rather, I want to ask what *form* of globalization was taking place in early twentieth century animation. To my mind, it is premature to call film or animation “transnational” in this period, as scholars such as Michael Baskett (2008) and Daisuke Miyao (2007) have done. For all that foreign trade shaped the content and distribution of animated films, many animators in both America and Japan still worked most often at the national level, without the kinds of mutual collaborations that make up transnational globalization and transcultural community in the twenty-first century.

That is not to say that early American cartoons *only* represent a unified, monolithic America, nor that Japanese animation reflects the pure, unique essence of the Japanese nation. Far from it; in the two chapters that comprise this section, I demonstrate the many crossings of influence between different nations and cultures evident in animated works from this period. Neither of these cinemas was, or could be, purely “national.” And yet, I cannot ignore the fact that the animators I examine often coped with such influences by trying to convey the image of a distinct national “imagined community,” one often formed in opposition to various Others who were to be wooed or conquered, depending on the context. In this section, then, I argue that Japanese and American animated cinemas before 1946 were implicated at different levels in an *imperial internationalist* mode of global cultural exchange—even if counter-impulses may be found in the complexities of individual works.

In order to demonstrate how the international perspective was used and complicated in film animation, I compare a number of works that self-reflexively depict animation and its audiences at home and abroad. In chapter 1, “Cartoon Internationale,” I focus on silent and sound short films that reveal animators’ aspirations to generate connections across distance: the “miraculous cinema” as the “genius of international contact.” In particular, I show how the character of Betty Boop, developed by the Polish-born, New York-based Fleischer Brothers, was positioned as an animated “goodwill ambassador” to Japan in the 1935 sound short “A Language All My Own,” and look at how Betty was already being refigured in works by Japanese animators such as Ōfuji Noburō at that time. By examining the material cultures and discourses of modernity through which Betty Boop films travelled, I highlight the potential of self-reflexive animation to provide a hybrid, adaptable form of cultural expression, though without overlooking the Orientalist and nationalist dimensions of export and reception which ultimately limited that potential. Here I explore *how* film circulated through particular structures of internationalism in the early twentieth century and *who* shaped such circulation.

In chapter 2, “World War Cute,” I pick up on the threads of nationalism and imperialism introduced in chapter 1 to illustrate their various manifestations in American and Japanese propaganda animation during World War II. Drawing on the attractive international aspects of the Betty Boop character, I pay close attention to the complex plays of affect that propaganda cartoons generated when they depicted national and ethnic Others as cute animals or children. The imperialistic aspect of animated internationalism is especially clear in propaganda films such as Walt Disney’s two

compilation films made for and about Latin Americans in 1942 and 1944, *Saludos Amigos* and *The Three Caballeros*, and in Seo Mitsuyo's depictions of adorable Pacific Islander animals who help the Japanese in *Momotarō's Divine Ocean Warriors* (1945). These works reveal how nationalism and internationalism were negotiated in different times and conditions, as well as how these discourses reflected changing film technologies. Propaganda animation also raises questions about the effects film is thought to have on passive (or resistant) audiences. This is an issue I will acknowledge here and explore more fully in my later chapters on post-war formations of fandom.

Film, Nationalism, and Internationalism

In order to speak of early-twentieth-century cinema as “national” or “international,” it is first necessary to draw out a few of the many complex links between cinema, the nation, and international markets in America and Japan. The question of whether “the nation” is a valuable conceptual tool for thinking about cinema at all has become something of a hot-button issue among film scholars in recent years. Andrew Higson's 2000 article “The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema,” for instance, concludes that “to argue for a national cinema is not necessarily the best way to achieve either cultural diversity or cultural specificity. In any case, the contingent communities that cinema imagines are much more likely to be either local or transnational than national” (73). While Higson is describing mainly 1990s film here (where the term transnational may indeed be appropriate), others have also seen globality as crucial to early cinema, particularly in the silent era. Tom Gunning draws on the example of the *cinématographe*'s spread in his article “Early Cinema as Global Cinema” to argue that before World War I, “a primary way that film understood itself was as a medium that

could express a new sense of global identity” (2008, 11). Though addressing different periods, Higson’s and Gunning’s articles suggest a turn in film studies towards de-emphasizing the nation as organizing category and emphasizing the global.

As both authors admit, however, nationalisms cannot be entirely ignored.

Speaking of early twentieth century film, Gunning notes that he is

not claiming early cinema represents an era beyond and above nationalist squabbles or power plays, a utopian period that ignored borders from idealistic motives. If cinema crossed borders easily in its first decades, it followed global pathways opened up by worldwide capitalism, colonialism, and imperialism (11).

More specifically, Gunning looks at how “early cinema dovetailed into the ideology and patterns of display of the Universal Expositions at the turn of the century,” forming part of the Enlightenment project of establishing a scientific system of “global knowledge” (12) that bolstered European colonialisms (especially British and French). But this “global” system of knowledge in fact relied on a conception of the globe made up of many distinct, mappable, classifiable national/cultural entities. If programs of travelogues and comprehensive film catalogues in the 1890s–1910s attempted to demonstrate a “new global consciousness,” (14) as Gunning says, then even the very earliest among them, “the 1896 Lumière sales catalogue of films shot in distant parts of the globe [was] organized according to country of origin,” with each country thought to possess its own “distinguishing characteristics” or “infallible ear marks” (Abel et al. 2008, 1). I thus argue that even in silent film—and much more so in early sound film—ideas of the “global” were as much inflected by the national imaginaries that produced them as the “national” was reframed in a global consciousness. In short, early global cinema was inter-national: between nations.

Hollywood film of the 1920s–40s is an apt demonstration of a budding international cinema, as a case much more complex than knee-jerk criticisms of the “Americanization” of the world would suggest. After all, the United States was not the only major player of the early silent film industry. France was rather considered among the world’s foremost powers in cinema, until the draft and the devastations of World War I all but shut down French domestic production. It was mainly in the years during and after World War I that American cinema began its global rise.³ During the inter-war years, the American film industry also began to internationalize in nationally specific ways.

In *The World According to Hollywood, 1918–1939*, for instance, Ruth Vasey shows how “the nature of domestic self-regulation [in the American film industry] cannot be fully understood in isolation from international considerations, and vice versa” (1997, 9). In particular, the depiction of nationality, race, gender, and sexuality in Hollywood films before World War II was heavily influenced by consideration for its most valuable export markets, particularly England and Mexico, but also including China as a British colonial market (142, 148). Such considerations included attending to the conflicting demands of censorship and translation in each market, which Vasey argues led filmmakers to back off from depicting *any* specific ethnicity or nation for fear of insulting a potential market. As a result, “it was precisely the international expansion of Hollywood’s range of distribution that led it to develop a deliberate policy of effacing

³ That is not to say that Hollywood film spread evenly across the world. It held different shares in various national markets due to the trade routes through which it flowed. For instance, American film made up 88.4% of film imports to Mexico by 1925 (Thompson 1985, 140) and accounted for up to 90% of total Mexican exhibitions by 1928 (Kindem 2000, 358). But while American film made up 80% of imports in Japan, it only held about a 10.9% overall share of the Japanese market in 1926 (142; as Thompson notes, this is a low-end figure based on imports of reproducible negatives as well as individual prints.) Due to strong domestic production, the majority of Japanese theatres in this period showed either a mix of domestic and foreign films (57.1%) or only domestic films (39.2%) (Thompson 143). When speaking of a media producer as a “world power” or holding “global market domination,” one must clarify: who is involved, in what time and place, and in what ways does “market domination” happen?

ethnic and cultural difference on the screen” (227). In this argument, the homogeneity of Hollywood film was in fact a result of its worldliness, its effort to appeal to a wide range of audiences (however mistaken such an effort may have been in assuming whiteness as a universally acceptable or normative “non-ethnicity.”) As I will show in the case of the Fleischer Brothers’ cartoons, such efforts did not even necessarily involve effacing ethnic and cultural specificity, but could also involve highlighting it to appeal to a given audience, be it Jewish or Japanese. This is the “inter-” aspect of Hollywood film: the “between” positions out of which it grows and which it tries to address.

Still, just as silent French film created a form of “global knowledge” amenable to European colonialism, Hollywood’s talkie internationalism was also supported and promoted by the institutions of the American nation-state. Countering assertions that American cinema spread because it was “just better” than other cinemas, Alan Williams proposes that Hollywood was so successful because “the integrated [major studios] were substantially aided by a series of mercantilist-minded American governments that considered films to be a major export item to be promoted abroad in all ways possible, fair and foul” (2002, 13). Along with live-action cinema, animated film was also used in practices such as flooding foreign markets and underselling local producers, as Paramount attempted to do with sound animation in Japan in the early 1930s, or alternately making animation directly into a tool of state diplomacy that supported American economic ambitions, as Disney did in promoting the Roosevelt administration’s “Good Neighbor Policy” in Latin America during World War II. In this way, international film was quite often rooted in individual nations’ economic

motivations. This is what I define as the “imperial internationalist” mode of global animated cinema.

As I have suggested, however, American imperial internationalism does not simply result in the “Americanization” of the world. There were many nationalisms and imperialisms in this period, based not only in Europe but also in Asia. These often came into both competition and complicity with Hollywood’s supposed world dominance. For example, Aaron Gerow, in his book *Visions of Japanese Modernity: Articulations of Cinema, Nation and Spectatorship, 1895–1925*, has described how Japanese film was transformed in the first decades of its existence by the Pure Film Movement, a movement started by Japanese intellectuals and critics who sought to “introduce the filmic innovations of Hollywood and European production, considered to be the best examples of the cinematic medium, into the Japanese industry” (2010, 3). Promoting “pure film” often involved the condemnation of “un-cinematic” film styles derived from Japanese theatrical traditions, such as the oral performances of silent film interpreters (*benshi*), the use of male actors in female roles (*onnagata*), and stage-style directing that “ignored all the unique qualities of the medium—speed, realism, close-ups, editing, and...illusionism: the creation of a diegetic world” (10). Cinematic techniques such as varied camera angles and cross-cutting as illustrated in the films of D.W. Griffith were held up as examples of the unique specificity of the film medium and of the newness of modernity itself, and their use was debated among intellectuals of the day.

While this movement is often seen by critics such as Noël Burch as a clear-cut case of “Westernization” or “Americanization,” Gerow criticizes this position, saying “Burch cannot fully appreciate the transformations resulting from the Pure Film

Movement because he can only categorize it as ‘Western’ and thus as foreign to the Japanese alterity he desires” (19). Rather than relying on essentialized conceptions of “Western” and “Japanese” film, Gerow argues that “the transformations represented by the Pure Film Movement...are not simply instances of ‘Americanization’ so much as a complex set of discursive enunciations and influences that cannot be reduced to an East/West narrative” (21). These enunciations represented a “tug of war—between domestic and foreign interests, imperial or neocolonial power and the nation-state, producers and spectators, different classes of society and so on—over who has the ability to declare what is (Japanese) cinema and what is not” (23). In short, the Pure Film Movement acted as a site of rearticulation and contestation around ideas of modernity, cinema, and the nature of the nation and internationalism itself in Japan. As I show, such rearticulations of live-action cinema also influenced early Japanese animators, especially those with an international eye such as Ōfuji Noburō.

If Japanese filmmakers, like their American counterparts, responded to diverse influences in nationally specific ways, they also participated in larger discourses of internationalism as well. The subtle opposition Gerow implies between “imperial or neocolonial power and the nation-state” in his discursive tug of war risks eliding the fact that Japan, having defeated China in 1895, Russia in 1905, and having annexed Korea in 1910, was well on its way to becoming an imperial state itself. Michael Baskett’s 2008 book *The Attractive Empire: Transnational Film Culture in Imperial Japan* echoes Vasey’s position on Hollywood in asserting that “imperial Japanese film culture did not exist in isolation but was part of an international fraternity of film imperialists” (106), including the United States. Baskett, however, turns from Vasey’s ideas of censorship to argue that

The visions of empire that circulated throughout imperial Japanese film culture were by necessity *attractive*. As a multicultural, multilingual, multi-industrial enterprise, imperial Japanese film culture wove together a wide fabric of participants who brought with them any number of motivations—patriotism for some, opportunism for others, independence for still others, and so on. (5)

Baskett's is an argument for film as "soft power" or cultural hegemony, in which entertainment media such as comic strips and animated films formed part of the Japanese government's educational efforts to build national culture at home and "media empire" (49) abroad. In both American and Japanese "national" cinemas, then, there were shared discourses of imperial internationalism which generated opposed empires, particularly during World War II.

Between the beginnings of commercial animation in the late 1910s and the end of World War II, film animators faced many technological and geopolitical changes. Change happened at an uneven rate in different places, and as Gerow's work suggests, ideas of what constituted "modernity," "cinema," and "the nation" were contested across the many geographical localities, classes, and other social groupings that filmmakers occupied. In the following two chapters, I demonstrate how certain individual animators in North America and Japan coped with such changes by creating self-reflexive cartoons which depicted and addressed national and international audiences. Recognizing the shifting interplays between the national and the international, identification with and distinction from Others, cultural exchange and cultural imperialism, is crucial to understanding how film animation both enabled and foreclosed cross-cultural engagement in the early twentieth century.

Chapter 1. Cartoon Internationale

Film animation began its life around the turn of the twentieth century as an internationally mobile medium, an animate apparatus. Movement features strongly not only in its distribution as a product and its properties as a medium, but also in its content, as the subject matter of many of the earliest silent films. In the introduction to his *Before Mickey: The Animated Film 1898-1928*, Donald Crafton notes that “the first [stop-motion] animated films were concerned with making objects appear to move with a mysterious life of their own” (1993, 7), highlighting the creation of motion. Hand-drawn works, such as Winsor McCay’s “Little Nemo” (1911), likewise showed comic-strip characters who announced in on-screen text “Watch me move!” (103, 105), demonstrating in content the new medium’s capabilities as machine.

Along with animated movement, early Western cartoons were also prone to show the mover, the pencil-wielding hand of the animator. As such, Crafton states that “the early animated film was the location of a process found elsewhere in cinema but nowhere else in such intense concentration: self-figuration, the tendency of the filmmaker to interject himself into his film” (11). In his view, what animation primarily animates is *itself*: its capacity to create the illusion of life and to show its own creator, the animator, in “the role of life giver” (12). He goes on to show how self-reflexivity was accomplished “not mysteriously, but deliberately” (12) through the purposeful decisions of animators and through the technologies and studio organizations they helped to develop.

Crafton’s argument that self-reflexivity became an established trope in silent American and European animation before 1928, along with being important for the foundations of Western film animation, also provides an intriguing way to begin thinking

about how animation formed outside the West, and yet not beyond its influence in early twentieth century Japan. In Japan, too, silent animated cartoons of the 1920s and early '30s show a level of reflexivity about their technologies and their status as created works, though not as explicitly as American cartoons that literally showed the “hand of the animator” entering the frame. The spread and variations of reflexivity as a trope well into the sound era in both America and Japan raise many questions about the links between film production and media representation on a national and international scale. For instance, how were animated “reflections” of animation itself crafted to suit the needs of animators and the particular social and political contexts in which they worked? How was early animation deployed reflexively to depict or construct certain viewing positions? And how did such reflexive works address diverse audiences in their movements between cultures and nations?

To answer such questions in this chapter, I pay close attention to another reflexive figuration common in early cartoons that animation scholars, including Crafton, often overlook: the audience. While Crafton discusses live spectators’ reactions to early films, he does not consider animators’ representations of their audiences in their own films at any length. As I show, however, animating audiences—depicting them, but also interpellating them *as* audiences—was an important part of the work of animation, particularly as it transitioned from silent to sound in the early 1930s. At the national level, talkies by the Warner Brothers and Walt Disney comically instructed American audiences on how (not) to behave in the space of the theatre and modeled the relation between the Hollywood star and the fan. Silent shorts with record accompaniments by Ōfuji Noburō, meanwhile, showed how foreign new technologies attempted to bring

Japanese audiences together through song and image. At the international level, the Fleischer Brother's 1935 made-for-export depiction of Japanese audiences in "A Language All My Own" showed how animation informed by diverse cultural influences could act as a hybrid, multilingual form of expression, contrary to criticisms of Hollywood's homogeneous and homogenizing global media hegemony. Ōfuji's adaptation of Betty Boop in "Defeat of the Tengu" (1934) and the proliferation of her image in Japanese consumer culture during the 1930s, likewise demonstrated the complexities of audience reception and creative production that attended international animation.

In considering their works, I demonstrate how these silent and early sound animators attempted to act as the "genius of international contact" by depicting national and international audiences in their specificity rather than, as Vasey claims, by simply erasing ethnicity or nationality from the screen in works meant for export. At points, the films of the Fleischer brothers and Ōfuji even anticipate the impulse towards cross-cultural connection that motivates the formation of transcultural communities, establishing approaches to animating audiences that will be "remediated"—resurrected and reworked—into the twenty-first century. Finally, however, I argue that these creators, their works, and their audiences were embedded in structures of international trade and opposing imperialisms that precluded the kinds of collaboration across difference necessary for transcultural communities.

Reflexivity and Animation

I have argued thus far that early film reflexively depicted the animated medium, its creators and its audiences. But precisely *how* did early animators in Japan and the

West frame animation and film viewing? What kinds of images did they use? Consider, for example, the supposed first Japanese anime, an anonymous short dated (though without confirmation) as early as 1907. In this short, a black line drawing of a little boy in a sailor-style school uniform and a red peaked cap writes a phrase on a board. The phrase he writes is: 活動写真 – *katsudō shashin* – moving picture. He turns to face the audience. In the same movement, he doffs his red cap and bows, smiling. In one phrase, in just 50 frames, the entire medium of film animation is reflexively introduced. Three seconds have passed.



Fig. 1.1: 35 mm filmstrips of “Moving Picture” (1907?). Source: *Asahi Shimbun* (public domain image).

Now, compare this to Émile Cohl’s 1908 silent short “Fantasmagorie.” On an all-black background, a live-action hand comes into frame from the left, and draws a clown in thick, solid white lines. It’s an exercise in figurative geometry: lines for arms, circle head, triangle hat, square torso. (Fig. 1.2). The hand moves out of the way, and the little clown pulls down the “bar” it is holding over its head, which becomes a rectangular

screen picturing a fat man, his body one huge circle, with a top hat and umbrella. The clown steps off right, and the fat man floats down, losing hat and umbrella, into a theatre seat. A woman wearing an immense feathered hat enters and sits in front of the man, blocking his view. What they are watching is literally peripheral: just the tantalizing corner of a proscenium arch on the far left of the screen, mostly out of frame. Curtains rise and fall, revealing halves of figures and indecipherable lines. Is it a theatre stage, or a movie screen? What is happening up there? Whatever it is, it is clearly affecting her. As the man pulls feathers off of the woman's hat in a bid to see, she, absorbed in the show, cries a line of tears into a handkerchief, smiles, peers through opera glasses. When the last feather is removed, the man sits back with a cigar that (accidentally?) lights the woman's head on fire. But no harm done: the ball of fire turns into a bubble with the clown inside. It floats away and everything changes. Figures morph fluidly one into the other, cannon to champagne bottle to flower to elephant, as increasingly nonsensical events chase each other in a series of visual free associations, arbitrarily evolving and just as arbitrarily ended. The finished cartoon is just less than two minutes long.



Fig. 1.2: Still from “Fantasmagorie” (1908). Source: screen capture (public domain film).

There are a number of obvious differences in style and content between the anonymous “Moving Picture” (1907?) and Émile Cohl’s “Fantasmagorie” (1908). For

instance, the written Japanese text of “Moving Picture” is clearly aimed at those who could read Japanese, and so suggests an intended domestic audience quite unlike the wordless silent cinema Andreyev lauded. Indeed, it is doubtful if this short, found along with a turn-of-the-century hobbyist’s projector, ever played beyond an elite household setting. Cohl’s more international “Fantasmagorie,” by contrast, has no written dialogue or screen text, but does draw heavily on the visual language and style of the American blackboard short “Humorous Phases of Funny Faces,” (1906), even as its strange iconography reveals Cohl’s debt to the avant-garde “Incoherent” art movement in France (Crafton 64). Already these silent examples demonstrate approaches, themes, and characters that will recur in Japan and America throughout pre-war and wartime animation. In Japanese animation, there is the figure of the little boy in uniform, the self-conscious representation of new, imported technologies, and the importance of Japanese language teaching and learning. In France (and later in America) there is a focus on the self-figuration of the artist’s hand and the depiction of emotional spectators. For all their differences, there is one similarity: both, to a greater or lesser extent, are characterized by *reflexivity*. They are cartoons about cartoons, their technologies, their creators, and their viewers.

Still, how much of the “reality” of animation is being depicted in these examples? The attention given to drawing hands and moving pictures here suggests a medium that is essentially *self*-reflexive, depicting only what goes into the making of the film itself. Similar observations have led some scholars to claim that animated self-reflexivity leads to a kind of filmic narcissism or self-enclosure. For instance, Dana Polan argues that when Daffy Duck duels with the pencil that controls his character design, backgrounds,

sound, framing and camerawork in the 1953 Looney Tunes short “Duck Amuck,” animation “closes in on itself, fiction leads to and springs from fiction, the text becomes a loop which effaces social analysis” (1974, n.p). In this view, there is a sharp divide between works that are naturalistic and represent social reality, and those that are self-reflexive and represent their own essentially unreal world. Others scholars, however, take a more nuanced stance on the issues of filmic reality and reflexivity. Robert Stam, in his thorough overview of *Reflexivity in Film and Literature: From Don Quixote to Jean-Luc Godard*, argues that “Realism and reflexivity are not strictly opposed polarities but rather interpenetrating tendencies quite capable of coexistence within the same text” (1992, 15). Stam thus prefers the term “reflexive” to “self-reflexive.” I follow him in understanding animated “reflexivity” not only as a matter of how animated works depict their own genres, materials, and technologies, but also how they reflect the social conditions that make them possible, in the sense that “reflection” itself is a discursive process by which “reality” is formed. This process is particularly evident when animation turns from depictions of itself to animate audiences in the context of national identity and international exchange.

Animating National Audiences

From the silent period onward, American animators have had a great fondness for showing both filmmaking and film-going. Among the most memorable meta-cartoons from the major producers of the 1920s and '30s are Otto Messmer's silent Felix the Cat shorts “Felix in Hollywood” (1923) and “Flim Flam Films” (1927), the Fleischers' silent “The Cartoon Factory” (1924) and sound “Betty Boop's Rise to Fame” (1934), Warner Bros. Studios sound shorts such as “Bosko's Picture Show” (1933) and “The Film Fan”

(1939), and Disney's sound shorts "Mickey's Gala Premier" (1933) and "The Autograph Hound" (1939). Many of these, like Cohl's "Fantasmagorie," show general audiences in the space of the theatre. Friz Freleng's 1937 talkie "She Was an Acrobat's Daughter," for instance, parodies the bad habits of movie theatre audiences using animal caricatures. It shows a fat hippo stepping on toes while he squeezes in and out from the middle row, a jackass getting kicked out for trying to shill snacks, and a motormouth duckling who chatters in a non-stop stream "Is there a cartoon I like cartoons do you like cartoons Daddy?" until he is chased out by the annoyed moviegoers around him. This light-hearted satire both reflects and organizes the conditions of spectatorship in the public space of the theatre. In entertaining, it teaches filmgoers not so much how to watch films as how *not* to behave as film audiences or publics.

Along with general audiences, there are also a few films specifically about fan viewers, which lay out some early expressions of film fandom based on the Hollywood star system. Bob Clampett's "The Film Fan," for example, shows Porky Pig being distracted from an errand by the lure of free admission to a movie theatre. Once he is inside, the cartoon places more emphasis on showing what Porky is watching through parodies of newsreels, short comedies, and the Lone Ranger than on his "fannishness" itself. But already, he stands as an example of a fan as someone fascinated and allured by film. Disney's "The Autograph Hound" goes even further in showing Donald Duck as an avid film fan who attempts to get autographs from his favourite stars while evading a surly security guard. All of the stars play comical tricks on him except for little Shirley Temple, who recognizes him and points out that he is the great Donald Duck. In a satisfying reversal, it is now Donald who is buried in a pile of books, as those who

formerly mocked him beg for his autograph. As in “Mickey’s Gala Premier,” in which Mickey Mouse is feted by everyone from Charlie Chaplin to Greta Garbo, these shorts reflect the glamour of Hollywood and suggest that the fan can be a part of it too. If Donald Duck is also a film fan, and an “everymouse” like Mickey can win kisses from Garbo, then why can’t *any* fan participate in Hollywood by collecting autographs and hoping for that chance to join the stars?

In these shorts, fandom and stardom are the twin sides of a film industry that is pictured as democratizing, open to anyone who wishes to be a part of it. Eric Loren Smoodin, in his book *Animating Culture: Hollywood Cartoons from the Sound Era* makes a similar point about the very structure of 1930s American cinematic exhibition. In his argument, film screenings, being organized into a film bill of the sort Porky Pig watches which includes news, cartoons, shorts and features on all kinds of topics and characters, aimed to create a “democratic space, one that offered something for everyone, a kind of entertainment utopia” (1993, 60). As he also notes, however, the “cinema bill managed diversity by asserting it; in other words, differences—of race and class, and also different kinds of culture—could be made to disappear, replaced by a sense of aesthetic wholeness” (60): a melting pot ideology. Likewise, in animating fan audiences as potential stars, early Hollywood cartoons could be seen to play into nationalist discourses of America as the “land of opportunity.” As Smoodin points out, however, such discourses were often more conflicted than Disney’s portrait of easy inclusion would suggest, a critique I will elaborate on later in analyzing the Fleischers’ international films.

American animation is often held up as the prime example of the animated medium in the 1920s and ’30s, and it was indeed a strong and lively field. But it is a vast

overstatement to say, as Patrick Drazen does in his book *Anime Explosion!*, that “If people anywhere in the world saw animation at all before 1941, it was probably Disney animation” (2003, 4). In fact, along with European animators, Japanese animators were also producing domestic cartoons throughout these decades. The problem is that less evidence of their activities remains. Many early Japanese animated works have been lost to natural disasters and war, and remaining works are often not easily accessible to the public. Even among the relatively few surviving, available works,⁴ however, there are animated shorts that show cartoon viewing and technologies in ways that suggest the national articulations of film spectatorship in Japan.

In 1931, for instance, animator Nishikura Kiyoji released a short titled “Chameko’s Day,” based on a popular 1929 song by child star Hirai Hideko. It was technically a silent film, but had a phonograph accompaniment to be played in theatres. Sound was essential, as “Chameko’s Day” uses whimsical and sometimes surreally literal illustrations of the song’s lyrics to depict the life of a contemporary school-child. Chameko wakes when the sun peeks over the horizon, hands, face and all. She eats a breakfast of rice, soup, and pickles and walks along a busy street to school, where a sign on a passing truck shows Chameko’s face alongside Charlie Chaplin’s. Despite the reflexive wink, there is no hint that she is a star in the diegesis of the film. She goes to class and is called on by the teacher, like any other child. As a reward for doing well in

⁴ In the past five to ten years, there has been a small but heartening swell of interest in early anime among film conservators and distributors. As a result, I have been able to consult the following DVD collections of pre-1945 animation: *Japanese Anime Classic Collection*. Tokyo: Digital Meme, 2009 (4 discs, English, Korean, and Chinese subtitles) ; *The Roots of Japanese Anime Until the End of WWII*. [United States]: Zakka Films, 2008 (English subtitles); *Ōfuji Noburō Collected Works* [大藤信郎作品集]. Tokyo: Kinokuniya, 2004; *Wartime Collection* [戦中期篇]. Tokyo: Kinokuniya, 2004; and various volumes of the multivolume set *World Animation Film History* [世界アニメーション映画史]. Tokyo: Columbia Music Entertainment/Kinokuniya: 2007. The Internet is a further source for otherwise hard-to-get videos, including the film *Momotarō’s Divine Ocean Warriors*, which is available unsubtitled on YouTube in nine parts beginning at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=suRt7Dtdsmg>.

math and reading, she asks her mother after school if she can go to the movies. A square screen appears on the wall behind their profile figures, and instantly we are watching live-action newsreel footage of Japan's first female Olympic medalist, Kinue Hitomi, and then an animated samurai film, as if in a theatre. What is perhaps most interesting here is the ordinariness of going to the movies, the sense that it is part of Chameko's routine life. "Let's go again next Sunday!" she chirps to end the piece. In visually overlapping the space of the home with the space of the theatre, and directly asking (audiences) to go to the movies regularly, "Chameko's Day" establishes the cinema not as a glamorous Hollywood dream, but as a part of the everyday life of ordinary people.

As the flashing image of Charlie Chaplin suggests, however, the naturalized "ordinary Japanese-ness" of animated film was in fact something deliberately constructed by the domestic film industry in constant negotiation with foreign influences. An animator who stands out in his concern for both the national and international aspects of film is Ōfuji Noburō. Born in Asakusa, Tokyo in 1900, Ōfuji studied under pioneering animator Kōuchi Jun'ichi, whose studio he joined in 1924. He was soon inspired by German silhouette films such as Lotte Reiniger's *The Adventures of Prince Achmed* (*Die Abenteuer des Prinzen Achmed*, 1926) and Ferdinand Dielh's "Caliph Stork" (*Kalif Storch*, 1929) (Ōfuji 1956, 232) to create the silhouette style for which he later became famous. In 1926, Ōfuji set up his own production studio, the Liberty Film Institute (*jiyū eiga kenkyūjo*), which changed its name in 1927 to Chiyogami Film Studios because it specialized in animating figures cut from the traditional patterned paper called *chiyogami*. Ōfuji's work is at times quite reflexive, but often in different ways from that of contemporary American studios.

For instance, in 1931 Ōfuji released a short called “*Haru no Uta*” or “Spring Song.” Like “Chameko’s Day,” it is a silent film with a phonograph accompaniment: a “record talkie.” It also makes gestures towards colour through the use of a filter that renders all white areas of the image cherry-blossom pink. The main title of the short features a prominent circular logo marked “Columbia” in English, with the phonetic Japanese translation “Columbia Record” appearing underneath, among images of slowly turning concentric circles and round flower shapes. (Even the series name, “Chiyogamigraph,” is spelled out with little dots.) The screen is then filled with an image of sheet music with animated lyrics appearing word-by-word, inviting audiences to sing along to a light-hearted song praising “the land of the sakura blossoms” and the trees “blooming everywhere from the east to the west / Its petals covering even this asphalt road.” The music plays on over pastoral and at times vaguely surreal images of human-sized cherry blossoms with legs dancing and a little boy wooing a kimono-clad girl who appears in the sky. These images are all set against a backdrop of sakura trees and the occasional Japanese flag. There is no plot per se, but instead a focus on patterned paper and spinning circular shapes, with rotating discs of blossom-printed paper representing the celebrated sakura trees. In the final moments of the short, the circles of the trees themselves form a circle, gathering around the turning centre of a huge, photographed Columbia record.

Without explicitly depicting film-going, this film still clearly demonstrates the intersection of media technologies, national identity, and audience formations. The record, clearly marked in English, suggests a foreign technology, while the “asphalt road” in the song evokes modernization. At the same time, however, the imagery of sakura blossoms

and flags is highly nationalistic, and the traditional paper Ōfuji uses was often highlighted as a marker of Japanese culture in advertising of the era. Daisuke Miyao notes that another project of Ōfuji's, *The Thief of Baguda Castle* (1926), was advertised as using "Chiyogami-technique of purely Japanese taste" (2002, 88). Just as "Spring Song" both covers and reveals the Columbia record with sakura blossoms, *The Thief of Baguda Castle* remade a Western work (Raoul Walsh's *The Thief of Baghdad*, itself a Hollywood remake of Paul Leni's German film *Waxworks*) with "purely Japanese" materials, suggesting a simultaneous embrace and reworking of international styles in national contexts.

That audiences were given an image of sheet music and invited to sing the song all together in theatres across Japan further recalls Benedict Anderson's thesis on the unisonance of the anthem that helps to construct the "imagined community" of the nation. Indeed, in 1931 Ōfuji did put out a silhouette-style rendering of the Japanese national anthem, "Kokka Kimigayo" ("Our National Anthem, 'Kimigayo.'") Given that 1931 was also the year of the Mukden or Manchurian incident,⁵ such nationalism cannot help but become inflected (at least in retrospect) with the kind of imperial internationalism which later Japanese propaganda works more fully elaborated. Ōfuji's lyrical evocation of the land of sakura blossoms seems less innocent when one considers that educational films with such titles as "Cherry Blossoms (Sakura)" and "Our National Anthem (Kokka)" were screened by colonial authorities in Taiwan, where they were considered "the most

⁵ This pivotal event took place September 18, 1931, when a group of Imperial Japanese Army officers conspired to place explosives on a railway track outside the Manchurian city of Mukden and then blamed the detonation on Chinese dissidents. The explosion, though a minor one, provided the excuse the Japanese army needed to occupy first Mukden, then all of Manchuria, resulting in the creation of the puppet state Manchukuo by March of 1932. Furthermore, according to Ian Gordon, "Many historians, especially those in Japan, regard the Manchurian Incident of 1931–32 as the start of what they call the Fifteen-Year War—essentially the start of World War II in Asia. Indeed, a strong case can be made that this act of aggression made further conflict inevitable" (2003, 189).

effective ways to reach children, farmers, and peasants” with the message of Japan’s “‘civilizing’ presence” (Baskett 2008, 17). (Of course, how the Taiwanese understood Japanese film constitutes yet another scene of negotiation.) In order to strengthen its growing empire for a war that was already beginning in China, the nation also needed to be strengthened, even if it meant creating a paradoxical nationalism that both took in influences from the West and exerted influence in the regional sphere of East Asia.

Still, such paradoxes also reveal that Japanese nationalism cannot be understood as a purely “national” project. If Ōfuji attempted to animate national audiences with patriotic song, the intended “unisonance” of singing together was always haunted by the subtle dissonance of intra- and international tension. Miyao situates Ōfuji’s work as part of the Pure Film Movement, which he claims “insisted that cinema was a national project and that it should serve the nation” (96), even as it drew on international styles. But as Gerow has argued, the Pure Film Movement could only insist on the nation, on Japanese modernity, on “pure film” itself by entering into discursive competition with many different visions of cinematic modernity within and beyond Japan’s borders. It is this kind of competition I will turn to now in looking at the depiction of international cartoon stars and audiences in Ōfuji’s works and those of the Fleischer Brothers.

Animating International Audiences

The Fleischer brothers were the children of a Polish-Jewish immigrant family who moved to New York in 1887, when Max, the second oldest of six children, was five years old. His younger brother and future filmmaking partner Dave was born in 1894 in New York. The pair began their professional careers in 1918 at the Bray Studios, where they produced their first silent cartoon, titled *Out of the Inkwell*. This popular series

featured a clown named Koko (acted out by Dave before a camera and then retraced or “rotoscoped” into animation) who climbs from his pen-and-ink world into the live-action studio to interact with his creators, in a perfect visual “interpenetration of reflexivity and realism.” The brothers’ interest in reflexive works—and in promoting these works across America and the world—continued after they founded the Fleischer Studios in 1929 and moved into sound film with their *Talkartoon* series.

The *Talkartoon* series is significant because it was here that Betty Boop, the Fleischers’ most famous character and the subject of the rest of this chapter, made her screen debut. She first appeared in the 1930 cartoon “Dizzy Dishes” as a supporting character, a singer in a cabaret. By 1932 she had become a cartoon starlet with her own series. Part of Betty’s appeal was undoubtedly her sexiness. Under the exhibition system of the film bill, “animation was not produced within a system... which, as conventional wisdom might have it, always and unproblematically reduced cartoons to children’s entertainment” (Smoodin 1993, 188), but was viewed by audiences of all ages as part of the complete show. Though animation was thought to be favoured by children, as the image of the duckling in “She Was an Acrobat’s Daughter” suggests, it was not restricted to a child audience in the same way that television cartoons became marked off as “kiddy fare” in the 1950s and ’60s. The *Betty Boop* series attempted to capitalize on the adult market by presenting a short-skirted, jazz-singing heroine modelled in look and voice on Helen Kane, a flapper icon known to mature audiences from her saucy late-20s vaudeville acts and films.

Along with sex appeal, this series also used allusions to the urban underworld of booze and jazz to hold adult attention. It featured “gags built on urban and industrial

experience, a fantasy world of neighbourhoods, sweatshops, pool halls, Coney Island rides, and...Manhattan vaudeville” (Klein 1993, 62), both reflecting and reconstructing the Fleischers’ own experiences of growing up in New York. More particularly, the Fleischers’ works were embedded in the cultural climate of Lower East Side Jewish immigrant neighbourhoods. In her article, “Betty Boop: Yiddish Film Star,” Amelia S. Holberg argues that along with the language of the Hollywood-style musical cartoon, “Betty’s cartoons also spoke the language of the Yiddish cinema. That language included not only bits of actual Yiddish but also references to the themes of the Yiddish cinema and the lives of working-class Jews jammed together in tenements on the Lower East Side.” In this way, “the Fleischer cartoons are a prime example of a unique moment in American cinema in which a product aimed at a mass audience also reflected the concerns and culture of another cinema audience altogether—the audience for the alternative Yiddish cinema” (1999, 302). Already, the Fleischers’ works diverge from the homogeneous and homogenizing American national culture often assumed in critiques of global media “Americanization” to reflexively represent the international experiences of immigrants.

That is not to say, however, that Betty Boop shorts were exemplars of multicultural, multiethnic empowerment. Holberg notes that the success of the Fleischers’ works (along with that of other Jewish filmmakers) often relied for humour on caricatures of fellow immigrants, such as the Chinese, and of African and African American peoples, who were almost always cast in the roles of jazz men or cannibals. Adding gendered stereotypes to the mix, Betty herself was sometimes painted as a sensual “ethnic girl” character. In the notorious short “Betty’s Bamboo Isle,” her skin was darkened and she

was dressed in a skimpy grass skirt in order to perform a “belly dance” modelled directly on the filmed movements of a touring Samoan dancer named Miri. Joanna Bouldin argues that Betty’s representation here draws on the trope of the “ethnographic body,” exemplified in the spectacle of the exotic woman caught on film for the “educational” pleasure of an assumed white male audience (2001, 52-3). In the early 1930s, then, exotic imagery played out on the animated screen in ways that disturb but also reinforce the presumed imperialistic quality of mainstream Hollywood cinema.

For a time, the Betty series was very successful. As the Depression deepened and the social climate grew harsher, however, films like “Betty’s Bamboo Isle” became subject to a growing moral panic surrounding the depiction of sexuality and vice in Hollywood film (not to mention the lives of Hollywood stars.) This panic culminated in the creation of the “Hays Code,” a motion picture production code designed to censor anything that might “stimulate the lower and baser element” in audiences, such as nudity, suggestive dancing, and interracial relations (Hays Code 1930, n.p.) Betty’s jazz-era design and exotic performances became unacceptable to the new mentality which regarded “flappers and hootch” as emblematic of “what was rotten in the economy,” namely the “leisure industries like the movies, a world that many felt was encouraging broken families and changing the traditions of courtship and propriety” in America (Klein 1993, 71). By 1934 the Code was regularly enforced, so that within four years of her debut Betty’s flapper days came to an end, leading to a drastic re-design.⁶ The Fleischers,

⁶ For more on Hays Code censorship and Betty Boop, particularly in relation to feminist concerns, see Heather Hendershot’s article “Secretary, Homemaker, and ‘White’ Woman: Industrial Censorship and Betty Boop’s Shifting Design” (1995) and Ōgi Fusami’s “An Essay on Betty Boop: The Bold Challenge of the Flapper” (2002).

having counted on Betty's sex appeal, were forced to find other ways to recover their star from the necessity of covering her up.

One of these ways was to turn to the international market. According to animator Myron Waldman, the Fleischers became aware that Betty Boop was popular in Japan, and decided to create a short "designed to appeal to the Japanese market" (Dobbs 2006, n.p). This short was "A Language All My Own."⁷ It features Betty Boop (redesigned, in post-Hays style, with more modest hemlines) performing the title song, all about how her catchy tune brings people around the world together. After singing for a cheering New York audience, Betty sets off in her plane for the Land of the Rising Sun, depicted literally as such with an emblematic sunrise over Mt. Fuji. While the opening seems like a perfect set-up for the sort of racial caricature comedy common in other Fleischer shorts, in this instance, the brothers were deeply concerned about not offending their Japanese fans. As a result, when Betty arrives to sing for the Japanese, the audience members are not depicted as the usual cymbal-hatted pan-Asian grotesques, but as more proportionate adult figures with detailed kimono and hairstyles, albeit still rather bucktoothed and hardly individualized. Furthermore, Betty sings to them not only in English but also in Japanese. Waldman recounts that the Fleischers' staff consulted with Japanese exchange students in America on the lyrics and on Betty's dance, to be certain her body language and gestures would not be considered inappropriate in Japan.

Rather than confirming the hypothesis that American animation necessarily imposes a coherent, monolithic American ideology on other countries, then, this short demonstrates a concerted attempt to localize a film by taking into account other languages and cultures. It is a hybrid, mobile work designed to play on the circulation of

⁷ The cartoon is available online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KHTUHT4kAOY>

international film. In this way, it echoes Andreyev's cosmopolitan dream of the "miraculous Cinema" that draws all humanity and the ends of the earth together and unites different groups across great distances. In the Fleischers' works, however, cinema is effective not because it has *no* language, as in the silent era, but because it has a "language of its own": a visual and musical language that contains within itself the accents of global mobility, from elements of Yiddish to Betty's distinctive New York patois to a collaborative attempt at Japanese.

The *impulse* towards connection across difference was there. But it was not yet truly transcultural. While the Fleischers consulted immigrants on details of cultural specificity, the overall arc of the story remains a typical Fleischer Bros. performance narrative, precluding a mutual exchange of ideas about Japan either between the animators and those they consulted or between producers in America and viewers in Japan. As a result, just as in "Bamboo Isle," Betty's "hybrid" performance of exotic Japanese femininity is grounded in stereotypes which reaffirm certain Orientalist ideologies. Looking more closely at "A Language All My Own," it is interesting to note how Betty physically enacts national differences while still remaining the same old New York cutie. When she sings the line "If you're near or far / doesn't matter where you are," the music shifts into a minor key while she sways, loose and sinuous, to a bongo beat.⁸ When she declares that "Song's in ev'ry land o'er the ocean," however, she stands

⁸ The melody used for these lines is from "The Streets of Cairo, or the Poor Little Country Maid." This song was written for the highly sensationalized performance of the belly dancer "Little Egypt" at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, and has since come to signify "the Orient" in the American popular consciousness. As an audio cue in animation, it often signals exoticized femininity and eroticism, accompanying dancing harem girls (e.g. Felix the Cat's "Arabian Nights," 1928), sexy silhouettes ("The Autograph Hound," 1939), and even chorus line scenes (Mighty Mouse in "Aladdin's Lamp," 1947). The continuing use of this song in silent and early sound animation recalls Gunning's assertion that early cinema drew on patterns of display that originated in World's Fairs and Expositions. For more on the history of the song, see Donna Carlton's *Looking for Little Egypt* (2002).

at attention and salutes to an American march. The combination of music, images, and words connotes that to be “far” is to be embodied as a languorous “Oriental,” while the universality of song is uprightly Western. What’s more, it is the catchphrase that made her famous in America, her “boop-boop-a-doop,” that is “known in every foreign home.” Betty has her Japanese fans repeat this line after she sings it (Fig. 1.3), and they chime in happily with the refrain. In “A Language All My Own,” then, Betty’s performance subtly reveals the Orientalist conceptions of bounded, embodied national identity on which the cartoon’s attempts to form international relations and international film distribution are founded. The animation of Japanese audiences as ready imitators suggests a dream of Japan as a foreign land full of compliant consumers ready to sing along to Western tunes. But this dream was in fact somewhat complicated by Betty’s actual Japanese reception.



Fig. 1.3: Betty listens to the Japanese fans “boop” in “A Language All My Own.”
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The Japanese reception history of American animation can be extremely difficult to trace. While it is certain that American animation was seen in Japan in the 1920s and '30s, precise dates and films screened are often elusive. Daisuke Miyao, for instance,

reports that Disney's "Steamboat Willie" showed in Japan, but gives the screening date as 1927—a year before the film was actually completed (2002, 204). Fortunately, the situation with Betty Boop films is much clearer. From available documentation and from allusions in film works such as Ōfuji's "Defeat of the Tengu" (1934), Waldman's assertions about Betty's popularity in Japan can be well substantiated. The uses to which Betty's image was put in Japan paint a fascinating portrait of the kinds of international exchanges that were taking place in animation in the 1930s.

Firstly, there is the issue of distribution and promotion channels. The exclusive distributor for Fleischer Studios was Paramount Pictures, which (according to their advertising) also handled Disney films in Japan. Paramount began strongly marketing American films from its Tokyo office as of 1930 (Anderson and Richie 1982, 75-6). They focused particularly on sound film, an area where American imports initially held a 90% market share (Thompson 1985, 143).⁹ Paramount's Tokyo branch also actively promoted Betty Boop talkies, placing full-page ads with lists of the latest imported Fleischer Studios works in the major Japanese film magazine *Kinema Junpo*. In a 1992 study titled *The Legend of Betty Boop: The Actress as Symbol, the Symbol as Actress*, noted science fiction author Tsutsui Yasutaka provides a detailed chronology of all the Fleischers' major Betty shorts and many of the minor ones, including information about their Japanese releases and titles, and images of the *Kinema Junpo* ads.

⁹ It should be noted that sound was a bit slow to catch on in Japan, in part because of the lingering popularity of *benshi* narrators, so sound film in 1930 only made up 5.7% of the total market. As Japanese-made talkies grew in popularity following the success of Heinosuke Gosho's *Madamu to nyobo* (*The Neighbor's Wife and Mine*) in 1931, American shares declined. By 1934, sound film made up 40.3% of the market, but only 18.6% of those were American imports (Thomson 1985, 143). The important exception to these statistics may be in the area of animation, as I will show.

Among these is an ad from the November 1, 1935 edition of *Kinema Junpo* for “A Language All My Own,” re-titled “Japan Visit” (“*Nihon hōmon*”). Taking up half the page is a stylish line-art image of Betty Boop flying in her little plane over Mount Fuji, a cityscape swathed in stylized cloud at its base. The accompanying text proclaims Betty to be the “Queen of Popularity,” and provides the following puff:

Paramount Cartoon Studios’¹⁰ masterpiece! Betty Boop, a cartoon goodwill ambassador between Japan and America, visits Japan and sings in Japanese in this splendid masterpiece! Betty’s “Japan Visit.” (Tsutsui 1992, 225)¹¹

In this ad, the internationalism of the Fleischers’ short is brought out even more strongly than in animator Myron Waldman’s own statements. Rather than speaking of markets, as Waldman did, it uses the language of diplomacy and international relations, evident in the phrase “goodwill ambassador” or “*nichibei shinzen no manga shisetsu*” (日米親善の漫画使節), which suggests a government envoy or delegation (*shisetsu*) aimed at promoting Japan-U.S. friendship (*nichibei shinzen*). The idea that film could be used as a political tool was far from foreign to Japan. Beginning as early as 1933, there was a push among reform advocates for the formation of a national film policy, rooted in demands for more educational animation (Yamaguchi and Watanabe 1977, 30), and a “desire to promote Japanese films abroad as an intercultural exercise in mutual understanding” (Standish 2006, 140). In the advertising for “Japan Visit,” Betty Boop

¹⁰ I have translated the company name given in this ad literally as “Paramount Cartoon Studios” [パラマウント漫画スタデイオ], but in English, the distributor for Fleischer Studios was called “Paramount Pictures.” The studio called “Paramount Cartoon Studios” in English was not founded until 1956.

¹¹ Tsutsui does not devote any further attention to this short or analyse the ad at all. In fact, he claims in one sentence on pg. 200 that “A Language All My Own” did not play in Japan, and he does not give a Japanese title for it in his filmography. The fact that the ad refers directly to the short’s plot and images, however, confirms beyond a doubt that “Japan Visit” is the Japanese version of “A Language All My Own.” It seems that Tsutsui, for whatever reason, did not make the connection between the different Japanese and English titles, or did not recognize the image to identify it, hence the omission.

was subtly re-positioned through issues of diplomatic policy and international distribution that concerned (the more official parts of) the Japanese film world.

When Betty Boop entered Japan as a “goodwill ambassador,” then, she was not entering a theatre full of quaint kimono’d figures eager to sing along as instructed, but a modern(izing) social field already fraught with changing discourses regarding the role of cinema, the nation, and international relations. Western works may have been popular, but they were not *always* passively consumed. In some cases, they also became part of the raw visual material used in animated film production. Indeed, by the time of Betty’s fictionalized arrival in 1935, her image had already been taken up and transformed by those among the Japanese audience who were also film creators, such as Ōfuji.

In 1934, Ōfuji released a short cel-style film called “*Tengu Taiji*,” variously translated as “The Routing of the Tengu”¹² or “Hyōei and Heibei’s Tengu Hunt,” (*Japanese Anime Classic Collection* vol. 3). I will call it, more simply and directly, “Defeat of the Tengu.” It seems there were at least two versions of this film: a talkie version with no title cards (available in the *Classic Collection* with the original soundtrack) and a silent version with title cards meant to be interpreted by *benshi* narration (available in *Ōfuji Noburō Collected Works* with an added *benshi* track), both dated 1934. In its two incarnations, this cel-animated short visibly draws on the Fleischers’ style to tell a fantastic period-drama story, displaying once again the intertwining influences of animated cinemas in their international circulation.

“Defeat of the Tengu” opens with a little dog-boy named Heibei, who is on fire-watch duty when a black-feathered arrow shoots over his head, hits a wall, and morphs

¹² This is the title given by the noted manga translator Matt Thorn in his YouTube post of the short. It can be seen at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2kbhvx9ZMzQ>

into a grotesque face that laughs at him. The arrow was fired by a marauding gang of bird-like mythological creatures called *tengu*. The *tengu* miscreants break into a nearby geisha house to kidnap one of the women, squashing the man who tries to stop them flat as a sheet of paper. Heibei, who has been hiding all this time in his own apron, cries “*taihen da!*” (“How terrible!”), and takes the flattened figure to the great Lord Hyōei (or Dangobei, in the silent version). The squashed man, it turns out, was Hyōei’s beloved uncle. Hyōei vows revenge, and, folding his uncle into an origami helmet, he rushes off after the *tengu* with theatrical gestures. Like the American shorts which spoofed feature melodramas, this film culminates in a parody of the popular *chambara* sword-fighting genre. In a wonderful mock-epic battle, enemies and heroes alike are mowed down or sliced in half only to literally pull themselves back together, rejoining like the primordial protoplasm Sergei Eisenstein famously celebrated in his musings on American animation (Leyda 1986). Hyōei may defeat the *tengu* army, but it is little Heibei who saves the samurai from the biggest, meanest *tengu* of all by clipping off its famous long nose with a crab’s claw. In plot, the short is quite different from American animation, drawing on a domestic Japanese genre. But in visual style and gags, such as the surreally transforming arrow, it is highly reminiscent of Fleischers cartoons. The true tip off is the character design of Hyōei himself, who can only be described as Betty Boop in a topknot. (Fig. 1.4)



Fig. 1.4: Sir Hyōei in “Defeat of the Tengu.” Source: screen-capture from the film in *Japanese Anime Classic Collection* (public domain film)

“Defeat of the Tengu” can thus be thought of as a two-pronged reflexive parody.

On the one hand, it makes fun of the live-action film genres of *jidaigeki* (the period piece) and *chambara* (the swordfight film). On the other hand it reflexively refers to the animated cartoon itself, placing the recognizable animation star Betty Boop in a comically incongruous situation. It plays on, or rather plays *against*, her canonical appearances as an American film star by situating her in a markedly “Japanese” setting, cued from very start in an establishing shot of a typical historical street scene with figures walking about in high wooden clogs while plucking at *shamisen* and the like. In being recast as Hyōei, Betty no longer performs alluring Orientalist femininity, but a parodic martial masculinity asserted in overblown heroic gestures, such as when he mourns his wronged relative by wailing “*Ojiue! Ojiue!*” (“Uncle! Uncle!”) and vows revenge. His heroism is just as quickly undercut by the fact that he has to be saved from the chief *tengu* by little Heibei with a crab claw that was moments before pinching Heibei’s bottom. In reflexively recasting Betty along completely different lines of genre and

gender than she was created to play and then *over*-playing them, this short embodies the transformative power of local appropriation.

At the same time, however, such appropriations did not take place in an empty playing field free of all economic and political considerations. For instance, I have noted that “Defeat of the Tengu” was produced in both silent and sound versions. This is because it stood at the transitional point between earlier animation methods and technological changes that were taking place in film production as a result of foreign competition. The growing popularity of sound film was a major factor here.

According to Yamaguchi and Watanabe, competition from American sound film caused a great deal of hardship for Japanese animators. Paramount, importing talkies by the Fleischers and Disney, was able to price their products cheaply, since American studios made most of their revenue from domestic American sales and were able to mass-produce prints for overseas markets at a relatively low cost. Japanese animators, by contrast, more often worked under a craft system, in which a single artist such as Ōfuji formed his own studio and made most of the cartoons himself with the help of a few apprentices. For them, sound recording was expensive, the new production process took three to four times longer than silent film, and there was only one source of revenue: the Japanese market. On average, animators had to charge 1000 yen per one-reel short film to cover costs. But theatre owners increasingly refused to buy domestic shorts at that price, protesting that “for 1000 yen, we can get two Mickey Mouse talkies” (Yamaguchi and Watanabe 1977, 26). Besides the cost, theatre owners felt justified in refusing Japanese-made works because, despite industry exhortations to support local film, audiences preferred the smooth movement and expertly synchronized sound of Disney’s *Silly*

Symphonies (25) and the Fleischers' *Talkartoons*. It was a dire loss for Japanese animators to be undersold in their own market, since they were not able to export their animation along global trade routes that largely shipped finished films only one way: from West to East.¹³

As a result, animators had to find other ways to make a living. One way, as I discuss more fully in chapter 2, was to take on government contracts for educational animation, and later military contracts for propaganda film. The other option, open to a few established creators such as Masaoka Kenzō and Ōfuji, was to build on the success of American talkies by making their own sound animation, sometimes using American styles or characters as a draw. The tactic of profiting on American characters was also used by Japanese merchandise manufacturers, who produced rafts of unauthorized Betty Boop paraphernalia. On kimono and sandals, matchboxes and board games, Betty could be seen cavorting with Mickey Mouse or with Japanese cartoon stars such as Norakuro, the Stray Black Dog, much as in Ōfuji's own "hybrid" cartoon. Yasuno Takashi's 2002 photo book *Collection of Betty Boop Made in Japan* pictures hundreds of Japanese-made Betty Boop items from the 1930s–'50s, suggesting the thriving consumer culture that was built up around her image. This consumer culture cannot be called complete foreign domination, since profits did not always return to the Fleischers. But it does nonetheless result from asymmetrical structures of global trade which allowed American products to flourish in Japan while freezing Japanese creators out of the world market. In this way,

¹³ That is not to say that no Japanese animation ever played outside of East Asia in the early twentieth century. For instance, Ōfuji's 1928 silhouette film "*Kujira*" ("The Whale") was screened in the Soviet Union along with Kinugasa Teinosuke's equally avant-garde feature *Jūjūiro* (1928), where both garnered good reviews (Yamaguchi and Watanabe 19). But this was the exception rather than the rule. Certainly, Japanese animation did not play for entertainment to popular film audiences in America at this time the way Betty Boop films were shown commercially in Japan.

the chances for *mutual* cultural exchange and community building through film animation were, for a while, foreclosed.

Finally, I do not wish to claim that animation of the 1930s was nothing more than a mouthpiece for the dominant imperialist discourses of its age. While economic and social inequalities surely existed, the personal experiences of animators and the diverse positionings of the many individual viewers who watched their creations open up a vast field of potential interpretations, some of which run counter to ideas of imperialist internationalism. Furthermore, I would argue that the *reflexivity* of these cartoons, which directly address topics of international film viewing and intranational identity formation, reveals that animation need not simply reproduce social realities, but can actively participate in shaping them. By drawing attention to animation itself, cartoons like “A Language All My Own” and “Defeat of the Tengu” make us think about who is watching films and how we watch them, encouraging a more participatory stance. This can grant reflexive film animation a kind of transformative power that may act as a harbinger for other forms of active consumption, such as that practiced in animation fan communities.

That said, there is a danger in over-emphasizing either the oppressive or the liberatory potential of animation. It may be hard to see how the Fleischers’ and Ōfuji’s cartoons promoted any practical, effective way of forming a community of creators or viewers between America and Japan. After all, within a few years of Betty’s goodwill mission to Japan and her adoption by animators there, the two countries were at war. During the war, however, it became apparent that filmmakers believed in the capacity of cartoons to make audiences think, feel, and most importantly, act. They believed in the *affective* power of propaganda animation, a power that is perhaps harder to manage than

they suspected. If we are to seriously consider animation as a medium with social impact, then we must acknowledge both its complicities in nationalist, colonial, and racist discourses and its simultaneous resistances to them. This involves recognizing the ways in which no text, even the most blatantly biased cartoon propaganda, is purely oppressive or resistant, just as their viewers are neither fully taken in nor entirely unaffected. Rather, animated propaganda often contains many intertwined strands, representing Others through shifting impulses of aggression, sympathy, distinction, and identification that build and divide communities based on nation, ethnicity, and media consumption. As an illustration of this proposition, I will turn to some examples of American and Japanese animated propaganda from World War II.

Chapter 2. World War Cute

The use of animation in propaganda was nothing new by the late 1930s. The first stop-motion animated film produced in England (by some reckonings, in the world), was Arthur Melbourne Cooper's 1899 "Matches: An Appeal," a "propaganda film intended to encourage spectators to send a guinea's worth of matches to troops in the Boer War, the top brass having forgotten to provide them to the soldiers" (Roffat 2005, 15). In Japan, too, Tsugata Nobuyuki has shown that animation was almost immediately taken up by educational institutions and political parties, with pioneering animators such as Kitayama Seitarō pursuing "active involvement in animating propaganda and educational films" (Tsugata 2003, 25) as of 1917. During World War I propaganda animation was uncommon—the medium was, after all, still in its infancy—but its potential was clearly realized by Winsor McCay's "The Sinking of the Lusitania" (1918), and perhaps by Kitayama's 1918 works "Taro the Guard" and "Taro the Guard, The Submarine," only parts of which survive.

When international tensions began to escalate again in the '30s, the more established animators in America and Japan were already experienced producers of educational and patriotic films, which soon led into military propaganda work. As mentioned earlier, in 1931, the same year as the Mukden Incident, Ōfuji Noburō released a silhouette rendering of the Japanese national anthem, a highly aesthetic work replete with symbolism. The slow, dignified pacing, curved lines, and refined imagery of his national anthem are echoed in propaganda pieces such as the 1944 silhouette film "Malay Offshore Naval Battle," which includes lengthy shots of planes sitting unmanned and unmoving on an airfield, framed by delicately arching grass and palm leaves, along with

the expected battle scenes. In his own way, Ōfuji was an active “wartime animator” from the beginning of Japan’s “Fifteen Years’ War,” stretching from 1931–45.

Representing a somewhat shorter run-up, the Walt Disney studio produced its first educational training short on flush riveting in airplane construction for Lockheed in 1940, a year after World War II began in Europe, but before the United States entered. This short so impressed John Grierson, Commissioner of the National Film Board of Canada, that in the spring of 1941 Grierson commissioned four propaganda films from Disney to promote the Canadian war effort. The first of these, “The Thrifty Pig,” was produced using footage from the 1933 short “The Three Little Pigs” to open on November 19, 1941, in Canada and the United States, several weeks before the United States officially entered the war. Once the flood gates were opened, the Fleischer Brothers quickly followed, leaving behind the harmonious Orientalist Betty Boop in favour of Popeye the Sailor Man, who starred in such notorious propaganda cartoons as “You’re a Sap, Mr. Jap” (1942). From this brief overview, it should be evident that American and Japanese animated films were not just pushed into the service of war after the fact by direct political pressure (although that happened too), but were in some ways primed to it already by their use in existing markets for educational cinema, and by their implication in the imperial internationalist discourses I have described so far.

In this chapter, I draw on the background laid by the earlier works of Ōfuji and the Fleischer Brothers to consider how animation was used in different cultural and technological contexts to encourage patriotic action at the international level during WWII. Following a general overview of how filmmakers handled tropes of ethnicity, national “imagined communities,” and international empire differently in North

American and Japan, I move to a consideration of a single common image that was used in varying ways in both American and Japanese propaganda: the image of the “cute ethnic Other.” This figure may be represented as a child or an animal, and may be very vaguely ethnicized. But in both American and Japanese propaganda, images of the cute ethnic Other recur in contexts where animators had to perform a complex negotiation between recognizing those in other nations as potential allies, as Walt Disney does in his 1940s films on/to Latin American subjects, and yet distinguishing them as colonial subjects, as Seo Mitsuyo does in his depictions of Pacific Islanders as exotic, wild and yet compliant young animals in *Momotarō’s Divine Ocean Warriors* (1945). By considering such works, I argue that figures of the “cute ethnic Other” were used in American and Japanese World War II propaganda animation to generate the affects of simultaneous distinction from and identification with Others necessary to at once build international communities and to position their own nations as imperial leaders.

Propaganda and the Cute Ethnic Other

Much has been written about film propaganda during World War II, including several invaluable cross-cultural comparisons of American and Japanese wartime film. Perhaps most useful for tracing the key tropes and approaches on each side is John Dower’s 1986 book *War Without Mercy: Race & Power in the Pacific War*. Dower begins by pointing out that World War II was specifically a “race war” that “exposed raw prejudices and was fueled by racial pride, arrogance, and rage on many sides” (4). This last phrase, “on many sides,” is important, signaling Dower’s desire to move away from blaming one combatant nation or the other for producing *more* hurtful or discriminatory

propaganda. Rather, he argues that while the “problem of racism is often approached as if it were a one-way street named White Supremacism,”

the many attitudes that come together to comprise racial consciousness... —including pride in one’s native place and culture and bloodlines—are hardly a monopoly of white peoples. When it is also recognized as an expression of status and power vis-à-vis others—comparable to class consciousness, to nationalism and great-power chauvinism, and to gender arrogance—then it becomes clear that there is a place for serious comparative study [of Japanese and American propaganda as racially inflected]. (179)

In his own comparative study, Dower deftly outlines how expressions of racial consciousness varied in America and Japan. The main strategies of American propaganda were to depict the Japanese in three ways: as animals, especially apes or monkeys (81); as either treacherous, subhuman “little yellow men” or giant, terrifying “supermen” (94); and as children, a tactic especially favoured by academics in the emerging interdisciplinary field of “culture and personality” or “national character” studies (123). These tropes, and related charges of primitivism and madness, blended easily into existing national and imperialist stereotypes of ethnic difference, with the result that the Japanese were often compared to “Red Indians,” while Pacific Islanders—in particular Filipinos—were compared to “Negroes” (151–3).

By contrast, Dower says that while Japanese propagandists most certainly created racial hierarchies, they did not do it by using skin colour or animal imagery to degrade the racialized enemy so consistently as in America. Rather, “whereas racism in the West was markedly characterized by denigration of others, the Japanese were preoccupied far more exclusively with elevating themselves” (205). Richie also observes that Japanese propaganda depicted enemies far less often than Western propaganda (2005, 99). Rather, the key tropes in Japanese propaganda were the “pure self,” aestheticized through such

imagery as falling cherry blossoms (Dower 1986, 214) and tied to the idea of expelling the foreign through suffering, hardship, and death; the “demonic other” or enemy/outsider as both menacing and potentially beneficent (240); and “proper place,” a concept of the essential moral hierarchy of races, born of long-standing roots in Chinese Confucianism, only with Japan now placed at the top (266). This latter led to the idea of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere as “*minzoku kyōdōtai*,” a “racial community” or “racial cooperative body” (268), in which Japan proposed to lead Asia using an organic family model similar to the German *Volk* while maintaining the essential purity of the “Yamato race” (262).¹⁴ (Recall the model of *kyōdōtai* put forward by Yanagita Kunio in his work on Japanese folklore and its ties to the German *Gemeinschaft*.)

Animation propaganda, as part of this filmic discourse, displays many commonalities with Dower’s descriptions. Michael S. Shull and David E. Wilt’s exhaustive study of wartime American animated shorts gives clear indicators of the racial bias of topical wartime cartoons in the United States. When lambasting the enemy, American cartoons tended to caricature European Axis politicians such as Hitler, Goering, and Mussolini far more often than the German and Italian nations or people, but frequently villainized Japan and the Japanese as a whole nation/race, with relatively little reference to Emperor Hirohito or to military leaders such as General Tōjō and Admiral Yamamoto (Table 2.1). This is in line with tendencies in live-action films such as Frank Capra’s *Why We Fight* series, where the “Know Your Enemy: Germany” documentary

¹⁴ While “*minzoku*” can also be translated as “ethnic,” in the socio-cultural rather than biologically racial sense, Dower here makes the point that “Having drawn fine distinctions between *Rasse* and *Volk*, or *jinshu* and *minzoku*, the [World War II-era Japanese] Ministry of Health and Welfare researchers nonetheless went on to emphasize that blood mattered. Biology was not destiny, but a common genetic heritage could contribute immensely to forging the bonds of spiritual consciousness that were so crucial to the survival of the collectivity.” In this way, “blood mattered psychologically,” as did biological concepts of race, as means of both connecting “Asians” and distinguishing “Japanese” (268) within the community of the Co-Prosperity Sphere.

begins by describing Germany as a “musical” and “industrious” country full of “tidy” and “educated” people, allowing for the possibility of the “Good German,” while the “Know Your Enemy: Japan” documentary depicts an incomprehensibly foreign people, each soldier as identical to the next as images from the same photographic negative.

Topical Reference	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	Total
Japan	0	0	1	14	22	4	1	42
Germany	0	0	1	2	5	1	0	9
Italy	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Nazism/Fascism	0	2	4	4	19	4	1	34
Hitler	0	0	3	10	26	5	1	45
Mussolini	0	0	2	3	7	1	0	13
Hirohito/Tōjō/Yamamoto	0	0	0	1	6	3	0	10

Table 2.1: Distribution of references to nations and political leaders in American World War II propaganda animation by year. Source of the data: Shull and Wilt 2004, 208.

Animation, having longstanding associations with editorial cartooning and caricature, proved itself even more capable than live-action film of depicting the enemy through bestialization, size distortions, and grotesque racial caricatures. Racist caricature was a particular specialty of the Warner Brothers studios, as evidenced by shorts such as “Bugs Bunny Nips the Nips” (1944) and “Tokio Jokio” (1944). The former Fleischers studios, taken over by Paramount in 1942, also produced wildly exaggerated caricatures in Superman and Popeye shorts such as “Japoteurs” (1942) and “Scrap the Japs” (1942). Even Disney, whose entertainment shorts tended more towards home-front education (as in “Out of the Frying Pan, Into the Firing Line,” 1942) or army-life satires (as in “Donald Gets Drafted,” 1942), was not above caricature. For instance, “Commando Duck” (1940) depicts Donald fighting Japanese soldiers disguised as slant-eyed trees, who utter lines such as “Japanese custom say, always shooting a man in the back please.”

Japanese propaganda animation, being so strongly influenced by American animation, does show a greater propensity towards animal imagery than Japanese live action film. The *Norakuro* series of shorts, produced in the mid-1930s by Seo Mitsuyo from a popular comic strip, uses all animal figures, as do his *Sankichi the Monkey* shorts, which do in fact depict the Japanese army as monkeys fighting various enemies. And yet, in both of these series, the focus is on either the main character in *Norakuro*, or on the heroic group, *Sankichi's* unit, rather than on the enemy. As Dower notes, too, the animals selected are not part of a rigid typology: in *Norakuro*, dogs are the heroes and monkeys the enemies; but in *Sankichi*, monkeys are the heroes and bears the enemies. As Lamarre (2008) has noted, the consistent patterns of good farm/woodland animals vs. evil predator animals found in Disney films do not always hold in Japanese animation.

This may be because, as Ueno Toshiya describes, the very structure of Otherness in Japanese propaganda film was not just binary, but three-tiered and contextual. Recalling Dower on “proper place,” Ueno argues that Japanese engagements with Otherness followed the pattern “Transcendental existence/Self and Community/Aliens,” but who occupied what station changed according to context and need. Sometimes the Japanese were transcendent over the community of colonized Asian peoples, who were in turn placed above alien enemies; at other times, the Emperor was transcendent over the “common Japanese,” who were above *all* foreign people (1993, 86). The ambivalences Ueno introduces here pave the way for a more nuanced consideration of animated propaganda, how it affected its audiences, and what sense of national or racial community it tried to build.

For instance, most studies of propaganda and animation, including Dower, Shull and Wilt, and Richard Shale's volume *Donald Duck Joins Up* (1982), focus on "war hates" (Dower 1986, ix) and critique grotesque, exaggerated, bestializing caricatures designed to generate fear or mocking laughter. Such critiques are clearly important and valuable. As Thomas Lamarre argues, however, "Friendly or positive animal images may imply strategies of racialization, too" (2008, 75). He points to Dower's examples from American post-war magazine illustrations in which the "evil Japanese monkey" suddenly becomes a tame pet monkey. Even during the war, the *cute* racialized animal also had a crucial role to play in the creation of "speciesism," "a displacement of race and racism (relations between humans as imagined in racial terms) onto relations between humans and animals", a tactic of figuration that does violence both to "nonhuman animals and those designated as racial others" (76).

Though speciesism appears widely in propaganda and other discourses around the world, Lamarre finds the *cute* racialized animal a characteristic figure of Japanese animation. He argues that whereas American animation often uses the trope of the hunt or the chase, the "Japanese imaginary is one of 'companion species' rather than one of wild animals to be hunted and exterminated or one of domestic animals to be exploited. The imaginary of companion species is related to a specific geopolitical imaginary" (78)—in this case, the colonial region of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Thus, in *Momotarō's Divine Ocean Warriors*, "colonial peoples appear as...cute and friendly animals that fairly cry out for nurture," a cuteness which "meshes nicely with their status as a readily available and willing source of labour" (78). This is part of the "geopolitical

imaginary” of the Co-Prosperity Sphere, and so, Lamarre claims, it suggests “a kind of speciesism unlike the American bestialization of the enemy” (78).

This is an insightful account. The general trends in WWII propaganda animation were towards grotesque bestialization and hierarchization in American work, and a more diffuse structuring of races/species through a contextual “proper place” in Japanese work, which lends itself more to “cute” imagery even when picturing ethnic Others. These trends were rooted in the cultural and social contexts of each nation, including local and regional geopolitical formations, such as the Good Neighbor Policy in the Americas and the Co-Prosperity Sphere in Asia. And yet, as I have shown, the Japanese and American film industries both participated in a larger geopolitical imaginary: the imaginary of the international “miraculous Cinema.” This allowed them to share some common cinematic images as well as to establish national differences, a mutually informing process in which “Japanese” and “American” animation cannot always be neatly divided or opposed. I have described the “imperial internationalism” that underpinned the Fleischer brothers and Ōfuji’s attempts to cope with and convey connections across distance through reflexivity and song. I would now like to look at two animators, Walt Disney and Seo Mitsuyo, who allow us to consider the dimension of the cinema that aims, no less reflexively, to conquer.

“Thinking Cute” in Disney Propaganda

The Disney studio, under various government contracts, produced its fair share of enemy-bashing vitriol. As Disney animator John Hench has described, however, even during the war, animators were more concerned with pleasing “Uncle Walt” himself than the military (Maltin, *Disney on the Front Lines* vol. 2). And Disney had long felt that the

key to a successful film could be summed up in the phrase “Think Cute.” In the years leading up to WWII, Disney studios made an increasing move away from the slapstick farmyard antics of the black-and-white Mickey Mouse shorts towards the sweetness of the full-colour *Silly Symphonies* shorts and, ultimately, wartime features such as *Pinocchio* (1940), *Fantasia* (1940), and *Bambi* (1942). It is quite easy to dissociate these works from their historical context. And yet, even the earlier shorts provide examples of the cute animal and child figures that would play a role in Disney’s propaganda shorts.

Consider, for instance, a pre-war *Silly Symphonies* colour cartoon, “Little Hiawatha” (1936). It is a simple enough story. An incredibly adorable little “Indian” boy with baggy pants that are forever falling down sets out to hunt the animals of the forest, only to find that they are just too darned cute to kill. He gives up hunting, upon which all the animals—squirrels, beavers, deer, rabbits, birds, and the like—become his friends and help him escape from an angry mother bear. It may seem facile, but let us look more closely at the moment when Hiawatha decides to give up hunting.

In this scene, Hiawatha has cornered a grey-and-white baby rabbit on a stump. Seeing that it can’t escape, he dances and whoops while stereotypical “Indian” drumming plays on the soundtrack. Then he raises his bow to shoot. The other forest animals watch in trepidation. A close up of the rabbit shows it quivering with fear, a single tear rolling from its sad, upturned eyes. Seeing this, Hiawatha is affected: he snuffles and cries a tear too. Pulling himself up and puffing out his chest, he takes a tiny bow and arrow from his pants, gives it to the rabbit, and tries to hold a fair-and-square shootout. When he walks three paces and turns to draw, however, the little rabbit is still sitting where he left it, and the bow and arrow fall from its paws. Hiawatha makes an “oh, shoot!” gesture, kicking

the dust. Then he shoos the rabbit away before breaking his own bow and arrow and throwing it to the ground. His renunciation is greeted with wild whistling and cheering in an extravagantly animated multiplane camera shot. All the animals from the foreground to the deep background of the forest bounce together in joy and excitement, drawing the audience, too, into the cinematic depth of their world.

There is no dialogue in this entire short. Everything is conveyed through music, voice-over narration, and the characteristically expressive animated “method acting” developed at Disney studios: a visible manifestation of deep psychology on the animated body that still earns praise from scholars such as Michael Barrier (208). In this way, the short vividly plays out the affects that cuteness is supposed to engender. Seeing the rabbit cry, Hiawatha cries, from the same eye, with the same little descending scale played on the soundtrack’s xylophone. Seeing the rabbit drop its bow and arrow, he throws down his bow and arrow too. He moves from sympathy to identification to action: the path of affect, which is not just emotion, but also “an ability to affect and be affected” (Massumi, xvi), or a shift in the potential or capacity to act. His affective action allows him to join the animal community, a holistic coexistence of all woodland species (except angry bears) conceived as a family. The voice-over narration at the end reports that after this, “the beaver called [Hiawatha] brother.” Even more so than “A Language All My Own,” this short shows the reconciliation of diverse, opposed groups into a harmonious cute community of animalized children and childlike animals. Though not overtly reflexive, the frequent images of a crowd of animals watching Hiawatha and of Hiawatha watching back suggest a form of spectatorship based on feeling together, and being unified by that imaginative and affective experience.

At least, that is the utopian dimension of the film, and perhaps the dimension most intended by the animators. But “Little Hiawatha” is also problematic on racial and “speciesist” grounds. In an article entitled “Natures and Cultures of Cuteness,” Gary Genosko compares Disney’s cartoon critters and National Geographic photography of cute animals designed to encourage participation in environmental movements. His conclusion is that “Cuddly, soft, and charming creatures create delight and emotional warmth, but not understanding and respect” (2005, 16). They encourage a protective instinct that is also a possessive instinct: a sense of control over something lesser that can all too easily lead to exploitation rather than mutual understanding or ethical engagement.

That said, “Little Hiawatha” was not produced in complete ignorance of Native American life. As Gene Walz describes, the designer of the Little Hiawatha character, Icelandic-Canadian animator Charlie Thorson, admired the First Nations peoples he met in the Canadian West for their independence and hardiness. But there is a measure of idealization on Thorson’s part too, in that “To his eye, they seemed to live charmed lives, although the reality was, and still is, considerably different” (Walz 1998, 84). Moreover, the infantilized and animalized “noble savage” figure, which underlies both Hiawatha’s childish appearance and his ability to call the beaver “brother,” has historically stood alongside the “Red savage” trope in colonial discourse (Goldie 1993), just as surely as the “cute pet Japanese monkey” image derives from the “traitorous jungle monkey” in the propaganda illustrations Dower analyzes. The war-dance and whooping Hiawatha performs to pounding drum music when he has cornered the rabbit suggest the spectre of the “Other Indian,” the savage to be overcome. Likewise, the defeat of the angry mother bear by friendly animals evokes the “Other animal” against which a community of good,

helpful, humanized animals is formed. Hiawatha is all right, as long as he is, in the closing words of the short, not only “Mighty hunter Hiawatha, mighty warrior Hiawatha, mighty chieftain Hiawatha,” but “mighty *little* Hiawatha,” with his cute little animal friends.

The Disney studio’s attempts to cope with internal Others on the domestic scale of nation-building had a strong impact on films that dealt with Others in an international context. Disney’s use of cute child figures in wartime propaganda reveals the complex geopolitical imaginaries informing the depiction of enemy and allied nations. As “Little Hiawatha” shows, cute characters evoke a sense of simultaneous sympathy and separation, a “like me” and “not me.” This “bivalent” affect, nuanced to suit the situation, proved useful in American propaganda for both justifying war against Germany and attempting to form hemispheric solidarity with Latin American nations. In modeling identification and distinction, Disney’s propaganda films constructed global cultural exchange as *imperial* internationalism, which depends on uniting diverse populations while maintaining the hierarchy of national/ethnic distinction between them.

Cases of cute enemy figures are rarer than grotesque caricatures, but they are to be found in Disney’s wartime oeuvre. Nowhere is this clearer than in the 1943 colour short “Education for Death: The Making of the Nazi.” Based on a book by Gregor Ziemer, a former teacher who fled the Nazi regime to America, “Education for Death” dramatically depicts the life of a young boy, Hans, from birth until the time he becomes a soldier in the German army. Dubbed entirely in German with voice-over narration once again providing explanation and commentary, this short aims for a filmic, quasi-

documentary feel, with only a few instances of “cartooniness.” It is these instances I will focus on, as they are tellingly reflexive of the many roles animation played in propaganda.

The first “cartoony” scene operates in the satiric mode of animated propaganda. From a shot of *Mein Kampf* (given to the parents of baby Hans), the screen dissolves to another book that opens itself to reveal a rather Disney-esque image: a white turreted castle. “Kindergarten, and little Hans learns the fairytales of the new order,” the narrator tells us. In this version of “Sleeping Beauty,” Hans is taught that the witch is “Democracy,” while Sleeping Beauty is revealed to be an enormously fat blonde woman with a Wagnerian horned helmet and a beer stein: Germany. Her handsome prince is, of course, Hitler, complete with bristling moustache and popping, blood-shot eyes. After chasing the evil Witch Democracy out a window, the Hitler-knight strains to shove “Germany’s” enormous buttocks onto his tiny horse to carry her off through the woods. It is a jarringly bright intervention into what has been up to this point a sombre film full of intimidating wide shots of monumental architecture and deep, slanting shadows. Here, spectators are encouraged to laugh at the grotesque enemy, to participate in the kind of caricature-based propaganda most common in American animated shorts.

In the second scene of Hans’ education, however, the film presents a cute and sympathetic image that speaks more to persuasion than propaganda. It opens in a classroom, where Hans’ teacher gives a lesson on “natural history” by drawing a rabbit and a fox on the blackboard. The little rabbit is magically animated and runs from the fox, but it is caught at the corner of the blackboard and eaten. Hans, asked to interpret this scene, says “The poor rabbit!” This provokes outrage from his teacher. He is sent to the corner to cower, sad-eyed, under the disapproving gaze of portraits of Hitler, Goebbels,

and Goering, while his classmates proclaim: “The world belongs to the strong!” and “The rabbit is a coward and deserves to die! I spit on the rabbit!” Hans, rejoining the class, unleashes a stream of invective against the rabbit. “My, how he hates that rabbit,” the narrator remarks ruefully.

Once again, we see a moment of sympathy between a cute little boy and a rabbit, but now with a number of twists. For instance, it is difficult to say just if or how racialization operates in this short. Hans is cute in an exaggeratedly “Aryan” way, with straw-yellow hair and very pale blue eyes. Here, whiteness is foregrounded and made to signify something associated with an “enemy” ideology of white supremacy (though that itself was not an ideology foreign to the United States, by any means). The rabbit, on the other hand, is only very diffusely racialized. An allegorical figure of a victim, it suggests the Jews only indirectly through context. In being condemned as “weak,” it may just as easily refer to the disabled children executed by the Nazis, a practice Ziemer vocally condemned (1941, n.p), or to a generalized idea of fascist social Darwinism with no specific victim in mind.

More so than “Little Hiawatha,” the rabbit scene is also reflexively framed as animated. In a sort of palimpsest of cartoon history, the “chalkboard coming to life” trope recalls silent-era chalkboard animation, while the animals on the board are accompanied by comical squeaky sound effects and jaunty music timed to the action, evoking Disney’s own facility with matching sound and image. When framed in this way, emotional engagement with a “poor rabbit” has a rather different consequence than in “Little Hiawatha.” Hiawatha’s sympathy allows him to be accepted into a natural community. But Hans’ emotional response is immediately manipulated by a false, artificial culture, as

his sympathy is turned to hatred under the propagandistic visual education of the Nazis. The moment of sympathy is valued, but also rendered somewhat suspect, in that it is an emotional reaction open to manipulation. This example of propaganda within propaganda works on multiple levels, asking audiences to stay alert and question the media, including fairytales and cartoons, while more subtly encouraging them to participate in exactly the kinds of affective engagements depicted. And emotional manipulation is indeed one of the tactics used in “Education for Death,” as sympathy with Hans is finally turned into fear and hatred of the Nazi army.

By the end of the film, cute animal and child figures are both subsumed into the trope of the bestial enemy. Hans has grown up, and is now a thick-chested, heavily-armed soldier goose-stepping in a column of identical soldiers rendered in sharp one-point perspective, a visual exaggeration of cinematic depth that makes the column seem to spring out alarmingly toward the audience. The “ballistic vision” of film theorized by Paul Virilio (1989) is displayed in full force, but its power is now turned against the audience to inspire fear rather than control. The predominant colours are menacing reds and blacks, while the music is heavy and militaristic. As the narrator describes the Nazi indoctrination process, Hans is shown wearing blinders, a muzzle, and a collar and chain: a literally “brute-al” member of the Nazi army, at once beast and terrifying superman.

“Education for Death” is thus a single short comprised of many different propaganda modes: satire, cuteness, and bestialization are all taken up in turn. It can generate both a sense of identification with the “Good German,” an important task given the large German-immigrant and German-American population in the United States, and

a sense of distinction from the European-German/Nazi enemy. It is the creation of an “us” through a “them” in an unstable process of (inter)national community formation.

This process of identification/distinction is also apparent, with different inflections, in films about relations with nations desired as allies, particularly in Latin America. In 1940, Franklin Roosevelt appointed Nelson D. Rockefeller the Coordinator of the Office of Inter-American Affairs (OIAA), charging him with the task of implementing the “Good Neighbor policy” designed to curb Fascist influence in Latin America by promoting hemispheric unity. Though the phrase “good neighbours” suggests a cozy ideal of local community, the motivations were broadly political and economic. The idea was that “a reformed capitalist system would protect the liberties and enhance the lives of North and South Americans. It would also keep Latin America open for U.S. traders and investors” (Franco 2002, 22). To this end, the OIAA employed “soft power” tactics such as diplomacy and propaganda rather than the direct military interventionism that characterized their earlier political relations with emerging Latin American nations. The new diplomatic program included promoting high culture works targeting intellectuals and mass culture works aimed at the general populace, such as Disney cartoons, which worked to forge hemispheric connections by mixing education with entertainment. The most notable of these were the compilation features *Saludos Amigos* and *The Three Caballeros*.

Saludos Amigos (titled *Alô Amigos* in Portuguese) premiered in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on August 24, 1942. It was followed in December of 1944 by *The Three Caballeros*, which opened in Mexico City. While certainly not the first Disney features shown in Latin America, they were the first to premiere outside the United States, and the

first of Disney's works to target so directly the audiences of particular geographic regions. Like "A Language All My Own," these films were pitched as part of an ambitious, even somewhat progressive, attempt to move beyond the usual Hollywood stereotypes of foreign cultures and form two-way international connections through media. Under the auspices of the U.S. Department of State, Walt Disney took a group of his best animators and writers, nicknamed "El Grupo," and went on a goodwill tour of Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Peru. Along the way, they met local artists, dancers, and voice talents, as well as politicians and film fans, and asked their help in producing what were intended to be twelve Latin American-themed short films. It was then decided to collect the shorts into package features, in order to increase each feature's appeal across different regions.

Being collections of shorts, both films use a framing device to tie the individual pieces together. *Saludos Amigos* reflexively uses Disney's trip itself as a frame narrative, interspersing the shorts with live-action documentary footage of the Disney crew and an animated relief map of South America tracking their progress. *The Three Caballeros*, on the other hand, features Donald Duck, rather than Disney himself, as the linking figure between shorts. The organization of the shorts is structured around three presents Donald receives in a birthday package "*de sus amigos en Latinoamérica*" or, as the gift-tag magically translates, "from his friends in Latin America." The three presents are a film-within-a-film titled "Aves Raras" ("Strange Birds") containing three shorts, a picture book of Brazil, and a photo album of Mexico. In both cases, the familiar generic structures of the travelogue and of touristic apparatuses such as photo collections provide the rationale for a series of shorts intended to educate North American audiences on the

traditional dress, dances, and customs of the countries visited, and to edify Latin American audiences with lushly animated depictions of their own landscapes and cultures.

The content of the shorts is accordingly comic yet educational. *Saludos Amigos*, the more didactic of the two works, features the Disney characters participating in scenes of tourism and learning that mirror, in an exaggerated way, the animators' experiences of comparing local customs with American ones or simply taking in the scenery. For instance, Goofy the Texan cowboy is transformed into Goofy the Argentine gaucho, with narration pointing out the similarities and differences between the two, while Donald visits Rio's sidewalk cafes and vibrant dance-halls with his local guide, a nattily-dressed green parrot named José (or Joe) Carioca.¹⁵ *The Three Caballeros*, on the other hand, moves from animating the animators to animating the audience, showing Donald Duck as a spectator figure watching images that literally allow him to step into Latin America. It begins educationally enough, with three film shorts on the "Aves Raras" reel he is sent that highlight the geography of South America as seen from the eyes of a travelling penguin, an exotic bird-watching tour, and the story of an Uruguayan gaucho boy. It soon delves more into fantasy and even a kind of subtly eroticized surrealism, as Donald leaps into pictures to chase various live-action Latina actresses through fields of Mexico City neon, hoping for a kiss. At one point he even literally dive-bombs an Acapulco beach full of live bathing beauties, his body morphing into a pointed red missile.

¹⁵ The only short that does not feature an established Disney character or any real Latin American cultural content is the second film in the feature, titled "Pedro," about a little mail plane named Pedro making a dangerous journey through the Andes to pick up what turns out to be a single tourist's postcard. The lack of Latin American content may stem from the fact that the story was re-worked from an idea the animators had well before the tour about a plane named "Petey O'Toole" traversing the Rockies. According to character designer Joe Grant, the earlier idea "just fit" the new situation "because from the Rockies to the Andes was a short jump as far as we were concerned" (Kaufman 1997, 266). Is this exchangeability of foreign places to the North and South of the United States an index of a newly mobile internationalism, a deterritorialization, or simply a reterritorialization of the United States as geographic and ideological centre of the continent?

Like “Education for Death,” *The Three Caballeros* is varied in tone. If the Acapulco story indulges in some of the wild, hallucinatory energy of more grotesque Disney shorts (for instance, the famously surreal “Der Führer’s Face”), the Uruguayan story, “The Flying Gauchito,” provides a perfect example of a cute ethnic Other character. A consistently self-conscious work, it is narrated by the title cute boy, the little “Gauchito,” as an old man, who speaks directly to both Donald, the film’s spectator, and his younger self on the screen. The Gauchito is introduced just like Little Hiawatha as he sets out hunting one morning, a scene complete with a re-used gag in which he accidentally drops his pants (or rather, as the narrator points out, his “*bombachas*”). Also as in “Little Hiawatha,” he encounters a quarry that is simply too cute to kill: a flying donkey who soars right up to him and sniffs him all over. The Gauchito decides to train this winged *burrito* (little burro) to run in a race and win 1000 pesos so he can live rich. “Training,” however, is more like bonding with a new best friend or companion animal, as the Burrito shares the Gauchito’s tea (*mate*) and his company, sitting side-by-side with him under the light of the full moon. Though they win the race by working together, they don’t get the 1000 peso reward but instead fly off together for adventure, never to be seen again. The short concludes to the delight of Donald Duck, who cheers from his position under his home projector, surrounded by unspooling film.

Even more so than “Little Hiawatha” or “Education for Death,” this short emphasizes *sympathy* in a story that reflexively depicts the formation of friendship through media. Film itself—the projection apparatus, the material film stock—is shown as the medium that affectively brings different cultures and even eras together. Donald can talk to the Spanish-accented voice of the narrator, the narrator can tell his past self

where to look or run, and the little Gauchito can respond to the narrator and to Donald with angry or happy glances at the camera. If real audiences cannot actually step across the borders of the screen and of Latin America at once the way Donald does later, it is implied in this short that they can still form affective international relations by watching and sympathizing with Uruguayan voices and characters.

Despite this image of mediated connection, however, there remain definite distinctions between the “self” of the audience, represented by Donald, and the cute ethnic Other. Like *Little Hiawatha*, the little Gauchito himself cannot speak. He conveys his responses through the deep expressivity of “method acting,” but remains an adorable “natural child” akin to his animal companion the Burrito, a depiction that as Genosko says encourages warmth but not necessarily respect for the autonomy of those depicted as cute. The adult narrator who speaks for the Gauchito, on the other hand, is excessively verbose. He often digresses to explain every little cultural detail visible on the scene, for instance in the Spanish naming of the Gauchito’s items of clothing. But if he speaks, it is mainly to instruct an audience who does not know what these items of clothing are—in short, an assumed American audience. Even though the films were meant to play in Latin America, both the Gauchito and his older narrator self are still framed as Others, distinct from the audience-self Disney was most accustomed to addressing, the American public.

A similar mode of address is found throughout both compilation films in their touristic or spectacle-seeking gaze, recalling Gunning’s assertion that early cinema drew on the patterns of spectatorship originally found in European World’s Fairs. Even as they seem to convey the message “we are all hemispheric Americans together,” distinctions are made between “them,” the “native informants” who display their cute local customs

and the global (in fact, American) “us” of the audience. What’s more, even the supposed “native informants” are all characters created by Disney animators using a character type that played a social and political role in managing diversity: the cute ethnic Other.

Still, if Disney films attempted to model the appropriate audience reaction as one of amused acceptance and learning, actual audiences were not always so ready to be instructed. *Saludos Amigos* was fairly well-received by its intended American audience, as journalist John McManus praised Disney as “a fairly sophisticated young man of the Western world...bringing our viewpoints into accord like a witty ambassador, and generally doing a job in hemisphere relations that no one before has managed to achieve” (qtd. in Shale 1982, 48). But the praise was not unanimous. There were protests from those in countries excluded from the first tour, such as Venezuela and Uruguay. Shale cites a report to the effect that “Uruguayans resented having their country ignored and...newspapers in Montevideo were playing up this fact, thus causing friction rather than good will” (49). The film’s touristic and imperialistic “tendency to minimize contrasts” (49) between nations in the interests of “pan-Americanism” thus became a source of tension in a region with differences that ran deeper than the dabs of local colour on Disney’s palettes.

The inclusion of “The Flying Gauchito” in *The Three Caballeros* could be seen as an effort to make up for the omission and smooth out ruffled feathers. And yet, *The Three Caballeros* was panned by most critics for various reasons. Opposition was especially strong on the Left, prefiguring Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart’s Marxist critiques of Disney comics in Chile in the 1970s. In a 1945 article for the *Partisan Review* (then still a left-wing publication), Barbara Deming called the film a “monstrous”

reflection of the “nightmare of these times” (Burton 1992, 31) in response to the not-so-subtle war imagery of Donald’s bombing run on the Acapulco beach. More recent post-colonial and feminist critics such as Julianne Burton likewise assert that the film “seems to prove the rule of cross-cultural borrowing as self-aggrandizing appropriation, Good-Neighborliness as a foil for empire-building-as-usual” (1992, 23). While most criticisms focus of the grotesque elements of Disney domination, however, it is in fact the “cute” shorts that are the most telling when it comes to the geopolitical imaginaries of propaganda animation. This is not just because they were more insidious ideological vehicles of “soft power” in their appeal, but because they suggest the ambivalence inherent in imperial internationalism, the simultaneous need to both connect and divide diverse national audiences. This ambivalence, offering communicative potentials as well as risks, will become important to later formations of transcultural animation community.

Cuteness and Japan’s Attractive Empire

Cuteness, as I have shown so far, often surfaced in American propaganda animation in a very specific context: when a need arose to address cases where enmity and friendship were not clear-cut, when the feared German enemy could not be completely rejected and the desired Latin American ally could not be unproblematically accepted. In Japanese propaganda animation, too, the cute figure often turns up at points where the shifting impulses of international connection and imperial control had to be managed.

Lamarre’s aforementioned concept of speciesism is valuable here, especially his 2010 elaboration of the late-war and post-war conception of “multispeciesism,” “a specific form of multiculturalism related to the Japanese effort to build a multiethnic

empire” (58). In looking at the continuities between wartime and postwar ideas of community and ethnicity, Lamarre suggests that Japanese wartime films depicting “peaceful” communities of cute animals of different species, such as Seo Mitsuyo’s *Momotarō’s Divine Ocean Warriors* (1945), grew out of the geopolitical and even biopolitical project of the East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. I completely agree with this position. I would like, however, to complicate his assertion that this tactic is particular to Japanese propaganda because “the Japanese faced difficulties with the multispecies ideal that the Allies did not” (2010, 75). Following Dower, Lamarre makes a distinction between American animated propaganda based on bestial enemies, and Japanese animation based on the “logic of the companion species” (57). As I have shown, however, Disney films also consistently used the logic of the companion species in attempting to manage multiethnic populations both within the United States (in the case of Indigenous populations) and Latin America. Using cute figures was not an isolated national tactic, but one common to the “international brotherhood of film imperialists” (Baskett 2008, 106), or, the global imaginary of the Miraculous Cinema to which both nations belonged.

The common trope of cuteness was, however, nationally *inflected* in Japan in two ways. First, due to the strong influence of foreign animation on early anime, Japanese propaganda animators had to find ways to revise their earlier uses of American imagery and styles when depicting American enemies. Secondly, the nature of Japanese political influence in Asia affected how the cute ethnic ally figure operated, since the Japanese military physically occupied its (South) East Asian colonies under the banner of “uniting Asia,” while the American government arguably only exercised “cultural imperialism” in Latin America. A close reading of Seo’s *Momotarō* films reveals how cute ethnic Other

images in wartime propaganda were reflexive—that is, both reflective and constructive—of Japan’s shifting place in the international order as a critic of American imperialism *and* a regional imperialist power in its own right.

Seo himself was, politically speaking, a complex character. He began his animation career at the age of 20 in 1930, doing part-time propaganda work for the Proletarian Film League of Japan (Prokino) (Yamaguchi and Watanabe 1977, 29). This was unfortunate timing, since in 1931 he was arrested, jailed, and possibly tortured for his Leftist associations when Prokino was harshly suppressed by the government. Upon his release, he worked for a short time with animator Masaoka Kenzō on Japan’s first sound animation, “In the World of Women and Power” (1933), before founding his own studio. Here, he began to turn to works that could be considered more ideologically compatible with an increasingly militarized state. These included the adventures of Norakuro, an incompetent dog in the army who nonetheless keeps getting promoted with every short, and Sankichi, a rather more competent monkey who defends Japan from foreign invasion in “The Monkey Sankichi’s Air Defense Battle” (1933; see Yamaguchi and Watanabe 30). After about ten years in operation his studio was absorbed by another and renamed Geijutsu. It was for Geijutsu that he released his first wildly popular Momotarō short, the 37-minute *Momotarō’s Sea Eagles* (1943) (Gerow 2008, 10; Yamaguchi and Watanabe 38-40). Eager to do a longer piece, he then rejoined his mentor Masaoka at the large-scale Shōchiku studios, where he directed the 74-minute *Momotarō’s Divine Ocean Warriors* (1945), Japan’s first feature-length animated film.

Like Ōfuji, Seo turns to Japanese folklore for his source material in these films, drawing on the most frequently animated Japanese folktale of the era, the story of

Momotarō. The Momotarō legend tells of an old couple who find a peach floating in a river from which a little boy emerges: the eponymous “Peach Boy.” A supernaturally strong and noble child, Momotarō sets out on a quest to stop the evil *oni*, ogres who attack Japan from a distant island. On the way, he meets a dog, a monkey, and a pheasant, and gives them each a millet dumpling so that they will put aside their past quarrels and join him. Each animal uses its special skill—biting, climbing, flying—to help Momotarō defeat the *oni*. In some versions, the *oni* are all killed; in school textbooks of the mid-1940s, they are simply made to promise they will behave in the future (Dower 1986, 252).

The possibilities for propaganda are clear, and in his first major wartime work, *Momotarō’s Sea Eagles*, Seo took them on, depicting Momotarō as the head of an army of fighting dogs, monkeys, and pheasants, along with an additional crew of rabbit support staff, who carry out a bombing mission to the “ogre island” of Hawaii in an animated reenactment of the Pearl Harbour attack. Despite the title, Momotarō is not the focus of the short, and shows no real affective engagement with the animals. In Ueno’s three-tiered scheme of Otherness, Momotarō occupies the “transcendent” position, directing his troops from above with a calmly imperious expression. Closeness and warmth is rather directed towards the community of animals themselves, as the short opens with a long sequence depicting the army of cute animals being rallied by Momotarō on an aircraft carrier and preparing for battle. Juxtaposing the serious and the silly, the animals then play games with each other and help out some passing sea eagles as they fly in meticulously-animated bomber planes across the Pacific. The actual battle scene of the bombing of Pearl Harbour is played for comedy, with monkeys climbing up each other like ladders to get in and out of their planes. The focus is so much on the animal soldiers

that Momotarō and the sea eagles do not return to the picture again until the final scenes, when the crew of a victorious but badly damaged plane is returned to their aircraft carrier and its waiting boy-commander by the sea eagle family they helped on the way to Hawaii.

This film establishes the basic concept of diverse animal species interacting, as dog and monkey characters squabble lightly, show each other up, compete in games but always work together in battle. In this way, it sets the stage for the kind of “cute community” seen in *Ocean Warriors*. The overall tone of this piece, however, is not so much cute as comic and satiric. At points it even participates in the propaganda mode of dehumanizing the enemy as it reflexively targets American animation itself. Arriving in Hawaii, the enemies the crew fights are not traditional *oni*, but cartoon stars drawn once again from the shorts of the Fleischer brothers. The first ship they bomb is crewed by a perfect replica of Popeye’s nemesis Bluto, who is shown stumbling about the deck of his ship in a panic, complete with a soundtrack of grumbling and sobbing taken from an original Popeye cartoon. Bluto, representing the American Navy, is lambasted as a dumb, clumsy, selfish man who tips his own fellow sailors overboard while trying to escape in a life boat and ends up floating alone amidst the wreckage of a successful bombing raid. Seo also took aim at enemy politicians. In an advertising poster for the film (Fig. 2.1), a caricature of Franklin Roosevelt is seen splashing in the water along with Bluto, Popeye, and a rather helpless-looking Betty Boop, who does not actually appear in the film.



Fig. 2.1: Advertising poster for “Momotarō’s Sea Eagles” (1943). Source: *The Roots of Japanese Anime* DVD gallery (public domain image).

Like “Education for Death,” “Momotarō’s Sea Eagles” is not a uniformly cute war film, but includes within one text a number of different propaganda modes. Using villainizing caricature along with cuteness allows it to work through Japanese animators’ historical use of American film and express the new oppositions between their media empires. On one hand, the unwarranted reappearance of Betty’s sweet face in the poster suggests that the Fleischers’ characters still worked as a box-office draw. On the other hand, the literal attack on Bluto (already a bad guy even in American works) reveals how in this cartoon war “the enemy [is] not just the American military, but the American animation that had dominated Japanese screens before Pearl Harbor” (Gerow 2008, 10). If animation reflexively worked to build “Japan-American friendship” and intercultural

mutual understanding before the war, here it just as reflexively restructures those relations, from ally to enemy.

If *Sea Eagles* depicts foreigners satirically, then what about the cute ethnic Other figure? Once again, this trope is reserved for situations in which a complex negotiation of self and Other is required. *Momotarō's Divine Ocean Warriors* exemplifies just such a deployment of cuteness in its approach to animal characters and its more naturalistic style. Gone are the Fleischer-like cartoon caricatures. If in *Sea Eagles* a monkey could fall off a plane in flight and catch up to it by “swimming” through the air, in *Ocean Warriors*, such a thing is not thinkable. The animals now wear clothes, walk upright, and have almost human faces, sometimes even with lips, though their bodies are round and small like children's. They live in a world with cinematic depth, animated on Seo's own multiplane camera. They have personalities, families, and lives. In this feature film, a young dog, monkey, pheasant, and bear leave their parents and little siblings to join the army. They arrive on an unnamed South Pacific island where the natives, a miscellaneous group of kangaroos, tigers, jaguars, elephants, and the like, have happily built an airstrip to welcome Momotarō. The new arrivals spend some time educating the natives in Japanese and preparing their supplies, and then valiantly parachute into enemy-controlled territory and force the British commanders there to surrender. Momotarō handles the negotiations himself in an animated rendering of General Percival's unconditional surrender to General Yamashita in Singapore in 1942.¹⁶ The film ends with a shot of the heroic animals' little siblings back at home in Japan, practicing their parachuting skills by jumping from a tree onto a map of the North American continent.

¹⁶ The surrender of General Percival was also a favourite scenario among live action film-makers. See High 2003, 366-7 for a comparison of depictions of the event in *Momotarō* and works of live-action cinema.

Lamarre and Ueno, as I have mentioned, both describe the colonial dimension of Seo's depiction of Pacific Islander animals. *Ocean Warriors* stresses not only cooperation between the familiar animals of the Momotarō legend, but also their cooperation with a mass of exotic, diverse "Native" creatures who are shown as happy to work, in a sort of "fun colonialism" (Lamarre 2008, 85). All the soldiers are animals,¹⁷ which effaces the difference between them and enables a sense of quasi-ethnic commonality or community. Still, Lamarre notes that "with speciesism, we can never be entirely sure what a certain animal stands for—a race, a nation, an ethnicity, all of these or none of these.... We have a sense that racial distinctions are being made, and yet they are not racial distinctions exactly" (86). I would like to expand on this point to suggest that the distinctions in Seo's film arise around the issues of language and education.

In one of the cutest scenes of the entire film, a dog is trying to teach a class of native animals one of the two Japanese phonetic syllabaries, the simple *katakana* script, which he has written on a blackboard. He has success in getting them to repeat "A" (ア) words such as "*asahi*" (rising sun) together in a group, but when he tries to get individual animals to speak, they simply squawk or bellow or trumpet, each making its own chaotic sound. Growing increasingly unruly, the students begin to throw things, crawl under the desks, and generally misbehave. The dog is at a loss until two of his friends show up and begin to play a tune on the harmonica. This catchy, simple song of all the *katakana* characters, starting from the vowels "AIUEO," soon spreads through the class and out to other island animals who are doing laundry and chopping vegetables. It is even hummed by the "Japanese" animals who are cleaning and preparing weaponry at a long table.

¹⁷ Except, of course, for Momotarō, and even his "humanity" is in question, given his quasi-divine status. For more on Momotarō and his confrontation with the equally supernatural oni/British, see Dower 1986, 255.

As in “A Language All My Own” and even some musical segments of *The Three Caballeros*, music allows all the animals to sing together, and generates affection among them. But in fact, the work of this piece is to paper over what still must be presented as a problem to be overcome: the great variety of unrecognized languages the island animals speak, which leads to restlessness and rebellious behaviour among them as an audience. Having presented diversity as a source of discord, the film must establish cooperation as a form of “unisonance” predicated on Japanese language learning to the exclusion of all others, just as happened in long-held Japanese colonies such as Korea. This new ethnic community or *minzoku kyōdōtai* is perhaps not as dualistically hierarchical as the self/Other distinctions of Disney films. But neither is it entirely *nonhierarchical* or equitable. The community depicted in *Momotarō’s Divine Ocean Warriors* is rather, as Ueno (1993) says, dependent on a shifting, contextual hierarchy in which wild animals in all their diversity may leave the “alien” category and enter “community citizen” status on the condition that they sing along in Japanese and behave like civilized Japanese animals. At the same time, the fact that they need to be *taught* to do this still differentiates them from their tutors, who know it “naturally.” Cute community, once again, is premised on both identification and distinction, a defining feature of imperial internationalism.

Throughout this section, I have traced a number of international impulses in pre-war and wartime animated films. In the Fleischers’ well-intentioned yet subtly Orientalist short “A Language All My Own” and in Ōfuji’s playful appropriations of the Betty Boop character in “Defeat of the Tengu,” I demonstrated animators’ desires for international connection and suggested some of the structural limitations on their idealism. In Disney’s and Seo’s uses of cute ethnic Other figures for propaganda purposes, I showed how

animators participated in government-sponsored imperialisms in ways more subtle and complex than the usual ideas of cultural domination and hatred. In all of these cases, reflexive depictions of animation technologies and audiences play a key role in building both national and international consciousness.

While I have criticized almost all the films in this section for their complicities in discourses with racist and oppressive components, finally, I do not believe that these films are *only* oppressive and manipulative. Much less do I agree with assertions made by scholars such as Friedrich Kittler (1999) and Paul Virilio (1989) that film is *itself* a sort of warfare or weaponry, a “film bullet.” Besides relying on a kind of technological determinism—as if to say, “once a war machine, always a war machine”—this idea of the “film bullet” too closely corresponds with the “magic bullet” theory of audience reception, in which audiences are thought to passively receive film messages. Little Hans may be manipulated into declaring his hatred for the enemy rabbit, but many of his viewers were not so taken with Disney’s propaganda efforts. Eric Smoodin cites a letter written on Feb. 9, 1942 by a woman named June Hoffmann from the University of Connecticut, who says of Disney’s 1941 short “The New Spirit” that,

I do not think that our government should participate in this type of hate-producing propaganda. . . . in particular, the portrayal of German and Japanese men as beasts, the fiery scenes of destruction, and the snarling voice of the commentator will not arouse the kind of emotions which will seek a just and durable peace when this war is ended. (1993, 179)

Tellingly, Hoffmann does not call for rationality in the face of “hate-producing propaganda,” but for a more just, ethical form of emotional engagement. As I have shown, even sympathy plays a part in creating racial and national distinctions. But there is also a point at which the ambivalences and contradictions of the cute ethnic Other figure reveal

the instabilities in the process of community formation itself, and suggest the possibility of another imaginary beyond the univocality of the nation as imagined community. It is this imaginary that I will explore in considering how fan audiences develop practices of reading that are both affective and reflexive, and how their use of televised and online animation shifts from an international model towards a transnational mode of cultural engagement in the second half of the twentieth century, and beyond.

Part 2: After These Messages: Television Animation in the Age of “Posts”

After these messages, we'll be riiiiight back!

This little ditty, sung to an upbeat tune, was a constant refrain of Saturday mornings in my childhood home. It was a “bumper,” a short segment between the program and the commercials, on the American Broadcasting Company’s Saturday morning cartoon lineup, which I eagerly tuned into on cable television in Canada in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Each bumper was a cartoon in itself, a five-second claymation sight gag based on some comic reversal. In one, a singing fire hydrant turns the tables on a nosy dog by spraying it with water. In another, three lounge singers, a black woman, a white man and a white woman, croon the tune in harmony as they exchange heads, so that they end the song with faces and bodies all mixed up. Yet another shows a guitar-playing cowboy whistling for his horse, only to have it fall on his head at the end of the song.¹ With the ABC logo appearing on a red-brick wall in the background of every cartoon, these bumpers acted as station identifiers, not-so-subtle advertisements for the network. They also advertised—that is, drew attention to and made known—the fact that a commercial break was coming up.

The function of the bumper is simple. It acts like a punctuation mark, a comma in the grammar of television, allowing children to parse the structure of the broadcast and understand that the cartoon show is one clause and the commercial break is another clause, somewhat related but also distinct. Seen linguistically, the bumper appears to be a natural, even necessary, part of televisual communication. Like so much that seems natural about media, however, ABC’s Saturday morning bumpers were in fact the

¹ A compilation of the bumpers can be seen on YouTube at:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ywTZ3xgReiM&feature=Playlist&p=274B748218A19E6E&index=7>

product of a series of intense debates about the nature and effects of television. Bumpers were not an intrinsic element of American televisual language, but were made mandatory by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in 1974, under pressure from public interest groups aiming to defend young minds from unexpected commercial assaults.

The debates that brought the bumpers into existence spanned public and governmental forums, academic classrooms and family living-rooms, and the questions they raised continue to resonate in cultural and media studies today. To what extent can child audiences understand and critique what they see on television? How are young spectators constructed as vulnerable and manipulable, or as active and creative, audiences in commercial and public discourses about television watching? What happens when television programs are distributed in countries with different official policies and cultural attitudes about who views animation and what is appropriate for such audiences, such as Canada, the United States, and Japan? And how have the paradigms that informed earlier approaches to television cartoons changed since the 1970s, when Japanese animation targeted at adult fan audiences began to circulate more widely beyond national borders?

These questions guide the two chapters in this section on television animation. As in my previous chapters on cinematic animation, I continue to look at Japanese and American works that self-reflexively depict animation technologies and audiences. Here, however, I turn the focus to cartoons produced specifically for television at different moments in the 1960s, 1980s and 1990s, such as William Hanna and Joseph Barbera's *The Jetsons* (1962/1985), Tezuka Osamu's *Astro Boy* (1963/1980), and Watanabe Shinichirō's *Cowboy Bebop* (1998). The continuing reflexive figuration of animated

audiences found in these programs allows me to build on and expand some of the key issues for global animation introduced in pre-war cinematic animation, such as the representation/construction of animation viewing practices, issues of affective engagement and ideological manipulation, and formations of ethnic, cultural, and national identity in mass media. Along with tracing such broad continuities, I also reveal how the changing “mediascapes” of television, along with peripheral technologies such as the VCR and DVD player, contributed to a major shift in the kinds of “imagined communities” that could form across cultural differences at different moments in the late twentieth century. While film works before and during World War II were implicated in global structures of imperial internationalism, I contend that the postwar North American and Japanese animated television programs I examine reflected and helped to construct a powerful, multivalent discourse of media globalization as *postnational*.

The postnational mode of media globalization, as I have defined it in my Introduction, is based on promoting the flow of images, technologies, and capital across national borders perceived to be porous or vanishing. I call it “multivalent” because despite its own ideologies of borderless free flow, the postnational media economy did not spread at a uniform rate or manifest everywhere in the same ways. One of the most important vehicles of postnational media flow, the television set, was itself distributed unevenly, becoming widely owned in the United States in the late 1940s and early 50s, Canada in the mid-to-late 1950s and Japan in the 1960s.² There were thus many

² Experimentation with television broadcasting began before World War II in many nations, but it was not until after the war that it flourished. It began earliest in the U.S. with the founding of the major networks NBC in 1947, and CBS and ABC in 1948. Television sets were priced affordably in the post-war economic boom and the medium spread quickly, from 250,000 sets owned in America in 1948 to 17 million in 1952 (Cumo 2007, 88). In Canada, the CBC began television broadcasting in Montréal and Toronto in 1952. 9 out of 10 Canadian households had a television by the late 1950s, though the bulk of English programming was still imported from America (Filion 1996, 458). In Japan, regular television broadcasting began in

overlapping and clashing layers to “the postnational,” some of which remained embedded in inter/national frameworks.

As postnational media spread, however, certain commonalities began to appear among the different sites where it manifested. For instance, in contrast to cinematic propaganda animation, television cartoons created and re-created in various nations for global commercial distribution often positioned audiences along other axes than nationality, such as age in specially-targeted children’s programming and later genre preference among adults, especially science fiction fandom. In the coming pages, I reveal just how new kinds of cartoon viewers were created within the postnational media economies of animated television programming, and also how these viewers used emergent visual technologies to develop local and global fan communities. My analysis of postnational television’s animated audiences thus links the tropes of self-reflexivity established in the film era with the intertwined formations of consumer culture and fan culture that will become crucial to digital transcultural animation fan communities in the twenty-first century.

I have chosen to look at both consumer cultures and fan cultures in the following chapters because, as I argued in my Introduction, academic discourses on media globalization in general, and television animation in particular, are often polarized between the political economy approach, which condemns the oppressive commercialism of the culture industry, and cultural studies-style celebrations of active audiences’ appropriations of media texts. In much of the extant scholarship on animation, television

1953, but as Tsurumi Shunsuke reports, in that year there were only 1000 television sets in all of Japan, mostly located in restaurants and tea houses. Televisions were not affordable or widely owned by families in post-war Japan until the ’60s, and did not reach the 90%+ saturation levels seen in Canada and America until 1969 (Tsurumi 1987, 63).

cartoons have been figured on the one hand as a manipulative commercial force so invasive as to be “akin to statutory rape” (Kanfer 1997, 199), and on the other hand as a subversive new mode of expression that is “smarter than the average art form” (Wells 2002, 15). Neither of these views alone is sufficient for understanding the complexities of animation fan communities. In order to address both the critiques of TV animation’s undeniable roots in commercial broadcasting and the alternatives presented by proponents of grassroots fan movements, I devote a chapter to the benefits and limits of each approach, placing them in dialogue so that each may complicate and nuance the claims of the other.

In chapter 3, I focus on how the economics of increasingly globalized television production and distribution did in fact shape postwar animation styles and programming in the United States, Japan, and Canada. Taking the examples of two children’s science fiction series which depict child viewers, *The Jetsons* and *Astro Boy*, I explore the influence of “top-down” factors such as network policies and corporate sponsorship on the content of television cartoons, their global distribution, and their reception by adult activists and child viewers. My analysis of these factors draws on the work of media globalization scholar Koichi Iwabuchi, who criticizes the “culturally odorless” quality of Japanese anime produced by the multinational entertainment industry for consumption abroad. The texts of *The Jetsons* and *Astro Boy* support such theories in their tendencies to minimize cultural and ethnic differences within and between their respective nations in order to facilitate widespread distribution. To keep from over-exaggerating TV animation’s homogenized corporate quality, I also introduce a few “bumpers”: related yet contrasting examples which demonstrate of the limits of “top-down” approaches and

suggest the need for more nuanced attention to the particularities of fans' uses of animation in forming communities, both postnational and, later, transnational.

In chapter 4, I pick up on the theme of audience agency introduced in chapter 3 to describe the growth of a dedicated fan following for Japanese anime among science-fiction-loving adults in Japan and North America in the 1970s–90s. Drawing on the theorizations of affect and globalization proposed by scholars such as Matt Hills and Arjun Appadurai, I detail fans' methods of exchanging animation and of forming local and global communities through the imaginative and affective mediascapes of television. As I show, however, such flows of supposedly borderless postnational community are not without their own frictions. Watanabe Shinichirō's 1998 anime series *Cowboy Bebop*, a science fiction program about a group of vagabond bounty hunters drifting through a space-scape of screens, provides a perfect example of an animated attempt to re-imagine community in a world of mediated flow. In analyzing the successes and failures of the group depicted in this program, I signal the need to consider the risks of mediated communication, as well as its benefits. Considering such risks, I argue, is a crucial part of understanding the productive yet partial and imperfect frictive collaborations out of which online transcultural communities grow in the twenty-first century.

The Cultural Dupe vs. the Active Audience in Television Studies

To this point I have referred to the “political economy” and “active audience” positions on media globalization without going into much detail about how these debates are related to television, TV animation, or theories of “global flows.” I would like to clarify these relations now, as much informative scholarship on the debate has been done in the field of television studies. As a subfield of cultural studies, television studies has

been influenced in particular by the 1970s work of the British Birmingham school. Adherents of this school worked to reject or refine the “hypodermic needle” or “magic bullet” theories that underpinned much thought on film (especially propaganda), instead looking at “how media formed the means through which people...expressed their culture” (Spigel and Olsson 2006, 8). The “active audience” theory that resulted has had great impact, not only among scholars of Western media and media fandom, such as Henry Jenkins, but also on the study of global television culture. In the introduction to their collection *Planet TV*, Lisa Parks and Shanti Kumar cite precedents for their bid to form a field of “global television studies” in Ien Ang’s famous studies of various ethnic audiences’ interpretations of *Dallas*, and also in Eric Michael’s work with Aboriginal audiences in Australia, Canada and the United States, which considered “not only how indigenous societies were negotiating the globalization of television, but how they ‘reinvented’ the medium in the process” (Parks and Kumar 2003, 7). Such recognitions of audience agency are a vast improvement on the disempowering determinisms of apparatus theory.

And yet, the “active audience” theory is not without its critics, especially among television theorists using political economy approaches. Even Spigel and Olsson admit that “active audience” cultural studies, when used too loosely, risks becoming “a certain brand of work that simply embrace[s] mass culture by locating ‘resistance’ everywhere, refusing to analyze fully the constraints imposed by the culture industries” (10). More seriously, Ramaswami Harindranath, in his article “Reviving Cultural Imperialism,” has drawn attention to the uncritical “celebration of hybridity” (2003, 157) among scholars of global “active audiences.” He points out that the pervasive discourses of

“‘interconnection’ and ‘interdependency’ suggest a process of equal exchange, an equal partnership which belies the fundamental inequality in the flow of media, the flow of capital, and the international division of labor” (157). This is a valid criticism, and I will certainly not overlook such inequalities in the formation of animation fan communities. And yet, all too often political economy theorists commit the same sin as active audience proponents in reverse: rather than generating a brand of unqualified resistance, they make an industry of detecting structural oppression everywhere. Each approach seeks its ideal spectator, and ends up with a caricature: the rebel or the dupe.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the disagreements between scholars who favoured reception theory and those who favoured political economy grew quite heated. But the result since then has been not so much a solution to the debates as a tendency to drop them and refocus attention elsewhere. Spigel and Olsson briskly identify the next hot topic as “new media” (11). David Morley and John Curran, in the introduction to their 2006 *Media and Cultural Theory*, breath a sigh of relief as they state that “Nowadays, some of the debates that characterized this field in the 1990s...such as that between political economy and reception studies...do (happily) seem to have worn themselves out” (1). They imply that the issue has been old hat since the mid-90s, footnoting Lawrence Grossberg’s aptly-titled 1995 article “Cultural Studies versus Political Economy: Is Anyone Else Getting Bored of this Debate?”

As I hope my arguments thus far make clear, I am committed to moving beyond the “moral dualisms” of resistance and manipulation in my work on transcultural animation fan communities. In order to do so, however, I find I need to re-address them yet again. This is because much of the extant scholarship on television animation has

remained caught up in either the condemnation of TV cartoons as “glorified half-hour commercials” (Hilton-Morrow and McMahan 2003, 78) or the celebration of adult animation as subversive art.

Animated Debates

In general, I have found the condemnatory or dismissive approach to cartoons, often from an art-historical rather than a political economy position, more prevalent than the celebratory approach in animation studies. To date, there has been no single comprehensive history of television animation published in English.³ Histories of world and American animation published well into the 1990s, such as Giannalberto Bendazzi’s *Cartoons: One Hundred Years of Cinema Animation* (1994), Stefan Kanfer’s *Serious Business: the Art and Commerce of Animation in America from Betty Boop to Toy Story* (1997), and Michael Barrier’s *Hollywood Cartoons* (1999) follow pioneer animation scholar Leonard Maltin in focusing a great deal of their attention and praise on the art of film animation, while dismissing TV cartoons as commercialized rubbish. In his astoundingly comprehensive survey of world animation, Bendazzi relegates television shows to a few scattered pages. He proclaims that “the series has been a true straitjacket for American animation” (238), and describes the entire history of Japanese TV anime with the comment that beyond a few notable older shows, “this mass production requires little attention as far as creativity is concerned” (412). It is impossible to study these works in aesthetic terms, Bendazzi says: only an economic or social commentary could

³ Partial overviews in English include M. Keith Booker, *Drawn to Television: Prime-Time Animation from The Flintstones to Family Guy* (2006) and George W. Woolery, *Children’s Television, The First Thirty-Five Years, 1946-1981: Part 1: Animated Cartoon Series* (1983). There have also been edited collections published, such as Carol A. Stabile and Mark Harrison’s *Prime Time Animation: Television Animation and American Culture* (2003). But a definitive history comparable to Maltin’s *Of Mice and Magic* (1980; rev.ed. 1987) remains unwritten.

have any value (238). Barrier likewise grants television animation a page and a half in his afterword, mainly to note pessimistically that “When a cartoon maker takes the old films seriously and tries to capture their spirit, as John Kricfalusi did in his *Ren and Stimpy* series of 1991-92, the system cannot accommodate the films or their maker” (571).

Kanfer provides the most detailed information about television animation, devoting three full chapters in his book to the latter half of the twentieth century. Again, he characterizes—indeed, attacks—almost all later animation as little better than the sugar cereal and soldier toys it was meant to peddle. His chapter on TV animation is titled, after the contentious words of FCC commissioner Dean Burch, “Akin to Statutory Rape” (199). Kanfer judges Saturday morning cartoons to be “travesties of real animation... inferior to the creakiest efforts of Terrytoons, the low end of [cinematic] cartooning until Saturday mornings came along” (194). He adds that that despite their own cut-rate productions, the American networks “ABC, NBC, and CBS, convinced that domestic animation was still too expensive, imported shoddier products from Japan, and these in turn blighted the American output” (194). In these examples, nostalgia for “the old films,” elitist aesthetic value judgments, and knee-jerk condemnations of consumer culture form an unpromising platform from which to consider television animation.

Nostalgia, however, is a generational phenomenon, and there are now at least two generation of scholars raised on television animation who are prone to look on it with a more forgiving eye. Paul Wells is one such scholar. Wells’ earlier work does show the influence of Bendazzi in that it attempts to recover animation’s artistic merit by turning towards more avant-garde “experimental” short films and away from the “orthodox” animation styles of Disney and the “cheaply produced, highly industrialized cel

animation made in the USA and Japan [that] has colonised television schedules” (1998, 35). But in a later essay on American TV cartoons, titled “Smarter Than the Average Art Form,” Wells seeks to recuperate television animation by aligning it with the self-reflexivity of earlier film animation. He argues that animation’s

capacity for ‘self-figuration’ results in the idea that animation may be seen as a self-enunciating medium, literally announcing its intrinsic difference from other visual forms and cinematic imperatives. In many senses, this also underpins the view that the cartoon operates as a potentially non-regulatory or subversive space by virtue of its very artifice, and the assumed innocence that goes with it. Animation always has the excuse that “it’s just ink and paint” (2003, 16).

In this view, even limited animation is recovered into the discourses of art, as its creators “realized that the economic conditions which dictated change could also be exploited artistically” (17). Through self-reflexivity, “animation always enables alternative aesthetics and perspectives” (31). Susan J. Napier follows Wells in her seminal book on Japanese film and television animation *Anime from Akira to Princess Mononoke* (2001; rev. ed. 2005), arguing that “because animation and manga function in a non-referential realm, they may allow for a more complex form of viewer identification” (121). The result of such complex identifications is that anime, even at its most conservative, allows for more effective critiques of the real world than live-action film (124). These are two examples of the positive, even celebratory, mode of cultural studies, which relies on identifying resistance first and foremost.

Efforts to recuperate television animation aesthetics have also surfaced among Japanese commentators. As mentioned in my Introduction, postmodern artists and critics such as Okada Toshio, Murakami Takashi, and Azuma Hiroki, the key proponents of the “Gainax discourse,” have made much of the formal qualities of television anime and the self-conscious art and active forms of otaku reading it encourages (Lamarre 2006). In

Japan, however, even conservative media commentators find reasons to celebrate certain TV anime. Anime pioneer Tezuka Osamu once described rather wryly how those writing on his *Astro Boy* series “often imparted great philosophical meaning to the long pauses and limited action” and “assigned a high art motive to it...even calling it ‘uniquely Japanese’ and a clever application of the Kabuki tradition of *mie*, where actors freeze in a dramatic flourish” (Schodt 2007, 153). The phrase “uniquely Japanese” resonates with the nationalistic advertising for Ōfuji’s 1930s Chiyogami films, and with contemporary conservative *nihonjinron* (study of the Japanese) discourse. Indeed, articles by diplomatic corps members such as Yamada Akira’s “The Theory and Practice of Pop Culture Diplomacy: Calling Otaku Diplomats,” elevate television anime to a Japanese cultural art akin to *ikebana* and *shōgi* only cooler (2009, 68), an approach that has been criticized by Ōtsuka Eiji as a form of “cultural nationalism” (256) since at least 2005. In this view, then, anime announces itself as performative, and what it performs is Japan’s artistic tradition as national brand, all ready to circulate in the global marketplace.

By now it should be clear that animation’s reflexivity *alone* does not guarantee a radical politics or aesthetics. Reflexivity in itself is not an ideology, progressive or conservative. It is a means of positioning. It makes explicit how producers relate to the technologies, institutions, and audiences of animation, and gives viewers a potentially empowering chance to position themselves through identification with or rejection of a suddenly-visible model of spectatorship. But whether the positions they actually take are critical or complicit (or, more often, some combination of both) depends on many factors. As for the animation critics I’ve just discussed, the positions they take may be opposed,

but their terms remain for the most part within the familiar arenas of cultural studies: commerce vs. art, economic production vs. audience reception, oppression vs. resistance.

Flows and -Scapes

To understand why animation is framed in such polarized terms, we must look carefully at the kinds of discourses that surround media globalization, where pop culture intersects with power. Scholars widely recognize that new media technologies such as television have played a crucial role in establishing the “complex connectivity” (Tomlinson 1999, 2) of globalization. But as of yet, few can agree on whether this globalized mass media homogenizes culture under a global “hegemony of consumerism,” (Artz 2003, 4) or provides new ways for audiences to engage with others across the world from their own local context, forming global communities.

The model of cultural imperialism as homogenizing “Americanization” has been a mainstay of media criticism since the 1971 publication of Dorfman and Mattelart’s *How to Read Donald Duck*. There have, however, been attempts to move beyond such binaries, even within Left-leaning critiques of global media economies. Asian pop culture scholar Koichi Iwabuchi has challenged the binaries established in globalization research between global homogeneity and local heterogeneity, with its attendant oppositions of dominating Western commercialism versus resistant local traditions.⁴ Rather, he focuses on the *regionalization* of media influence, such as Japan’s attempt to claim a place in “the

⁴ See also Gholam Khiabany’s 2005 article “Faultlines In the Agendas of Global Media Debates,” in which he criticizes Lee Artz for associating homogeneity with “the intercultural dominance of the Western model” and hybridity with non-Western “cultural artists and audiences.” As Khiabany points out, this merely reifies oppositions between the “commercial, rootless, banal and pre-packaged ‘Western’ products and the ‘authentic’, ‘organic’ and deeply rooted culture of the ‘East’” (208).

real-time intraregional cultural flow within Asia” (2002b, 119) through both animation and live-action TV dramas.

Others see a more dramatic shift taking place away from national or regional capitalism toward a more multifaceted postnational cultural flow. Arjun Appadurai’s *Modernity at Large* is perhaps the best example. By proposing a number of intersecting dimensions of cultural flows or “-scapes,” such as financescapes of capitalism, ethnoscapes of immigration and diaspora, and mediascapes of information and imagery, Appadurai’s approach provides a more flexible basis for thinking about media globalization not only as the spread of multinational capitalism, but also as a process of forming affective relationships among people through multiple sites of engagement.

These two models of *flow*—the “intraregional cultural flow” of Iwabuchi’s “odorless commodities” and the “cascades” (1996, 150) of Appadurai’s postnational imaginaries—will be important for understanding *Astro Boy* and *Cowboy Bebop* as travelling texts. I will also, however, have occasion to question the pervasiveness of the “flow” metaphor itself.

Flow has been a keyword in television studies since the 1970s, finding its most influential expression in the work of British cultural studies founder Raymond Williams. In an apocryphal but oft-cited story, Williams recounts how he arrived one night in Miami, still dazed from travel, and tried to watch a movie on his hotel room TV set. He quickly found himself disoriented by the unmarked transitions between the original movie, the commercials, and trailers for other movies. The broadcast “came to seem—for all the occasional disparities—a single irresponsible flow of images and feelings” (1974, 91-92). From this experience, he formulated the theory that “this phenomenon of *planned*

flow is then perhaps the defining characteristic of broadcasting, simultaneously as a technology and as a cultural form” (86, my ital). Since then, flow has emerged as an essential concept in the study of television and new media.

As Mimi White observes, flow was also a key descriptor for political and economic studies of the globalization of media in this same period, as “both implicate television as an object of study in various forms of global mobility—tourism, international trade, ethnography, and diasporic communities” (2003, 94). White’s arguments resonate with Arjun Appadurai’s diasporic media ethnographies, and with more purely economic accounts of globalization as postnationalism. In his 1995 book *The End of the Nation State*, for instance, Kenichi Ohmae perhaps unintentionally mirrors Williams’ statements about the defining role of flow in television when he argues that “linkage to global flows of information is a—perhaps, *the*—central, distinguishing fact of our moment in history” (15), a moment when “traditional nation states have become unnatural, even impossible, business units in a global economy” (5). Flow, then, has become a metaphor that interlinks the formal structures of television, its mobile audiences, and the borderless world of postnational economic globalization.

And yet, I wonder: what would Williams have written if instead of turning on a movie that night in the early ’70s, he had arrived a little later and put on ABC’s Saturday morning cartoon line-up? In 1974, the same year his book *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* was published, the FCC passed its regulation on the use of bumpers in children’s programming, following several years’ worth of protests from children’s advocate groups demanding greater differentiation between commercials and programming. Just as Williams was describing planned flow as central to the structure

and culture of television, that flow was being disrupted by contestation in various public forums. So as I examine a few of the layers that make up the multivalent mode of postnational, postwar globalization in America, Japan, and Canada, I would like to keep in mind not only the flows, but also the breaks within television animations and audiences. What are the “bumpers,” the momentary snags, reversals, and switches in point of view, for Canadian children watching anime at home, or Japanese creators making works for global audiences, or any of a thousand and one other combinations of mediated mobility? The answer is coming up...after these messages.

Chapter 3. Perceptions of TV Audiences I: Couch Potatoes

There is little doubt that children's television animation today remains a devalued genre within the academy and within mainstream culture at large. A strong thread of nostalgia for "Golden Age" cinematic animation runs through critical commentary on television animation, and even TV's supporters tend to revalue it by comparison to more highly-esteemed forms of theatre and classic film. Some early television animators themselves shared the critics' views, lamenting the commercial strictures of television while longing for a bygone era of film quality and film work schedules. In an interview published in 1980, Bill Hanna, co-founder of the Hanna-Barbera studios recalled that

Back when we made M-G-M [theatrical] cartoons, we worked at a more leisurely, almost relaxed pace. There was infinitely more care put into the drawing, timing, sound effects, and the recording of the music. [...] Back in the Tom and Jerry days, I personally did a minute and a half of film a week; now I do as much as thirty-five minutes a week. ... The economics has a lot to do with it, of course. The economics of TV dictates the quality. (Peary and Peary, 25)

Japanese animators have expressed a similar sentiment with regards to their own media industries. Miyazaki Hayao, an animated film director who got his start in TV, wrote an article in 1989 about TV anime pioneer Tezuka Osamu, explaining that

In 1963, Tezuka created Japan's first TV anime series, *Tetsuwan Atom*, or *Astro Boy*, at the very low price of 500,000 yen per episode.⁵ Because he established this precedent, animation productions ever after have unfortunately suffered from low budgets.

This was the beginning of a problem, but I also think that TV animation was destined to have started in Japan, anyway, even without Tezuka, because of the nation's rapid economic growth. Without Tezuka, the industry might have started two or three years later. And then I probably could have relaxed a bit and spent a little longer working in the field of feature animation, using more traditional techniques. (Miyazaki 2009, 196)

Writing about a particular moment of technological shift, when the bulk of animation production moved from theatrical shorts and features to television commercials and series,

⁵ Approximately \$1389 per episode at an exchange rate of ¥360 to the American dollar in 1963.

these creators have a tendency to perceive with sorrow the passing of an era when animating was a more “relaxed” and more artistically rewarding profession.⁶ For both creators, the perceived drop in animation quality had to do not only with the properties of the new medium itself, but also with the changes in industrial practice it entailed: the demands of weekly production, the link to broader national economies, and the restriction of budgets kept competitively low.

This chapter considers seriously Hanna’s assertion that “The economics of TV dictates the quality”—the literal quality of the cartoons themselves, and the quality of experience television created among animation audiences. Hanna-Barbera’s *The Jetsons* and Tezuka’s *Astro Boy*, as programs that were created while TV production practices were being organized in the 1960s and then recreated to meet the medium’s changing technologies and audience needs in the 1980s, serve as key texts in defining how animation came to look and move on small screens in America and Japan, how it was consumed domestically, and how it was made to travel throughout the capitalist world of the late twentieth century.

In *The Jetsons*’ 1962 depictions of children and teens as boisterous TV fans, and in actual audience reactions to commercial children’s television programming in America, I show how even the most apparently active models of spectatorship may be inextricably bound up in the marketing practices of national mass media industries. I then turn to the ways in which national animation industries spread postnationally through the creation and re-editing of programs designed for global consumption starting in the 1960s and

⁶ Of course, the American studio era was far from utopian, as is amply demonstrated in accounts of striking workers, women restricted to low-wage manual tasks such as painting and inking, and conceptual artists and animators who were fired or quit because they did not fit the studio mold either artistically or ideologically. See for instance, Barrier 188 and 282-5 on strikes at the Fleischers and Disney studios in the late ’30s and early ’40s.

strengthening through the 1980s. The multiple versions of Tezuka's *Astro Boy* created in 1963 and 1980 provide a perfect example of how a single animated work may be adapted time and again for viewing in Japan, America, and in Canada through processes of both homogenizing "deodorization" and locally specific "reodorization."

Though each of these series is quite different in its origins, contexts, and motivations, they are both linked by their participation in a growing market for television cartoons within and between North America and East Asia in the latter half of the twentieth century. Just as film animation once circulated along the trade routes of imperial internationalism in the hemispheric Americas and the colonies of East Asia, so television animation was produced to flow in the free market, and can be seen to reproduce the capitalist and neo-imperial aspects of postnationalism. The cases of *The Jetsons* and *Astro Boy*, in their production histories and the ways in which they affected their audiences, suggest that acknowledging animation's intractable complicities in postnational capitalism is a crucial first step towards understanding the postwar growth of animation fan communities—though it should by all means not be the last.

What is Television Animation?

In using the term "television animation," I am describing programs intentionally designed by producers and their networks of distributors to be viewed on a TV set through broadcast, cable, or satellite feeds. I mention this because it is by no means certain that every cartoon one sees on television is "television animation."

The commercial broadcasting of animation in the United States had its roots in black-and-white material produced for cinematic exhibition, aired in half-hour compilation programs such as the Van Beuren Studio's *Official Film Cartoons* (1950),

the *Commonwealth Cartoon Package* (1951), including silent and sound works by Paul Terry and Ub Iwerks, and *Cartoon Carnival* (1956), which aired films as various as the Fleischer's *Betty Boop* shorts and George Pal's stop-motion *Puppetoons* (at least, those of Pal's works that were not deemed too racist to play. See Woolery 1983, 204). Warner Bros. studios had the biggest hit with *The Bugs Bunny Show*, which joined film shorts with newly-produced "wraparound" material and was reincarnated under varying titles from 1960 to 2000. Disney's theatrical shorts and features have likewise found homes on televisions worldwide. The Canadian Broadcasting Company's "Wonderful World of Disney" program, for instance, has been scheduled nationally on Sunday evenings since 1954.⁷ There are certainly rich grounds for a study of how animated works designed for one medium are received in another. But starting within a few years of 1960 in both North America and Japan, another form of animation developed that was specifically designed to play on television for contemporary TV audiences. Since my concern is to understand how animation reflexively depicts its own technologies and audiences, and how spectators themselves use such positionings to generate a sense of community, it is the television cartoon style known as "limited animation" on which I will focus.

By its very definition, "limited" or "planned" animation is distinguished by its cost-saving production methods in contrast to "full animation." Full animation is a painstaking process based on creating the impression of fluid, natural-looking movement. As developed during the Golden Age of film animation, it involved careful research into

⁷ The programming block titled "The Wonderful World of Disney" began on CBC as a re-broadcast of ABC's one-hour anthology program *Disneyland*, and still nominally exists as of 2010, independent of the now-cancelled American program. See http://archives.cbc.ca/days_to_remember/1311/7/ for 1967 CBC broadcast details and http://www.cbc.ca/programguide/program/the_wonderful_world_of_disney/ for the current rather spare website. Despite the title listing, live-action family comedies and animated films by other companies, such as Don Bluth's feature animations, are now aired in this slot as well under a generic "Sunday family film" label.

the motions of animals and humans, the use of rotoscoped movements from live action models, multiplane camerawork to evoke the impression of “movement into depth,” and the creation of round, solid-looking characters who could be imbued with distinctive gaits and faces designed for expression. At Disney studios, animators drew an average of 18 pictures for every 24 frames of film per second, with a full 24 pictures, one for each frame (animating “on ones”), used for faster or more delicate motions. While the second-tier animation studios used economical short-cuts such as animating “on twos” (12 drawings per second), *Felix the Cat* animator Otto Mesmer recalled that even in the earliest days at Sullivan studios, “If it was running or falling you had to have it on ones” (Barrier 1999, 33). In full animation, things must move along at any cost.

In limited animation, the kinds of economizing techniques used sparingly in films became the basic requirements for getting a show to air.⁸ Television animators began to work more often “on threes,” using six drawings per second, or even less. Schodt reports that in the 1963 *Astro Boy* series, a single image could be used in up to 18 frames, resulting in characters who seem to blink from pose to pose. Other money- and labour-saving tactics still common in TV anime today include panning slowly across a single image, sometimes called “*hiki seru*” or pulling cels in Japan (Lamarre 2009, 191), and holding on a dramatic still image which may use dynamic camera angles or abstract backgrounds full of “speed lines” to generate motion even in stillness. In both early Japanese and American cartoons, character designs were simplified and flattened, relying on a variety of different stylistic strategies such as bold outlines, matte colours, and

⁸ It should be noted that limited animation is not *essentially* a product of television. The United Productions of America (UPA) studio, founded by ex-Disney animators in 1943, pioneered a visually similar style in their Oscar-winning film short “Gerald McBoing-Boing” (1955). Still, even UPA moved into television production with a McBoing-Boing program, and limited animation has remained a hallmark of TV cartooning style. See Maltin 1980, 330-38.

segmented bodies to facilitate animation. Hanna-Barbera programs readily reveal how cycles—the reuse of a single set of movements over and over—became standard practice, as all their characters “walk” by moving their legs back and forth while their upper bodies remain still and stock backgrounds repeat behind them. With visual detail minimized, the plot is moved along by voice-over narration (a standard tactic of the openings of 1963 *Astro Boy* episodes) and quippy dialogue (heavily favoured by Hanna-Barbera). The result is a form that has come to be either derided as “illustrated radio” (Wells 2002, 78) or celebrated as a new aesthetic.

Who Watches Limited Animation?

Production is only part of picture when it comes to understanding television animation. Equally as important are channels of distribution and how viewers access them. Jason Mittell, in his article “The Great Saturday Morning Exile,” has explained the transformation of cartoons into a children’s genre by arguing that

production is not the primary agent of change in this case [i.e. the case of television cartoons.] Rather, the ways in which [cartoon] texts, both recycled and original, were situated through scheduling and cultural circulation, demonstrate how these practices came to link the genre to a set of shared assumptions that have remained associated with the cartoon genre to this day. (2003, 34-5)

By turning away from the usual definitions of TV animation based on its style or production to look at distribution, Mittell highlights the crucial role that television industries and sponsorship played in creating not only TV cartoons, but their audiences as well. Following the Mattel company’s great success advertising toys during *The Mickey Mouse Club* in 1955, many corporations became keen to create TV ads targeting children. In order to attract sponsors and maximize advertising revenues, television networks developed the strategy of “narrowcasting,” a process which not only targets a particular

demographic audience, but also “works to construct those audiences through... programming, marketing, sales, and measuring practices” (Mittell 41). In order to target children more directly, networks created the “Saturday Morning Ghetto,” a programming block into which all cartoons, even family-oriented prime-time series such as *The Flintstones* and *The Jetsons*, were pushed. In trade journal commentary, the Saturday Morning “kid vid” or “moppet market” was founded on two premises: that “kids will gladly watch recycled and repeated programs” and that “kids cannot discern quality of animation” (50). The endless reruns of limited animation provided by Hanna-Barbera, already cost effective from the production standpoint, thus became desirable from the networks’ standpoint as well.

In Japan, too, television animation was born out of the country’s post-war economic situation, a situation quite different from America’s. The domestic television animation industry in Japan, beginning in 1963, got its start slightly later than the American one, and was subject to a much sharper break between pre-war and post-war animation. This is because “[j]ust as the documentary had been somewhat compromised by wartime use, so the propagandization of animation worked against its postwar acceptance” (Richie 2005, 253). Under the restrictions of the American Occupation from 1945 to 1952 animators could not re-air old film footage (which was often burned), or even draw on the types of characters, stories, or theatrical underpinnings they had always used. Works that relied too heavily on traditional theatrical genres, or which did not have their screenplays submitted to American General Douglas MacArthur’s Civil Information and Education Section for approval in advance of filming, such as Ichikawa Kon’s just-completed kabuki-based puppet film *Musume Dōjōji* (1946), were promptly banned

(Richie 2005, 107; Anderson and Richie 1982, 162). Only animators who produced “safely non-feudal” (Richie 253) films on approved topics, such as Ōfuji Noburō,⁹ were able to continue their theatrical film careers under MacArthur’s new content regulations.

If none of the major pre-war film animators moved directly into television, however, it was not only a matter of ideology, but also a matter of infrastructure. Television sets did not become widely available in Japan until the 1960s, and as in many countries, early broadcasting relied on imported American programming to fill airtime. With economic forecasts rising, however, demand for domestic cultural productions grew. It was in this competitive situation that Tezuka Osamu founded his animation studio Mushi Productions in 1961.¹⁰ In order to make a deal with Fuji Television for a new domestic animation series based on his hit manga *Tetsuwan Atomu* (*Astro Boy*, 1951-68), Tezuka agreed to “a cost and production schedule that bordered on the inhuman” (Schodt 2007, 67). The network further sought sponsorship for the program from Meiji Seika, a confectionary producer (67).

If the links between confectionary corporate sponsorship and television cartoons seem similar to the American situation, however, the American networks’ style of narrowcasting was not quite so appropriate to the Japanese media environment. There was less of a “Saturday Morning Ghetto” effect due to the fact that Japanese children of certain ages attended school on Saturday mornings. Rather, prime-time series had much

⁹ According to Ōfuji’s own account, he was able to continue in film production when other propaganda animators were being purged because an American liaison officer in the Occupation’s film department saw some of his recent efforts at non-propaganda shorts, such as “The Spider’s Thread” (1946) and liked them. For the full story, see Ōfuji’s “Thirty Years of Silhouette Animation Film” (1956), 232.

¹⁰ Mushi Productions was not the first post-war animation studio. Toei Animation was founded in 1956 and within two years began producing feature films using the “Disney formula of presenting a traditional folktale with songs and plenty of cute animals” (Beck 2005, 158). “MushiPro” and Toei quickly came into direct competition on the small screen, with Toei releasing its first TV anime, *Ōkami Shōnen Ken* (*Wolf Boy Ken*,) in November of 1963, ten months after *Astro Boy*’s Jan. 1, 1963 debut.

greater success in attracting Sunday evening family audiences than Saturday mornings had attracting kids. The animated domestic comedy *Sazae-san* (1969-present), for instance, regularly gained ratings above the 25% mark in its Sunday-night timeslot (Lee 2000, 189) and far outlasted American prime-time hits of the '60s such as *The Flintstones* (1960-66). Partly for this reason, anime began as something that families and adults enjoyed as well. Still, the association of anime with a range of child-friendly consumer goods, including children's manga magazines, toys, and snacks, was also established and continues today.

As even this brief overview should illustrate, then, the 1960s saw an increasingly dense incorporation of producers, networks, and sponsors, which all together generated the visual styles (limited animation) and the ideal audiences (uncritical consumers) of television animation.

Contesting Television Animation

The position outlined above is a "political economy" view of television animation. As I have stated, however, this view often tends to flatten the social field in which animation travels. Mittell writes about how children were constructed as audiences, but not how actual children watched cartoons, a topic I will return to later in reference to the viewing of *Astro Boy* in Canada. For the moment, I would like to outline some adult reactions to television animation in the 1960s and '70s, because they demonstrate most clearly how sponsors, networks, and individual animators alike were caught up in a complex process of negotiation with both governmental and non-governmental organizations over children's programming in general, and animation in particular. In this period, the questions of who makes and watches television animation becomes less an

exercise in identifying individual artists or studios or candy companies, and more a question of the intricate connections between private industries and public demands.

An apt example from the American context is the Action for Children's Television (ACT), an advocacy group founded by mother and professional Peggy Charren in 1968 that profoundly shaped the way children's animation was made and viewed. Heather Hendershot's *Saturday Morning Censors* deftly reveals how ACT was neither a pawn of "corporate media hegemony" (Artz 2003) nor a source of unparalleled grassroots resistance. ACT was founded as a non-censorious reform organization. It did not aim to criticize the content of mass media texts or to demand an end to certain programming, unlike other media reform groups in the United States and in Japan, where parents' groups responded to "inappropriate" manga with the slogan "*Uranai, kawanai, yomanai*" ("Don't sell them, buy them, or read them") and set up garbage-bin collection sites (Schodt 1983, 133). ACT was not "against commercial television per se but against what it saw as the exploitation of children" by advertising (Hendershot 1998, 69). Its prime targets were the commercials for toys, sugary cereals, and candies that were embedded in children's animation through the processes of "host-selling" (when a character in the program promotes a sponsor's product) and through the near-indistinguishable proximity of animated programs and animated commercials in the "planned flow" of the television broadcast.

Ads that depicted "the alluring fantasy of entering the world of animation" (Hendershot 86) by showing live-action children interacting with sugary cartoon product-characters were of special concern. "Sugar commercials," Charren argued "call upon the child to make very sophisticated health judgments," even though at their stage of

cognitive development “they don’t know what a commercial is and lack the experience or maturity that adults have to treat commercials with some judgment” (Charren 1978 qtd. in Hendershot 83). Simply put, children cannot distinguish between cartoon fantasy and healthy reality.

This conception of child audiences (and later of fan audiences such as otaku) is not so different from the uncritical, imitative, manipulable “moppet market” of industry trade journals. By redeploying the “uncritical child” image as a “vulnerable child” image, ACT successfully pressured major corporations into eliminating host-selling and reducing the amount of commercials in children’s television from 16 to 12 minutes per hour (Kanfer 1997, 199). ACT also promoted the FCC regulations that made bumpers mandatory in order to provide children with some distinguishing markers in the flow of the broadcast.¹¹ Though they positioned young viewers as biologically manipulable at some points, they also believed in the power of family- and community-based education, attempting to teach children that, in Charren’s words, “they didn’t have to be victims, passively watching whatever the networks put before them” (qtd. in Kanfer 199). The ACT group itself, often cast as “militant mothers” in the media, stands as a counter-example to the claims of political economy critics such as Mittell, who place the agency even for media reception almost entirely in the hands of collusive networks and corporations.

If corporate decisions were affected by public protest, however, public interest groups did not stand in some ideally progressive realm outside commercial society. ACT

¹¹ The effectiveness of bumpers has been much studied by developmental psychologists, with inconclusive results. Some studies suggest that most children under the age of seven or eight simply cannot identify or understand the concept of commercials, while other studies appear to show that bumpers can be effective even among four-year-olds if properly deployed. See Dale Kunkel’s 2002 article “Children and Television Advertising,” 378-9 for an overview of several studies on program/commercial discrimination.

was in fact among the *least* progressive of the many media reform groups operating in the late 1960s and 1970s. Hendershot says that “at base ACT was ideologically compatible with corporations and the FCC” as a “white, nonfeminist, and non-‘extremist’” (74) group. Its concerns, couched in a conciliatory discourse of maternal protective instinct, could be used to pay lip-service to women’s issues and draw attention away from the demands of more confrontational media reform organizations, such as the National Black Media Coalition and the radical feminist National Organization for Women. Their non-censorious approach, based partly on “positive reinforcement,” saw ACT give awards to corporations such as McDonald’s for their token charitable gestures in sponsoring “good” PBS programming, further entangling private and public interests. ACT thus provides an example of the ways in which the most active audiences, the activists, can themselves be complicit in what they critique. This holds equally true for the animation texts themselves, as the reflexive, satirical, and ultimately conservative example of *The Jetsons* illustrates.

The Jetsons: “A typical American TV-type family”

Hanna-Barbera’s first full-colour television series, *The Jetsons*, originally aired from September 23, 1962 to March 3, 1963, in a 7:30-8:00 PM time slot on ABC. A prime-time flop with just 24 episodes produced, it went on to become one of the most enduring Saturday morning cartoons of its age. Those 24 shows lasted nearly 15 years in network reruns alone and gained the series the distinction of being one of only four pre-1980s animated programs to air on all three major major networks, ABC, CBS and NBC (Woolery 1983, 327). It was brought back into production in the 1980s, and both series

went on to play in syndication for years in many languages all over the world.¹² Though its premiere predated ACT's critiques by several years, similar anxieties about the effects of a commercialized media were already being glossed (explicated, and also smoothed over) within the diegesis of the show.

The Jetsons follows the format of Hanna-Barbera's longer-running series *The Flintstones* (1960-66) by taking a typical 1950s sitcom family and setting their lives in a distant time period. Where *The Flintstones* draws its humour from making modern conveniences out of Stone Age materials, *The Jetsons* plays every shiny new gadget imaginable in the 1960s to the hilt, especially advanced media technologies such as television. The Jetsons are above all, as George Jetson remarks, "a typical American TV-type family" ("Jetson's Night Out"). They watch TV and are shown on TV, their lives fantastically exaggerated by the non-indexical, self-reflexive character of animation. Because this TV family is so exaggerated, the show can be read as a subversive parody like *The Flintstones*, which Rebecca Farley argues "gently undermine[s] the familiar conventions of television representation" (2003, 55) by playing them up so self-consciously. But it is also possible to see the ways in which the program uses the comic and fantastic exaggerations of animation to contain the unsettling geopolitical changes that television brought into the home. In this light, *The Jetsons* may be seen as a re-affirmation of the dominant structures of family and nation in 1960s America, structures

¹² The second season of *The Jetsons* began in 1985, with 40 new episodes made that year, and another 10 in 1987, plus two made-for-tv movies and a theatrical feature released between 1988-90. Among the distributors listed for both series on the Internet Movie Database are companies located in the Netherlands (1965), West Germany (1971) and Japan (1987), where the Japanese dub was handled by Toei studios. See <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0055683/companycredits> for the distributors. See also <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0055683/releaseinfo#akas> for a list of some of the show's alternate-language titles (not including the Japanese title, which was "The Space Family Jetson" [*Uchū kazoku Jetoson*]). *The Jetsons* can still be seen in 2010 on speciality cable/satellite TV stations such as Teletoon Retro in Canada and Time Warner's Boomerang, available throughout the Americas, Europe, Southeast Asia, and Australia.

not as antithetical to corporate interests as reformers like Charren thought. The figure of the child-as-fan, in particular, stands at the locus of tensions between optimism and anxiety over the broadening world of television.

From the very opening credits, *The Jetsons* derives its comedy from juxtaposing the familiar stability of the sitcom and an animated science fictional flux, as ordinary routines take place in an extraordinary world. The show's catchy opening jingle invites viewers to "meet George Jetson" and his family members, "his boy, Elroy / daughter, Judy / Jane, his wife," as they speed to their proper places—school, the mall, and the office—in a glassy, streamlined flying car. Elroy's and Judy's schools look like nothing so much as airports built in the International Style of architecture that so often signified the "ultra-modern" or the "future" in mid-century film.¹³ George's place of employment, "Spacely Space Sprockets," is equally futuristic, all stylish white console desks and banks of computers. As the show progresses, George is shown whiling away his "exhausting" five-hour workdays, three days a week, by pushing the occasional computer button between catnaps or dictating to a robot secretary (that is, when he's not performing some outrageously demanding task like testing an indestructible suit for his bully of a boss, Mr. Spacely.) Jane's duties as a housewife likewise involve comical winks at the taken-for-granted convenience of modern household technologies, showing her complaining about having to dial up food from an automatic kitchen or push the button to activate a vacuuming robot that hands her tea as it works. Even their dog Astro is an advanced talking space-dog, and their maid an outspoken robot named Rosie.

¹³ See, for instance, Lee Hilliker's 2002 article "In the Modernist Mirror: Jacques Tati and the Parisian Landscape," which discusses the influence of Modern or International Style architects such as Le Corbusier in 1950s live-action comedies.

The world the family inhabits has the vertiginous, mobile, placeless quality of *flow*: cars fly, people glide on moving sidewalks, and all of the buildings, such as the Spacepad Apartments where the Jetsons live, slide up and down on tapering pillars that disappear off-screen. Never once does the camera show where the pillars are actually rooted. The ground, the very horizon line of the earth, is almost totally absent.¹⁴ There is no landscape to mark where the series is geographically set, only the blank-sky backgrounds of atmospheric space. There is not even any depth to space, just horizontal “animetic” movement across the plane of the screen. Even in this decentered, disembedded world, however, the nuclear family unit and each member’s place within it remains intact. Their orderly introduction by name and family role demonstrates how each character can be defined in fixed relation to George and to the environment they belong in, be it school or mall, home or office. This is the first step in manufacturing social stability out of the thin air of the future.

Hanna and Barbera were not the only television producers to at once defamiliarize and reify the sitcom family this way. By the 1960s, Megan Mullen explains, audiences were already growing used to—and bored of—the idealized “normal domestic life” scenario of such programs as *The Goldbergs* (1949) and *The Honeymooners* (1955). Producers were seeking ways to rework the formula by appealing to an audience which “can be assumed to be thoroughly familiar with plotlines and character types and therefore may be treated as insiders,” (2004, 67) competent and expert enough in the genre to recognize reflexive jokes about it. The result was the rise of “magicoms”:

¹⁴ The ground is shown in Episode 7, “The Flying Suit,” where the titular flying suit ends up falling to earth and being picked up by a homeless man. In a science fiction trope as old as Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis* (1927), only the disadvantaged live below. Even here, however, “below” is not the dystopian forest of tower bases we might expect. There are just a few light and airy one-storey buildings and some generic hills under a clear sky: a non-place sort of place, like every other background in *The Jetsons*.

programs such as *Bewitched* (1964) and *I Dream of Jeannie* (1965), which “invested otherwise ordinary domestic sitcom characters and settings with magical powers” (67). Following Linda Hutcheon, Mullen argues that both live-action magicoms and their animated counterparts may be seen as “postmodern parodies,” adding that “it is the complicity of [this form of parody]—its inscribing as well as undermining of that which it parodies—that is crucial to its ability to be understood” (68). Mullen’s reading of *The Jetsons*’ main themes tends to emphasize the program’s “undermining” or subversive aspects more so than its complicities. For instance, she describes the ways in which the “technologization of modern society” in the 1960s generated “a fear that patriarchal authority in the domestic sphere was being undermined by women’s control over the new household technology” (71). She then isolates instances in which George’s authority is undermined, painting him as “well-intentioned but a perpetual failure who most often finds his wife, children, and even his dog extricating him from difficult situations” (71). Certainly, many of the plots do follow this pattern. But in episodes that revolve explicitly around the Jetson *children’s* TV-based fan activities, the pattern of family relations shifts in significant ways.

A prime example is episode 14 of the 1962 run, titled “Elroy’s Pal,” which deals with the seven-year-old boy’s avid dedication to science fiction TV hero Nimbus the Great. The first shot of the episode establishes that Elroy is well beyond casual viewership. His posture and attention level as he watches TV mark him clearly as a fan: he leans forward in his chair, staring up at a huge wall-mounted screen with an expression of deep concern for his hero. If that were not enough, he wears a purple spaceman costume identical to the one pictured on the screen, save that Elroy’s helmet

visor is clear to show his face, while the television figure's visor is tinted black. When Nimbus saves the day, Elroy repeats his hero's catchphrase "It's Spaaaaace Magic!" in delight. As the episode progresses, he is shown to be an active member of the "Space Pals" fan club: "Captain Elroy" communicates with a lower-ranked member, geeky "Sub-lieutenant Willie," and uses a lengthy secret password to begin sensitive "business" conversations about club activities. His play-officiousness in club communications is endearing, even patronizing, in the fashion of the cute, precocious children of Disney shorts. And yet, in a very simple way, it is made clear that being a fan gives Elroy many benefits, such as a specialist language, a community of fellow-fans who share that language, and something to be passionate about. This model of affective viewing appears much more positive than that provided by another cute and emotional child-spectator I have discussed, little Hans in "Education for Death."

Still, in this case as well cuteness is not without ambivalence. As the use of the word "business" to describe club activities might suggest, Elroy's adoring imitations of Nimbus also place him firmly in the grip of corporate sponsors. The Nimbus show breaks off after just seconds of adventure plot to show a smarmy host figure enthusing about "that dee-licious cereal, Moonies!" He goes on to tell Elroy that Moonies, the "powerized breakfast food for all space magicians," now "comes complete with its own television set on the back of the package." It is literally a direct pitch: Elroy exclaims "Aw, you're kiddin'!" and the host responds by reaching right out of the screen with a television-cereal-box for Elroy to examine and then compliantly hand back. This moment gets laughs from a recorded adult audience on the sitcom-style laugh-track, suggesting a contemporary recognition of the satirical jab. Children's television and sugary cereals are

so closely joined that they may as well be a single product/technology flowing right into the home, crossing the boundaries of fantasy into reality. Years before ACT, Hanna-Barbera screenwriters had the marketing strategy of host-selling pegged, reflexively ribbing it in cartoon programs that were themselves thoroughly “cerealized.”¹⁵

Underlying the humour here are deeper anxieties about how Elroy’s fandom disrupts the routines of his family life. Jane calls Elroy to the dinner table, but he stays put to watch the Moonies pitch. He demands Moonies for supper, much to his mother’s aggravation, and takes a call from Sub-Lieutenant Willie during the dinner-hour by pretending it is about schoolwork. If his eating habits annoy Jane, however, it is George who is most bothered by the intensity of Elroy’s fandom. When Elroy wins a visit from Nimbus in a Moonies-sponsored contest, George is upset to the point of losing sleep over how much Elroy worships Nimbus. Jane attempts to placate her husband by remarking that “all boys have their heroes,” to which George responds, “Well, what happened to the way boys used to look up to their fathers?” Like Mullen’s “grey-flannel rebels,” the wives of the ’60s whose tech-savvy undermined male authority, Elroy’s idolization of Nimbus and his devotion to the mediated community of Space Pals have upset George’s place at the head of the family structure, so assiduously established in the opening credits of every episode.

The difference is that in this case, unlike in instances examined by Mullen, no one else gets George out of the situation. It seems at first as if he might be saved by fate: the great Nimbus writes claiming that he is cancelling the visit due to a cold. But George’s conscience, appearing as the classic “shoulder angel,” compels him to forestall his son’s

¹⁵ Hanna-Barbera’s Yogi Bear pitched Kellogg’s Cornflakes from 1961–63, while Post Cereals was a sponsor of *The Flintstones* from 1967–74 and manufacturer of the Pebbles breakfast cereal starting in 1969. See Woolery 1983, 104 and 315.

disappointment by donning the costume of Nimbus himself. Elroy thus receives two visits, in the comedy-of-errors plot used in so many episodes: one from the sick actor who decides to come after all and one from his father in disguise. Through real-life comparison Elroy learns that Nimbus is not so great after all. In another well-worn joke, the actor is short and only “looks taller on TV.” His own dad may be an incompetent space magician, but he is still, Elroy cheers, “the greatest guy in the whole galaxy!” Against media glitz and fannish delusion, the order of real life and the nuclear family are re-established.

“Elroy’s Pal” was not the only episode to use this storyline. The series’ second episode, “A Date With Jet Screamer,” used a similar plot with a similar denouement to address the potentially disruptive energies of young female fandom. In this episode, Judy Jetson is a prototypical pop star fan: she adores teeny-bop rocker “Jet Screamer,” plasters her walls with his picture, and has fellow fans over to her house to dance the “Solar Swivel” along with his music video (a prescient touch, decades before MTV). Like Elroy, she enters a contest to meet Jet Screamer, and once again George becomes unreasonably jealous, to the point of trying to sabotage her. He replaces her song-contest lyrics with a nonsense “secret code” Elroy uses with his friends. Of course, one line from Elroy’s code—“Eep Opp Ork Ah Ah’ means ‘meet me tonight’”—has a certain pop-friendly suggestiveness, and Judy wins the title date with Jet Screamer. With George tagging along eavesdropping, the date becomes a series of misunderstandings and double-entendres. For instance, Jet Screamer describes how he “like[s] to keep a string of beauties around, you never know when you gonna need one” in reference to owning multiple cars, and not, as latecomer George assumes, having a stable of racy girlfriends.

The fact that Judy professes to find Jet's descriptions of his "big ones, little ones, fast ones" (again, cars) "thrilling" is what disturbs George the most. Throughout the episode, as scholars have argued of Elvis fandom and Beatlemania, it is the female fan's active expression of erotic interest in the object of her adoration that is most threatening to patriarchal authority.¹⁶ That is not to say that Judy can be called feminist or empowered as a fan, though: unlike Elroy, who at least takes on a leadership role among the Space Pals, her activities fall well within the stereotypically accepted "feminine" practices of swooning and sighing "whatever you say, Jet" to the cocky star's every suggestion.

Still, the Jet Screamer performance Judy attends does have an unusual sense of energy. In a scene reminiscent of Donald Duck's libidinally-charged trip through the neon lights of Mexico City in *The Three Caballeros*, the episode dips heavily into surreal, abstract geometric forms for the song sequence, joining the characters' bodies and the music in ways only animation can. Jet and his backup singers perform against an all-black background on coloured ovals that slip them back and forth as if on ice; he and Judy skim through a starry background; and a very rough approximation of a hand-shape moves over psychedelic patterns of brightly-coloured triangles, concentric circles and wavy lines that can only be inferred as guitar strings. Judy contributes a gasping scream of delight to the song while throwing her arms in the air. As one of the most unrestrained moments in the series, the song itself has gained some vocal fans, being covered by the campy punk act "The Dickies" and the alternative rockers "Violent Femmes" in the 1980s.

¹⁶ See, for instance, Barbara Ehrenreich, Elizabeth Hess and Gloria Jacobs, "Beatlemania: Girls Just Want to Have Fun" in Lisa A. Lewis' *The Adoring Audience* (1992), especially pages 90-97.

As in “Elroy’s Pal,” however, George once again finds a way to safely reposition himself as the real star of the show. At Jet Screamer’s performance, he pays off a drummer and takes over on the “boom-booms” himself. Judy is at first horrified to see him sitting at the drum kit, but George does so well in his opening solo that he is appreciated and gains an appreciation for Jet Screamer’s style of music. By the end of the episode, he becomes president of the Jet Screamer fan club, and is the apple of his once-more innocent daughter’s eye. In both of the episodes I have analyzed, George overplays the mannerisms of the TV stars his children love to win back their attention, crowing Jet Screamer’s catchphrase “Baby, baby, baby!” as well as Nimbus’ “Spaaaace Magic!” But despite his apparent induction into their world, he has no connection to fan *community* the way his children do. He is not shown communicating with Judy’s fellow Jet Screamer fans or with any other Space Pals besides his own son. The point is not that George has truly embraced media fandom, but that he has restored domestic harmony and his place in it. If usurping external influences enter the Jetson family home through the television, George is finally able to domesticate them in a parodic imitation that does as much to inscribe as to undermine his authority.

Why, at this point in time, was it important to recontain media fandom and uphold the family unit in such a way? I would argue that the reaffirmation of the nuclear (age) family went beyond the household level to encompass issues of national identity. After all, the Jetsons are self-avowedly “a typical *American* TV-type family.” Tina Stockman argues that the program critiques the future as “bleak, science-dominated, and lonely” (1994, 7) in order to glorify by contrast the comfortable, “homey” present of middle-class 1960s America and defend it against the chilling externalities of the Cold War.

Anachronistically, she analyses an episode from the more sci-fi-oriented 1987 series to prove this point, introducing numerous errors in character and place names along the way. But the anxieties surrounding national and international relations that she identifies do add a dimension to my reading of the 1962 episodes, suggesting the ways in which the construction of the family was also the construction of a particular view of the nation from the inside out.

Upon closer inspection, the image of the family and the world they inhabit in *The Jetsons* is rigorously majoritarian, the middle of the slipstream road. Unlike the working-class Flintstones, who go to bowling alleys and fall victim to get-rich-quick schemes, the Jetson family is middle-class, white and white-collar, as is almost everyone they know. In their lives, there are no visible ethnic minorities—a not uncommon feature of 1960s television animation, where even the black maid, Mammy Two-Shoes, in Hanna and Barbera's cinematic *Tom and Jerry* shorts was repainted white and turned into an Irish maid for television broadcast. (The Irish, apparently, were still acceptable targets for stereotyping.) Aurally, New Jersey and Southern Belle accents are used for comedy, but black-coded voices are avoided. There are no foreign visitors to the Jetsons' home besides celebrities, Mr. Spacely, and, in one episode, George's father. Even the family's stage of action is generally circumscribed. Elroy says he is going to Siberia for a class trip, and Judy asks to go to the tropics after school, but the only locations characters are shown travelling to are parodically American ("Las Venus," a mechanized Wild West Dude Ranch) or neutral (the moon, uninhabited planets).

In short, along with the potentially disruptive movements of young TV and music fans, all traces of contemporary conflict between classes, races, and nations are smoothed

away. Middle-class consumer culture is parodied, in the postmodern fashion that inscribes as it undermines, but more contentious national and international issues such as the civil rights movement or the Cold War are neatly glossed over. The economics of TV had a definite impact here. As Hendershot points out, American television networks were under slowly increasing pressure to self-censor anything that might offend audiences enough to get a show cancelled. The most blatant racist caricatures, such as George Pal's "pickaninny" Jasper (originally created 1942-6), were taken out of television cartoon compilations in 1957 after a decade of being "criticized by Negro and white newspapers, organizations and notables as perpetuating the myth of Negro shiftlessness, fear, and childishness" (*Ebony* magazine 1947, qtd. in Cohen 2004, 58). The Latino stereotype Speedy Gonzales was also taken off the air in the 1970s due to "pressure from Latino activists" (Hendershot 1998, 106; see also 40-41). This trend, as Hendershot notes, indicates not the end of racism but simply its elision. Without even an ambivalently appealing "cute ethnic Other" appearing on *The Jetsons*' screen, the end result is a view of America approaching the homogeneity for which Hollywood is so often (and so unfairly) condemned. It is as if the world and all of outer space *is* white middle-class America, a "postnation" made universal by the very normality and placelessness it constructs in its depictions of TV animation and audiences.

In this way, the reflexive portrayal of television in *The Jetsons* allows conservative national ideologies to be reinscribed through the very medium that promises (or threatens) to provide a world of wider experience.¹⁷ If the show depicts postnational spaces of flow, they are ultimately the *planned* flows of television, carefully re-contained

¹⁷ Other 1960s episodes that directly address television include "Elroy's TV Show," "Miss Solar System," and "TV or Not TV," which all end with family members reunited and back to their proper places after some television-induced upset.

within commercially-compatible conceptions of family, place, and nation. As I have shown in the case of Disney films, however, even works which tacitly assume a particular American audience are never *only* viewed by that audience. They must also enter into the actual, and rather more fraught, field of cross-cultural reception. To discuss cross-cultural reception more thoroughly, it is necessary to take another case, one in which postnational distribution was not only the eventual result but also the initial aim of the text.

On the Cultural Odour of *Astro Boy*

In 1963, as *The Jetsons* struggled in prime-time on ABC, another science fiction program was building steam in Japan: Tezuka Osamu's foundational black-and-white anime *Mighty Atom*.¹⁸ Like *The Jetsons*, *Mighty Atom* is also set in a futuristic media-saturated world of flows, in which cars and characters alike can fly. And even more strongly than *The Jetsons*, it focuses on the figure of the precocious, technologized modern child. Its hero, Atom, is a boy-shaped robot created by the brilliant but unstable scientist Dr. Tenma to replace his biological son Tobio, who has been killed in a traffic accident. When Tenma rejects his creation because it cannot grow like a real child, Atom finds safety with the kindly head of the Ministry of Science, Dr. Ochanomizu, who creates a robot mother and father for the mechanical "orphan." But unlike *The Jetsons*, where the home forms the main stage for events, Atom's family is more of a background from which he can securely have adventures and fight criminals. Though he gets his new parents at the end of the second episode, he does not go home or even interact with them

¹⁸ Throughout this chapter, I will use the title *Mighty Atom* (Tezuka's own preferred rendering of "鉄腕アトム" or *Tetsuwan Atomu*) to denote the Japanese-language show, and the American title *Astro Boy* to denote the various English-language versions. I will also use the character name "Atom" to refer to the Japanese-speaking character, and "Astro" to refer to the English-speaking character. I hope that this will avoid confusion about which of the program's many incarnations I am addressing.

at all in the next episode, or the next one, instead visiting exotic locations such as Mars and a pseudo-Middle Eastern desert on his own. From even this brief synopsis, it should be clear that *Mighty Atom*, while sharing the science fiction genre with *The Jetsons*, is a more fantasy/adventure-oriented work with a wider scope of action. It takes place, as Saskia Sassen might say, in a different *scale* of globalization: the scale of the postnational.

One reason for this difference in focus is that unlike the nationally-oriented domesticity of *The Jetsons*, *Mighty Atom* was not conceived to appeal only to Tezuka's established Japanese fan base. Rather, it was designed as a globally mobile program from the start, and was drastically remade to suit the changing times and places of its airing. There have been three separate Japanese television versions to date: the black-and-white 1963-66 series (193 episodes), the colour 1980-81 series (52 episodes), and the computer-generated 2003-04 series (50 episodes). (I will not be discussing this last version for reasons of both page space and time period.) The programs have appeared around the world in numerous translations, from Arabic to Tagalog. The 1980 series alone boasts two separate English-language dubs: a version produced by Nippon Television with American voice actors that was broadcast in Australia and a very limited area of the United States, and a separate Canadian version with dubs in English and French, produced by Montréal-based company Via le Monde for broadcast on Radio-Canada/CBC.¹⁹

¹⁹ See Patten 2004, 335-36 for the Australian episode titles and broadcast order. The Australian/American version is the one currently available on DVD. The Canadian version remains officially unreleased, but videotape recordings of the opening and closing titles with production credits have been posted, along with a few episodes, by dedicated Canadian fans on YouTube. The English credits are available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9t935HMEEEA&feature=related> and the French credits at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EfEvsjIqeis>.

Through its many versions, *Mighty Atom/Astro Boy* may be seen as a perfect example of what Koichi Iwabuchi calls a “culturally odorless” product: a hybrid and consummately adaptable commodity which paradoxically strengthens Japanese “soft power” by effacing its national character for global markets. In this way, *Astro Boy* is perhaps not so different from *The Jetsons*, which by Iwabuchi’s criteria could be called “culturally odorless” in the American context. As I will show, however, differing social expectations and industry regulations surrounding issues of child audiences, commercialism, and animation did result in texts that were “deodorized” in various culturally-contingent ways. This is evident particularly in the 1980s Canadian *Astro Boy*, where the child as television character and television fan is a key figure in ways not found in other broadcast versions.

First, let me begin at the source: the Japanese production and distribution of *Mighty Atom*. By the early 1960s, Toei animation studios had begun to lay the groundwork for the international distribution of anime by exporting their animated feature films to the United States, though with little success (Patten 2004, 22). When Tezuka saw the American limited animation series being aired in Japan, he became convinced that he could make such television cartoons and export them as well (Schodt 2007, 66-7). Schodt recounts that “Tezuka had anticipated a possible sale to the United States when making the first pilot episode of *Mighty Atom*” (77). He was not wrong to do so. The program premiered on January 1 and “[b]y February 1963 lawyers had put together a draft contract giving NBC the option to broadcast fifty-two episodes of *Mighty Atom* for a minimum guarantee of around \$520,000” (78). The show had been pitched to NBC as “Pinocchio with robots,” so the network handed it over to Fred Ladd, a New

York producer/director who happened to be working with Belgian director Ray Goossens (*Hergé's Adventures of Tintin, Asterix the Gaul*) on a sci-fi animated feature called *Pinocchio in Outer Space* (1965). The American-Belgian co-production featured a whale named after Disney's "Monstro," "Astro," and as Ladd recalls, it was from this haphazard network of influences that the first English-language "Astro" Boy was born (Schodt 81). It was broadcast in America beginning September 7, 1963, just eight months after its Japanese premiere.

Given this genesis, Japan's first television anime is an exemplary case of postnationally-oriented animation, contrasting with the nationally-based tack Hanna-Barbera took with *The Jetsons*. But what does it mean to be "postnationally-oriented"? What is "postnational animation" like? In the case of *Mighty Atom*, it would be easy to argue that "postnational" is in fact another term for "Americanized," following the kind of supposedly unmarked and yet decidedly white middle-class American quality of *The Jetsons*. Schodt reports that even in the original Japanese production, Tezuka "tried to make the show as culturally neutral as possible" (77). He "deliberately tried to anticipate the feelings of foreigners and to avoid any imagery they might regard as too 'Oriental' or 'exotic'" (86). This meant using English lettering in printed pages and signs, and eschewing Buddhist and Shinto images for "Christian motifs such as churches and crosses" (86). Though cultural misunderstandings meant that some of Tezuka's insertions were edited out again (notably his more irreverent uses of Christian imagery), his intention was to produce a global text by making it less identifiably Japanese and more palatable to an imagined Anglophone, Christian, American audience.

That said, it is a simplification to call any introduction of Western imagery into a non-Western text “Americanization.” Certainly, it is not uncommon for anime creators to aim for cultural neutrality by erasing Japanese-ness from their works. Tomino Yoshiyuki, creator of the popular *Gundam* franchise (first series 1979-80) claims that he purposely “tried to avoid having ethnicity” and “tried to remove all cultural elements” in his science-fiction epics (Carey 2005, 97). Koichi Iwabuchi has also cited Oshii Mamoru, director of the international hit *Ghost in the Shell* (1996), as claiming that “Japanese animators and cartoonists unconsciously choose not to draw ‘realistic’ Japanese characters if they wish to draw attractive characters” and use Caucasian models instead (2002b, 28). This leads Iwabuchi to argue that Japanese cartoons (along with comics and consumer technologies like the walkman) are “culturally odorless commodities,”

cultural artifacts in which a country’s bodily, racial, and ethnic characteristics are erased or softened. The characters of Japanese animation and computer games for the most part do not look “Japanese.” Such non-Japanese-ness is called *mukokuseki*, literally meaning “something or someone lacking any nationality,” but also implying the erasure of racial or ethnic characteristics or a context, which does not imprint a particular culture or country with these features. (28)

Such odourlessness is partly a result of the “incorporation of Japanese, and other non-Western, media products into the Western-dominated global distribution network” (38). As I have shown, the practice of effacing the actual diversity of “a country’s bodily, racial, and ethnic characteristics” also took place in American programming such as *The Jetsons*. But at the same time, Iwabuchi stresses that the Japanese practice of making culturally odorless commodities is *not* just an imitation of American media homogenization. It is not induced by the “unidirectional flow of culture from the dominant (in most cases the United States) to the dominated” (39), as in Dorfman and Mattelart’s centre/periphery model of cultural imperialism in Latin America (1971; see

also Mattelart 2003). It is rather a result of the decentred and recentered integration of production and distribution industries in many nations, each of which contributes, however asymmetrically, to the process of making animation global. Iwabuchi refers to this process as “*transculturation*” (40) and uses the term “transnationalism” to describe Japan’s approach to media globalization, but in practice it is a form of postnationalism. As in Ohmae’s view, the new cultural economy is marked by an emphasis on “overcoming a nation-centric view of global cultural power” (Iwabuchi 41) and instead “recentering” globalization on multinational corporations and regional trade units, particularly East and South East Asia, where much of his research is conducted.

When it comes to *Astro Boy*, anime scholars such as Brian Ruh have followed Ohmae and Iwabuchi in arguing that “Astro Boy supports the argument against the idea that the globalization of television and popular culture is necessarily a one-way flow from the United States to the rest of the world” (2009, 212), as in the era of cinema animation, but represents a new “glocalized” (211) form of media industry. And in looking more closely at the show itself, it does seem that the global circulation of *Astro Boy* across the nations and the decades of the latter twentieth century reveals such a process of glocal or transcultural deodorization.

Consider one simple incident from very early in the series, the story of the “Robot Circus,” across the Japanese and English 1960s and 1980s versions. Unlike *The Jetsons*, the Japanese-language black-and-white version of the Robot Circus story in fact contains references to some quite contentious social issues. In it, Atom is sold by his disillusioned creator Dr. Tenma to a circus, where he is forced to fight in a robot gladiatorial arena. He is rescued from overt slavery by Dr. Ochanomizu following the

declaration of a “Robot Bill of Rights,” which is announced on a television news broadcast depicting massive crowds of 100,000 robot civil rights protestors cheering for their freedom. This was a timely image of TV, given that in August 1963, the month before *Astro Boy* began to air in America, televised news broadcasts were showing the historic March on Washington in support of Kennedy’s Civil Rights Act.

The 1963 American dub of this episode kept the protest scene, but removed a shot of the ownership contract declaring *Astro Boy* as property which had been carefully rendered in English by Tezuka. Director Ladd explicitly stated that it was taken out because “it evoked associations with slavery” (Schodt 2007, 85). With any possible historical referent to African-American slavery removed, however, the protest of the robots in the American version has less resonance with 1960s African-American struggles to overcome the continuing social repercussions of that past, including racial segregation and discrimination. It renders the robot protest more fantastic, along the lines of the “robot uprising” movies seen in Western science fiction. The American version thus somewhat “deodorizes” the historical aspects of ongoing racial discrimination, though in fact Tezuka’s own work (particularly his manga series) addresses it in many complex ways.²⁰

The 1980 colour remake steers even farther away from dangerous waters by avoiding any depiction of selling or protests. In the Japanese colour version, Atom signs away his own freedom when he is talked into joining a Disney-like circus featuring robot hippos in tutus and a mechanical flying baby elephant. It is no longer a vicious gladiatorial arena, but a site of comic (if coerced) performance. Even this apparently

²⁰ For a more detailed discussion of race and robots in *Mighty Atom*, see Schodt 2007, pg. 123-8. For more on multiethnic communities in Tezuka’s other manga and anime, drawing directly from the depiction of multiethnic empire in wartime shorts, see Lamarre’s 2010 article “Speciesism Part II,” cited in chapter 2.

more “benign” version of the circus occasions a string of (de)localizations, of which the Canadian adaptation appears to be the blandest of the bland. In the Japanese episode, the jab at Disney is accompanied by a subtle geopolitics of competition: the deceptive circus is stated to be in America, and Atom, now described as an example of super-advanced *Japanese* technology, is repatriated by Dr. Ochanomizu, a self-proclaimed “Japanese scientist” (“*Nihon no kagakusha*”). In the Australian/American version, it is mentioned in passing that the circus is in Chicago, building a connection between the circus owner and gangsters, but the renamed Dr. Elefun is now a scientist from some unnamable place he only refers to, awkwardly, as “my country.” Finally, in the Canadian version, neither America nor Chicago nor a “country” are mentioned. Rather, Japan becomes a city called “Futuropolis,” a high-tech global capital in an apparently stateless world, as so many globalization scholars forecast (e.g. Deibert 1997).

Besides the liberally-translated dialogue, the Canadian version also removes a great deal of footage, to the point that the “Robot Circus” episode begins at what is nearly the halfway point of the Austral-American episode with the same title. Most of the cuts involve violence, as the Montréal producers, following stricter Canadian broadcast regulations, deleted or altered even implied off-screen violence, such as the snapping sound of a whip as the circus ringmaster threatens Astro. The end result is that *anything* deemed potentially disturbing must be cut so that the program will flow smoothly on young Canadians’ screens without ruffling any feathers, public or commercial.

Having argued thus far for the impact of industrial regulation, complicit public protest, and national/postnational economies on animation and its audiences, I now feel it necessary to introduce a “bumper.” I find Iwabuchi’s argument that culturally odourless

commodities are created through acts of “appropriating, hybridizing, indigenizing, and consuming images and commodities of ‘foreign’ origin in multiple unforeseeable ways” (2002b, 46) to be compelling. If this is the case, however, I wonder if “odourless” is really the best descriptive term. Odourlessness or “deodorization,” after all, connotes the removal of scents, something based on censorious reduction. In his article “How ‘Japanese’ Is Pokémon?” Iwabuchi cites the local specificities that are removed from anime to create a globally accessible “*de-ethnicized and cultureless*, virtual version of Japan” (2004, 61, my italics). Ruh likewise reads the American localization of *Astro Boy* as a process of cutting out “foreign” Japanese elements (2009, 219), and I have followed them in focusing on edits and elisions in my analyses of *The Jetsons* and *Astro Boy* so far.

But Hendershot argues that censorship should not be understood only as the action of scissors and eraser, prohibition and effacement. Rather, “censorship is a *social process* through which the politics of class, race, gender, violence, and other potentially ‘problematic’ issues are deconstructed and reconstructed, articulated and scotomized” (1998, 1). In this way, changes to the *Astro Boy* program due to specific Canadian approaches to children’s broadcasting can be seen as both removing *and adding* local “odours,” evoking a different set of physical practices, and so different bodies in the act of spectatorship. To illustrate this process, I will conclude chapter three with a look at Via le Monde’s most significant addition to the Canadian version of *Astro Boy*, an educational segment about media literacy called “Geronimo’s Report.”

The concept of “Geronimo’s Report” is simple. At the end of each episode, using re-edited footage from elsewhere in the series, *Astro Boy* is shown entering the office of Dr. Peabody (the Canadian name for Dr. Ochanomizu/Dr. Elefun.) “Oh, it’s you Astro,”

Peabody says. “Hurry, Geronimo is waiting for your report.” A close-up of the massively complex-looking computer Geronimo is shown as it flashes its lights, beeps, and states that it will record Astro’s report for the “archives of the Institute.” At this prompt Astro launches into a detailed retelling of the episode that just aired, conducted in voice-over with clips from the show. Then, over further clips from the opening credits, an adult female narrator speaks warmly and directly to the audience, saying,

Have you watched closely, and especially listened carefully, to Astro’s report? Yes, I’m sure you have. Now, quick, pick up a pencil and a piece of paper to write down which error, I repeat, which error Astro made on purpose in his report to the computer Geronimo in order to play with you. Did he make a mistake on a name? A place? A detail of the adventure that you’ve just seen? Can you remember what it was? Compare your answer with those of your friends, and may the best player win!²¹

After a preview of the upcoming episode, Astro Boy is shown chiming in with one last message. Winking directly at the camera with a finger to the side of his nose, he says “Remember friends, our game will continue in the next episode!”

This fourth-wall-breaking segment lasts nearly four minutes, a significant amount of time in a program that only runs for half an hour. The reason for it, first and foremost, was to keep the show in compliance with broadcasting regulations in Canada, and especially in the province of Québec. While American children’s broadcasting in the 1980s became increasingly deregulated and market-driven under the Reagan administration, Canadian broadcasting operated under a dual public/private system, in which official bodies such as the Canadian Radio-Television Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) worked in tandem with coalitions of commercial broadcasters to create children’s programming policy. Along with codes of content regarding “ethics,

²¹ This text is taken from the Geronimo’s Report segment available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PvcDpPSm68&feature=related>

violence, and stereotyping” (Lisosky 2001, 828), the CRTC and self-regulating networks also devised policies that greatly reduced, and in Québec completely eliminated, commercials during children’s programming. This meant that Via le Monde had to remove things that were deemed contrary to the dominant “moral and ethical standards of contemporary Canadian society” (829), and at the same time to fill up the minutes that were allotted to commercials in Japan and America.

In one respect, the added Geronimo’s Report segment could be thought of as another variation on *The Jetsons*’ “Space Pals” segment. It is a direct, personal address to children that generates a sense of affectionate intimacy with a brand-character, a figure who can be emulated and possessed through the purchase of toys, lunchboxes, clothing, and so on. At the same time, however, the game itself is not a pitch for Astro toys in the same way the host-seller in “Elroy’s Pal” pitched Moonies cereal. Rather, it is explicitly designed to teach media literacy and to build community among children. Children are asked to take the affective path I identified in my first chapter, the movement from emotional identification to activity. After enjoying the show, they are told to watch and listen carefully, to critically compare two versions of the same story, and then to share their interpretations with a group of peers. Like the bumper, Geronimo’s Report makes the exegetical practices of spectatorship visible in order to allow children to use them consciously, reflexively. It also encourages the building of a community of viewers, as children are invited to interact outside the program and compare their answers with those of their friends in play. This community is both physical and virtual, since Astro, too, calls his viewers “friends” and seems to share in the act of watching and talking about the show as he describes clips from the episode in voice-over narration. The overall aim is

participation and education: the ideal of the child as a creative, cooperative student of TV. Such “pro-social” messages are perfectly in keeping with the “dominant ideology of cooperation” (Lisosky 828) that public-private coalitions of Canadian broadcasters themselves attempted to demonstrate.

The “pro-social” attempt to promote good Canadian cooperation, however, did have some unforeseen consequences in the area of reception. Encouraged to think critically and talk amongst themselves, some children were critical of the segment. Of the Canadian fans I spoke with who remember Geronimo’s Report, most of them recalled experiencing frustration with the game because the errors could be very minor and the correct answers were not given to validate the winner. I remember watching the English CBC broadcast of the colour *Astro Boy* over lunchtime at the age of eight or nine with a group of children my age and shouting out the error I’d spotted, only to be met with skepticism from my friends. I knew that Astro had misquoted the surface temperature of Venus,²² but my friends refused to believe that I could remember so small a detail. We argued as often as cooperated over our results, issuing the serious challenge: “How do you *know* that was the mistake? Prove it!” If Geronimo’s Report was aiming to teach dutiful cooperation, in my experience it was a failure. In another way, though, our “cross-talk” (Brydon 2004)—our debates over the practice of interpretation itself—can be seen as a foundation for the more advanced methods of textual exegesis found in fan reading.

After all, we children were being instructed in how to detect the “on-purpose errors” made in a re-presentation of a show that was itself full of wilful deviations from its Japanese source material. Geronimo’s Report revealed that a story, once broadcast, can be edited and retold, and that we must watch and listen carefully for the changes. One

²² See episode 17, “Astro vs. Atlas: Terror on the Comet” (1980).

of the key practices of early Western anime fandom—one of the first practices I engaged in upon discovering that anime was from Japan—is the identification of differences between the Japanese and American texts. When the magical-girl adventure series *Sailor Moon* aired on Canada’s Youth Television Network (YTV) in 1995, my friends and I sought out Internet websites that listed every cut and mistranslation. We delighted in learning just where a “donut” was actually a rice-ball called *onigiri*, or how a pair of male homosexual lovers had been made heterosexual by supplying the more feminine partner with a woman’s voice and pronouns, while the two lesbian Sailor Scouts were made into “cousins.” We tried every way we could, in those days before widespread video downloading, to see Japanese-language versions of the *Sailor Moon* movies that were not released officially in Canada, including borrowing fan-subtitled videotapes from friends of friends and visiting the one tiny independent Asian grocery/video store in Halifax that carried some Japanese stock. From within our local experiences of foreign animated programs, from our sense of their scent in Canada, we began to look outward for the other bodies and cultures that seemed to be missing.

Iwabuchi has argued that North American anime fans seek only an “animated virtual Japan” that is inevitably a “monological illusion since it is little concerned with the complexity of ‘real’ culture” (2002a, 268). As both *The Jetsons* and *Astro Boy* reveal, there is always a concern that the flows of television through the various scrubbers of networks, sponsors, governments, and activists across many nations will lend even the roughest animation too high a gloss, erasing the diversity in animated works and contributing to a postnational culture industry which constructs children as animation fans in order to make them good consumers. But as much as I accept that television

animation *distribution* is highly commercialized, I cannot believe that the *reception* of any media product is necessarily monological or illusory. The complexity of culture I experienced growing up with anime was certainly “real” to me.

In my next chapter, then, I would like to examine the kinds of creative capacities Stephanie Hemelryk Donald has identified in her case studies of global media audiences in China. In her book 2005 *Little Friends*, Donald stakes a “claim for children as cosmopolitan consumers [who] demonstrate a flexible understanding of national loyalty, aesthetic taste, and brand apprehension” (105). She shows that even young spectators may participate in “cosmopolitan affect,” forming “affective engagements, financial, cultural, forced, chosen, with other places [which] are both known and imagined locations...and also symbolic sites that qualify the outside world, the *waiguo*” (108). Drawing on the work of Arjun Appadurai, I expand on the idea of a “cosmopolitan affect” that joins known and imagined locations to look at what happens when such cosmopolitan child consumers grow into adulthood with a love of animation. And in looking at cosmopolitan affect, I demonstrate how communities of animation viewers can be understood, not only as corporate demographic target audiences or manipulated, consumers, but as sites of active fan *movements* with their own potentials, and their own risks.

Chapter 4. Perceptions of TV Audiences II: Channel Surfers

“A fan is someone who has a passionate relationship with a source, a kind of special engagement.”

“A fan is someone who loves to be lost in a world far from her own where sorrow and joy happen every day instead of mediocrity.”

“A fan is someone who likes something.”

When asked the question “In general, what kinds of activities or personal qualities do you associate with ‘fans’?”, many people who took my survey responded by telling me, not about their activities or personalities, but about what animation makes them feel. Terms such as “passion,” “enthusiasm,” and “enjoyment” recurred over and over again. So did terms such as “obsession” and “fanatical.” I bring this up not as a great discovery, but to highlight from the start the single most unavoidable, irreducible quality of fandom: *fans like something*. As to how much and in what way, your mileage may vary.

If you are a fan, you may be willing to support your favourite no matter what or you may love it enough to criticize it. You may share your enthusiasm with others or treasure it in solitude. You may express respectable intellectual admiration (Jenson 1992, 22-23) or an embarrassingly intense erotic attraction (Bennett 2010, 17). It may even be that you love to hate something, as in Jeffrey Sconce’s entertaining article on Paris Hilton “anti-fans” (in Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington 2007, 328).²³ Whatever the manifestation, the *feeling of fandom* matters very much to fans. It also matters in different ways to aca-fans like myself, who must balance our deep emotional involvements in fandom carefully against professional obligations to work within certain scholarly discourses of authority and responsibility. As a result, theorizations of emotion and affect have been important to

²³ See also Jonathan Gray’s article “New audiences, new textualities: Anti-fans and non-fans” (2003) for a consideration of the different viewing practices and proximities to the text experienced by those who might not identify themselves as “fans.”

understanding fan sociality and media use within the field of Western fan studies (and to a lesser extent otaku studies) since its inception, contributing to the growth of a more general “affective turn” in the social sciences and humanities since the mid-1990s.

Just how fan affects are linked to media globalization, and in particular to postnational animation, is another matter. In chapter 3, I gave examples of the ways in which fannish passions for television programs can entangle viewers unawares in larger national and multinational economic structures. Elroy Jetson, for instance, is both a model science fiction fan and a model consumer of the cereal and toys which make up an indispensable part of his viewing and social interactions in the “universal” purchasing paradise of the future. I also suggested at the end of chapter 3, however, that a passion for animation can inspire fans to seek cross-cultural connections that run counter to the discourses and directions of flow intended by marketers, as I once sought out the cultural elements of *Sailor Moon* that were not officially available in Canada by turning to alternate systems of fan trade and local independent businesses. In each case, it is a strong affective engagement that motivates fans to consume or connect. But just what constitutes an “affective engagement”? What kinds of connections or knowledges can be generated through it? How does affect function to link texts produced in different locations, diverse viewers with their own preferences, and the social and geopolitical contexts in which texts, imaginaries and bodies circulate?

In this chapter, I draw on historical accounts of the spread of anime fan culture in the 1970s and current survey data from my own ethnographic researches in North America and Japan to address such questions. I demonstrate that although anime fans (particularly outside of Japan) may be to some extent dependent on multinational media

industries for original television programming, they are not always passive “cultural dupes” (Iwabuchi 2002b, 88), but in some cases can generate their own underground economies and communities through the very “cosmopolitan affects” that drew them to postnational animation styles in the first place. At the same time, in my reading of Watanabe Shinichirō’s *Cowboy Bebop* (1998), I point to the difficulties of establishing affective connections and building effective communities in the world of postnational flow. *Cowboy Bebop*, I argue, marks the point of crossing in the late 1990s between the differing American and Japanese fan communities, between cultures of television and the Internet, and between the postnational and transnational modes of animated globalization.

Affecting Theories

So far, I have used the term “affect” to denote a movement between emotion and action. My examples included everything from sympathy and imitation, as Hiawatha cries upon seeing a baby rabbit cry, and so gives up hunting in Disney’s “Little Hiawatha,” to frustration and open contestation, as I sometimes fought with my childhood friends over our interpretations of the Canadian *Astro Boy*. In order to extend these examples into a further consideration of animation audiences and affect, I feel it necessary to flesh out my understanding of this oft-debated term.

Though I have cited Brian Massumi’s definition of affect from his 1987 preface to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus* as “an ability to affect and be affected” (1987, xvi), my use of his words differs somewhat from Massumi’s own theoretical models. As Sean Carter and Derek McCormack summarize, Massumi’s later (2002) work argues that affect “is by no means reducible to the subjective qualities of personal emotion, but designates something both more and less; a kind of vector of the

intensity of encounter between bodies (non-human and human) of whatever scale and consistency” (Carter and McCormack 2006, 234). Affect is not dependent on subjectivity or on the content of any given text, but is a prepersonal potential. It is only through the “the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience” (Massumi 2002, 28) that prepersonal affect becomes personal, subjective emotion. Emotion and affect are thus conceptually distinct for Massumi.

In his seminal 1992 article on the “Affective Sensibility of Fandom,” Lawrence Grossberg likewise argues that affect is “not the same as either emotions or desires,” but is more of a mood, which “gives ‘color,’ ‘tone,’ or ‘texture’ to our experiences” (57). Unlike Massumi, however, he sees affect as itself social and ideological, stating that it is what “enables us to invest in socially constructed ‘mattering maps’” (57). These affective “mattering maps” tell us not only “how to live within emotional and ideological histories,” or how to determine which concepts and feelings matter to us, but also bring about the “mattering” of bodies, determining which physical characteristics will hold the kind of charge that marks identity (gender, skin colour) and which will not (ear placement, shoe size) in a given social context (58). In this way, Grossberg argues, “The importance of affect derives, not from its content, but from its power to invest difference. Affect plays a crucial role in organizing social life because affect is constantly constructing, not only the possibility of difference, but the ways specific differences come to matter” (58). Grossberg, in contrast to Massumi, stresses the collective, cultural, and even multicultural dimension of affect, which organizes social difference and belonging.

There are strong points to both arguments that I would like to retain. As Carter and McCormack argue, Massumi's conceptualization is especially important for film studies, as it "acknowledges how affect is implicated in the human without being reducible to a quality of personal, human experience" (2006, 234). This addition of a non-human perspective allows them to think meaningfully about the relational quality of visual images in and of themselves, understood "as bodies of affective intensity with the capacity to affect other kinds of bodies" (235). They use this idea of affect to draw out "the relations between the affective and geopolitical logics of intervention" (228) in recent American war films such as *Black Hawk Down* (2002). As I have shown, earlier propaganda films such as Disney's "Education for Death" also created strong affective relationships between humans and "inhuman" images—namely, the spectator and the drawn little boy Hans, as well as Hans and the drawn image of a rabbit—in order to generate both antagonistic division and the unity of fellow-feeling along geopolitical lines. The TV series *Cowboy Bebop* likewise uses affect, though rather differently, to generate a sense of commonality between characters and viewers who may only manifest to each other as mediated sounds and images circulating in a postnational space.

Carter and McCormack's interpretation suggests that what is valuable about Massumi's work is the way in which purely prepersonal affects become implicated in social and geopolitical logics. And if we are to speak of social impact, then Grossberg's idea of the "mattering map," which highlights the affective dimensions of the racialization and gendering of Massumi's otherwise unmarked "bodies," becomes indispensable. Still, I would like to take a few caveats on Grossberg's work from Matt Hills.

In his book *Fan Cultures*, Hills takes issue with Grossberg (and indirectly, Massumi) for removing the personal dimensions of emotion from the term affect. Hills is critical of the devaluation of personal feelings in styles of academic discourse founded on “the guiding (inter)disciplinary norm of excluding the subjective” (2002, 92) in favour of the cognitive and objective. In fact, many feminist critics have already addressed the problem of the devaluation of emotion and the personal in academia, with authors such as Sianne Ngai, in her work on “ugly feelings,” refusing the affect/emotion distinction entirely (Ngai 2005; see also Gorton 2007). In order to reclaim subjective emotion for fan studies along similar lines, Hills proposes the concept of “affective play,” in which media fans are not dependent on preexisting social categories of affect, as in Grossberg’s hard-line constructivist approach, but are “capable of ‘creating culture’ as well as being caught up in it” (93) through playful engagements with texts. If fans use mattering maps, then, the maps are not totally pre-given: fans are agents capable of drawing in at least some of the lines themselves. That is not to say that fans are entirely autonomous. Rather, Hills questions the binaries of social determinism and resistant individual agency that have haunted “political economy vs. cultural studies” debates by asserting that “Fan cultures...are neither rooted in an ‘objective’ interpretive community or an ‘objective’ set of texts, but nor are they atomized collections of individuals whose ‘subjective’ passions and interests happen to overlap. Fan cultures are both found and created” (113) in the dialectical tension between these poles.

In a similar spirit, I define affect as the movement between pre-personal potential, subjective emotion (*affect* as a noun), and social action (*to affect* as a verb). “Subjective emotion” includes psychological states of mind and more diffuse concepts of “mood.”

“Social action” may be anything from expressing an opinion to making purchases to organizing events and building interpersonal relationships. But these are not distinct, and affect is not a linear progression from one isolated state to the other. When it comes to media viewing, for instance, affect is born from a constant process of checking and cross-checking between the media text as affective body, the social context of its distribution, and the desires and designs of the individuals involved, including the creator and the spectator. Affect is not the sole preserve of fans. All spectatorship to some degree involves negotiating textual, social, and personal factors. But due to the intensity of emotions and interactions in fandom, fan cultures are, as Hills argues, best approached through the tensions between their individual members, their interpretive communities, and their favourite fan objects. Affect is by now a term with a rich enough pool of meanings to support such a multi-layered approach.

Affects and Imaginaries: Media Globalization

Along with fan studies, affect and emotion have in recent years become important concepts in the study of globalization, especially where media are involved. In his book *Globalization and Culture*, for instance, John Tomlinson addresses the concerns that grew up in late twentieth-century scholarship around how television viewers are “moved” or “touched” by what they see of the world on the small screen. As Roger Silverstone says, “it is the quality of the contact—the quality of the touch—that is surely the issue” (qtd. in Tomlinson 1999, 172) regarding television viewing. Just as in criticisms of low-quality limited animation cartoons, some find television viewing to be an experience lacking in affective quality, with dire consequences for the viewer’s ability to engage ethically with world events perceived through the mass media.

For its detractors, television appears as a medium that makes distant events *immediate*, bringing images of wars in far-off countries directly into the home, and at the same time distances or alienates the audience from any real emotional or physiological impact, leaving the viewer “in the drab comfort of his own home, cut off from the pain, heat, and smell of what is actually going on” (Miller 1971; qtd. in Tomlinson 173). Kevin Robins sums up this view of television eloquently as “Dispassionate proximity, intimate detachment” (Robins 1994; qtd. in Tomlinson 176). Rather than seeing the kind of affect that Hills finds in media fans, these critics focus on the “emotionally and morally anaesthetizing nature of television” (Tomlinson 177). In popular discourse, too, violent TV animation since the 1960s has been thought to dull children’s capacity to understand the realities of the pain of others, provoking fears that children might start to casually harm others in unfeeling imitation of cartoon violence (Kanfer 1997, 206-7). Such criticisms had a direct impact on how Japanese animation circulated cross-culturally, as American and British broadcasters, among others, began to perceive anime as “too violent” for the children who had become animation’s main Western audience (Patten 2004, 63; McCarthy 2001, 77).

Tomlinson, with a laudable sense of balance, provides some counter-examples to the “TV as dispassionate atomization” line of critique, but he too finally prefers embodied face-to-face interaction over mediated communication, where “more moral and emotional *effort* is going to be required to engage with the situations of distant others” (177). For Tomlinson, the true cosmopolitan is “someone who is able to live—ethically, culturally—in both the global and the local at the same time”(195), with the “local” comprising mainly “the situated lifeworld of the self” (204). Under his definition of the

local as lifeworld, there can be no such things as global media “communities” (202). There are only global media “audiences,” disparate individuals linked together by their viewing in a “plurality of isolations” (203). He thus concludes his chapter on media globalization by stating that “no amount of technological sophistication can make us cosmopolitans on-line” (204), or through TV.

Still, as I suggested at the end of chapter 3, there are theorists who believe in a “cosmopolitan affect” that does allow for meaningful engagements through imagined experiences of the world. The links between affect, imagination, media, and community have been made most explicitly by Arjun Appadurai in his 1996 book *Modernity at Large*. Appadurai follows thinkers on imaginaries such as Benedict Anderson and Cornelius Castoriadis in complicating the ontological division of material lifeworld and virtual illusion underlying many of the global media theories examined thus far. He argues that “the imagination has become a collective, social fact,” and that “electronic media provide resources for self-imagining as an everyday social project” (4).²⁴ He is quick to stress that imagination is not fantasy, which connotes thought divorced from action, but is a practice that “creates ideas of neighborhoods and nationhood” (7), establishing flows or “cascades” (150) between different scales of being. In his view, our experience of the embodied lifeworld is very much dependent on the supposed abstractions of imagined experience, and vice versa.

If imagination is not quite fantasy, neither is it a purely rational construct. Rather, Appadurai argues that the “work of the imagination” operates through affect (146). It is

²⁴ Appadurai’s focus on the practical, everyday quality of imagination has resonances with N. Katherine Hayles’ position on information technologies in *How We Became Posthuman* (1999). Here, Hayles focuses “not on the separation of matter and information but on their inextricably complex compoundings and entwinings” (23), and on the “embodied knowledges” (199-200) involved in actually using material media technologies.

affect, for example, that generates nostalgic structures of national belonging such as the Japanese *furusato* or “home” (146), as well as the “diasporic public spheres” (147) of culturalist movements that extend beyond national politics, such as movements based on ethnic identity. Along with nations and ethnic movements, affect also allows for the formation of the “community of sentiment,” “a group that begins to imagine and feel things together” based on a common interest or experience; groups such as “fan clubs” (8). Like Grossberg, Appadurai takes a constructivist stance in arguing that “affect is in many important ways learned” (147), and that “there is little payoff in separating the world of emotion and affect from the world of language and self-representation” (148). But somewhat like Hills, he also emphasizes the agency of those who take pleasure from mass media works, both in terms of personal, individual enjoyment and in terms of community building. The global quality of such affects comes from the fact that “both viewers and images are in simultaneous circulation” (4) through what Appadurai terms mediascapes and ethnoscapes. In his view, “the joint force of electronic mediation and mass migration is explicitly transnational—even *postnational*” (9, my italics), in that “the nation-state has become obsolete and other formations for allegiance and identity have taken its place” (169). Fan clubs serve, however humbly, as examples of these alternative formations of identity: postnational communities created by affective, imaginative, and embodied engagements with media.

Later in this chapter, I will have occasion to address how Appadurai’s work has been applied to animation fandom, and also to question his pervasive metaphors of flow, fluidity, and cascade. But for now, in order to ground these rather theoretical arguments about the practices of global media communities, I would like to turn to the specific case

of anime fandom in Japan and abroad, and look at just what histories, technologies, practices, and affects went into the formation of animation's "community of sentiment."

Who are these anime fans, exactly? And just how global *are* their connections?

Getting to Know Anime Fans

If there is one general remark that can be made about exactly who makes up the population of anime fans today, it is that it is very hard to make generalizations. This has not always been the case. Popular consciousness in both Japan and America still holds a strong image of the archetypical anime otaku: the single, straight, poorly-dressed, and physically unattractive middle-class young man with no social skills and a childish yet prurient fascination with cartoons. For many years, the young-male-oriented character of anime fandom, if nothing else, was borne out by statistics. For instance, in 1994, journalist Annalee Newitz, then a PhD student, conducted a survey of 100 English-speaking anime fans using a similar methodology to my own English survey: a lengthy questionnaire about animation viewing distributed on the internet, combined with fieldwork at fan events at her home university, the University of California at Berkeley. Her results, published in the journal *Bad Subjects*, establish a portrait of the average English-speaking anime fan in 1994, insofar as the average fan could be accessed from California at that time.

Newitz found that anime fans were largely between the ages of 18-25, with a significant minority between the ages of 25-30. They were roughly 86% male, and fairly evenly divided between men of Asian and Caucasian descent. Despite the fact that she posted the survey on the Internet group rec.arts.anime, which at that time received up to 500 messages a day from around the world, only about 10% of her respondents were not

American, including a very few from Canada, Australia, France, England, the Netherlands, and Indonesia. It was perhaps more reasonable to focus, as she does, on the in-person survey results, since as she notes, anime was “largely circulated through [face-to-face] fan communities, either at conventions or fan clubs” (1994, n.p). A local anime club in 1994, then, was just that: primarily composed of residents of one geographic area, even in its online intersections, and from a particular demographic within that area, the 18-30 male Asian and white American audience.

Much has changed in the 16 years since Newitz’s survey was done. Though I happened to employ the same technologies and obtained approximately the same number of responses as Newitz, the only thing that almost all of my respondents have in common is that they like Japanese animation, a fact asserted by 96% of English-speakers and 100% of Japanese-speakers in my survey. Also, because I surveyed respondents between the ages of 18-30 in university settings as well as online, just over half of my respondents were students at the time of the survey, and the majority (81%) were either working on or have completed a post-secondary diploma or degree. In short, most (though not all) of my respondents were those I set out to survey: college-aged self-identified anime fans.

Besides this basic commonality, there is less consistency in my results. First, and most strikingly, men no longer dominate the field: women make up 61% of my English respondents and 66% of my Japanese respondents (see Appendix 3, Table 4). Neither is there an even split between Asian and Caucasian-descended respondents among Anglophone respondents. People who identified as a member of an ethnic group other than Caucasian amount to roughly 34% of the anime fans I surveyed. But since I allowed respondents to name their ethnic background in their own words rather than selecting

from a set list of limiting standard terms, I received a fascinating array of difficult-to-classify identifications, from “hyphenated” and biracial identities to numerous positionings within what might be thought of as whiteness, such as those who chose to call themselves “Celtic” or “Polish-Russian” (Appendix 3, Table 2.) The “average anime fan” is thus rather difficult to categorize based on gender or ethnicity.

Furthermore, in contrast to Levi’s survey, in which 90% of respondents reported that they lived in America, less than half of my 125 Anglophone respondents were born (45%) or currently live (48%) in the United States. The balance of places where anime fans currently live is made up of responses from 31 countries in total. The top ten responding nations after my target areas of the United States, Canada, and Japan were the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, the Philippines, the Netherlands, Italy, France, Argentina, Malaysia, and Hong Kong. The least represented regions are the African continent, with no respondents, followed by the Middle East, with only three respondents from Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates (Appendix 3, Table 1). This group speaks a total of 33 languages besides English, citing Japanese as the second most-spoken language, followed by French and Spanish. In the Japanese-language survey as well, I was contacted not only by native-born Japanese fans living in Japan (though they make up over 80% of my results), but also by those born abroad, for instance in England, or currently living abroad in Brazil and Germany (Appendix 3, Table 1). These results are in line with the general impression that many fans, myself included, hold of the composition of animation fandom in 2009–10. As one respondent remarked, “It’s extremely typical for people from the US, Canada, any number of European nations, Southeast Asian nations, South American nations, Middle Eastern nations, South Africa,

and elsewhere to all congregate on a single LiveJournal community for a popular anime/manga series.” The geographical scope of anime fandom outside Japan is, if not totally “global,” at least extremely wide-ranging, suggesting that fans are connected not so much by nationality as by their membership in a particular online community, as Appadurai says.

Perhaps the biggest surprise in my attempt to get a sense of the changing composition of anime fandom was related not to nationality, but to the age of those who participated in my survey. I began with the assumption that most anime fans were between the ages of 18-30, and that I would therefore be more successful in recruiting respondents and gaining an understanding of the generational shifts in fandom if I focused exclusively on this segment. To my repeated chagrin, I found that my attempts to recruit in physical settings such as conventions often turned up articulate and interested people who were younger than 18, while my attempts to recruit online were met with vocal protest from those above 30. I have further found myself faced with a number of intransigent respondents who did not abide by my survey’s age limits. Between the English and Japanese surveys, 21 people (14.4% of the total) reported in the demographic information page that they were either younger or, more often, older than the age range (Appendix 3, Table 3). Though I incorporated a feature known as “skip logic” into my survey design, in which not affirming one’s age in the consent form causes one to be “skipped” to the last page, a number of people either affirmed that they were 18 in the consent form (but not the demographics) or were skipped forward and still opted to do the last page.

A traditional quantitative researcher might disqualify these results, but I have decided to include them as an accurate reflection of both the varying age range of anime fans today and their ways of engaging with and speaking back to researchers. This is in keeping with my general approach of “standing shifting”—that is, remaining flexible and accepting results which run counter to what I anticipate. Indeed, some of the older respondents provided insights into the changing composition of anime fandom which have proven just as valuable as those who were children or teens in the era of generational shift in the 1990s I set out to study. These are results that cannot be ignored.

Overall then, in contrast to Newitz’s mid-1990s results which depict an 18-30 male American white and Asian audience, my results suggest that anime fans today are a diverse and opinionated group. It may be that anime fans were *always* a diverse and opinionated group, and only now do enough people in nations such as Malaysia have the internet access and global mindset necessary to complete a survey like this. It is also extremely likely that my own survey, like Newitz’s, is not representative of the actual world population of anime fans, but only of those who fit into my survey methodology by speaking English or Japanese and being somehow within my network of contacts. (Indeed, as I discuss further in chapter 6, my lower response rate in Japan is telling when it comes to confronting some ongoing *disconnects* in global networks.) Still, the fact remains that as a PhD student and an anime fan, my potential network—the number and variety of people it is possible to contact—has expanded since 1994, reflecting a correlating shift in how fans in my survey represented their understanding of anime fandom as an interest shared beyond national boundaries.

Practicing Anime Fandom: a Brief History

How did such changes in the practice and perception of global fandom take place? How did interest in anime become so widespread, while only two or three people out of 139 reported an interest in, for example, French, Czech, or South African animation in addition to anime? As I have demonstrated, the answer to anime's success is partly economic, based on the ability of Japanese animation producers such as Mushi Productions to create limited animation programs for export at extremely competitive prices, and to do so at an important point in the development of television as a global medium. At the same time, however, the early boom of localized Japanese children's programming on American television in the 1960s was just that: a brief boom between 1963–67,²⁵ after which Japanese producers for the most part retreated back into their own domestic market until the last years of the 1970s.

Their retreat was partly due to the increasing costs of producing in colour, as black-and-white programs such as *Astro Boy* became unsaleable in America in the face of Hanna-Barbera's all-colour works. But it was not the only reason. After all, Tezuka's Mushi Pro also exported their first colour series *Jungle Emperor* (1965; America 1966). Rather, critical discourses surrounding the emotionally and morally desensitizing quality of television made networks leery of anime's increasingly mature content. Sean Leonard notes that the "pressure to sanitize American children's television in the 1970s paralleled dramatic advances in violence and sexual content in Japanese animation, for example,

²⁵ Woolery's list of children's animated tv programs in America between 1947-81 turns up 11 shows from Japan, 10 of which were released between 1963-67 (1983, 326). After that, no anime were released by major networks until *Battle of the Planets* in 1978. It should be noted, however, that Asian, Latin American, and European nations saw different releases throughout the decades. See Helen McCarthy, "The Development of the Japanese Animation Audience in the United Kingdom and France" (73-84) and John Lent, "Anime and Manga in Parts of Asia and Latin America," (85-7) both in Lent's 2001 book *Animation in Asia and the Pacific*. See also chapter five of the current thesis for a discussion of anime fandom in South Korea.

with Go Nagai's *Devilman* (1972)" (2005, 285), which targeted adults in accordance with Japan's more age-varied animation market. Even the more youth-friendly "giant robot" shows, not produced according to the same "narrowcasting" strategies as animation in the West, featured mechanical battles and epic drama appealing to a wider age range. In short, anime branched out into adult-oriented works in Japan just as Western networks closed in on content for mature audiences.

The result, American *Astro Boy* translator Fred Ladd stated, was that "You couldn't give away a Japanese-made series here [by the 1970s]" (Leonard 285; added text in the original). Similar objections to violence were raised by authorities and citizen's groups in Taiwan, South Korea, and the Philippines, where anime was banned in the '70s (Lent 2001, 85). Due to the growing disparities between the Japanese and world markets for TV animation, anime simply couldn't circulate as a global product through the regular commercial channels. The main way to watch broadcast anime in the United States in this era was on small-scale Japanese-community TV, which began to air a few of the giant robot shows growing so popular in Japan to members of the Japanese diaspora living in the larger American cities (Patten 2004, 56).

Given the decline in mass market anime distribution in the United States, it is all the more striking that the mid-70s is precisely when anime fandom began to grow there. Early fandom could develop because it turned not to commercial broadcasting alone, but also to the underground networks of trade enabled by the introduction of a new media technology: the personal Video Cassette Recorder. The Betamax video recorder was released in May 1975, and Leonard reports that "During one of the weekly meetings at the Los Angeles Science Fiction Society (LASFS) in July 1975...[anime fan-club pioneer

Fred] Patten met an early adopter of Sony's Betamax technology who showed him some Japanese animation that he recorded off the air" (2005, 286). Patten himself writes that as VCRs spread, the casual "hey, look what I found" style of tape trade developed into an organized international network. According to him,

When it was discovered that Japanese community TV in different cities did not show the same cartoons, fans used contacts between SF and comics clubs throughout the United States to find out which cities were showing which anime series, and to trade copies of video tapes. Anime fans also began using the contacts between international SF fan groups to trade videos with fans in Japan, exchanging tapes of American SF TV like *Star Trek* and *Battlestar Galactica* for tapes of Japanese TV cartoons which were not shown on American Japanese-community TV at all. (2004, 58)

Anime fandom thus began as a confluence of new media technologies with the established and emerging social connections of diasporic ethnic communities and the world science fiction fan community, which had been active in America since the 1920s and in Japan at least since the 1957 founding of the *Uchujin* (Alien) SF club (Osako 1994, 138).²⁶ It was in this context that Patten co-founded the Cartoon/Fantasy Organization (C/FO), America's first dedicated anime fan club, in 1977.

Within a year, the underground popularity of anime in the United States was spurred by the national syndication of *Battle of the Planets* (1978; based on *Science Ninja Team Gatchaman*, 1972) and *Star Blazers* (1979; based on *Space Battleship Yamato*, 1974), SF epics for young adults retooled to cash in on the immense popularity of *Star Wars* (1977). Even in heavily "deodorized" formats, these programs caught the eye of American adolescents, the same audiences who grew up with *The Jetsons* and *Astro Boy*

²⁶ There were of course well-known proto-science fiction writers in Europe, the United States, and Japan well before either of these dates, such as Jules Verne (1828-1905) and Unno Jūza (1897-1949). But the use of the term "fan" to describe a reader with a particular interest in SF did not surface in America until the mid-1920s (Sanders 1994, 18). Japan's "science literature" (*kagaku shōsetsu*), meanwhile, had relatively little impact before WWII, Japanese SF being more associated with post-war "global youth culture" (Bolton, Csicsery-Romay, and Tatsumi 2007, vii).

in syndication, and who perceived in anime a form of SF animation “worthy of mature interest” (Patten 59). Not all SF fans responded actively, but those who were affected by the programs began to search for other fans and for Japanese magazines, guidebooks, and copies of the original shows, which they would pore over together in order to “point out all the scenes of violence that had been censored” (59) in the American release. These practices suggest the establishment of a *cosmopolitan fan affect*, which leads from initial excitement over an animated style to the formation of social bonds and a deeper engagement with the body (odours) of the original Japanese work.

By its height between 1985–89, the C/FO club alone had three dozen chapters across the United States, as well as a chapter in Japan established by members of the American military diaspora stationed at the Tachikawa and Misawa air force bases. American fans had some contact with anime producers, most notably the globe-trotting Tezuka Osamu, but generally Japanese industry representatives were unwilling to deal with foreign fans or small distributors. Instead, anime distribution largely fell to fans’ grassroots efforts to share their passion.

That is not to say that anime fandom was an international brotherhood of peace and cooperation, of course. Leonard rather describes the fan community of the 1970s and ’80s as a “closed proselytisation commons” in which the “C/FO controlled distribution and, therefore, access to anime became a matter of who one knew” (290). This led to ideological conflicts between those who wished to spread anime as widely as possible, expressing the “evangelical fervour” (Patten 59) of the fan, and those who wanted it to remain the property of a small group of those “in-the-know,” increasing their

“subcultural capital” (Leonard 290).²⁷ The debates grew harsh enough to lead to the dissolution of the C/FO in 1990.

Still, anime fandom continued to evolve, and was once again altered by the opportunities granted by different media formats. For instance, mainstream vs. subculture debates often manifested in interminable arguments over whether anime should be made available dubbed with an English-language audio track or in the “authentic” Japanese, with English subtitles. In the VHS era, officially-licensed North American releases tended to be dubbed into English in hopes of attracting a broader audience. Fans who preferred the “original” Japanese-language audio track were forced to purchase more expensive subtitled tapes, or (for unlicensed works) to turn to “fansubs,” tapes with subtitles added by scattered amateur groups, to be distributed informally among friends or through the mail at the cost of a blank tape + postage fees.

As Laurie Cubbison describes, the dramatic upsurge of the DVD in 1998 and 1999 very much altered the character of this debate. By providing multiple audio and video tracks on one disc, it allowed the growing community of hardcore “Japanophiles” (Levi 2006, 57) to watch the Japanese language version and more casual fans to watch the English dub at the same cost. In this way, the peripheral technology of the DVD player helped fans to reconcile “competing definitions of authenticity in relation to the text,” and also “pushed DVD distributors to make greater use of the format’s capabilities in order to satisfy a demanding market,” resulting in “a more plural experience of the text than other formats” (Cubbison 2005, 46). Appealing to many audiences with their various features, DVDs (and successors such as Blu-Ray discs) remained one of the most popular

²⁷ For more on the role of cultural/subcultural capital in fandom, see John Fiske, “The Cultural Economy of Fandom,” in *The Adoring Audience*, ed. Lisa A. Lewis, (London: Routledge, 1992), 30-49.

media platforms among both Japanese- and English-speaking respondents in 2010. When I asked my survey respondents to rank which media they use most often to watch animation, DVDs very nearly tied with television for first place among Japanese-speakers, and came a close second to the Internet among Anglophones (Appendix 3, Table 5). As Michael has argued of aboriginal audiences, then, anime fans of the 1990s were negotiating the globalization of television and “reinventing” the various media associated with it at the same time, a process with long-term effects.²⁸

The history of anime fandom reveals that fans themselves, in their passionate conflicts and cosmopolitan cooperations, have been among the major players driving anime’s global circulation, along with the market forces discussed in chapter 3. Leonard even goes so far as to claim that “proselytisation commons shaped the commercial enterprise, not the other way around” (2005, 295). Such fan activity can, of course, be read through a Frankfurt School lens as the “production of consumption,” or as consumers’ participation in their own induction into consumer culture. But it can also be read as a means of re-imagining culture through media consumption. By employing different networks of distribution, “[f]andom imagined itself as a site of convergence and mediation between Japanese animation and the American public” (Leonard, 299). And if fans are “capable of ‘creating culture’ as well as being caught up in it” (Hills 2002, 93),

²⁸ When asked whether they preferred to watch anime dubbed or with subtitles, 85% of my Anglophone respondents preferred subtitles. The great debate nowadays is whether fans should purchase their subtitled anime through officially licensed sources, thus supporting anime creators and faltering overseas distribution companies, or whether it is acceptable to download/view fansubs for free on the internet. Fansubbing in the digital era has come to be variously regarded as harmful piracy or as a justified continuation of earlier fan practices, complete with ethical codes that limit what and when to download (Cubbison 48). On that count, the majority of my survey respondents claimed that they obtained their anime from legal purchase or TV recording. Only 25% of Anglophones and no Japanese-speakers admitted that the last anime work they acquired was obtained through free downloading. See Appendix 3, Table 6.

what they create may be said to go beyond either American or Japanese culture, “remixing” both into a new postnational form.

Such a positive, even utopian, emphasis on fans’ active engagement with global media recalls Appadurai’s figuration of the postnational global climate as “a sort of cultural laboratory and a free-trade zone for the generation, circulation, importation, and testing of the materials for a world organized around diasporic diversity” (1996, 174), creating a new narrative in which “bounded territories could give way to diasporic networks, nations to transnations, and patriotism itself could become plural, serial, contextual and mobile” (176). It is this attention to diasporic diversity through the affective remixing of various pop cultures that characterizes the 1998 anime series *Cowboy Bebop* and its reception among anime fans.

“The Real Folk Blues”: *Cowboy Bebop*

Cowboy Bebop is a television series that stands on the cusp of many changes in anime circulation, technology, and fandom. It first aired in Japan in 1998 and marked the television-directorial debut of Watanabe Shinichirō (b.1965), who has become known for globally-oriented anime that mix Japanese historical themes with the audio-visual stylings of contemporary pop cultures.²⁹ An English-dubbed version of *Cowboy Bebop* aired in the United States in 2001, becoming the first adult-oriented anime shown on the Cartoon Network’s late-night “Adult Swim” block. In terms of animation technologies, it combines cel-style animation with computer generated (CG) imagery, a tactic which played very well into the booming digital DVD market (Oguro 2000, 66). In its content,

²⁹ For instance, Watanabe’s next hit after *Cowboy Bebop*, *Samurai Champloo* (2004), laces a story set in the Edo period with anachronistic references to graffiti tagging, rap, and hip hop music, in a spirit perhaps not too far divorced from Ōfuji Noburō’s parodic “remixing” of the flapper icon Betty Boop and *chambara* samurai films.

as well, it is an anime that comments reflexively on its own passage between local and global audiences, and between the affects of cool, detached irony and a poignant longing for connection. In short, *Cowboy Bebop* is a meditation on how community can be created in a world where “Like kites without strings, everyone has lost a sense of where they belong” (Napier 2005, 117). As in Appadurai’s work, the struggle in *Cowboy Bebop* is to imagine new ways of feeling and belonging in an ever-changing world of flows. The successes and challenges of this postnational “work of the imagination” can be seen in the show’s circulation in different media environments and in its reflexive representations of television audiences themselves.

Cowboy Bebop, like so much post-war anime, is set in the decades following a near-apocalyptic technological disaster: the explosion of a hyperspace gate in orbit above the Earth, which has showered the planet with meteors. As a result, much of humanity has migrated into space, creating a “confusing conglomeration of independent governments, alliances, and spheres of influence” (Patten 2004, 357) spread across the solar system. The borders and institutions of nation-states no longer exist. Official policing bodies such as the Inter-Solar System Police (ISSP) are largely corrupt and ineffective. Public safety is only barely maintained by freelance bounty hunters like our protagonists, a mismatched group of quirky, damaged nomads trying to eke out a living aboard the spaceship *Bebop*. The core group includes the coolly impetuous Spike Spiegel, tough-but-tender-hearted cyborg Jet Black, *femme fatale* Faye Valentine, and the cute-kid-and-dog duo Ed and Ein. Each character’s complex history is slowly drawn out during the course of their (mostly failed) attempts to catch drug dealers, eco-terrorists, hackers, and assorted criminals. From this premise Watanabe and his writers, including

such talents as Nobumoto Keiko and Satō Dai, create a series of sophisticated and entertaining stories that parody everything from American spaghetti westerns to the New Wave art films of Jean-Luc Godard to Hong Kong martial arts movies. The literally “stateless” setting and international range of genres and allusions employed in the series suggest from the outset a mediated environment of diasporic cultural mixing in which power is dispersed and decentralized.

This repackaging of international media icons for a global pop audience may sound like a textbook example of Iwabuchi’s postmodern, postnational Japanese hybridism, and indeed, there is evidence to suggest that the program’s “culturally odourless,” easily translatable quality may be a reason for its success in North America. For one thing, it was the English dub that quickly became a “fan favourite” (Patten 358), preferred even among those Japanophiles who normally demanded subtitles. I recall that when *Cowboy Bebop* was released on DVD in 2000, the friend who recommended it to me suggested I watch the English-language version first, claiming the program had such a Western feel that she found it weird to hear the characters speak Japanese. Reviewer Robert Baigent likewise attributes the show’s popularity to its nationally unmarked or “*mukokuseki*” quality, claiming that “*Cowboy Bebop* exists in a stateless other place where Western and Japanese audiences can appreciate it equally” (2004, 94). Baigent is not arguing that the program has been “Americanized” so much as suggesting that in its very conception it transcends the restrictions of national audiences to become a globally circulating product, as was the case with *Astro Boy*.

In fact, the Japanese distribution and reception history of *Cowboy Bebop* is not quite “equal” to the American, and both are rather more complicated than a conscious

decision to make and market a postnational hit anime. In an interview with Douglas McGray, screenwriter Satō admits that the show was not originally conceived to play abroad. Satō says that for Watanabe's follow-up series, *Samurai Champloo* (2004), it was true that the director "had planned to rely on foreign capital from the start, and his plan was to market it abroad. However, when [Satō] produced *Cowboy Bebop*, these things didn't matter" (2002, n.p). It was intended for the Japanese domestic market, and even there it ran into problems.

While most niche anime titles air late at night on satellite stations in Japan, *Cowboy Bebop* was shown on TV Tokyo during primetime in a 6:00 PM Friday timeslot starting April 3, 1998. The problem was that due to its depictions of adult themes such as drug use and homosexuality, only 13 of the original 26 episodes were permitted to air in the first run. Even the final episode was cut, prompting fans of the original television run to decry the ending online as a terrible "anticlimax" (Oguro 2000, 66) and to look forward to the "real Cowboy Bebop" promised in a special episode created by Watanabe in response to the censorship.³⁰ The full series was not shown until the Fall 1998-99 season at 1:00AM on the WOWOW satellite network.

Still, despite (or perhaps because of) its controversial release, *Cowboy Bebop* won awards at the Kobe Animation Festival and the Japan National Science Fiction Convention in 2000. It was critically praised as a "quality" anime for its innovative blend of cel-style and CG animation and its edgy narrative (Oguro 64). It was also popular enough among viewers to warrant a theatrical feature film in 2001 (Patten 2004, 358-59),

³⁰ The special Episode XX, "Mish-Mash Blues," features the characters' voices musing over clips from the previous 13 episodes and criticising those who deprive others of freedom. It concludes with a text screen reading (in English) "This is not the end. You will see the real Cowboy Bebop someday." It is not included in the North American DVD box set releases, but can be seen in a recording of the original television broadcast at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZywTioVsB_o&NR=1

multiple DVD box sets, manga, and video game releases. In this light, it is possible to see *Cowboy Bebop*'s staggered release as a canny transmedia marketing strategy,³¹ drawing in Japanese (and eventually global) audiences with ever more pieces to complete the same story in different media. But at the same time, it is important to note that the demands of audiences dissatisfied with the censored broadcast drove the further releases of the series in Japan, as American anime fans both comprised and constructed a market for anime on DVD outside Japan.

English-speaking viewers of *Cowboy Bebop*, on the other hand, encountered the text through a different set of media regulations and social practices than those in Japan. As I have mentioned, a key form of textual exegesis among anime fans in the West is the identification of changes between Japanese-language and translated texts. This was one of the practices shaping the Western reception of *Cowboy Bebop* in late-90s anime fandom. By the time *Cowboy Bebop* began airing on the Cartoon Network in September 2001, fans already had access to the unedited Japanese program through Bandai Entertainment's releases on VHS (1999) and DVD (2000), and were closely comparing the full Japanese version to the American broadcast. The massive American/Australian website *Anime News Network* ran a column by Kyle Pope called "The Edit List,"³² which provided weekly commentary on the changes to *Bebop*, among many other programs. Along with the usual list of inked-out blood splatters and drawn-in bikinis, Pope noted several politically-motivated changes, such as the Cartoon Network's decision not to air

³¹ "Transmedia storytelling" is a model of media production described by Henry Jenkins in his 2006 book *Convergence Culture*. As I discuss further in chapter six, such media-mix marketing is known in Japan as the "contents industry," and operates along lines similar but not identical to the American model.

³² The archived columns may be found at <http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/edit-list/> starting Sept. 25, 2011.

episodes depicting spaceship hijackings and terrorist attacks against large buildings in the immediate post-9/11 climate.

In comparison to past practices of localization (and to the original Japanese airing), however, the broadcast changes were considered mild and understandable, easily supplemented by the DVD sets. Praised for balancing an attention to North American sensibilities with fidelity to the original Japanese content, the dub of *Cowboy Bebop* has become one of the translated programs often used to introduce new viewers to anime, and to pull existing viewers together.³³ It may be understood, in Susan Napier's terms, as a "fantasyscape." Coining a term on Appadurai's formula, Napier describes fantasyscapes as sites of play, "temporary alternative lifestyles that exist parallel to the mundane, which people enter and exit as they please" (2007, 11). These fantasyscapes could be considered akin to Hills' affective play and Donald's cosmopolitan affects, in that they constitute not merely escapism, but a site of productive imaginary engagement between people, globally mobile texts, and various local contexts of production and reception.

So, while there is something to be said for Baigent's argument about the hybrid, stateless quality of *Cowboy Bebop* (especially in its English incarnation), I think we must be more careful in applying the Japanese term "*mukokuseki*" (無国籍) to *Cowboy Bebop*. Iwabuchi defines *mukokuseki* as "'something or someone lacking any nationality,' but also implying the erasure of racial or ethnic characteristics" (2002b, 28), a key concept for the culturally odourless commodities previously examined. As with the reception of *Astro Boy*, however, edits to the *Cowboy Bebop* series in fact provoked different styles of

³³ *Cowboy Bebop*'s continuing popularity among English- and Japanese-speaking anime fans is evident in my survey results, in which I asked fans to list their top five favourite Japanese animated films, tv shows or web cartoons. *Cowboy Bebop* is the most-cited TV series (listed by 24 respondents total), and the second most-cited anime work overall, behind the blockbuster feature film *Spirited Away* (listed by 41). See Appendix 3, Table 8.

reception, springing from different bodies in affective action related to the text. Upon closer inspection, the very text of *Cowboy Bebop* also poses a challenge to Iwabuchi's image of globally popular anime as "culturally odourless" and racially neutral.

Turning to the series itself, it becomes evident that rather than erasing ethnicity, *Cowboy Bebop* self-consciously depicts a diverse society, composed of African American, Italian, Chinese, and Moroccan-descended characters, to name just a few. Far from avoiding the cultural context of its production, the show hints ironically at its Japanese origins when it depicts the ship's owner, the gruff cyborg Jet, engaging in markedly "Japanese" cultural practices such as tending *bonsai* or bringing back *omiyage* (souvenirs) of a cute local food called "*piyoko*" (even in the English dub) from a short trip to Earth. Neither does a globalized—or in this case, interstellar—mass media contribute to cultural or linguistic homogenization. Screens are omnipresent in the *Bebop* universe, but they are just as likely to show black-and-white samurai films (playing in a casino in episode 3) as Tom-and-Jerry style cat-and-mouse cartoons (the in-flight movie on a shuttle to Venus in episode 8). Even more reflexively, the characters in the show often watch television programs that are, according to the riders, "being broadcasted in twelve different languages." The meta-programs they watch are themselves parodic, including a special information program for bounty hunters called "Big Shot" with a kitsch-cowboy theme. "Television" too is a hybrid technology, featuring recognizable broadcasting genres such as news and talk programs, but also acting as a screen for accessing the Internet and for making video calls to others. If this series is "stateless," then, it is not in Iwabuchi's sense of erasing ethnicity, but in Appadurai's sense of postnational diaspora: hybridity, not hybridism. While nation-states have ceased to exist, ethnic, cultural and linguistic

diversity has flourished and flows through the new channels of ethnoscaples and mediascaples—and also, for viewers, through the comic, ironic play of “fantasyscaples.”

Having established *Cowboy Bebop* as a program that playfully, reflexively depicts the postnational mediated flows of bodies and images, I would now like to introduce another bumper. While flow is a key metaphor in both cultural and globalization studies, it can at times lead to an uncritical celebration of the joys of multicultural confluence. In my discussions of affect, television, and globalization in this chapter, I have drawn on theorists who (however cautiously) focus on flows of pleasure and play to frame arguments about fan agency. I have told the story of historical and contemporary anime fans through this frame, selecting my epigraphs and sources and interpreting my data to suit the tale of fan empowerment and global engagement (with a few exceptions, such as the demise of the C/FO). And I have focused on the playful, comic, and ironic side of *Cowboy Bebop*. As John Tulloch argues, however, it is equally as important for scholars of global audiences to take into account “the field of risk, anxiety, and pain, as well as the more recently fashionable pleasure, ecstasy, and celebration” (16). What is lost in the academic attempt to “find in the postmodern condition an ecstatically pleasurable diversity of audience readings” (2000, 17)? And what anxieties or criticisms are glossed in reading *Cowboy Bebop* through the comic science fictional “space of flows” it shares with *The Jetsons* and *Astro Boy*?

In order to address this question, I will now consider how it is that *Bebop* animates its audiences. For Appadurai, as I have mentioned, mediascaples provide not only a way for diasporic travellers to maintain connections with their homelands, but also a way for diverse audiences to form communities of sentiment based around a common

feeling, interest or goal. I would like to say that *Cowboy Bebop* depicts the formation of just such a community of sentiment, and that these imaginative depictions of mediated bonding provide equally far-flung and diverse audiences with a model for the formation of their own communities. And yet, the behaviour of the Bebop crew as an audience sometimes works against such optimistic readings, suggesting a stance on television and new media that is as anxious as it is playful.

When it comes to spectatorship in *Cowboy Bebop*, the crew members rarely all watch television together or use it as a way to connect emotionally. A typical scene of television watching from episode 9, "Jamming with Edward," finds Jet pruning his bonsai in front of the screen as Faye, seated on a nearby stairway, casually files her nails without the slightest indication that she is paying attention to anything else. Spike half-listens to the broadcast in another room while he scrubs down his personal fighter ship. Even the dog Ein yawns in front of his own little screen. At no point during the broadcast scene are all four characters shown in the same shot. When the news program they are watching announces a large bounty on a computer hacker, Jet's and Faye's interest in taking on the case is indicated by quick cuts between close-ups of their faces glancing at the screen. But only after a lengthy pause do they look to each other in a wide shot that emphasizes the distance between them, as Faye is seated high on the stairs to the right corner of the screen, while Jet is seated on a low couch to the right corner. As partners, their personalities clash and they continually bicker and snipe at each other. Spike, meanwhile, refuses to join in on this job altogether.

In this scene, the crew is hardly framed as a cohesive communal audience. Rather, each character clearly places his or her own interests foremost, leading to competition as

often as cooperation between them. Their viewing behaviour is more akin to the “plurality of isolations” (1999, 203) Tomlinson critiques in his work on global media than to a utopian unified community. Although this scene is played lightly for the comic banter, there is an underlying anxiety here about the loss of affective connection, one also echoed in other episodes in a more contemplative or dramatic mode. For instance, in the special clips episode “Mish-Mash Blues,” Spike is told by his Native American mentor Laughing Bull that “If you hate someone, you hate yourself. If you love someone, you love yourself.” Spike replies “I don’t feel anything toward anyone.” He is then told “That is the greatest misfortune on this earth.” The sense of misfortune, even tragedy, is fully realized in the final episodes of the series. As Napier notes, for most of the series “the *Bebop* is a world where emotion is either ironic or negative, and the characters’ main superficial affect is a stylish coolness” (2005, 139). But there are points at which the lack of affect itself becomes a source of bittersweet drama. This is because chafing against the characters’ superficial coolness is an undeniable longing for some kind of emotional connection or stable home. This manifests as a kind of nostalgia often associated with older analogue media interfaces, in contrast to the slick flow of the digital (and digitally animated) television/Internet shown in episode nine.

Consider the story of Faye Valentine. Like the others, Faye is a character who literally has no home in the universe: she has lost her memory, and knows only that she came to in a hospital lab, faced with the medical bills for several decades worth of cryogenic suspension. Towards the end of the series, however, a mysterious package is delivered for Faye. It contains an antique Sony Betamax videotape, a defunct technology that can only be played on a Betamax deck recovered from a museum in the sunken

former nation of Japan. The tape turns out to be an old home video showing Faye's touchingly innocent and cheerful younger self sending words of encouragement to the Faye of the future. After watching and re-watching the videotape, Faye goes back to Earth in search of the scenery it depicts. She is finally able to find the childhood neighbourhood shown in the Betamax video, which is identifiable as an actually existing park in Singapore by its distinctive and regionally famous "Merlion" fountain. From there, her slowly-returning memory guides her up a long steep hill towards her childhood house. A shining vision of a white mansion fills the screen...but it is only a vision. Faye comes to a halt in front of her old home, now nothing more than a razed foundation. The reunion promised by her returning memories and emotions is cut off. She can't recall anything else. All she can do is scratch the outline of a rectangle into the ground where her doorstep used to be with a stick and lie there gazing at the evening sky in an expression of nostalgic longing for a solid place.

In critiques of postmodern social imaginaries, the affect of nostalgia is often tied to global consumerism. Appadurai's chapter in *Modernity at Large* on "Consumption, Duration, and History" describes the postmodern phenomenon of "imagined nostalgia," the "nostalgia for things that never were" (1996, 77). Imagined nostalgia, he argues, stands at the heart of the "social discipline of the imagination, the discipline of learning to link fantasy and nostalgia to the desire for new bundles of commodities" (82). Iwabuchi adopts Appadurai's model to show how such consumerist fantasies and affects worked as a kind of "imperialist nostalgia" in Japanese media discourses on East Asian economic development in the 1990s by projecting onto East Asian nations a fantasy of the "premodern 'innocence'" (2002b, 175) and "modernizing energy" (177) that post-bubble

Japan itself was thought to have lost. The fact that Faye seeks her own lost vigour and innocence in Singapore using a Japanese bubble-era media technology recovered from a Japanese museum fits neatly into Iwabuchi's thesis. In evoking the institutions and cultural icons of Japan and Singapore, such as the museum and the Merlion fountain, it also reveals the legacies of nationalism underlying the postnational universe of the series. As I demonstrate further in chapter 6, the capitalist and consumerist social *discipline* of the imagination must be taken into account alongside any attempt to consider the productive social *work* of the imagination that animation and its fans do, especially within East Asia.

Still, the key difference between *Cowboy Bebop* and these theories of postmodern nostalgia is that in both "imagined nostalgia" and "imperialist nostalgia," there is an implicit promise that "the commodity will supply the memory" (Appadurai 78) of what was never lost, or that the "loss is revivable" through pleasurable consumption (Iwabuchi 175). In *Cowboy Bebop*, there is no such reassurance that consuming either old or new media technologies will revive a lost stability or even create a new one. Like Faye, no crew member manages to completely recover the past love or life they have left behind. Though Jet, Spike, and Ed all meet past lovers or family members at some point in the series, they all lose them again in more or less serious ways after just one or two brief encounters. By the end most of the major crewmembers have either left the *Bebop* or died. In this "deassuring" work, the crew's momentary collaboration is more touching for the struggles and failures to connect that result from their different histories and goals than for any easy relationship born of sharing in mediascapes.

Cowboy Bebop thus speaks to a tension between anxieties over the lack of genuine connection in mediated, diasporic communication, and continuing desires to generate that crucial affective movement between media technologies, audiences, and contexts, even if just for a moment. This tension was born of the particular time in which *Cowboy Bebop* came out between 1998 and 2001: a moment when analog media cultures began to give way to digital, when the in-person fandoms of the 1970s became increasingly Internet-based, and when nationalisms began to make resurgence into postnational imaginaries. *Cowboy Bebop* still represents for the most part a world of borderless postnational flows in which characters collide and then drift apart again. But in the underlying frictions of its text, and in the national and cross-cultural complexities of its reception, it also introduces some of the problems and potentials of transcultural animation fandom. As Appadurai and Iwabuchi suggest, transcultural fandoms are still to some extent imbricated in the consumerist and potentially neo-imperialist structures of cultural globalization within and between East Asia and North America. But transculturalism also enables a style of fandom which generates mutual, if still asymmetrical, connections across difference, operating alongside more official channels. The ways in which transcultural fan communities, like the *Bebop* crew, are built not only through flow but also through friction will be the subject of the next two chapters.

Part 3: Online Conversations Across Difference

People can communicate mind to mind. There is no race. There are no genders. There is no age. There are no infirmities. There are only minds. Utopia? No, the Internet.

-MCI “Anthem” commercial, 1997¹

Although digital compositing is usually used to create a seamless virtual space, this does not have to be its only goal. Borders between different worlds do not have to be erased; different spaces do not have to be matched in perspective, scale and lighting; individual layers can retain their separate identities rather than being merged into a single space; different worlds can clash semantically rather than form a single universe.

-Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, 2001, 158

New media are often taken up through older discourses. The Internet is no exception. The two quotations above were considered provocative, cutting-edge statements about digital communications and visual technologies in their time, generating academic commentary and criticism.² But underlying these statements about a relatively new mode of communication are some of the same fears and fascinations that I have been tracing in my exploration of media technologies and animation fandom so far. In the eras of international cinematic animation and postnational television animation, I have shown that there were many instances in which American and Japanese animators and audiences demonstrated a desire for direct connection—political, personal, economic, or artistic—across cultural and geographical boundaries. And yet in practice, there have been just as many points where tensions arose among animators and spectators of different backgrounds, leading to “semantic clashes” around questions of who can be connected

¹ This television commercial is viewable with commentary on the website *Representations of Global Capital*, ed. Robert Goldman, Stephen Papson, and Noah Kersey, 2003.

<http://it.stlawu.edu/%7Eglobal/pagessemiotics/montagemci.html>

² On the MCI commercial, see Lisa Nakamura’s “‘Where Do You Want to Go Today?’ Cybernetic Tourism, the Internet, and Transnationality” (2002). On Manovich’s treatment of film and reality, see Thomas Lamarre’s “The First Time as Farce: Digital Animation and the Repetition of Cinema” (2006a).

with whom and what those connections should entail. The interweaving threads of cooperation and contention, sameness and difference, have been present in the production, distribution, and consumption of animation on local and global scales since the earliest days of mobile film technologies. When I argue in this section that the Internet has enabled the formation of truly *transcultural* animation fan communities, then, it is not to claim that the Internet marks an absolute rupture with international and postnational forms of media globalization. Rather, my aim is to suggest that the Internet, as with each new medium introduced so far, brings with it both continuing problems and emerging potentials for the formation of communities across cultural difference.

The problem and the potential of the Internet, as in Tomlinson's definition of globalization, lies in its "complex connectivity" (1999, 2). This connectivity "furnishes people with a *cultural resource* that they lacked before [globalization's] expansion" (30): the ability to imagine global culture from within local lives—or, in the case of animation, to become part of a global anime fan community from wherever you may live. At the same time, however, mediated connectivity is uneven and, in Tomlinson's view, potentially alienating when it comes to moral and affective engagements with distant others (180). Virtual communities are rife with ongoing cultural, political, and economic problems, such as ethnic stereotyping and increasing commercialism. And yet, they also present opportunities for some users to self-reflexively confront these problems in collaborative ways not previously possible, in the collective creation of their own works and in online conversations around them. Drawing on this fraught situation, I argue that today's transcultural animation fan communities act as groups in which people from many backgrounds experience a complex sense of connection across difference, engaging

with each other through a shared interest while negotiating the frictions that result from their differing social, political, and personal contexts. The two chapters in this section demonstrate just how such communities have formed around web-based animation in East Asia and North America in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

In order to begin thinking about the Internet's role in this process, it is instructive to look at the ways in which the new discourses of digital communication refer back to the earlier imaginaries and issues covered so far. In MCI's presentation of a virtual world without race, gender, age or (dis)ability cited above, there are clear echoes of Leonid Andreyev's 1911 paean to the Miraculous Cinema, a universal medium with "no language" that "gathers the whole of quivering humanity into a single stream" (Reeves 2003, 3). At its most positive, this approach attempts to join people together without prejudice through the shared imaginaries of media. The fact that the "Anthem" commercial depicts people of various ethnicities, ages, genders, and abilities making the statements above suggests (however disingenuously) that it is not the speakers themselves who are erased but discriminatory categorizing terms, negative discourses that can be crossed out by those who claim the power to speak—or, to type. Mark Poster expresses a similar view when he claims that the "salient characteristic of Internet community is the diminution of prevailing hierarchies of race, class, and especially gender. What appears in the embodied world as irreducible hierarchy plays a lesser role in...cyberspace" (1997, 213). In the words of Betty Boop's song, "if you're near or far / doesn't matter where you are," or who you are: everyone can assert their equality through the immediate medium of the affective image that moves mind to mind, heart to heart.

As in the old Betty cartoon, however, even portrayals of harmonious inclusion can still be shaped by existing social and economic power structures. Iwabuchi has shown, for instance, how 1990s celebrations of postnational statelessness and hybridism can create a form of global media in which “bodily, racial, and ethnic characteristics are erased or softened” (Iwabuchi 2002b, 28) for purposes of corporate profit. At its worst, the utopian discourse of the MCI commercial provides a variation on “statelessness” in which individuals from visible minority groups are called upon to erase in dialogue the difference they present in body, saying in effect, “we may look different, but really we are all the same on the Internet.” In representing “the Asian” or “the deaf,” they simultaneously erase from the screen those members of their own groups who are unable to access MCI’s “democratic” commercial services, or who may not want to use them in the ways offered by MCI. Equality here becomes an illusory sameness that elides the needs and experiences of diverse populations. The MCI ad thus suggests two facets of sameness: the positive qualities of media communities as sites of inclusion and imaginative engagement built by active audiences, and the ongoing criticisms of neo-imperial homogenization, corporate manipulation, and the erasure of situated experience.

I have looked at these facets of global togetherness or sameness in works such as “A Language All My Own,” with its utopian, harmonious yet Orientalist vision of international cinema, and the various versions of *Astro Boy*, which were scoured of “cultural odor” in the postnational flows of corporate television only to trigger a generation’s cross-cultural curiosities. In chapter 5, I expand on how internet animation generates forms of community as unity-in-difference by looking at the 2003–08 Flash animation series *There She Is!!* This series was created by a three-person group of

independent South Korean comic artists/animators called “SamBakZa” (“The Three Beats”) composed of two women, Sogong and SongSongHwa, and a man, Amalloc. The globally popular cute-animal romance they created and the multilingual message board that grew up around it are perfect examples of online animation’s potential to provide an alternative system of cultural and economic exchange. Its cute rabbit and cat characters attempt to banish the shades of Momotarō’s adorable war heroes with a story sometimes interpreted as a national allegory of Korean/Japanese reconciliation following decades of mutual animosity. Still, in its use of cute or “*kawaii*” imagery which draws reflexively on the visual language of Japanese anime, *There She Is!!* raises ongoing questions about the much-debated impact of Japan’s “soft power” in East Asia.

In contrast to the MCI commercial’s insistence on sameness, with its utopian and dystopian potentialities, Lev Manovich’s formulation of “spatial montage” created by digital compositing expresses the value of *difference* as an aesthetic and ideological quality of new media. As in Lamarre’s formulation of the “animetic,” Manovich bases his theory of montage on the material practices of early animation, namely “the logic of an animation stand where the stack of images is arranged parallel to each other” (Manovich 2001, 160), overlapping yet distinct. As I have shown, film animation sometimes acted as a medium where “different worlds can clash semantically.” There was, for instance, the case of Ōfuji Noburō, who engaged in the Japanese film industry’s (inter)nationalism by layering elements of “uniquely Japanese taste,” such as *chiyogami* sakura blossoms, with Western photographic elements shown out of scale, such as an outsized Columbia record. From its earliest days animation has been a process of compositing heterogeneity, in both material and social senses.

If Manovich recognizes montage's historical debt, however, he also makes a case for the specificity of *digital* compositing to the age of computers and the Internet, when remixing elements from many different formats is no longer an experiment but the norm (159). Digitally created works, coming to the fore in the 1990s, thus have links with the "growing importance of such concepts as 'geopolitics' and 'globalization'" (323), especially in the postnational mode. *Cowboy Bebop* may be seen as an example of a television program that layers cg animation with hand-drawn cels to depict a space in which various stylistic and cultural elements are not fully blended but "clash semantically" on the screen. This visual style is used to good effect in *Cowboy Bebop* to depict a universe of ethnic and cultural diversity, moving through the flows of mediascapes and ethnoscapas described by Arjun Appadurai. As a result, the diverse layered styles of television anime such as *Cowboy Bebop* avoid the kind of homogenization found in critiques of media globalization as "Disneyfication," or the dominance of one unified style across the entire globe, and posit the value of difference.

And yet, the ideology of "difference" or "clash" cannot simply be celebrated, on the Internet as in film and television. As Gholam Khiabany has argued, the oppositions of heterogeneity and homogeneity themselves can serve to maintain binaries between "commercial, rootless, banal and pre-packaged 'Western' products and the 'authentic', 'organic' and deeply rooted culture of the 'East,'" (2005, 208), so that the promotion of "diversity" acts as a cover or a tool for the maintenance of structural inequality. This is what Iwabuchi argues happens when East Asia becomes the site of Japanese "imperial nostalgia" in consumable media fantasies of "premodern innocence" (2002b, 175-7). On a more general level, the Internet has been the subject of many critiques for encouraging

“cyber-balkanization” and enforcing the global “digital divide,” to the benefit of the technological elite. Jerry Everard, for instance, warns that “the development of global digital telecommunications networks may well intensify the current discontinuities between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots,’” leading to a reinforcement of ‘legacy colonialism’” (2000, 53).

The exaggeration of ethnic and national differences (either positively or negatively) in order to support imperial hierarchy was a key aspect of my chapter on the cute ethnic Other figure in wartime propaganda works, such as *The Three Caballeros* and *Momotarō's Divine Ocean Warriors*. I extend this discussion in chapter 6 by introducing a popular online comedy series set in World War II, *Hetalia: Axis Powers* (2006-current). *Hetalia*, as it is usually called for short, began life as a web manga posted to the personal blog of Himaruya Hidekaz, then a 21-year-old design student studying in New York. His more-or-less amateur web manga has since been adapted into a web-based animated series and a theatrical film. The animated series has proven controversial, especially in South Korea, for its stereotypical depictions of WWII combatant nations as attractive young men (and a few women) whose treaties and battles are figured as interpersonal/romantic relationships. In featuring anthropomorphic countries as characters, *Hetalia* raises once again the issues of propaganda, power, and nationalism. And yet, by looking at how the series has been reworked by a particular subset of fans—namely, “*fujoshi*,” or female fans of homoerotic fiction—I also reveal how these issues are actively confronted by fans online. Both of the chapters in this section extend the issues of globalization, media technologies, fans, and community seen in film and

television animation into the digital age, tracing the residual tropes and attitudes towards animation that continue to inform even the newest of emergent media.

That said, I do not want to give the impression that every new visual medium is doomed to repeat the same interlocking chiasmus of corporate indoctrination and utopian inclusion, empowered diversity and segregated control. As I said of television, I believe that changes in media technologies through time necessitate different kinds of relations between audiences and creators in different parts of the world. While I will demonstrate how web animation reflects the legacies of international and postnational animation, I also want to focus on how creators and fans use the Internet to generate new forms of transnational and transcultural connection unlike those discussed so far.

In my readings of *There She Is!* and *Hetalia* and in my ethnographic research on their fan communities, I show how the transnational connections that have formed between anime fans in North America, East Asia, and beyond in the first decade of the twenty-first century do not confirm the blissful, free-flowing image of the postnational Internet presented in the 1997 Anthem commercial. There are still too many power imbalances, too much asymmetry present in global media exchange for it to be called equitable or “un-hierarchical.” The touchy historical subject matter of *Hetalia*, for instance, has provoked accusations of political bias and racism as often as platitudes of global equality. And yet, such works are not simply a return to the nation-state or national cinema model which stresses the essential integrity of geographical and cultural borders, as if nations were entirely autonomous. Unlike (inter)national cinema, the Internet enables truly mutual, multidirectional conversations between animation creators and audiences in many nations. *There She Is!*, growing out of the digital environment of

multilingual message boards visited by fans from dozens of nations, is as much an expression of a global media imaginary as a work of “Korean national web animation.”

In light of these works and their audiences, I argue that transcultural fan communities neither transcend old national and cultural borders nor remain fixed within them. Rather, in being both mutual and asymmetrical, transcultural connections are made *across* the links and firewalls—the points of access and denial—that structure the virtual and social worlds of the early twenty-first century. As in Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing’s ethnographic studies of transnational collaboration, such exchanges are constituted through friction, “the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference” (2005, 4). *There She Is!!* and *Hetalia* demonstrate the frictions and crossings of this emergent mode of transcultural engagement. The question now is: how, in all practicality, do the frictions between fans’ different worlds generate, if not a single universe, then at least a space of collaboration that can be called a community? Before I turn to my texts to address this question, it is necessary to outline some of the ways in which Internet technologies, web animation, and online fan practices intersect with various contemporary ideas of community in East Asia and North America.

Anglophone and Asian-language Internets

When it comes to Internet technologies and community, the first thing to recognize is that “the” Internet is not one unitary technology accessed, used, and structured everywhere the same. The Internet is in fact a “network of networks” created in many written, oral, and visual languages, and accessed through different technologies in socially-, politically-, and geographically-influenced ways. The earliest forms of computer-mediated communication (CMC) based on data packet switching, such as

ARPAnet, were developed in the United States and took English-language interfaces as their basis. As a result, the worldwide pervasiveness of the Internet today is often associated with the spread of English as a global language. Brenda Danet and Susan C. Herring, for instance, state in their volume *The Multilingual Internet* that the Internet has strengthened the historically- and politically-established position of English as a lingua franca among multilingual speakers around the world (2007, 22). Even given the (often contested) dominance of the English-language Internet, however, the works in Danet and Herring's volume and in other recent collections on Internet studies also demonstrate a growing commitment to understanding the Internet through other paradigms than the Anglophone. Gerard Goggin and Mark McLelland state in *Internationalizing Internet Studies* that

despite the clear importance of attending to the Internet's Anglophone origins, ...it is necessary for Internet studies to take greater account of developments in the non-Anglophone world and to qualify the conception of the internet as a 'global' technology with increased recognition of its very local histories and cultures of use. (2009, 12)

For that reason, I will forego a lengthy discussion of the history and cultures of the English-language Internet, a topic already widely covered in the literature since the late 1990s.³ Instead of taking the Anglophone Internet as the default or universal online experience, I will look at how the Internet is used in Japan and Korea, and how that in turn affects the global communication the Internet is purported to enable.

The most obvious difference between the Anglophone and Asian Internets are their written languages. In the case of Japanese, language seems to have been an early limiting factor in forming global connections. In the first place, written Japanese, along

³ Some useful early studies of English-language Internet use include David Porter's edited collection *Internet Culture* (1997) and Sherry Turkle's influential book on virtual communities such as Multi-User Dungeons (MUDs), *Life on the Screen* (1997).

with many other languages such as Chinese and Arabic, initially could not be displayed in web browsers based on the Roman alphabet due to the input and processing challenges posed by the extensive character sets they required (Danet and Hering 2007, 9-10). Once this technical problem was solved, there were also specific social issues surrounding language use in Japan that affected Internet use. Nanette Gottlieb argues that the Japanese internet began as a “relatively inward-linking” (2009, 67) structure, with 74.6 percent of its links being to other sites within Japan in 1998, and remains linguistically conservative today due to its “entrenched ‘one-country, one-language’ mindset” (70). Transformative approaches to language come out mainly in linguistic play within Japanese, and particularly within specific gendered or subcultural uses of Japanese, such as the character-scrambling text-talk of fashionable high school girls (*kogyaru*) called “*gyarumoji*” (gal talk) or the use of emoticons called “*kaomoji*” among young housewives on bulletin boards (Katsuno and Yano 2007). In this way, the Japanese language Internet can be seen as one of the more isolated networks on the World Wide Web, tending to encourage communication within already associated social groups rather than between those of different backgrounds and linguistic abilities.

That is not to say, however, that the Internet in Japan is completely disconnected. Other scholars who have studied the linguistic shifts taking place in Japanese online communication trace them not only to particular Japanese subcultures, but also to broader patterns of change in digital expression. Yukiko Nishimura isolates language usages particular to Japanese female media fans, such as plays with feminine sentence ending particles, but she also charts a number of general communication strategies used in English Netspeak as well as Japanese. These include multiple punctuation marks,

eccentric spelling, abbreviations, and “rebus writing,” as in “CU” for “see you” or “4649” for “*yoroshiku*” (2007, 168-9). While she insists on the “importance of attending to the characteristics of the specific language involved, and to the sociocultural context of its online use, for an understanding of emergent patterns in online communication” (181), then, her work also identifies points where linguistic play may be part of a transcultural mode of communication.

To take a concrete example, when I was attempting to decipher the massive BBS website 2-channeru (Channel 2), with its (in)famous anime otaku boards, I came across a link to an exchange of 380 posts between Japanese- and English-speakers discussing the “Japanese Online Idioms” specific to 2chan’s otaku culture.⁴ Using bilingual explanations, they collectively worked to translate neologisms such as DQN (*dokyun*, an ignorant or disruptive person) and 萌え (*moé*, about which more in chapter 6), to explain the punning otaku abbreviations for anime titles used online, and to list common and comical *kaomoji*, such as \ (° ∇°) / (cheer) and (▼Д▼) (mafia). In return, Anglophone posters explained new and old English expressions that Japanese-speakers found confusing, such as “go the whole hog.” The posters demonstrated an understanding of some shared principles of linguistic transformation online (abbreviation, emoticons), but they were also interested in local variations. The case of SamBakZa’s BBS in chapter 5 will provide another example of mutual language coaching—and linguistic friction—as part of the formation of transcultural animation fan communities.

Perhaps more challenging to negotiate than language differences are the distinct patterns of access and usage that arise from the histories and technologies of the Internet

⁴ *Japanese Online Idioms*. Nov. 23, 2004-Aug. 30, 2010. <http://4-ch.net/nihongo/kareha.pl/1101446156>

in East Asia. For instance, compared to the West, PC penetration even into the late 1990s was low in many Asian countries such as China, Japan, and Korea. As a result, “it was not desktop computers that were the most popular platform for Internet access, but rather a range of mobile devices—particularly mobile phones—which were Internet-enabled as early as 1999” (Goggin and McLelland 2009, 9). This history has had a lasting impact on how the Internet is used in each country.

In South Korea, for instance, the most popular form of social networking is the “mini-hompys” (mini-homepage), created through the service provider Cyworld. Participants register with their national ID numbers to create profiles that include elaborate virtual rooms decorated with purchases made in the Cyworld currency, “acorns” (*dotori*). Something like a combination of virtual worlds such as Second Life and social networking sites such as Facebook, mini-hompys are updated frequently with pictures and messages sent from mobile devices through Korea’s extremely dense wireless networks. A basic version of the service became available in 2001 and by 2006 over 90 percent of Koreans aged 20-29 had a mini-hompys, with 92 percent updating almost daily (Yoo 2009, 220). Though very popular in Korea, the mini-hompys poses some challenges for conceiving of global virtual community.

Seunghyun Yoo, for instance, has argued that mini-hompys have many features that allow users to develop “community capacity,” a sociological term indicating “the ability of community participants ‘to come together, learn, make well-reasoned decisions about the community’s present and future, and to work together to carry out those decisions’” (2009, 227). This is quite a high standard for community, and one that only becomes more problematic when it comes to developing *transcultural* community.

Besides questions of how users who do not speak Korean might work to “make well-reasoned decisions” with those who do, Cyworld presents special challenges to international access. In order to register for the service, non-Koreans must submit a piece of official ID such as a passport which is then checked by site administrators. The site is not designed to allow this process as easily as entering a Korean ID number, and it also deters young users without id and older users accustomed to the anonymity of “Web 1.0” culture. Furthermore, Cyworld’s 2006 attempt to set up in the United States failed within two years due in part to poor localization.⁵ The Korean Internet, then, is still at least partly bordered by the national citizenship documents required to gain access.

The Internet in Japan has some similar features. As in Korea, it is accessed as much through cellular telephones (*keitai denwa*) as PCs, if not more. In early 2006, wireless penetration in Japan surpassed 100 percent among 15-64 year olds.⁶ Noriko Manabe (2009) further reports that over 85 percent of Japanese mobile phone users in 2006 browsed the web on their phones daily, compared to only 12 percent in the United States and 14 percent in Britain. By 2010, cell phone ownership has become crucial for full online participation in Japan—so crucial, in fact, that key parts of the Japanese-language internet cannot be accessed without one, as I found out during my fieldwork there. For instance, in order to sign up for Japan’s largest social networking site, Mixi, one must provide a registered Japanese cell phone email address. Foreign or temporary Japanese addresses (like that of the borrowed pre-paid phone I used) will not work. This

⁵ At least, this is the explanation given most often by IT specialists and tech bloggers online. See for instance the post made by Korean-based Google employee Chang Won Kim at *Web 2.0 Asia* on August 1, 2007 at: <http://www.web20asia.com/333>

⁶ This statistic is based on information provided by the Statistics Bureau of Japan and the Telecommunications Carriers Association (TCA) in 2006, and calculated by Fujitsu employee Alexei Poliakov. See <http://www.analytica1st.com/2006/03/wireless-penetration-in-japan.html> on March 13, 2006.

restricts Mixi users almost entirely to Japanese national citizens, a situation that has drawn half-joking comparisons to the country's historical isolationist policies.⁷

The prevalence of mobile Internet applications means that other forms of online interaction common on the Anglophone Internet are not as widely used in Japan, making it even harder for Anglophone users to get “into the system.” For instance, I had great success recruiting English-speaking respondents for my survey of anime fans by posting to e-mail listservs. When I attempted to do something similar in Japanese, however, I was told (ironically, by members of the Anglophone *Anime and Manga Research List*) that listservs are not popular in Japan. No one I contacted could identify a single list I might to join. At the same time, “cold mails” to university anime clubs where I had no formal connections or previous acquaintance drew no response. My most successful tactic for recruiting “online” in Japan was in fact to have already met my respondents in person at social gatherings or through participant observation at Comiket.

Finally, the worldwide “domino effect” I was able to achieve in the English survey, which extended into secondary and tertiary networks (friends of friends of friends) to reach as far as Malaysia, did not happen in the Japanese version, where responses were limited mainly to close first-hand contacts. As a result, my response rates and completion rates were dramatically lower in Japanese than in English, with 41 responses and 14 completed Japanese forms, compared to 204 responses and 125 completed English forms (see Appendix 3). Though I made a reasonable effort to balance English- and Japanese-language recruiting in terms of materials and methods used, my results were unbalanced.

⁷ There was formerly a way for foreigners to get a Mixi account by using email addresses ending in .edu, but according to the most recent sources I was able to find, that loophole has been fixed. See <<http://www.tofugu.com/2010/02/25/how-to-get-into-mixi-without-a-japanese-cell-phone-email-address/>> for the instructions, their retraction, and a light-hearted criticism of virtual isolationism.

Among other factors, this may be due to the much greater number of available respondents who speak “global English” worldwide. It is also indicative, however, of my own asymmetrical positioning in online networks that remain only semi-connected. Along with the expanding networks of online fans described in chapter 4, it seems that the Internet does still present some divisions between users in different cultural, linguistic, and geographical locations. It is this disparity or asymmetry that potential members must navigate in order to form transcultural fan communities.

Flash Animation and Web Anime

Having discussed a few of the differences that impact general Internet access and usage in South Korea and Japan, I would now like to turn to a more specific use of the Internet: the creation and distribution of animation online. Animation is often cited as foundational to CMC in terms of both usability and aesthetics, present in everything from the basic appearance and motion of objects in the Graphical User Interface (e.g., Chang and Ungar 1993), to web design elements such as animated introductory screens created with the Flash multimedia authoring application (Ankerson 2009), to innovative uses of sound, image, and time in experimental Flash websites (Manovich 2002, Munster 2003). As proposed in my introduction, however, I will focus on two kinds of narrative animation that have been produced by and for animation fan audiences using digital technologies. These are “Flash animation” and “Original Net Animation” (ONA), more commonly known as “web anime” in Japan.

Technically speaking, a “Flash animation” is any work created using Adobe Flash (formerly Macromedia Flash) and uploaded in the .swf format, regardless of national origin, style or content. *There She Is!!* counts as a Flash animation, since it was uploaded

to Flash portal websites such as *Newgrounds.com* in .swf format. In practice, however, the term “Flash animation” has come to indicate not just a file format but a particular style and ethos that grew up from the history of Flash.

According to Dan Baldwin, John Ludwick, and Michael Daubs (2006), Western Flash cartoons trace their lineage to a 1997 Internet series by television cartoon director John Kricfalusi called *The Goddamn George Liquor Project*. Kricfalusi explicitly positioned Flash animation in opposition to the mass-produced low-budget TV cartoon system detailed in chapter 3. In an interview with *Wired* magazine, he stated that that while “[Television] cartoons now are corporate-created,” “You can do it any way you want on the Net” (Sullivan 1997, n.p). No matter how crude or offensive, he argues, any cartoon can be put online free from corporate pressure and network censorship regulations. As Flash became widely available following its 1997 acquisition by Macromedia, many amateur animators around the world took up Kricfalusi’s celebratory stance of the web animator as a pioneer of the lawless “digital frontier.” In contrast to Bill Hanna’s criticisms of television production for restricting artistic creativity, the new medium of the Internet was lauded as a site of personal freedom of expression for animators stifled by the corporate environment. The animation style may be drastically simplified and the motion limited to suit the small file sizes required for easy downloading, just as limited animation styles were developed for television to keep budgets low. But online, this visual simplification becomes instrumental in the expression of individual vision—at least, in theory.

Given the historical connections between limited animation and Japan, it is no wonder that Baldwin et al. find “Similar parallels between form and content” in

“Japanese-produced anime cartoons” (2006, 145). When it comes to anime online, however, Japanese animators have had other options available to them besides Flash. Living in a country with a high broadband penetration rate supported by national IT policies from the beginning of the 2000s (Takada 2003), Japanese animators began attempting to distribute cel-style anime (or at least works produced by a combination of hand-drawing and cg) online as early as 2001. As in the case of the Original Video Animation (OVA) market, the main benefit of the Internet was to allow small-scale producers to evade the censorship of television networks and appeal directly to an otaku niche audience. Little wonder that the program to originate the term “Original Net Animation” was a fannish pornographic *Sailor Moon* parody titled *Lingerie Fighter Papillon Rose* (2001), by the otherwise obscure producer Tobita Shinji.⁸

As of 2010, there remains a strong culture of parody and fan-made video in Japan supported by the video-hosting website *Nico Nico Dōga*. And yet, I would be remiss to overlook the fact that some anime made for online distribution today are in fact tie-ins with existing TV franchises produced by traditional animation studios such as Kyoto Animation and distributed by companies such as Bandai. These are termed “Web anime” (Webアニメ), and are often sold on DVD following their free release as streaming videos.⁹ Web anime thus play an increasingly important role in what is termed the “contents industry,” an approach to media texts based on cross-over between different platforms and genres such as anime, manga, and video games. I will discuss the contents

⁸ In fact, the “first” ONA was finally released on video as an OVA, with only trailers distributed online. Still, news of the series’ planned Netcast quickly spread from Japan to the Anglophone Internet via the newsgroup rec.arts.anime.news, where a poster named “Hisashi” promoted it as “a kind of fan-anime,” similar to the early fan works of Studio Gainax. See <http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/news/2001-01-15/new-anime-series-to-be-distributed-on-the-net> for a transcript of the original posting.

⁹ Examples of web anime include “The Melancholy of Suzumiya Haruhi-chan” (Kyoto Animation, 2009), a tie-in with a series of best-selling light novels and television anime, and Bandai’s “Mobile Suit Gundam SEED C.E. 73: Stargazer” (2006), based on the decade-spanning *Gundam* franchise.

industry at greater length in chapter 6, as it is crucial to understanding the production and consumption of *Hetalia*. For now, suffice it to say that web animation, like the Internet itself, presents both possibilities for an alternative economy of shared user-generated content and the expansion of existing industries online.

I do not want to give the impression that Western Flash animation is the more independent style while Japanese web anime is thoroughly corporate, or indeed, that these media cultures can be so cleanly divided along national lines. Just as the Japanese television anime industry developed in a complex cultural field saturated with Western influences, so Flash animation results from the adoption and transformation of Japanese pop culture that began in the fan networks of the 1970s. Tracing this heritage, Anna Munster argues that “a Flash aesthetic is not synonymous with global design or high-tech information spaces but rather is a *hybrid product of information exchange and meaning between cultures*: low-tech, high-tech, Japanese, American, digital and analogue” (2003, 135, my italics). I am slightly wary of the term “hybrid” here, given that she cites Azuma Hiroki’s articulation of hybrid “Superflat” art (Munster, 138) without recognizing the ways in which such hybridity is often re-embedded in the subtly nationalist Japanese corporate hybridism Iwabuchi describes. However, it is true that the styles and uses of online animation are formed in the spaces between (trans)cultures, in the flow and friction of passages that sometimes run beyond and sometimes run up against national borders. The question now is just *how* such “information exchange and meaning between cultures” actually happens.

Fans and Communities

This returns us to the issue of online animation fan communities. While Munster provides a number of compelling theories about the formal properties of Flash animation, she does not address how animation is consumed online, beyond claiming that the social practices of Flash culture are extensions of the 1970s proto-networks of active anime fans trading video tapes. In her words, they are “the same kinds of networks, only amplified” (138). I would argue that there is a more complex relation of continuity and rupture between those who participated in the 1970s–80s Western anime subculture based on video tapes—what English-speaking fans call the “old school” faction—and the “new school” that has grown up since the spread of the Internet in the mid-90s. On bulletin boards, at conventions, and in my survey as well, many fans (especially those in their late twenties and early thirties) see the advent of the Internet as marking a generational divide. The shift is variously figured as either the next evolution or the utter decay and ruin of fandom. In many ways, anime fans are engaged in the wider processes that Brydon and Coleman (2009) call “renegotiating community,” as they attempt to work through changes in the practices of inclusion and exclusion, the acquisition of anime materials, and engagements with other cultures in Asia and beyond that the Internet has brought about. So, how do fans renegotiate notions of community?

First, it is important to recognize just what ideas of community are undergoing change here. Early Western (and particularly American) criticism on “virtual communities” often drew on ideas of community as *place* or locality in order to ask whether virtual, symbolic interactions can have the same status as “real” face-to-face interactions (e.g. Fernback 1999 and 2007). Indeed, when I asked respondents in my

survey if they “feel a strong sense of community with [their] fellow fans,” many responded specifically with experiences of in-person interactions at fan conventions. Conventions were framed as conducive to emotional closeness and warmth, as one respondent reporting feeling a sense of community “especially at conventions because we can all come together and feel comfortable talking with each other because we share a common love.” Another said:

Yes, I have a strong sense of community. Out of almost all social situations, I have the most fun at anime conventions. ... It might be that there’s a convention feel that strengthens the sense of community.

This bond-forming “convention feel,” based on the immediacy of shared affective connection, has been depicted in Henry Jenkins’ *Textual Poachers*, and is one of the reasons that fan gatherings are so easily accepted in scholarship as “communities.”

And yet, the same respondent who praised the “convention feel” also reported that this bond can be disrupted by the intrusion of younger fans who do not respect “conventional” social rules, adding, “I find many fans immature and unable to interact socially, and so do not feel like part of a community when with them.” This conflict between newer, younger fans and older, more established fans is explicitly linked by others to the divisive effect of encountering a generation raised with the Internet and commercially-available dubbed anime, as opposed to clubs, small conventions, and underground tape trading. For instance, one 28-year-old American fan claims that,

I did feel a strong sense of community back when anime was hard to get and when there was a point to going to conventions with no famous guests. Now, anime is all over tv, you can steal just about anything on the internet, and people go to cons to meet voice actors, not fellow fans. I feel a bit alienated.

The sentiment is not uniquely North American. An Italian fan aged 24 also says,

I feel a definite connection with fellow fans, but I don't have a strong sense of community, mainly because fandoms are heavily internet-based, which makes them more impersonal.

Even some of those who do find a sense of online community frame it as a sort of substitute for the real thing. A respondent from England wrote that

There's not really anyone local to me who loves anime like I do, so I rely on the internet community to talk about my favourite shows. I do feel a strong sense of community because, otherwise, I would be completely isolated.

The repeated use of terms such as “alienated,” “impersonal,” and “isolated” speak to a sensation of digital disconnect, born from changes in the ways fans form (or fail to form) interpersonal relations and access (or “steal”) animation on the Internet. Fans who are critical of the Internet find themselves in the company of scholars such as Robert Putnam, who decried the downfall of in-person American communities such as the bowling league by a generation that is now “bowling alone” (Wu Song 2009). Even John Tomlinson, for all his care in addressing media globalization even-handedly, insists that “people I see around the city have a ‘real’ cultural experience in their everyday lives which has a *certain priority* over any experience provided by the media” (1999, 62, my italics).

Critical approaches to online fandom are not restricted to the West. Though the specific term “community” (i.e. *kyōdōtai*) is less-often used in contemporary Japanese criticism, the term “social” (*shakai-teki*), with the connotations of consensus and communal harmony it carries in Japanese, comes up very frequently, particularly in opposition to otaku's media use. As I will discuss at greater length in chapter 6, Azuma Hiroki has famously defined the most recent generation of postmodern, Internet-using otaku as “database animals” whose relations are “nonsocial” and information-oriented. Even Kashimura Aiko's 2007 article “Why Has Otaku Culture Come to be Popular in the

World?”, in which I expected to find the Japanese equivalent of Western theorizations of cross-cultural communication, rather stresses the image of the (implicitly male) “socially-inept otaku” (351) who use bulletin boards such as 2-channeru to *avoid* expressing personal opinions or feelings and build “a culture in which the major theme is the avoidance of others” (341). The “impersonal Internet” discourse, one that replaces close affective communities with objective, exchange-based networks (Willson 2010, 755), is fully evident here.

Along with age gaps, Japanese-speaking respondents to my survey related the anti-sociality of otaku culture to divisions in gender relations, claiming that otaku are “People who have dropped out of normal communication with the opposite sex.” A sense of fading in-person community is also hinted at in remarks by 30+ Japanese fans such as, “I sometimes feel it, but since I don’t know many otaku or anime well, I’ve lost that sense of community lately.” And yet, though I made my connections in Japan primarily through face-to-face networks, just over a quarter of my respondents did report online activities when asked about their sense of community and their most memorable connections with other fans. These fans were also more likely to relate their sense of community to Internet usage in everyday life, rather than to special events such as cons. “It’s fun to share thoughts about anime with acquaintances on the Net,” one wrote, “Talking about anime on the Net is a daily habit [of mine].” Another described how she progressed from loving an anime series and talking about it daily on the Net with her friends to meeting those friends and taking a trip to the European setting of the show.

For some of those outside Japan, as well, the Internet enables global connections that are explicitly defined as communities. Female respondents using the blog site

LiveJournal, organized around both individual blogs and blog “communities,” were most likely to express a sense of closeness across distance. One American member of a community devoted to the four-woman manga artist team CLAMP explained,

I feel the strongest sense of community with the members of clampnow..., since I have been a vocal member of the community for about two years now, when I started translating Clamp manga and posting the translations to my LJ. I have been interacting with a certain core group of people fairly steadily through the community and my translations, and there's a definite feel of community.

In this view, online communities not only allow fans to form emotional connections through symbolic networks, but create links between everyday life and physical experiences of the world, locally and globally.

So, which is it? Does the Internet divide anime fans along age and gender lines, or unite them through common interests shared in common ways? Thinking transculturally, I would argue that both of these conflicting positions together are what make up animation fan community online. As early as 1999, Fernback described virtual community by saying that it is “not just a thing; it is also a process,” and I would agree with this. I do not, however, believe that it is “a process that emerges from the wisdom of our repository of cultural knowledge about the concept of community” (217) as Fernback claims. Certainly, the process of forming social bonds emerges from discourses about terms such as “community,” “network,” and “society” (or *shakai*). But these terms are not a “repository of cultural knowledge” or already-extant “wisdom.” Rather, the very *definition* of community is always under contestation. Some see it as a local, immediate experience threatened by the impersonality of mediated communications, while others see it as an evolving form of social interaction taking place in virtual environments among very widely separated participants. In transcultural fan community, opposing

views of what that community itself should be are renegotiated by fans (and scholars) who place them in debate.

Fans are not unaware of each others' positions on the state of anime fan community. Knowing each other's stances, they are apt to disagree. As one English-speaking respondent wryly notes, "We are all in agreement, perhaps, on our love of anime, but I think if fans start a discussion, there's potential for trouble." Outbreaks of "trouble" among fans have led to the use of such terms as "schism" and "divided," and to claims that fans today are fragmented into an array of program- or character-based interest groups. This is not an inaccurate picture. And yet, when I meet people who like anime, we do speak as if there is a common group called "anime fans" and find it comprehensible to talk about "fan community." I would suggest, then, that the process that makes this a community is one of both agreement and contestation across Anglophone and Asian-language Internets, in-person and online groups, genders and generations, the local and the global—in short, a collaboration across difference.

Chapter 5. “Love at First Site”

Let me begin this chapter with a beginning, the first words of a new fan: “Love at first site.” These words are the subject line of a post made to the SamBakZa.net bulletin board on February 2, 2006. The poster, “Rae,” has just seen the music-video-style Flash cartoon “There She Is!!” (2003), which will come to form the first episode of a five-part series also called *There She Is!!*. S/he has also just discovered that the site has a public bulletin board moderated by the SamBakZa team’s lead animator, Amalloc. At this point, there are 767 Original Posts (OPs) on the board, some with dozens of comments. Rae decides to post as well. Writing in English, Rae is slightly in the minority: over half of the posters coming to the board in 2006 write in Korean (398 OPs), though English trails not too far behind (276), and Japanese is relatively well-represented (89 posts, compared to three posts in Spanish and just one in Chinese). “Love at First Site”, Rae puns (or simply misspells?) in the subject line. The post continues:

I just happen to come across your site in the wee hours of the night...stumbled across a video that was made, and let me just say I fell in love!

Though I don’t understand the lyrics, the music is wonderful, the art is beautifully done, and it made me very happy just watching it. Thank you for such a wonderful site, and keep up the good work! (ellipses in orig.)

Rae never became a regular commenter, but the sentiment expressed here and the particular way of expressing it is common for the SamBakZa.net bulletin board. This unremarkable, everyday sort of fan posting has two features which are among the key aspects of transcultural animation fan communities online: first, a mixture of emotional engagement and reflexivity, and second, a focus on issues of language.

In the first case, notice how along with praising the art and animators, as is usual in fan letters, Rae also remarks on the online environment itself. The post begins with an

account of finding the website—“stumbling across it” at random—and concludes with thanks, not just for the animation but for the “wonderful site.” The text and the conditions of its viewing meld into one affective experience: “it made me very happy just watching it.” This experience is spontaneous and immediate in its visuality, happening at first sight, and yet it is also self-consciously mediated and linguistic, as it happens on a site, with Rae bringing attention to the act of viewing a video and then expressing opinions on the board. It is linguistic, however, in a way that is not limited by language, as Rae adores the short even without understanding the lyrics of the Korean pop song that structures it.

Commenters posting in other languages express similar ideas. In November 2004, a regular Japanese poster called “Chiumi” suggested that

Flash, by going beyond words, can allow all the people of the world to be deeply moved, so that by coming to this page they can feel as if a “new language” (*atarashii gengo*) is coming into being. So I very, very much respect Mr. Amalloc for being able to use that “new language.”

Like Rae, Chiumi remarks on both the Flash animation and the act of “coming to this page,” which allow an affective coming-together “beyond words.” Chiumi’s portrayal of Flash animation as “going beyond words” is grounded in a reading of SamBakZa’s animation, since all five shorts have no dialogue and tell their stories through a combination of visuals and musical rhythms. It is also a perfect example of the kind of longing for a visual language capable of connecting “all the people of the world” that has accompanied the emergence of new media from film to the Internet.

I have problematized the utopian “Miraculous Cinema” and “Anthem” models for their tendency to appropriate other voices in constructing world harmony. In the case of the SamBakZa bulletin boards as well, I will demonstrate that online media do not necessarily free fans from certain ethnocentric and heteronormative assumptions. In this

chapter, however, I will also ask what forms of belonging or collaboration across difference virtual communities can provide. Mark Deuze argues in his article “Ethnic Media, Community Media, and Participatory Culture” that “(ethnic) media signify a function of media in the everyday life of people that is cohesive as well as corrosive” (2006, 269). I will follow his example by considering instances where even frictions between fans may be productive in forming bonds, giving grip to mediated relationships rather than eroding them. In so doing, I will demonstrate how this Flash series acts, if not as a medium with “no language,” then at least as a medium with a “new language,” one that is shaped by the problems and potentials of the Internet, and the geopolitical realities to which virtual worlds are indissolubly linked.

Korean Animation from “Dreams of a Dog” to Cute Customization

Up to this point, I have looked mainly at animation produced under the banners of the United States and Japan. I have considered how these two traditions of animation have mutually influenced each other, lending credence to the idea that no (visual) culture is purely or essentially national, but constructs its nationality through the exchange of media materials and imaginaries. I have also tried to avoid falling into a celebratory postnationalism by recognizing the ways in which discourses of American-style multiculturalism and Japanese hybridism are often re-embedded in persistent nationalist political and economic structures. In doing so, however, I have not looked very far beyond the twin poles of Japan and North America. This limitation is problematic, because using only these two national examples risks reinforcing a particular form of “techno-Orientalism” that has been criticized in Asian studies and media studies.

Techno-Orientalism is the 1980s discourse which positioned Japan as an Other encroaching on Western technological superiority. Its differing manifestations in America, where Japan was seen as a threat, and in Japan, where self-Orientalism became an issue, have been widely discussed among anime scholars (Ueno 1996, Napier 2007, Lu 2008). As Kelly Hu argues, however, even criticisms of Techno-Orientalism such as David Morley and Kevin Robins' 1995 chapter "Techno-Orientalism: Japan Panic" themselves risk reproducing a narrative structure which "leaves no room for anything other than Japan and the West" (2005, 63). Until recently, other parts of East Asia have been ignored as "developing" or "secondary" media producers lacking the technological sophistication of America and Japan. Today, as Iwabuchi says, the media cultures of Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Korea, among others, can no longer be left out of the global picture in this way. The surging popularity of Korean television dramas and music known as "Hallyu" or the "Korean Wave" has given rise to a complex play between strategies of Othering and assertions of pan-Asian ethnic identity in Japan, and conflicting drives towards national protectionism and regional participation in Korea. A full understanding of anime's globalization must take into account its regional flows and frictions, which both reflect and diverge from East/West models of power.

For this reason, I will now provide a brief overview of the history of Korean animation to set the stage for my discussion of SamBakZa's work. I would like to reiterate that I am not simply seeking out an example of an alternative national cinema, as if it were some distinct and isolated entity. Following Joon-Yang Kim, I understand the "South Korea" in "South Korean animation" to be "a discursively produced, social and historical collective entity rather than being regarded as essential, natural and given"

(Kim 2006, 62). The national term “Korean animation” is useful mainly because such animation was (and often still is) explicitly tied to the growth of a national identity, if one constructed in constant negotiation with global and regional influences.

As far as current research can determine, the first Korean animation was a 1936 short film titled “Gae Koom” (alternatively, “Gaeggum”), or “Dreams of a Dog,” by Seoul-based artists Kim Yong-Wun and Im Seok-Ki (Kim 63). Though the film has not survived and may not have been completed, the extant publicity about it is telling. For instance, an article in the Nov. 25, 1936 issue of *Chosun Ilbo* newspaper announces that

While the names of Mickey Mouse and Betty Boop are known throughout the world, there has not yet been an animated character created in Chosun. Now, due to Kim Yong-woon and Im Seok-gi, in association with Jeongrim Movie Company, the production of *Gaeggum* has begun.
(trans. Giammarco 2005, n.p.)

The accompanying illustration (Fig. 5.1) depicts an anthropomorphic dog character wearing a suit jacket, tie, and glasses, with a cigar in his mouth. This, along with the references to Mickey Mouse and Betty Boop, suggests that Korean animators too were influenced by Disney and the Fleischers to create comic animated films using cute Western-style animals. At the same time the advertisement itself emphasizes that this is “an animated character created in Chosun [Korea].” One newspaper article is hardly representative of an entire era of production now largely unknown. And yet, even from this single example, it is possible to see that Korean animation publicity, like that for Ōfuji’s “uniquely Japanese” chiyogami films, explicitly tried to position local animation in relation *and* opposition to American cartoons, evoking “them” only to offer something made by “us.”



Fig. 5.1: Publicity image for “Dreams of a Dog.” Source: Giammarco, n.p. (Public domain).

Along with American animation, Korean filmmakers also had to negotiate both positive and extremely negative Japanese influences. On the bright side, animator Kim In-Tae, born in 1931, has recounted enjoying the Japanese *Norakuro* series as a child (Kim 2006, 64), an early experience of cartoons which inspired him to an international career as an animator in the post-war years. More negatively, however, older animators who did pursue the craft during World War II faced systematic discrimination and disadvantage when it came to getting basic filmmaking materials. The Japanese colonial governing body in Korea, the *Chongdokbu*, “imposed various forms of censorship and economic restrictions on the Korean motion picture industry” (Min 2003, 246), controlling access to film stock as well as subject matter. Koreans could work only with difficulty on government-sanctioned topics. As a result, some Korean animators such as Kim Yong-Hwan ended up working on *Momotarō’s Divine Ocean Warriors*, a work which, as I have shown, was an ideological vehicle for Japanese imperialism. Joon-Yang Kim argues that very little is known about this period in part because colonial oppression (and possible collusion) remains “an uncomfortable historical issue for South Korean animation” (2006, 65). As sensitive as the topic is, however, it must be broached, as the

colonial legacy of *Momotarō* would haunt Korean attitudes towards Japanese animation for years to come.

Following World War II and the Korean War, animation was rapidly industrialized along two lines. The first line was advertising. Animation scholars John Lent and Kie-Un Yu place the true beginning of South Korean animation (now quite distinct from North Korean animation) in 1956, with Mun Dalbu's black-and-white commercial for Lucky Toothpaste. From advertising, a few animators moved into feature-length film work. Shin Dong-Hun capitalized on his famous ad for the Jinro Liquor Company to produce Korea's first animated colour feature, *Hong Gil Dong* (1967). This work, based on a 17th-century Korean popular novel, was an instant hit, although subsequent remakes were heavily criticized for their Japanese-anime-derived look (Lent and Yu 2001, 94). Along with feature films, others also moved into animated short films. A notable international success is the aforementioned Kim In-Tae, the childhood fan of *Norakuro*, who brought his experience to Canada's National Film Board in order to produce the award-winning educational short "Korean Alphabet" ("Hangul," 1967) in collaboration with Norman McLaren.

After this early start, the domestic industry for Korean animation faltered. Entire years passed without a single domestically animated theatrical release in the '70s. Instead, the industry was supported by a second line of business: subcontracting work for overseas film and television companies. As Yu (1999) explains, so much animation was subcontracted to Korea by American, Canadian, European, and Japanese firms that it became the world's third largest producer of animation while generating very little domestic programming. Government initiatives to sponsor domestic television animation

in the mid-1990s by creating a specialty channel and imposing a 70-30 domestic-foreign content ratio failed due to the lack of affordably-produced local content to air. As a result, much “Korean” cartoon programming was actually Japanese or American animation purposely re-edited to disguise it as domestic animation.

Complicating the situation is the fact that the late '70s and early '80s “Japanese” TV shows aired abroad were often over 30% Korean-made through subcontracting (Mōri 2009, 75). So, domestic cartoon programming in Korea can be seen as a vicious circle of stations re-importing and localizing at cost the products of their industry’s own low-paid labour. Yu argues that the

development of the Korean animation industry is a historical result of the international division of labor.... Thus, the Korean animation industry has participated very actively in the formation of the global assembly line of the international animation market that has heavily relied upon Asian labor. (1999, 39)

Such divisions of labour have a continuing impact on East Asian animation production.

As recently as 2009, Mōri Yoshitaka has drawn attention to the ways in which Japanese subcontracting reinforces an Asian labour environment that “rewards exploitation” (81).

At the same time, however, Mōri also takes a more nuanced stance than Yu in his comparison of the animation industries in Japan, China, and Korea. He views the spread of anime in global markets today not as straightforward neoimperial economic domination, but as a process that includes cultural exchange, however unevenly distributed. He further contends that changing processes of media circulation and consumption, particularly where the Internet is involved, require new structures of production (91). Likewise, I would argue that criticisms of Korean animation as nothing more than an extension of top-down Fordist “assembly line” models are outdated and inappropriate for discussing the latest developments in web animation today. Net media

such as Flash animation do not depend on waged labour and mass market consumption. Rather, they are based (as Appadurai might say) on the “imaginative labour” of fans and amateurs creating user-generated content for/along with other fans.

The cultural work of fans is often overlooked in the development story of Korean animation. Criticisms of exploitative subcontracting and official channels of production, while good for industry workers, tend to overlook those operating through unofficial, non-industrial channels. In the decades following World War II, all Japanese music, films, and television programs were officially banned by Korea’s successive military regimes. This was done in an anti-colonial attempt to rebuild Korean national identity and protect it against Japanese cultural imperialism.¹⁰ Cartoons in particular were listed as one of the “six evils” facing Korean society, so that “each succeeding administration used them as whipping boys” (Lent and Yu 2001, 92). Though the ban on Japanese cultural products was implemented by authoritarian governments, Kim notes that it was “supported for a long time by many South Koreans because of their memories of the late colonial period” (2006, 70). The shades of *Momotarō*, as an illustration of the culturally colonizing effects of animation, remained strong among the older generation.

And yet, the spread of the VCR in the 1970s and ’80s meant that the younger generation, who had grown up not with Japanese colonialism but their own homegrown regimes, could get their hands on anime through underground fan networks and larger-scale piracy. Kim says that when fans saw the original versions of programs that had been broadcast in edited versions, they quickly realized that some of their favourite “Korean” shows were Japanese, the very anime they were officially denied. This realization stirred

¹⁰ Post-war bans on Japanese cultural products were common in formerly-colonized nations. For a comparison of South Korea’s ban with similar policies in the Philippines and Taiwan, see Nissim Kadosh Otmazgin’s article “Contesting soft power: Japanese popular culture in East and Southeast Asia” (2007).

anger at the deceptions practiced by television stations and the hypocrisy of “the established social system” (Kim 70). Through the VCR, anime acquired a sort of resistant subcultural function among fans. Using similar technological means as American fandom, but in a very different political climate, an East Asian anime fan community was born.

In Korea, as in North America, the Internet facilitated the growth of anime fandom and at the same time altered its character. Young Koreans at the turn of the millennium became accustomed to circumventing the ban and downloading the latest films by Hayao Miyazaki in a more casual, less politically-conflicted fashion.¹¹ At the same time, new media consumption led to new media creation, as aspiring independent animators such as SamBakZa’s Amalloc admit that their love of (officially forbidden) anime was a major inspiration. Contemporary Korean animation’s oft-criticized resemblance to Japanese animation is not simply a product of unimaginative imitation born from years of subcontracting work. It is the result of a process of fan-driven cultural exchange through changing modes of production and consumption: a re-imagining of regional cultural flows. Reflecting such changing attitudes, President Kim Dae-Jung’s democratic government began lifting previous administrations’ cultural restrictions in 1998. By 2004, almost all forms of anime were permitted entry (though animated pornography and controversial works such as *Hetalia* still prompt censorship). It was in this period of cultural opening in the late ’90s and early 2000s that the Korean Wave took off in Japan and the rest of Asia.

¹¹ For instance, a young Seoul-based web-designer named Kang Sun Kyung who was interviewed by the *LA Times* about her anime downloading on Dec. 28, 2003 said: “Just because I like Japanese culture doesn’t mean I’m a fan of Japanese imperialism or that I’m less patriotic than other Koreans” adding, “I think it’s wrong to keep out another culture.” Her ability to embrace Japanese popular culture while repudiating imperialism *and* remaining a patriotic Korean is typical of youth politics in Seoul today. See Otmazgin 2007, pg. 4 and Iwabuchi 2010, pg. 415.

If such mutual regional influences can no longer be seen as unidirectionally imperialistic or dominant, there remain concerns about consumerism and soft power, evoking as it does the “attractive empire” of Japanese cinema described in chapter 2. Japanese soft power in the 1990s was often depicted as “J-Cool,” the status-building might of Japan’s edgy popular culture, as for instance in McGray’s oft-cited 2002 article on “Japan’s Gross National Cool.” In more recent years, however, scholars have begun to look more at the effects of “Japan *Cute*,” or the “*kawaii*”: the warm appeal of small, soft, non-threatening character-icons such as little girls and animals (Allison 2004, Yomota 2006). *Hello Kitty* in particular is seen as a brand-character that plays a leading role in establishing a Japanese “consumutopia” (McVeigh 2000, 228) or “Japanizing” popular culture in places like Taiwan (Ko 2003, 177).

In the South Korean context, Larissa Hjorth’s study of Cyworld mini-hompys provides a detailed analysis of what she calls “cute customization”: users’ personalizations of their mini-hompy rooms through cute animated avatars and decorations given as gifts. Hjorth downplays theories of cute customization as part of “trans-Asian flows” of cuteness, emphasizing that such arguments often fall into the above-mentioned “Japanization” models (2009, 241). Cute customization in her view is a *local* manifestation of the Korean Internet. In uniting users through media, it reflects Appadurai’s global “communities of imagination and interest,” but it also re-channels them into “localized notions of community, social capital, and gift-giving” (248). For her, cute animation online is now a local social process rather than an effect of centralized or even “recentered” soft power.

I like Hjorth's focus on media community-building and find her attention to localization reasonable given how Cyworld is explicitly geared towards Korean national citizens. And yet, I feel it is equally important to address how cuteness is understood as both a local *and* trans-local element of Korean online culture, just as "national" identity is both national and transnational in its construction. The history of Korean animation, from "Dreams of a Dog" to work on *Momotarō*, from industry subcontracting to fan piracy, is founded on many layers of influence, coercion, resistance, and re-imagining at local, regional, and global levels. In the case of *There She Is!!*, with its cosmopolitan-minded creator and multilingual fan base, it becomes even more essential to look at the global exchanges that inform the most local "cute customizations." To that end, I will now consider SamBakZa's animation itself and the community that has formed around it.

There She Is!! and Here We Are

In terms of mainstream popularity, *There She Is!!* is a very minor work. It is unknown to the vast majority of audiences, certainly no match for anything by Disney or Studio Ghibli. In terms of subcultural popularity, however, it stands out as one of the more recognized and respected works in the budding field of Flash animation. It was originally based on a *manhwa* (comic) called *One Day* drawn by SamBakZa cartoonist Sogong and animated by Amalloc. The first "Step" was posted to their website in 2003, then uploaded by Amalloc to the American Flash-hosting website Newgrounds.com in 2004. The second Step, "Cake Dance," followed in February of 2005. The remaining three Steps—"Doki & Nabi," "Paradise" and "Imagine"—came out between May and December 2008. According to Amalloc, "There She Is!!" was not originally intended to be a series, but was expanded after the group received many positive reviews, messages,

gifts of art, donations, and requests that the story continue from fans.¹² On the strength of its growing fan base, the series went on to gain widespread recognition among Flash viewers, with over 11 million views on Newgrounds alone as of September 2010. Beyond Anglophone Internet circuits, it has proven particularly popular with Latin American audiences. The first Step won the Professional Award and Cyber Jury Award at Brazil's Anima Mundi web film festival in 2004, and qualified to play in the Anima 05 festival in Cordoba, Argentina. It was also screened in two versions at the Seoul International Cartoon and Animation Festival (SICAF). Successive Steps were shown at the Annecy International Animated Film Festival in France in 2008.¹³ Without the benefit of marketing or merchandise, SamBakZa has managed to reach a global audience. So what has made their series so mobile? And why is it an apt object around which to build a transcultural community?

There are many possible answers, from the technological to the economic. But looking at the text itself, I believe *There She Is!!* as a work of animation has two elements which allow fans to join together from many parts of the world. The first is its cuteness, which SamBakZa drew from the *kawaii* anime trend discussed above and “customized” in novel, appealing ways. Cuteness is especially prevalent in the first two Steps, which are light and comedic in tone. The second element is its presentation of a key issue that concerns animation fans: the problem of how to connect across (online) social spaces still riven with (offline) conflicts. This issue is addressed most clearly in the three final Steps, which form a more dramatic trilogy depicting discrimination against an interspecies

¹² Amalloc's account of how he came to make *There She Is!!* is given briefly on his Newgrounds page at: <http://www.newgrounds.com/portal/view/474311>

¹³ A list of festivals where the shorts played is provided on the SamBakZa website's profile page at: <http://www.sambakza.net/profile/profile.html>

animal couple. Altogether, the series reflexively suggests ways of imagining “being together” across difference which are then taken up by fans online.

The basic narrative of the series tells the story of a sweet, outgoing girl rabbit named Doki who falls in love with a reluctant boy cat named Nabi. The catch: in their world, love between cats and rabbits is forbidden (Fig. 5.2). The first episode plays out like a Warner Bros. “Pepé LePew” chase cartoon with the genders reversed. The girl, Doki, is smitten by Nabi when they cross paths at a pair of drinks vending machines, and she is not afraid to show it. He, embarrassed by the horrified stares of onlookers, runs away from her only to find her chasing him with blissful determination. Wherever he goes—in an elevator, on the toilet, sliding down the digital canvas of the screen—*there she is!!*

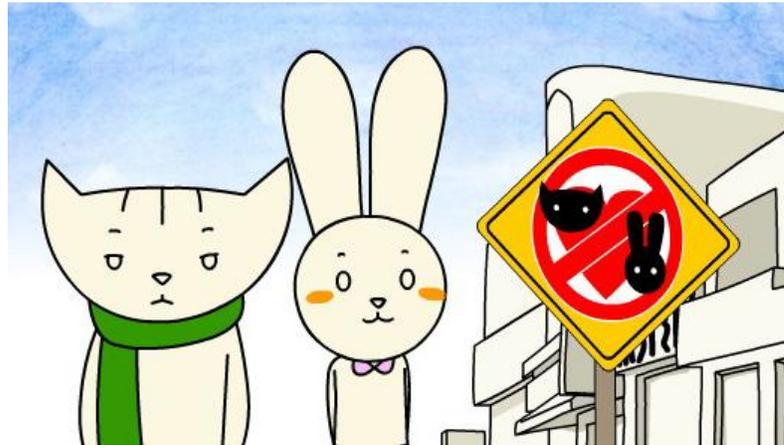


Fig. 5.2: Nabi and Doki walk by a sign outlawing their relationship in *There she is!!*
Used with the artists’ permission, obtained April 29, 2010.

The simple plot is carried off by an equally simple yet solid visual style. The clean-lined, unshaded characters, especially Doki with her wide-spaced oval eyes, round head, and little pink bow, recall the flat geometrical cuteness of Hello Kitty. Like Sogong in the original comic, Amalloc quite self-consciously draws on the visual “grammar” of Japanese manga and Korean manhwa, making fun of it along the way. For instance,

emotions are manifested as particular visual symbols—sweat drops for embarrassment, an x-shaped “forehead vein” for anger, hearts and flowers for love—which are then made amusingly literal. In the first Step, Nabi is actually buried in the pile of hearts Doki sheds for love of him. There are also direct references to cute Japanese children’s anime such as *Pokémon*, as in Step 3 where Doki throws one of the red-and-white balls used to catch “Pocket Monsters” at Nabi’s head during a chase scene. These parodies, like *The Jetsons*’ use of sitcom tropes, assume an audience accustomed enough to the style to get its in-jokes. Though everyone may not understand the upbeat Korean pop song the short is set to, the related visual languages of anime, manga, and manhwa are shared by fans around the world, be they in Korea, Japan, England, or Mexico.

The cute design style also builds on shared affects of warmth and acceptance, creating a “community of imagination and interest” that is more inclusive than a specific subcultural set of in-jokes. On the bulletin board, fans frequently cite the show’s cuteness (or *kawaisa*) as a reason that everyone can like it, regardless of gender, age or nationality. Male commenters, from a 12-year-old Québécois boy (2732) to an American man in the military (4802), wrote in reporting that although they don’t normally like romance and cuteness, this series touched them in ways that defied typically gendered audience expectations. As one man said, “I love it! pure bliss on bad day, it’s amazing, and to top it all off it almost made me cry. Guys aren’t supposed to cry ‘_’ ” (1617). Another asserted that the series is so popular because it “has a strong message, but at the same time without letting anyone be offended by it (how can you be offended by a cute rabbit and a cat?)” (2126). In comparison to other Flash cartoons on Newgrounds, which are often crude, violent, and overtly racist (as I will discuss in chapter 6), the cuteness of *There She*

Is!! was read as inviting and inclusive. In this light, the first Step's hopeful conclusion, in which Nabi tries a glassful of Doki's favourite carrot-juice while Doki gulps down a fishy drink, recalls the ending of "A Language All My Own," which hoped for an easy reconciliation of differences through images and song.

That said, discourses of mediated harmony put forward through cute animal imagery are never as innocently power-free as they may seem. Cute imagery may be used to bond groups, but at the same time it can play a role in forming a "multiethnic empire" in which members are only admitted on certain terms, as happened in Seo's *Momotarō* films and (somewhat differently) in Disney's propaganda animation. In *There She Is!!* as well, animal species are diffusely but definitely racialized, a tactic which risks naturalizing ideas of ethnic difference and segregation as much as similarity and harmony. In Step One, for instance, Nabi desperately tries to teach Doki about why they cannot be together by seating her in a little schoolroom-style chair and using a pointer to guide her through a series of drawings. (Where have we seen educational drawings of cute rabbits on boards before?) In this society, Nabi's graphic narrative says, there are cats and rabbits. Cats must love cats: he shows an image of a male and female cat with a heart in the background and a circle marking the picture correct, as if on an exam. Rabbits must love rabbits: the same image with a bunny couple. But rabbits and cats must not love each other: he shows an image of a male cat and female rabbit with a broken heart and an X. It is a clear visual image of segregation along "speciesist" lines.

Just as in Disney's scenes of pedagogical animation in "Education for Death," we are not meant to take this narrative seriously. Doki's adorable way of tilting her head and saying "?" in a speech balloon casts sympathy with her uncomprehending resistance to

the dominant narrative of species segregation Nabi has not yet come to question, in the same way that sympathy is cast with Little Hans' naïve pity for the rabbit. But this time, there is no final villainization of an enemy that demonizes a "them" and glorifies an "us." Neither is there a triumphant unification of all species, as if no difference existed between them at all. On the contrary, as the Steps continue, the ambivalent racializations suggested by cute animal characters, in which identification and distinction are placed in tension, are increasingly opened up to questioning as socially constructed discourses. At this point, issues of *friction* in transcultural fan community begin to arise.

In Step Two, "Cake Dance," there are hints of a segregated society, but the plot is still based on the slapstick pratfalls that ensue when Nabi, warming to Doki, tries to bring her a birthday cake through the crowded streets of Seoul. In the very first gag, Nabi is tripped up by a grinning little boy rabbit who runs by chasing a little girl rabbit with a fish held between two sticks. It is comical, but also telling: unlike Doki, who signals her love for Nabi by drinking "Juicy Fish," neither of the child-rabbits wants to touch or be touched by the favourite food of cats. More seriously, just as Nabi reaches the door to Doki's party after many travails, he is confronted by three tough-looking gang-rabbits known as the "Jjntta Set" (or, "Moron Set.") They identify Nabi via a scribbled image in a speech balloon as the evil red-eyed cat who forced himself on a tearfully innocent rabbit and attack him. Still, even the attack is played for comedy and the ending is happy, with the cake delivered only a little squished and the Jjntta Set invited to the party.

The outlook is not so rosy in Step Three. In this episode, Nabi and Doki go on their first date only to meet with open social disapproval. In a brief shot near the beginning, the pair are shown at a press conference with the banner "First Date," Nabi

hanging his head in humiliation as Doki stares, cheerfully unblinking, into the flashbulbs of a media frenzy. After this, the couple cannot hold hands in public or even in a darkened movie theatre without drawing negative attention or fearing the threat of it. Nabi's offer to take Doki out again, even after the disastrous first date, brings the couple together in a moonlit alleyway for a chaste, silhouetted kiss—but in the very next shot, the final image of the episode, a rock crashes through the window of Nabi's apartment.

The following Step, "Paradise," picks up the image of the rock and shattered glass to show how the pair's relationship has brought them into danger and polarized their society. Turning from the cute, bright tones of the earlier episodes, "Paradise" is rendered in black and white, with only small dashes of colour for emphasis. The line-work is more jagged, the backgrounds filled with grainy filters resembling static, and the screen itself is split through panels which layer close-ups over long shots: a negative manifestation of the separate, or *separated*, worlds of Manovich's spatial montage.

The grimmer visual tone is matched by an increasingly serious narrative. Nabi is thrown out of a café marked with the official interspecies-ban sign and later jailed because of the riots his presence causes. Doki is hospitalized after being wounded by anti-miscegenation protestors. One of her pets, a small hedgehog, is also hurt in the incident and later dies (much to the distress of Western animation fans, who plead with Amaloc on the board to show in the next Step that the "little hedgehog" did not really die, because a cute animal dying would upset children. It still dies. Cuteness does not lead to innocent invulnerability any more.) The couple are supported by friends who hand out fliers in the streets defending cat-rabbit relations, but as the animated camera tracks

horizontally past them, it moves to the edge of a building from which a crowd can be seen in a vertical tilt down below holding a huge version of the official sign of the ban.

Though there is no programmatic national allegory here, fans for a time speculated that this episode represented Japanese/Korean relations.¹⁴ The portrayal of resistance to an official ban on contact with a cute, insistent, potentially overbearing yet appealing Other/partner certainly echoes Korean anime fans' forbidden relationship with Japanese popular culture under earlier military regimes. In this short, however, it is not so much a single oppressive governmental institution that can be blamed for the conflicts, but ongoing, structural social divisions. *Both* sides—those who brandish idealized images of Nabi on signs marked “hero” and those who paint the couple as “evils”—are shown to harm the lovers by their militancy. These polarizations make life so intolerable that Nabi leaves Doki to protect her from being hurt, and Doki plans to escape the country using one of two plane tickets marked “Paradise.”

The final Step brings Doki to the brink of leaving. At this point, the short returns to the plot structure of the chase, and joins it to that classic romantic-comedy scenario, the lover's race to the airport. The action of this Step follows Nabi as he evades protesters and police officers with the help of the Jjntta set and other cat and rabbit friends to reach the airport before Doki leaves. As the lovers are reunited, the huge holographic sign that hangs over them at the gate flickers between anti- and pro-interspecies love icons before dissolving into a million glowing pieces. This is significant because it visualizes not the

¹⁴ As of the winter of 2008, the Wikipedia site for “There She Is!!” included a line stating that Step 4 represents Japan/Korea relations. The line was removed after another user claimed to remember reading “in the past” that SamBakZa intended the characters to represent North and South Korea, though without citing a source. From re-reading the entire board and consulting my work on it from 2008, I can say that the North/South Korea interpretation was never proposed in English or Japanese in the FAQ or on the bulletin board, though the Japan/Korea interpretation came up twice in English (posts 1612 and comments to 1616). If the North/South Korea interpretation has been put forward, it is likely found in the Korean-language comments.

triumph of either side of the debate, but a rejection of the utopian harmony/oppressive segregation binary itself. In the conclusion, the lovers do *not* get to leave for Paradise and they never find complete social acceptance, the way the cute pan-Asian animals all join together in *Momotarō's Divine Ocean Warriors*. Neither are they completely torn apart by the divided crowds that still line the airport hallways, the way the *Bebop* crew is torn apart by their various aims. Rather, the lovers opt to maintain their commitment to each other as they work for change within their community. The final shot of the series sees them scrubbing anti-miscegenation graffiti off of the drink machines where their relationship began. They have not changed the world, not yet: the graffiti is still there. But they have come to “Imagine”—the title of the Final Step—a way of being together that lets them make a small difference, even in a world of continuing conflict.

The stance Amalloc takes in this final Step is analogous to what Henry Jenkins calls a “critical utopian” (2006a, 247) position. In this series, discrimination still exists, and must be addressed honestly instead of glossed. But it cannot be approached without a certain amount of hope, humour, and optimism. Likewise, Jenkins’ 2006 work on media fandom takes a stance which, while not unduly celebratory, does not fall into the “critical pessimism” of theorists such as Noam Chomsky who focus on victimization and oppression. In Jenkins’ view, “a politics of confrontation must give way to one focused on tactical collaboration” (250) and engagement even with what troubles us. This is the kind of collaboration that I see playing out among fans of *There She Is!!* as well as in the text: a transcultural collaboration that takes place, as Tsing would say, *across* the differences of language and nationality that are still present even on the supposedly placeless, bodiless Internet.

I have thus far focused primarily on positive reactions and interactions among fans. This is because there are many cases of positive interaction through different languages, especially in the bulletin board's earliest days, when users would often post asking for help learning Korean or expressing their desire to learn it because of their interest in *There She Is!!* Threads were sometimes formed by native speakers of Korean or Japanese offering informal coaching, in much the same way as the anime fans I discussed earlier traded specialized otaku vocabulary. There were, however, some frictions between the boards' users as its population changed along with the progress of the series.

In my introduction to this chapter, I described the board in 2006 as a largely Korean-language environment. In 2006, it was quite common to see nineteen or twenty Korean posts in a row. Table 5.1, however, reveals that currently the board is more often used by English-speakers than Koreans. In late 2009, it was usual to see 14 or 15 English posts interspersed with four or five in Korean and one or two in Japanese or Spanish.

Languages	English	Korean	Japanese	Spanish	Other/multi-lingual
Total out of 2142 OPs	1039	899	121	24	59
Percentage %	48.5	42.0	5.6	1.1	2.8

Table 5.1: Languages used in Opening Posts (OPs) on the SamBakZa.net bulletin board as of Nov. 12, 2010.

It is tempting to say that the rise in English users correlates to the series' popularity on the American site Newgrounds, but it is also important to note that many Latin American and European speakers use English, even if it is not their first language, because they know (or hope) that Amalloc can read it, as in fact he can, albeit with some difficulty.

Even Japanese-speakers will sometimes post first in English, not realizing that Amalloc is much more fluent in Japanese than English. The default to “Global English” for any foreign conversation may allow people to communicate, but it has not always been welcomed as joining the board together.

For instance, in September and October of 2006, a couple of posters identifying themselves as 10-year-old girls from England (to judge by their writing style, honestly) began to use the board as their own social forum. Nonsense and joking unrelated to *There She Is!!* quickly spilled over into fights and “imposture,” where one or both of them would assume the names of others on the board and leave supposedly self-insulting messages. These often contained more than a hint of engrained homophobia, with subject lines such as “im a lezzie” (1117) or “I am gay and i love Alex,” (1110) and messages describing their “stupid” relationships. The flood of abusive English comments quickly drew the attention of Korean users. One posted a bilingual message under the handle “Korean” advising the board “I’m pretty sure that u all know this board is FAQ for Korean and Asian users,” and pointing out that many Korean users were criticizing the “slanders” and bad manners of “foreign spammer[s].” “Korean” further argued that to “us” (Korean and Asian users), these ill-mannered girls were “spokesman of entire English users [sic]” (post 1134). Rafts of Korean-language posts supporting *There She Is!!* with lines such as “MADE IN KOREA” (526) suggest that the series generated no small amount of national(ist) pride, and some seemed to wish the board was equally national, asking pointedly “Is this page for Korean or English users?” (1134). Even given a series that reflexively deals with themes of discrimination, some fans still turned back

to discriminatory or essentializing ideas of sexual orientation, ethnicity, and nationality in un-reflexive ways.

Still, this was not always the case. For instance, along with spammers, some users antagonized the board by insisting on more English-language (or sometimes Japanese-language) communication with Amalloc, despite his admissions that it is time-consuming and difficult for him to write in other languages. When Amalloc posted a response to his critics on August 27, 2008 explaining why he was unable to answer all of the English comments and questions on the board, one poster replied with an angry “flame,” demanding “SPEAK PROPER ENGLISH FUCKING AMALLOC.”¹⁵ The demand that a Korean creator speak a foreign language “properly,” particularly English at a time when Korean students were protesting American economic and cultural neo-imperialism in Korea (Otmazgin 2007, 4), could not fail to come across as ethnocentric and offensive. In this case, however, other fans *did* respond self-reflexively using the text of *There She Is!!* as a guide. While some began to fire back insults, another poster going under the handle “dqle” responded by opening a discussion as to why a cartoon might generate such strong emotion. He then explicitly related the arguments about language brewing on the board to the depictions of anger and discrimination in the darkest instalment of *There she is!!*, writing “Doesn’t this remind you of Step 4...?”

dqle’s act of relating the conflicts pictured in the animation to viewer’s online interactions and seeking a solution through that shared textual reference speaks to the

¹⁵ This thread has since been removed from the main site’s bulletin board by Amalloc. As of July 2009 it could still be found by entering the exact phrase quoted above into a search engine, but unfortunately a large number of comments to the board were lost in a site upgrade in May 2010, and as a result the remark no longer appears either on Google searches or on public archiving sites such as the Wayback Machine. It has, however, been archived by Heidelberg University as part of my earlier work on this site with the “Asia and Europe in a Global Context” research cluster. Records are available upon request.

affective engagements fans practice online, their passages between emotion and social action. dqle would even coach disruptive posters in bulletin board communication, voicing some unwritten rules that promote online dialogue, such as “Do NOT post new topics one after the other” or “double post” comments without leaving adequate time for others to respond (1949). In some instances, disruptive posters simply dropped out of the forum after a time. In other cases, including the case cited above where dqle explained the rules of netiquette, they continued to participate in the community with apologies, which were accepted by others “in hopes of a new more peaceful BBS” (1962). Frictions between fans thus act as a sort of mutual pedagogical process, making posters more aware of how they speak to each other in a multilingual, multiethnic online setting, and encouraging cohesion rather than corrosion.

On that count, Japanese posters have maintained surprisingly respectful relations with Koreans on this board, given the historical animosity that often boils over into racial slurs between Japanese and Koreans on other boards such as 2-channeru (McLelland 2008). Most posters have simply expressed their enjoyment of the series to Amalloc and moved on, so that the Japanese-language community on the board is not very strong. The outstanding case is the proponent of SamBakZa’s “new language,” Chiumi, who has continued for nearly five years to post thoughtful questions about the Korean cultural elements represented in SamBakZa’s works, recommendations for Korean and Japanese animated films, experiences he has had on Cyworld, and even updates on his family’s health. Amalloc always responds, and has also posted Japanese-language descriptions of such events as the Korean lunar New Year (181) for the benefit of Chiumi and other Japanese-speaking fans. These relations represent a somewhat less fraught transcultural

engagement, where conversation shifts from the animated text to the points of difference and similarity between (somewhat broadly-conceived) notions of Japanese and Korean culture without entering an antagonistic or confrontational mode. In this way, the online conversations across difference that take place on the SamBakZa message board, in both their conflicts and their co-operations, do show evidence of promoting the mutual cultural exchange which I argue is crucial to transcultural animation fan communities.

Directions in Flash Animation: Communities of Imagination, Communities of Consumers

In her discussion of mini-hompys, Hjorth is careful not to depict Cyworld as if it simply arose from the will of the people and their processes of community formation. Cyworld is also a business. Its currency, the acorn, is purchased with Korea's real currency, the won. If Cyworld evokes Appadurai's communities of imagination and interest, Hjorth argues, they can also be seen as manifestations of Chua Beng Huat's idea of "communities of consumers," which are formed around affective engagements with commodities in East Asia's burgeoning consumer culture. As I noted at the end of chapter 4, Appadurai too recognizes the ways in which affect plays a role in the social discipline of the imagination along consumerist lines. Thus far in my discussion of *There She Is!!* I have attempted to go beyond the top-down determinism of Korea's subcontracting industries and to recuperate fan agency through a "critical utopian" stance. In order to keep from becoming too utopian, however, I would like to turn back just a little to the "critical" side and address issues of consumerism and Flash animation.

When I first began to think about writing on SamBakZa around 2006, I was excited to discover what I considered an alternative model of online exchange, one which need not be so directly linked to existing geopolitical economies. Certainly, users must

purchase a computer and/or Internet access in order to make and watch online cartoons: these structures of material, hardware-based inclusion and exclusion are foundational to online communication and are troubling in terms of forming a “digital divide,” as many scholars (Everard 2000, Gajjala 2004, Sarikakis and Thussu 2006) have argued. But once the hardware base is laid, need the superstructural manifestations always follow it?

SamBakZa, it seemed to me, did not. The animation could be streamed and even downloaded by anyone for free right from the creators’ site. There were no banner ads or pop-ups, no corporate logos whatsoever. There were no dolls, t-shirts, or Hello Kitty-style “fancy goods,” partly because, as Nathaniel Noda says, the “*There she is!!*” animations occupy a kind of copyright limbo; while popular and highly regarded in their own right, concerns over copyright [on the Korean pop songs they are set to] have stymied requests...for merchandising” (2010, 155). The site was entirely funded by donations, which were first offered by fans and then solicited by SamBakZa through a light-hearted, collaboratively written Korean/English/Spanish poem in which the artists are pictured as buskers or street entertainers. The English section begins:

As ancient entertainers did long time ago,
as street performers do now
we are performing
in the internet street.

In this poem, SamBakZa position themselves within a gift economy, stating in effect: we will give this cartoon to you, and you may return the favour and give us something back. They accepted fan art and links to fan videos as well as monetary donations, posting them to a gallery on their main site. All fans who made donations were listed in the credits by name, as if they were co-producers, and were thanked as a group in the final title card of the last Step, which was dedicated to “The Fans.” Hope Donovan,

in her 2010 article “Gift Versus Capitalist Economies: Exchanging Anime and Manga in the U.S.,” argues that this form of gift economy has been observed among anime fans in many forms, including cooperative and competitive exchange. Donovan finds cooperative gift exchange particularly important to transnational female fandom. In cooperative exchange, “a gift is given freely and without respect to compensation” (15), its main purpose being to “strengthen the communal bonds” or the “feeling-bonds” (16) within women’s fan communities. Initially, SamBakZa seemed to be a prime example of this style of community-building cooperative exchange.

In light of research conducted for this thesis, however, I would now argue that Donovan’s opposition between “gift *versus* capitalist economies” (11, my italics) is slightly unrealistic both in the case of broader female fan exchanges (as I demonstrate in chapter 6) and in the case of *There She Is!!* This is because the way the SamBakZa site addresses audiences as fans and as consumers has changed along with the producers’ funding situations. Starting with Step 3—just as the works became more serious—SamBakZa was funded by the Gyeonggi Digital Contents Agency (GDCA), a group formed to sponsor Korea’s growing “contents industry” along business-oriented models. The GDCA’s stated goals include “discovering a new contents business model that has a basis in the value-chain system of digital contents,”¹⁶ using independent comics and animation as a sort of raw material for the broader “Hallyuwood” film industry, much as the American and Japanese film industries have done in recent years.

The group I have discussed as purely amateur, then, has been at least partly professionalized and “monetized.” This has led to a concomitant “monetization” of the website, particularly since May of 2010. Where there was previously only an informal

¹⁶ The GDCA’s content production objectives may be viewed at: <http://www.gdca.or.kr/eng/biz/02.asp>

request-for-donations page with the poetry posted, there is now a Pay Pal donations widget embedded in the site's main menu and a dedicated SamBakZa store, which sells copies of the creators' comics (though not their animations, because of the aforementioned copyright issues with the music.) Where there were formerly no ads, the windows in which the Flash cartoons play now have banner ads by Google placed intrusively in a bottom frame, where they cannot be closed or minimized.

Even the image on the donations pages is no longer one of street performers and gifts from fannish co-producers, but of organized theatrical entertainment. The poem is gone, and there is instead a cute picture showing an audience of animals and star-headed figures seated in the keyboard of a giant laptop computer, watching the SamBakZa staff perform a colourful magic show on the stage of the screen. The online audience is literally re-staged along lines similar to the kinds of theatrical and cinematic viewing seen in the earliest animated film. Contribution, likewise, is framed as spectatorship rather than collaboration, a position more conducive to consumption than co-production.

Of course, SamBakZa has the right to enjoy the benefits of their globally popular animated series and to be compensated for their creative labour. I am simply concerned that the increasing media industry involvement evident on the Internet will eventually make even "independent" Flash animation more institutionalized along the contents industry model, and thus more prone to form "communities of consumers" than "communities of imagination." It is still possible to imagine the world differently through mass-produced and consumed texts, as I have shown through the examples of *Astro Boy* and *Cowboy Bebop*. After all, even media "commodities" must be taken up and passed on by people in order to circulate, and are so shaped through varying usages to suit many

needs and contexts. As Chua points out, however, the difficulty with communities of consumers is that

While the potential for people-to-people exchanges might insidiously change mutual perceptions among the consumers, there are at present no structural avenues for these pop culture consumer communities to percolate upwards to intervene in international processes. (2006, 27)

Chua's assertion raises many questions for my study. To what extent do transcultural anime fans participate in "pop culture consumer communities"? What effect can an animated work be said to have beyond the circuit of its own communities? How can animation fandom generate an "effect" or "intervention" in "international processes"? What "structural avenues" matter when it comes to having a social impact, and how does animation flow through or chafe against them? In order to answer these questions, we must take a closer look at animation fans' relations to the contents industry.

Chapter 6. World Conflict/World Conference

The first time I went to Ikebukuro, a commercial district in Tokyo, the streets were lined with soldiers. Not human soldiers: image-soldiers. It was July of 2010, and flags advertising the film version of Himaruya Hidekaz's web-manga-turned-anime *Hetalia: Axis Powers* were strung along the lamp-posts of Sunshine-dōri, a major shopping street. Attractive male personifications of the eponymous Axis Powers (Germany, Italy, and Japan) along with the Allies (America, France, England, Russia, and China) beamed out from posters and wrap-arounds. Fans who had just seen the film flocked around to take photos with their cell phones (Fig. 6.1). "The flashback with Mini-Italy and the Holy Roman Empire was so *kawaii!*" one enthused. "Isn't it great?" her friend agreed. Passers-by passed by. Nobody seemed especially perplexed to hear the Holy Roman Empire described as "cute" by teenage girls.

I was surprised to see so many images from the film and so many fans on the streets even here in East Ikebukuro, the "holy land" of female anime and manga lovers. It had debuted at the local Cinema Sunshine theatre on June 5th, so by the time I got to see it in mid-July it was hardly a new release. Still, it was a relatively popular film among those interested in the web series.¹⁷ The 3:45PM show I attended was, if not a full house, then a three-quarters-full house of about 75-100 people. The audience was almost entirely

¹⁷ I say "relatively," because there are vast differences in the scale of distribution for various anime films. The *Hetalia* movie (full title: *Silver-screen Hetalia –Axis Powers Paint It, White!*) grossed US\$269,110 on ten screens in its opening weekend, placing it fifteenth in the overall Japanese box office ranking. Studio Ghibli's 2010 summer release, *The Borrower Arrietty*, grossed \$10,223,318 on 447 screens to open at number one. In terms of nation-wide audience shares, *Arrietty* was clearly the summer's most popular anime film. *Hetalia*, however, grossed more per screen in its opening weekend, earning \$26,911/screen vs. \$22,871 for *Arrietty*. This suggests that it was successful in attracting its specialized target audience during its limited promotional run. *Hetalia* can be seen as a success not of mass culture (*taishū bunka*), but of the culture of "divided masses" or "micromasses" (*bunshū bunka*; Kashimura 2007, 6). (Figures from boxofficemojo.com)

women under 35: I spotted just three or four men, all attending with women. Some of the younger girls wore high school or junior high uniforms. Not everyone present was familiar with the series. I spoke with one woman who was only attending with friends and knew little more than the basic concept that “these characters represent countries.” Many, however, were clearly devoted fans. The group of four girls sitting next to me talked excitedly over glossy anime art books and folders of handwritten notes about the characters. And it wasn’t just in the theatre that *Hetalia* fangirls were out in force.



Fig. 6.1: Fans photograph posters for the *Hetalia- Axis Powers* movie in Ikebukuro, July 10, 2010. Photograph © Sandra Annett, 2010.

The popularity of this multi-media series became more evident when I began to visit the shops and tourist attractions of Ikebukuro. The anime/manga specialty stores, of course, had large stocks of official *Hetalia* merchandise, along with shelves upon shelves of fan-made manga known as *dōjinshi*. The show’s imagery had also entered certain public spaces. After dark, I took an elevator up to the Sunshine 60 building’s 60th-floor

observation deck, planning to photograph the city lights. There I found that the skyscraper's gift shop (normally a source for souvenirs of the building itself) had been converted into a self-declared "Hetalia Shop" full of cookies, stationary, towels and just about anything else you could stick a personified nation on. The interior hallways linking the tower's glossy café with the observation decks hosted an exhibit of printed volumes of the web manga, a flat-panel television showing scenes from the web anime, signed screenplays, and life-sized images of the characters with plaques signed by their respective voice actors lining the walls. Even beyond Ikebukuro, I saw large posters for the manga volumes near the cash registers in major bookstores such as Kinokuniya in Shinjuku in 2009, and again more prominently in 2010. Finally, at the Summer 2010 Comic Market, where 560,000¹⁸ fans gathered to buy and sell their own works, one of the six hangar-sized halls in the convention centre's East Wing was given over to 748 fan "circles" selling *Hetalia dōjinshi* (*Comic Market 78 Catalog*, 201). It was the only single anime title in the event to occupy an entire hall on its own. It seems safe to say that the summer of 2010 saw a "*Hetalia* boom" among female anime fans in Japan.

As of early 2011, the boom has not ended. Nor has it been limited to Japan. Both the manga (online from 2006, published from 2008) and the anime (webcast from 2008) are ongoing, while official and unofficial translations are in the process of being released in many countries. I must acknowledge that there are some risks involved in writing about the present of new media culture in an academic setting. Any information provided about a current online work becomes outdated almost as soon as it is written, much less published. Furthermore, what appears popular and significant one moment may vanish

¹⁸ According to the "Comic Market 78 After Report," around 17,000 people attended the event on Friday, August 13th, 19,000 on the 14th, and 20,000 on the 15th. *Hetalia* is singled out in the report as among the most popular works of the event. See <http://www.comiket.co.jp/info-a/C78/C78AfterReport.html> (Japanese)

into obscurity the next, reducing the utility of the study for future researchers. It sometimes seems best to wait for a media series to finish and establish its staying power over some years, to attain a degree of canonicity that assures its ongoing relevance.

In this thesis, however, I am not considering animated works for their enduring canonical value or their place as landmarks in a teleological narrative of development. I am looking at them as integral parts of particular social and historical contexts. In my conception, *Momotarō's Divine Ocean Warriors* does not “lead to” *Astro Boy*. Rather, each case illustrates specific *moments* of anime as it passes through certain technologies and geopolitical structures: the first as imperial internationalist cinema and the second as de- and re-odorized postnational TV anime. There is continuity in their uses of certain figures such as cute animals and children; but these uses also shift according to changing modes of production, distribution, and consumption. Furthermore, the “original” texts are never complete, but are always being reworked through continual criticism and adaptation.

In this chapter, then, I argue that the ongoing case of *Hetalia* illustrates the kind of transnational media economies and social ecologies that have developed around the Internet at specific junctures in the first decade of the twenty-first century. While *There She Is!!* shows online animation's capacity to bind viewers together *in spite of* their differing languages, ages, and genders, *Hetalia* makes clear how fan communities are *formed by* processes of conflict and cross-talk across cultures of gender and nationality. I will explore the transcultural dimensions of the series in three interlinked ways.

First, I will argue that *Hetalia* reflexively addresses a subset of the anime otaku community that is only just finding its public identity: the group recently known as

fujoshi (腐女子), or “rotten women.” The divides and links between male otaku and female fujoshi suggest that working across gendered cultures, as well as national and ethnic cultures, is also an aspect of *transcultural* fandom. Second, *Hetalia* is a perfect example of web anime’s role in the growing “contents industry.” This media-crossing business model capitalizes on fannish modes of consumption and on gendered differences in fan production, highlighting the complicities as well as resistances of amateur media producers. Third, *Hetalia* demonstrates with particular clarity anime’s often rocky passage between fans of different backgrounds. Its parodic use of national, ethnic, and linguistic stereotypes, along with its cavalier approach to wartime history, has generated much controversy, particularly in South Korea. By reading *Hetalia* through these three interlinked issues—female fan cultures, the contents industry, and global flows and frictions—I will explain how it is that one young student’s web comic on a potentially offensive topic has become a conflicted locus for transnational capital and transcultural community in the twenty-first century.

Otaku and Fujoshi in the Age of Database Consumption

In order to begin thinking about online fan cultures and gender, I would like to look critically at one of the prevailing models of otaku consumption in the digital age: Azuma Hiroki’s 2001 book *Otaku: Japan’s Database Animals* (trans. 2009). In this book, Azuma focuses on the generational break represented by anime fans born in the 1980s, who “experienced the spread of the Internet during their teens” and whose “main forum for general fan activities has moved to Web sites” (7). His core argument is that these fans use a new postmodern mode of reading media texts that he terms “database consumption.” Unlike the modernist “tree model” of reading, in which small narratives

are underpinned and determined by a grand narrative, database consumption is like surfing the Internet, where “no hidden grand narrative regulates all Web pages” (31). Instead of the grand narrative controlling meaning through texts, users are the ones who “read-up” texts by accessing a database of settings and character elements. He calls these elements “*moé* elements” (42), because they inspire in otaku the complex and difficult-to-define emotion known as “*moé*” (萌え). Literally denoting a plant’s budding or sprouting, *moé* indicates the intense sensation of mingled protectiveness, empathy, and attraction towards a fictional character or image felt by otaku. *Moé* elements are the appealing, codified, recurrent aspects of anime characters, plots and settings that evoke such feelings. Often they are related to the *kawaii*, such as a cute sticking-up wisp of hair Azuma calls “antenna hair” (44; today affectionately called “*ahoge*” or “idiot hair”), cat ears, frilly maid dresses, affected ways of speaking, and so on. These elements form a database out of which character types and scenarios may be assembled by amateurs and professionals alike to make their own products.

Many of Azuma’s points apply to both male and female anime cultures since the advent of the Internet. He gives mainly examples of male-oriented *moé* elements, but countless similar elements favoured by women can be found, such as long, slim eyeglasses indicating a cool-headed yet secretly sensitive male character¹⁹ (in contrast to the huge moon-shaped lenses of a “*megane-ko*” [glasses girl] character, which highlight her cuteness.) Some *moé* elements also cross over from male- to female-oriented texts.

¹⁹ Recent examples of male *megane* (glasses) characters would be Ohtori Kyoya in *Ouran High School Host Club* (2006), Jin in *Samurai Champloo* (2004), or Austria in *Hetalia*. Round, cute glasses are also found on young or feminine-looking male characters, such as *Hetalia*’s Canada. Both of these are distinct from the classic use of over-large glasses on comical geek supporting characters, such as Mousse in *Ranma ½* (1989) or Madarame in *Genshiken* (2004). I would not consider these last two examples “*moé*,” since they evoke amusement more than protectiveness or desire.

For instance, one of the defining design features of the *Hetalia* series is its exaggerated use of the “antenna hair” or *ahoge moé* element, originally found on cute girls in dating-simulation games (Azuma 44). In *Hetalia*, cowlicks and curly strands on cute *guys* not only establish endearing character types, but also form the basis for self-reflexive jokes about the “moéfication” of geography. The notable hairs are explained as the popular sites of a country, as Austria’s forelock represents the tourist town Mariazell, and also as the characters’ “erogenous zones,” as Italy’s sensitive curl causes him excitement when grabbed by other male characters.

The use of *ahoge* here is a knowing wink at the fetishization underlying *moé* elements, poking fun at the *fujoshi* penchant for reading homoerotic subtext into almost anything, from the novels of Natsume Sōseki to historical figures such as Minamoto no Yoshitsune.²⁰ The *ahoge* element is so integral to the series that women who “cosplay” or dress up as *Hetalia* characters will take pains to create wigs or extensions including just the right curl. And no wonder: the inclusion of such elements is the inclusion of fans themselves, who can both call a character such as Canada “*moé*” or say “*I am moé for Canada.*” *Hetalia*, like so many other works I have examined, animates its audience as well as its characters. I myself came into the series around 2008 not through the text itself but through fan-created images of the characters posted to anime message boards. Recognizing the character types from their design elements, I read up on the series on a few general anime websites and was amused to find my own preferences and knowledge of anime subcultures (not to mention my academic interest in national identities) so reflexively presented. My initial attraction to *Hetalia* was then heightened by reading fan

²⁰ For more on women’s readings of homoerotic elements in Sōseki and other classic Japanese literary texts, see page 31 of Terazawa Kaoru’s article “Moé-Born Fantasy: the Story of *Fujoshi*” (2004).

translations (scanlations) of the web manga, joining the LiveJournal community, and visiting Himaruya's site itself, drawing on amateur and professional sources alike in database fashion. Certain *moé* elements were the incentive, the hook; wider connections with other fans were the result.

Of course, the reworking of such classic male-oriented *moé* elements for female tastes in *Hetalia* may be the result of the author Himaruya drawing on his own experience of otaku culture, which is then taken up by women (whether in the same ways as men, I will have cause to question later.) A closer look at the grounding theory of Azuma's database consumption, too, reveals a masculinist bent. This is evident in his depiction of otaku as "database animals." In order to theorize animals, he draws on the work of Hegelian scholar Alexandre Kojève, who proposes that "humans have desire, as opposed to animals, which have only need" (Azuma 86). Desire, however, is formulated along Lacanian lines of lack, taking as a "favourite example...the male's sexual desire for the female" in which the "male desire for the female does not end even when the male obtains a partner's body, but rather swells more and more" as he seeks the "desire of the other itself" (86). Azuma says that otaku are able to "become animal" by overcoming this endless deferral of desire and arriving at "a situation in which each person closes various lack-satisfaction circuits" (87) through the immediate consumption of *moé* elements rather than unattainable meanings. He does not, however, question the basic definition of desire on which the human/animal distinction is founded, that which takes the male heterosexual position as foundational. There is no room for imagining any other form of desire here –not the desires of animals, which are effaced, nor the desires of women, nor

the kinds of desires or becomings which are premised on production and opening rather than lack and closure.

Azuma's concept of the "database animal" also has consequences for otaku sociality and community. Because animalistic consumption involves the rejection of "intersubjective desire" (87), it turns back to a model of the subject that is self-contained and autonomous. In his words, otaku "sociality is sustained not by actual necessity, as are kinship and local community, but by interest in particular kinds of information" (93). Otaku feel free to "drop out" of such instrumental relationships at any time, since their "emotional activities are 'processed' nonsocially, in solitude, and in an animalistic fashion" (94). Though it may seem strange for a postmodernist scholar to propose such a discrete subject, Azuma's depiction of animalized otaku is in fact quite in line with theories of postmodern social relations as a "network society." Michele Willson describes network societies as characterized by "loose associations made up of autonomous individuals" who appear as nodes in a structure of information exchange rather than as members of a close, intimate community (2010, 752). Social network theory has the benefit of highlighting processes of exchange and connection, thus avoiding overly holistic, static conceptions of virtual community.

As in Willson's critique of social network theory, however, such instrumental ideas of exchange between autonomous individuals risk becoming bounded within a self-referential logic, unable to see any influences outside the network or to accommodate diversity beyond the network's needs (755). So, even when Azuma recognizes in a footnote that "the creative motive and the consumption behaviour of the female otaku who love the yaoi genre is far more human" than male otaku, he still maintains that as far

as he can see without in-depth research, “the female otaku are beginning to be animalized and database-ized among the younger generation” (137). Footnoting “female otaku” allows him to point out and then reincorporate a group that may fall outside his system, while still maintaining his theoretical structure of need/desire and his field of male-oriented references. But is it not possible that women may take up the same tactics as male otaku, the way *Hetalia* cosplayers embrace the *moé* hairs, while relating to them and to each other in a different way, based on their differing desires and histories as fans?

The most important term for understanding female anime fan culture to emerge in recent years is “*fujoshi*” (hereafter not italicized, as “otaku” is not italicized). Now, I am wary of setting up such broad diametrical categories as “male anime fans = otaku, female anime fans = fujoshi.” Strictly speaking, fujoshi are defined as women who like the homoerotic *yaoi* and boy’s love (BL) genres (Miura et al. 2007, 21), leaving out women who do not like *yaoi* and men who do.²¹ Even as Miura defines it, “fujoshi” is an identity category that is still in flux. So when I speak of fujoshi as a “female fan culture,” I am not seeing that culture as based on any essential feminine quality or “yaoi DNA” (2008, 61), as Ueda Kagura argues. Rather, I understand it as an intervention into the major discourses of otaku gender and sexuality, often (but not necessarily) employed by women as another *way* to understand and perform fandom.

My own understanding of fandom and gender here has been influenced by my interactions with fellow fans. When I asked survey respondents whether they considered

²¹ For more on straight and gay male *yaoi* fandom in the U.S., see Alan Williams, “Raping Apollo: Sexual Difference and the Yaoi Phenomenon” (2010). On Japanese male fans of BL, called *fukei* (腐兄 rotten big brother) or *fudanshi* (腐男子 rotten men), see Yoshimoto Taimatsu, “The Single-Man Otaku and Boy’s Love: Together with Yaoi-chan (2007). I include this footnote not to reincorporate men into my own theoretical structure, as Azuma does with women, but rather to point out that there *are* other approaches to *yaoi* fandom beyond such basic definitions as Miura’s, for those who wish to seek them out.

themselves otaku, one woman from Germany stated, “I think otaku means male fans, mostly, and that I am decidedly not. (Not male, sure, but also not *fannish in a male way*)” (my italics). Six other English-speaking respondents independently introduced the Japanese term *fujoshi* as an alternative to being “fannish in a male way.” Interestingly, no Japanese-speakers volunteered it, though I know that some of the female *yaoi dōjinshi* artists I recruited at Comiket were aware of it. Their hesitancy to identify as *fujoshi*—and the embarrassment I discovered in myself to be seen this way in Japan—speaks to the different social history they have experienced as fans and women.

As I discussed in my introduction, male otaku have long been shadowed by the negative image of the deluded, dangerous predator that grew up in the late 1980s and 1990s following the Miyazaki Tsutomu incident. As far as I know, however, there is no Miyazaki Tsutomu figure in *fujoshi* history, no big media scandal that brought female fans strong negative public attention followed by equally strong resistant reclamation, as for instance in the Gainax discourse. Sharon Kinsella refers to female *dōjinshi* artists in her article on “otaku panic,” but she does not see women as targets of mainstream popular opinion, arguing that it was the “manga clubs for men” creating “Lolicon” (Lolita Complex) works that became “the unlucky focus of the otaku panic” (1998, 300). Meanwhile, female fans of the aesthetic, non-explicit 1970s *shōnen-ai* (youth or boy’s love) genre, represented by authors such as Hagio Moto and Takemiya Keiko, have escaped large-scale criticism.

In a 2009 article titled “Direction of Otaku Studies,” Tagawa Takahiro likewise argues that *fujoshi* have not been subject to the same negative stereotypes said to mark male otaku, such as isolation in a virtual world and lack of contact with the opposite sex.

Fujoshi are thought to have boyfriends, hold regular jobs, dress and shop like everyone else, and otherwise appear socially and sexually “normal” while pursuing their “strange” hobbies in secret. While this perception may seem more positive than the stigmatization faced by male otaku, it in fact reinforces heteronormative expectations of women’s behaviour and leads fujoshi to what Tagawa, following essayist Sugiura Yumiko, calls an “unseen” (77) existence, a form of social invisibility.²² Fujoshi may recognize each other in a variety of ways known to themselves, but the very term has been unknown even among otaku scholars until recently, and fujoshi still feel inhibited about speaking of such “*hazukashii*” (embarrassing or shameful) habits to others. I found in Japan that mentioning fujoshi-related terms, texts, or places in conversation drew blank incomprehension among non-fans and reactions of awkward laughter, looking away, or whispered remarks such as “You know about that?!” among casual fans, leaving me feeling marked or embarrassed by my interest in the subject. Such invisibility has granted fujoshi great freedom of imagination in the privacy of their own intimate circles, but very little voice in the larger public sphere, a situation all too familiar for women in Japan.

Still, this situation is slowly changing. In 2004, the girls’ manga magazine *Puff* christened a street in Ikebukuro where there are a number of shops selling female-targeted works and goods “Otome Road,” or “Maiden’s Road” (Osada and Suzuki 2009,

²² Along the same heteronormative lines, it is often assumed that because fujoshi enjoy erotica depicting male characters (*yaoi*) they are automatically straight, along the model of straight men who like lesbian porn. Saitō Tamaki cites SF/*yaoi* author Nakajima Azusa’s statement that “nearly all *yaoi* writers are heterosexual women with husbands and children and that she has never met one who was a lesbian” (232). From this, he goes on to argue that psychoanalytically speaking, “women are fundamentally heterosexual beings” (236). This is in contradiction to my survey results, where far more women identified as lesbian (4 responses), bisexual (8) or asexual (3) than men did as gay (1) or bi (1) (See Appendix 3, Table 4). Not all of these women are necessarily fujoshi: indeed, one wrote to me movingly about her passion for manga about female/female romance, called *yuri*. Personally, however, I can enjoy both *yaoi* and *yuri* and know a number of queer women who do as well. Clearly female anime fans are just as diverse in orientation as the rest of the population.

66), and it has become well known enough to be included in general tourist guidebooks as a hotspot for “fangirls” (Yanagihara 2007, 82). Since 2005, several issues of the literary magazine *Eureka*, which formerly addressed mainly male writers and artists, have been devoted to topics such as “Culture Girls,” “Fujoshi Manga,” and “Boy’s Love Studies” (Aoyama 2009, 1). Indeed, in a roundtable of female scholars and novelists published in the “Boy’s Love Studies” issue of *Eureka*, Kinda Kiyoko identifies a “fujoshi boom” (Miura et al. 2007, 20) beginning around 2006 with the release of works such as the male-authored web-manga/live-action film *My Neighbour Yaoi-chan (Tonari no 801-chan)* and manga by and about female fujoshi themselves. A recent example of the latter is the autobiographical manga/Flash animation *The Dignity of Fujoshi (Fujoshi no Hinkaku, 2008/2010)*, in which a woman writing under the pen-name “Kusame” (腐女; a pun on “rotten woman”) comically describes her efforts to juggle the two sides of her identity as an office lady and a secret *yaoi* fan. *Hetalia*, with its reflexive nods to fujoshi and its high visibility even beyond Ikebukuro, is a perfect example of the extension of the fujoshi boom. So, whereas male otaku have long been present in Japanese public discourse as “emblems of media culture” (Kashimura 2007, 13), the “unseen,” private fujoshi subculture is only just now being faced with the necessity (or opportunity) of negotiating a public identity through limited but growing media and scholarly coverage.

Contemporary fujoshi fan culture is thus less akin to a “network society” and more akin to the particular kind of community Michael Warner describes as a “counterpublic.” A counterpublic is a public—that is, a “social space created by the reflexive circulation of discourse” (2002, 90)—which “maintains at some level, conscious or not, an awareness of its subordinate status” (119). That is not to say that

fujoshi like to play the victim, although some do when they claim to be “pariahs even to the other freaks” (Levi et al. 2010, 5). Rather, “Counterpublics are ‘counter’ to the extent that they try to supply different ways of imagining stranger sociability and its reflexivity” (Warner 122). Andrea Wood, writing from a queer theory perspective, likewise draws on Warner’s idea of the counterpublic to argue that “boy-love manga has become a compelling site for transnational readership and communication in a growing network of intimate and diverse strangers,” a site that “facilitates subversive queer identifications and desires” (2006, 410) across gendered and national cultures.

Indeed, fujoshi’s re-imagining of sociability has been theorized in a number of ways. One common tactic, as Wood demonstrates, is to see fujoshi cultures and desires as subversive, boundary-breaking and relationship-oriented rather than as self-enclosed and autonomous. Many early Western feminist defenses of women who enjoy homoerotic fantasies are based on the premise that these fantasies allow women to identify with any role in a sexual relationship they wish, overcoming the restrictions imposed by conventional gender roles. This is the track taken by Western media-fan scholars such as Joanna Russ, who described slash fan fiction²³ in the title of a 1985 essay as “Pornography by Women, for Women, with Love,” and by Japanese scholars of *yaoi*, such as Ōgi Fusami. In her article “Gender Insubordination in Japanese Comics (Manga) for Girls,” Ōgi sets out to determine “whether the gender representations [in girl’s manga]

²³ “Slash fandom” is a Western (largely North American and European, but increasingly global) genre of fan writing which, like fujoshi works, centres mainly on depictions male homoerotic relationships. Slash fans today may draw on media texts that overtly represent gay characters, such as Ang Lee’s 2005 film *Brokeback Mountain*, but historically they have been known for reading homoerotic subtext into straight male relationships, such as that of Kirk and Spock in *Star Trek* (1966), the foundational text of American slash fandom. Fan-created pairings are indicated by a forward slash between the relevant male characters’ names (e.g. Kirk/Spock), hence the term “slash.” Lesbian pairings are also sometimes included under the label “femslash.” For an interesting comparison of Western slash with Japanese *yaoi* fandom, see Mark John Isola’s article “Yaoi and Slash Fiction: Women Writing, Reading and Getting Off?” in Levi et al.

are subversive or whether they preserve the gender status quo” (2001, 171), ultimately settling on “subversive.” *Yaoi* in particular is said to “create a secure sexual gaze for shōjo [girls], who by convention lack libidinal agency” (183). Some of these defenses, however, can fall back too far on an essentialized female subject in opposition to a monolithic patriarchy, as in Ōgi’s either/or equation of subversion versus preservation of the assumed “status quo.”

Recent scholarship grounded in third-wave feminist and queer theory has questioned this neat opposition, pointing to the intersections between various positions on gender and sexuality in boy’s love fandom.²⁴ A somewhat more nuanced depiction of fujoshi transgression linked directly to *Hetalia* is Patrick Galbraith’s “Moé: Exploring Virtual Potential in Post-Millennial Japan.” In this article, Galbraith argues that “fujoshi fantasy is based on playfully reading the virtual potential of characters” (2009, n.p), imagining what they *could* be rather than sticking only to what is given in the text. This creates a form of desire less akin to Lacanian lack and more akin to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s theorization of the Body without Organs (BwO), “the ‘virtual’ dimension of the body that is a collection of potential traits, connections and affects” (n.p). Galbraith argues that the fujoshi’s *moé* BwO “engenders virtual possibilities without limits or control,” beyond the limits of gender and even humanity. He points to women who imagine parodic pairings of inanimate objects or abstract concepts, citing the personified nations in *Hetalia* as a prime example of the scope of fujoshi’s “transgressive intimacy.”

²⁴ See for instance, Uli Meyer’s discussion of transgender fans in “Hidden in Straight Sight: Trans*gressing Gender and Sexuality via BL” and Neal K. Akatsuka’s more critical article “Uttering the Absurd, Revaluing the Abject: Femininity and the Disavowal of Homosexuality in Transnational Boys’ Love Manga,” both in Levi et al. (2010).

It seems that fujoshi—and, in Galbraith’s argument, male otaku, whose desire is also refigured—represent a fan subjectivity and sociality precisely the opposite of Azuma’s model. Rather than being autonomous and instrumental, fujoshi fantasy is limitless yet intimate. Thinking about it like this, however, I begin to feel that Galbraith’s argument has only gone from “inter-” to “post-” modalities, from fixed territories to the absolute deterritorialization of desire. In fact, as Deleuze and Guattari state in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the BwO is *not* a means of getting beyond all limits to some uncontrolled state outside of reality. It is not an attained transcendence, but a process: “You never reach the Body without Organs, you can’t reach it, you are forever attaining it, it is a limit” (1987, 150), an “immanent limit” (154). In order to make yourself a BwO you still must “respond to the dominant reality” and mimic the “stratifications” that organize it (160), exploring the strata of “social formations” to find their potentials, the places where things can change, and where they connect (161). I appreciate that Galbraith finds the “trans-” moments and movements of connection between otaku and fujoshi concepts of *moé*. It is indeed a working through, a working *across* gendered styles of fandom that has produced fujoshi culture, not an opposition of always-oppressed women to always-oppressive men. But I find it problematic when he says that “The further away from reality and limitations on form the greater the virtual potential and affect” (n.p). In fact, fujoshi must still deal with reality and formal limitations brought about by social factors. As a counterpublic, they remain in tension with the mainstream public and with discourses of gender and sexuality, which they work to re-imagine without effacing or transcending them. And as fujoshi-oriented texts like *Hetalia* become increasingly visible

in the market, in the streets and skyscrapers of Ikebukuro, and beyond, their consumers must also deal with the “dominant realities” of commercialism.

Convergence Culture and the Contents Industry

It is no secret that anime is big business in Japan. As I demonstrated in chapter 3, television anime was from its beginnings in *Tetsuwan Atomu* a complex network of sponsorships, cross-media tie-ins, and international distribution deals. Film and consumer culture have been linked as far back as the 1930s, with the international distribution of American cartoons and their incorporation into the flourishing visual/material culture of character goods and local animation in Japan, as the case of Betty Boop and the vast array of products associated with her reveals. So what is different about the ways in which a web-based text such as *Hetalia* crosses between media? And how are fujoshi positioned as a female “community of consumers” in relation to the texts they love in the new media environments of the twenty-first century?

There have been many, many attempts to answer the question of how media industries and media consumers are changing since the turn of the millennium. In the Western context, Henry Jenkins has described the new media environment as “convergence culture.” “Convergence,” Jenkins argues,

does not depend on any specific delivery mechanism. Rather, convergence represents a paradigm shift—a move from medium-specific content toward content that flows across multiple media channels, toward the increased interdependence of communications systems, toward multiple ways of accessing media content, and toward ever more complex relations between top-down corporate media and bottom-up participatory culture. (2006a, 243)

Echoing his earlier work on “textual poachers,” Jenkins stresses that fans in this era are not passive, but actively hunt through texts to find meanings and to generate an entire story across multiple platforms.

Jenkins’ best example of such “transmedia storytelling” is his reading of *The Matrix* franchise, where parts of the story are told in the feature film trilogy directed by Andy and Larry Wachowski, and other parts in short films, video games, and online Role Playing Games (RPGs), so that a full understanding of the plot requires participation across different media. In transcultural fashion, anime has also played a part in *The Matrix*’s storyline through *The Animatrix* (2003), a direct-to-DVD release in which creators such as *Cowboy Bebop*’s Watanabe Shinichirō add their own visions of the Matrix to the mix. Referring to *The Animatrix*, Jenkins argues that the Wachowski’s “entire interest in transmedia storytelling can be traced back to this fascination with what anthropologist Mimi Ito has described as Japan’s ‘media mix’ culture” (110). “Media mix” is often exemplified by the mega-hit *Pokémon*, a video game/trading card game/manga/anime franchise lauded among industry commentators who claimed in the early 2000s that its “parallel-multiple channel business model is now becoming a specialty of Japanese enterprises” (Nakamura 2002, 6).

And yet, as in every transcultural exchange, I would argue that there are divergences as well as convergences between the American model of transmedia storytelling and the otaku-oriented contents industry as it exists in Japan today. Jenkins argues that a “transmedia story unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole” (2002a, 95-96). Viewers seek to know the entire story, and pool their knowledge and theories as to the “real

meaning” of the Matrix into a larger comprehension of the texts. When it comes to the anime market, however, I believe the “contents industry” is slightly different in its approach to narrative and consumption.

For one thing, the otaku- and, more recently, fujoshi-oriented contents industry does not include just any “contents,” but operates through specific vehicles best suited to convey the attractions of *moé*. Its four main pillars are anime, manga, video games, and a literary genre of short, illustrated youth fiction called “light novels” (Azuma 2007). Mihara Ryotarō says that because the contents industry is based on otaku genres and perceived purchasing habits, it works by encouraging not narrative reading but database consumption across media. Mihara cites otaku scholar Ōtsuka Eiji, who “repeatedly argues, throughout numerous books, that when producing a project, the important thing is not the stories, per se, but the environment that guides us to configurate [sic] them” (2009, 49.) What is consumed is not meanings or plot elements which make up a story “world,” but characters and settings which make up a “worldview” (*sekaikan*). The emphasis on “worldview” over narrative has drastic effects on the kinds of media texts that are produced and the ways they are used by fans.

For instance, the overriding importance of attractive characters has become a key feature of fujoshi-targeted works such as *Hetalia*. This is evident in the structure of the series and the ways it is adapted to different media. *Hetalia* is not a work that can be understood through a single linear narrative or overarching message. Certainly, the original webcomic posted on Himaruya’s website *Kitayume* starting in 2006 includes a “main storyline” of five chapters, plus two side stories. These chapters (with the exception of one side story) are mainly set during WWI and WWII and depict the

formation of the Axis and Allied powers' political alliances as comical, exasperating interpersonal relationships. Care-free, pasta-loving Italy constantly gets on strict taskmaster Germany's nerves and upsets Japan's reserved notions of personal space. (Italy's flaky uselessness in battle is the recurring joke of the series: even the title *Hetalia* is a portmanteau of the words "*hetare*" [useless] and "Italia.") England and France squabble constantly. America the "hero" tries to co-opt every meeting with his own enthusiastically self-aggrandizing agendas. China is still bitter about the Opium Wars, while Russia awaits the day when everyone comes begging to him with sinister cheer. The wartime plot described here is often cited as *Hetalia*'s main narrative.

Beyond these arcs, however, a much greater number of the total webcomic strips consists of "extra stories" and "comic diaries": one-shots or short sequences that show a range of geographic regions and historical periods, from China's age of exploration in the Ming dynasty to Estonia's rise as an IT power at the turn of the millennium. Even this outline renders the series more coherent than the reading experience in fact is, since the main and extra stories are told through a series of vertical four-panel comic strips called "*yon-koma*" in Japanese. These gag strips do not trace major events in the usual linear fashion of a history textbook. They rather jump from one small historical tidbit or human foible to another, making fun of such minor happenings as German spies in France being caught for mashing up their potatoes instead of cutting them into pieces. Author's notes within or under the strips then provide more detailed information or explain where the joke came from. Besides this, many comics do not depict specific events but general impressions of how the characters view each other, such as "Traits of Japanese People

that American-Kuns²⁵ have noticed.” The point is not to develop a narrative but to present the characters and settings that make up the “worldview” of *Hetalia*.

Hetalia’s transition between manga and anime platforms makes even clearer how the contents industry operates through consummately consumable characters. The web series, totaling 88 episodes in November 2010, is directed by Studio DEEN’s Bob Shirohata²⁶ and streamed weekly on the website *animate.tv* before being released on DVD. In past cinematic *yon-koma* adaptations, such as Studio Ghibli’s film *My Neighbors the Yamadas* (1999), the original “slice of life” manga strips have been harmoniously blended into a portrait of a single family’s daily existence. In contrast, the web anime adaptation of *Hetalia* radically exaggerates the discontinuities between each strip and places the focus more on the appearance of new characters. Each episode is only five minutes long. Within those five fast-paced minutes, Shirohata may present three short scenarios, opening and ending sequences, animated title cards that mark the transition from skit to skit, and sometimes a trailer for the next episode. Even single incidents are broken up in the most counterintuitive ways within and across episodes.

For instance, one fangirl-favourite story from the manga, a melodramatic flashback to the Revolutionary War in which young England and America painfully confront each other on a rainy battlefield, is telegraphed in trailers beginning five episodes in advance. Fans are promised in direct-address text screens that the animation staff is working hard on the episode, and it is repeatedly hyped through parodic

²⁵ “Kun” is a title for young men. In this semi-autobiographical strip, Himaruya uses his America and Japan characters to illustrate his conversations with friends in New York about their perceptions of “common features of Japanese people.” The “comic diaries” are not available in the official translated print volumes, but see <http://aph.starry-sky.com/amenihon.html> for an English fan translation.

²⁶ Shirohata and his studio are significant players in industry attempts to target fujoshi. He previously directed Studio DEEN’s anime adaptation of Murakami Maki’s popular boy’s love manga *Gravitation* (1996–2002). Linking video to print media, both *Gravitation* and *Hetalia* were published by the companies Gentōsha in Japan and TokyoPop in North America, which are invested in attracting female customers.

Hollywood-style teasers. After all the build up, however, the actual episode, “America’s Storage Cleaning Part 1,” shows America beginning to reminisce about the incident, then breaks off into a series of entirely unrelated scenes in which America realizes he has gained too much weight from eating nothing but hamburgers, and goes to France, China and Japan for diet advice. Only then does the plot return to America remembering his childhood with England—but by this point, there is no time left to finish the tale. “America’s Storage Cleaning Part 2,” with the heart-wrenching confrontation scene promised months in advance, does not turn up until three episodes later, in an episode that begins with skits about Italy’s inability to use a hand-grenade and England’s invention of the perfect boiled egg.

Whatever the in-show text screens may have claimed, this unusual structure was not a result of production backlog. According to an interview with Shirohata included in the English DVD box-set, his fragmentation of events was a self-conscious attempt to capture the “worldview” (his term) of the web manga. In the theatrical film, he is just as deliberate in setting up and then repeatedly interrupting at least two narratives, interspersing the “main stories” with reanimated versions of gags from the web manga and anime. Anyone watching for the continuity of even a subplot must face constant diversions and frustrated expectations. Devoted fans watching for the recurrence of their favourite character, however, are likely to be rewarded: with such varied scenes, many characters appear in short order, though their “face time” is not connected to a whole narrative. It is a series perfectly structured for database consumption.

Along with the character-based structure of the series, there is also a strong emphasis on the introduction of new nations in the publicity for *Hetalia*, including DVD

extras and ephemera such as the film program sold at the theatrical screening. Shirohata, reviewing each episode in the box-set DVD extras, always notes when a new personified country is introduced. His interview in the film program opens with an account of the web-to-cinema adaptation process, which then moves directly into how he and Himaruya came to introduce the new character of Iceland (Shirohata et al. 2009, n.p). The most anticipated and talked-about of Himaruya’s own blog entries are those in which he presents designs for previously ignored nations such as Australia.

In the *Hetalia* franchise, as in other contents industry hits such as Mihara’s case study *The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya* (2006), the consumption of character images also spreads very easily to character-based CDs where voice actors sing or speak in their roles. Not all of the CDs make “a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole” (Jenkins 2006a, 96), but they do allow fans to feel emotionally close to the characters (to feel *moé* for them) through hearing the voice actors sing or even count sheep aloud to lull listeners to sleep (see Table 6.1). Cute characters thus move easily across media and encourage affective bonds with products, making them the perfect vehicle for national and transnational consumer cultures.

Media	<i>Hetalia</i> Titles
Web manga	Axis Powers Hetalia
Print manga	Axis Powers Hetalia vols. 1-3
	Hetalia: Axis Powers vols. 1-2 (English translation) ²⁷
Web anime DVDs	Hetalia: Axis Powers vols. 1-7 (first 2 seasons)
	Hetalia: World Series vols. 1-4 (third season)
	Hetalia: Axis Powers box sets 1-2 (first 2 seasons, English dub and subtitles)
	Hetalia: Axis Powers Fan Disk
Film anime DVDs	Silver-Screen Hetalia –Axis Powers Paint it, White! (Released Jan.

²⁷ The *Hetalia Archives* fan site on Wikia, from which some of the information in Table 6.1 is drawn, also mentions Polish, Czech, Hungarian, and Chinese editions of the manga. Not speaking these languages, I cannot verify or comment on them. See http://hetalia.wikia.com/wiki/Hetalia_Archives.

	2011)
Music CDs	Hetalia Character CD Vol. 1: Italy
	Hetalia Character CD Vol. 2: Germany
	Hetalia Character CD Vol. 3: Japan
	Hetalia Character CD Vol. 4: UK
	Hetalia Character CD Vol. 5: France
	Hetalia Character CD Vol. 6: USA
	Hetalia Character CD Vol. 7: Russia
	Hetalia Character CD Vol. 8: China
	Hetalia: Sound World (holiday CD)
Drama CDs	Hetalia Drama CD: Prologue 1 (Comic Market exclusive)
	Hetalia Drama CD: Volume 1
	Hetalia Drama CD: Prologue 2 (Comic Market exclusive)
	Hetalia Drama CD: Volume 2
	Hetalia Fantasia (special mail-order gift to <i>Comic Birz</i> subscribers)
	Hetalia Drama CD Interval Vol.1: The CD of the Awesome Me
	Hetalia Drama CD Interval Vol.2: Boss CD
Sheep-Counting CDs (sleep aids)	Hetalia x Goodnight with Sheep Vols. 1-8 (various characters per CD)
Reference books	Axis Powers Hetalia Official Animation Guide
	Hetalia Axis Powers: Storyboard Guide Vols. 1-4
	Hetalia World Wide Walking Animation Fan Book
	Hetalia Character CD Perfect Guide
Video Games	Gakuen Hetalia (released March 2011 for PSP)

Table 6.1: Selected merchandise that contributes to the *Hetalia* “worldview” (not including figures, “fancy goods” such as stationary, clothing, magazine articles, etc.). All materials are Japanese editions available as of Nov. 2010 unless otherwise noted.

Of course, just because female fans (myself included) buy manga, guidebooks, character goods, and DVDs, it does not mean that we are automatically oppressed in a one-way power relation of domination. The contents industry, like convergence culture, produces “complex relations between top-down corporate media and bottom-up participatory culture” (Jenkins 2002a, 243). The presence of thousands of women’s own *Hetalia* products such as *dōjinshi* for sale in anime stores as well as at Comiket demonstrates that consumers and producers, amateurs and professionals are very much interconnected in the Japanese contents industry. And fujoshi are not only productive in terms of sales numbers. Thomas Lamarre has argued in his article “Otaku Movement”

that even otaku practices such as collecting and trading manga and anime, translating, filesharing, and so on are a kind of “communicative labor,” a “nonquantifiable work” that “poses a challenge to received organizations of labor” (2006b, 362). Such “otaku movement” is similar to what Antonio Negri calls “constituent power,” a power that is “immanent to the community,” rather than the “constitutive power” of “centralized forces of command that come from above, that are imposed on a community” (359). Fujoshi, sharing similar practices to otaku participate in a similar movement, just as they take up *moé* in their own way as the “immanent limit” of a BwO.

That said, Lamarre is quite clear-eyed in recognizing that constituent power is not limitless or equally distributed. While the men who theorized a “breakdown in the hierarchy producers” (367) and consumers went on to become animation producers themselves, women often do not have that opportunity because of structural gender-based inequalities of power. As Lamarre says in a footnote on page 394, women are successful in the media mix environment mainly as manga artists, providing material that is then adapted into anime by male directors. There are virtually no recognized female anime directors in Japan. In the case of *Hetalia*, too, women can participate actively and productively in an industry that includes many platforms and media, both official and unofficial—but only when they work on certain kinds of contents, such as *dōjinshi* and fan videos, which earn relatively little in terms of compensation for their labour. It is not that “transformative works” such as *dōjinshi* are themselves of lesser value; on the contrary, I will show that they are just as important to the formation of fan community and fan politics around *Hetalia* as the original text. And yet, it is troubling that women’s participation in productive activities remains based on certain forms of exclusion.

Like TV animation activist movements, not all otaku and fujoshi movements are automatically progressive or politically desirable. Sometimes they may be complicit with the very discourses they seem to oppose. The issue of complicity is especially pressing when considering a work such as *Hetalia*, which already walks a very fine line between parodying gendered, national, and ethnic stereotypes by exaggerating them, and reaffirming them by not providing any alternative vision. In order to unpack this issue, I will now look at what happens when character-based consumption and fujoshi production encounter the cultural frictions of globalization in East Asia and North America.

World Conflict/World Conference

At the end of my chapter on *There She Is!!*, I quoted Chua Beng Huat's concern that "there are at present no structural avenues for...pop culture consumer communities to percolate upwards to intervene in international processes" (27). I then asked: what effect can an animated work be said to have beyond the circuit of its own communities? What counts as "effect" or "intervention" in "international processes"? What "structural avenues" matter, and how does animation flow through or chafe against them? These questions are very pertinent to *Hetalia*, because international processes have already intervened in its media channels, its reception and its very text.

For instance, *Hetalia* was not originally intended to be only a web anime. Along with streaming online, it was also scheduled for broadcast on the television channel Kids Station in an adult-oriented timeslot (1:52 AM), starting January 24, 2009. A little over a week before its premiere, it was cancelled due to protests from South Korea which spread from the level of Net activism to the head of the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and

Trade (MOFAT). Despite the slow rapprochement between Japanese and Korean pop cultures described in chapter 5, *Hetalia* touched on divisive political and historical issues in the East Asia region, prompting an outburst of anger from anti-fans who did end up intervening in international diplomacy. Controversies related to historical memory—albeit different memories—have followed the series to North America as well. Many of these criticisms are deserved. *Hetalia* is an extremely problematic text when it comes to depictions of ethnicity and nationality. In raising such issues, however, I believe there is something to be learned from it. Because of the frictions it has generated, those who remain *Hetalia* fans have had to become more critically aware, not only of the text's representations of history, but of the practices of their own fandoms as well. Here we see a different kind of intervention, different avenues for change among fans working at the immanent level of their online communities. *Hetalia* has thus been an apt locus for transcultural animation fan community, with all its opportunities and its difficulties.

Let's begin with the Korean protest. Well before the anime was announced, and even before the publication of the print manga in March 2008, *Hetalia* began to surface in the Korean news media due to its popularity among anime fans online. Reports such as the one broadcast on Jan. 12, 2008 on Why10news²⁸ were highly critical of Himaruya's depiction of Korea. In particular, this report focused on a series of strips in which the over-enthusiastic Korea grabs Japan's "breasts" (his chest), and later complains to China that Japan refuses to admit the areas in question belong to Korea.²⁹ This was read, rightly I think, as a reference to the heated sovereignty dispute over a group of islets in the Sea of Japan known as Dokdo in Korean and Takeshima in Japanese, which both nations

²⁸ A video of this news segment is available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGzT1eUoC6Y>

²⁹ English fan translations of the pertinent comics are available at: http://aph.starry-sky.com/k_r.html and <http://aph.starry-sky.com/nikkimanga2.html> (third comic on the page).

claim. Himaruya's satire of the dispute was condemned in the report as both perversely "kinky" on account of the homoerotic element and politically insensitive for its positioning the islands as unquestionably Japanese, a part of Japan's "national body." There may be a thriving subculture of BL manga fans in Korea (Ueda 2008, 159), but *Hetalia* was off to a bad start in the mainstream Korean media.

The announcement of the television anime broadcast in Japan in late 2008 further provoked those who had heard about *Hetalia* through negative reporting in Korea. On Jan. 10, 2009, as the debut approached, an online petition to cancel the anime was posted to the Korean portal site Daum.³⁰ By the time it closed, it had collected 17,709 names and gained enough attention to cause concern among officials in the government's diplomatic arm, MOFAT. In a Jan. 14 meeting posted online by the Korean public broadcaster MBC (Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation), and then reposted with rough English translation to YouTube, a female official identified on-screen as Jeong Mi-Kyeong cited the concerns of the "netizens" and declared *Hetalia* a "crime against Koreans" akin to slander. She asked that Trade Minister Kim Jong-Hoon³¹ "make *Hetalia* a diplomatic issue and [cause] friction" to get the show cancelled. Kim replied that the issue concerned a private company and not the Japanese government, and so no official statements could be made. Still, their concerns and those of the petitioners were conveyed through the media to the Kids Station. Faced with such diplomatic "friction," the station's managers cancelled the entire television run in Japan. But they still insisted that the program was not offensive

³⁰ The petition may be viewed at <http://agora.media.daum.net/petition/view?id=65659>

³¹ The male addressee in the video is identified in MBC's screen-text as 2nd Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Min Dong-Seok. But upon consulting MOFAT's Korean and English websites at <http://www.mofat.go.kr/introduction/ministerintroduction/negotiation/index.jsp> and <http://www.mofat.go.kr/english/ministry/senior/trademinister/index.jsp> and comparing the officials' photos to the video, I found that Jeong is definitely speaking to the Minister for Trade himself. I was not able to find Jeong Mi-Kyeong on the MOFAT site, and am using the identification cautiously given the error on Kim's name.

because the character of Korea did not appear in it, and the studio's webcast and DVD releases went ahead.

Jeong's response to the *Hetalia* anime was framed in some very polemical language and revealed a lack of basic knowledge about the program and its airing. She claimed, for instance, that it would be seen by children since it was on the Kids Station, when in fact it was placed in a late-night adult timeslot. But there is a reason for her rancour. The issue here is not that Himaruya selected the wrong hot-button international event to satirize. Rather, it is the fact that his depiction of Korea has been seen to represent an entire Japanese attitude towards Korea, present in the Japanese government's denial of war crimes and in everyday discrimination against Koreans abroad and within Japan. In particular, *Hetalia* has been linked to the kinds of racism present on the Japanese-language Internet.

In his article "'Race' on the Japanese internet: discussing Korea and Koreans on '2-channeru,'" Mark McLelland analyses some harrowing examples of hate-speech by Japanese and American posters on the bulletin board 2-channeru. These include posts taunting Koreans who attempted to protest the hate-speech in awkward Japanese by responding in equally awkward English, "Poor Korean, people of colony. ... Speak Japanese, language of your master!!" (2008, 823). This is not so different in spirit from the profanity-laden demand made on the SamBakZa board that Amalloc "speak proper English." But even when discussing instances of American posters making racist remarks about all Asians as "yellow" or "slanty-eyed," McLelland finds that on 2-channeru "there is no pan-Asian solidarity between the Japanese and other 'yellow races,' but a reassertion of racial hierarchy in which Japan is seen as the leading nation in a region of

economically subordinate states” (825). Korean bloggers writing about *Hetalia* in Japanese often state that though they may like Himaruya’s drawing style, the ideology underpinning the series is problematic. One such blogger writing under the name no_tenki says that Himaruya’s “Korean character has been drawn according to the image of Korea as it appears on the Internet. It perfectly reflects the image that Japanese netizens have of Korea” (qtd. in Alecci 2009, n.p). This blogger cites as an example the character “Nidaa,” a stereotypical squinty-eyed image of a Korean cat created from typographical elements and frequently used on 2channeru (fig. 6.2).



Fig. 6.2: Image of the 2channeru character “Nidaa,” created by anonymous Internet users. Nidaa is named after the Korean suffix “-mnida.” (Public domain.)

Depictions of Koreans on the Japanese-language Internet may be read as what Cassandra Van Buren calls a “remediation” of the colonizing attitudes found in WWII propaganda animation. In her analysis of post-9/11 American Flash cartoons depicting Arab characters, Van Buren argues that the Internet can “resurrect and reproduce racist narrative strategies of WWII...animated propaganda films” (2006, 537). She draws on J. David Bolter and Richard Grusin’s concept of “remediation,” “in which the new medium gains currency through homage to older forms, and simultaneously older media forms maintain currency by incorporating elements of the new” (538). While Van Buren looks at the mainstream American tradition of grotesque, violent, and bestial caricature, it is important to keep in mind the differences and crossovers between Japanese and Western forms of racism and of propaganda, as discussed in chapter 2. In this light, I would argue

that *Hetalia* “remediates” not grotesque caricature, but rather Disney’s and Seo cute ethnic Others, with rather more disturbing ideological consequences than *There She Is!!*

As no_tenki goes on to say, the depiction of Korea in *Hetalia* is not so hateful as that of Korean-bashers on 2-channeru: his character design is “good-looking, silly but it doesn’t look malicious.” *Hetalia*’s Korea is overall a cute and friendly character, sometimes even over-friendly. The issue is that even the cute traits that make him appealing to *fujoshi* are rooted in stereotypes with underlying ideological consequences. Korea is basically a “little brother” type who constantly claims to be the origin of everything in Asia, when in fact he is only imitating his “big brother” (*aniki*) China, and also Japan. He claims, contrary to all evidence, that China’s Confucianism originated in Korea, and tries to take credit for Japanese *kendo* (wooden sword fencing) as well, utterly ignoring Japan’s patient explanations of Japanese sword-making history. Korea is even shown making Japanese flags to sell abroad in his first appearance. As a childish imitator, Korea’s contradictions of Japan’s (obviously correct) interpretations of history can be easily dismissed—a problematic depiction given the contestations over representations of history between Japan and Korea in recent years.³²

Though Japan’s colonization of Korea is not directly shown in *Hetalia*, the diminishment of Korea’s concerns and the infantilization of his character is consistent with more general depictions of colonized or conquered nations as cute and “*moé*” throughout the web comic and anime. Young countries such as America and Canada are found as little toddler (*chibi*) versions of themselves who live alone in the wild, usually

³² See, for instance, Isa Ducek’s article “Activism and the Internet: Japan’s 2001 history-textbook affair” (2003), which describes how Korean online protesters criticized the glossing of Japanese war crimes in a junior high school-level history textbook that was approved by the Ministry of Education (MEXT) in April 2001.

accompanied by playful fuzzy animals such as rabbits and bear cubs. The young countries are shown to choose or welcome their new colonial “parents,” England and France. This echo of *Momotarō*’s “fun colonialism” (Lamarre 2008, 85) also has links to Western imperial discourse, which pictured colonized territories as empty land ready for the taking, and colonized peoples as children in need of education (when they were not threats to be destroyed: recall Little Hiawatha and the angry mother bear). Meanwhile, in the East Asian context, Japan and Korea are both shown to be “children” of China in the distant past. The difference between them is that little Japan is precocious and insists on demonstrating his own unique cultural appropriations of Chinese teachings from the very start, such as writing his own phonetic alphabet and interpreting legends differently. By the time of the main storyline in the twentieth century, Japan thinks of himself as an “old man” with his own ways, unlike Korea, who remains a youthful imitator into adulthood.

As with the “cute ethnic Other” in film animation, then, there is a play between identification and distinction in *Hetalia*. Characters such as Canada and Korea who retain their cute, childish features throughout the series are very appealing, generating sympathy and attraction through the *moé* elements in their character design. But along with this cuteness comes a subtle distinction between them and the nations who grow to be “fully adult” such as France, England, Japan and the post-Revolutionary United States. In this way, *Hetalia* remediates some of the kinds of imperialist imagery found in cinematic internationalism.

Further recalling imperial international conceptions of national identity, the depiction of countries as whole, unified “national bodies” tends to emphasize what is stereotypically thought of each nation without showing what is untypical or diverse

within them. The nations selected for parody are based on a combination of East Asian politics from the Japanese point of view and the dominant discourses of Western history. Most countries with complex colonial and post-colonial histories are left out of *Hetalia* entirely, as is the case with India, all the Latin American nations, and all of Africa except Egypt. Countries with diverse ethnic populations such as America and Canada are still represented as white characters. The only black character included is Cuba, who appears mainly as a friend of Canada's. The upshot is that while many of *Hetalia*'s cute characters are indeed "ethnic Others" from a Japanese point of view, only certain ethnicities are involved.

In this regard, *Hetalia* is quite consistent with the general trends surrounding the depiction of ethnicity in boys' love manga. Kazumi Nagaike argues that fujoshi fantasies of beautiful exotic boys tend to turn towards particular ethnicities—mainly Caucasians, "amorous Arabs," and sometimes Chinese—and leave the rest as "absent others." Taking a critical postcolonial stance, she argues that "BL manga has been constructed by means of racial stereotyping" (2009, para. 4) and so "reflect[s] the racial textuality which remains prevalent in modern Japanese society" (para. 29). Such stereotyping, I would argue, is potentially increased in products of the fujoshi-targeted contents industry which are premised on character without character development, since they encourage the consumption of fixed types who are not changed by the events of a plot. In *Hetalia*, it could be argued that Japanese forms of commercialized cuteness and exoticism converge with Western discourses of history and of the childish Other, discourses that are remediated in web media to create a profoundly homogenizing, naturalized, and conflict-free portrait of imperial expansion both in the West and East Asia.

And yet, the reception of this text, as I have shown, has not been conflict-free. In North America as well as in Korea, fans have taken critical stances on *Hetalia*, with varying levels of accuracy and sophistication. There are a number of bulletin boards such as *Hate Hetalia* on which posters will simply reverse nationalist perspectives and give a pro-Korea position on everything from WWII to the Dokdo/Takeshima dispute, based on little more than what they have heard of the series and the historical events online. Such anti-fan approaches are often polarizing and lack adequate textual bases. When it comes to fans who are dedicated to the program, however, the situation becomes more complicated. While *Hetalia*-lovers are prone to respond to such incidents as the Korea protest by saying that *Hetalia* is “just a cartoon” or “just a joke,” at times even the most ardently supportive must recognize that their “fujoshi fantasy” touches on difficult social realities. This has been the case in North America as much as in Korea and Japan.

For instance, in the summer of 2009, several fans who attended the convention Anime Boston in cosplay as the character Germany caused a stir by “jokingly” performing a Nazi salute during a photo shoot in a public area. Compounding the negative impact of this thoughtless gesture was the fact that the convention was held during Passover and had hosted an emotional panel on “Why it is not cool to cosplay a Nazi,” during which the relatives of Holocaust survivors spoke movingly about the oral histories that had been passed down to them. The response from *Hetalia* fans over the controversial photo shoot was one of shock, anger, and shame about what “our fandom” allowed to happen. They—*we*—were forced to confront some very difficult questions, questions which often trouble me personally as an anime fan and scholar. What do you do when a media work you love provokes behaviours you cannot always condone? Do you

pass it off as the actions of a few ignorant members, or do you acknowledge that something in the text may enable or justify their actions? More generally, how do you remain a “fan” of something that you can see is problematic, yet cannot help finding appealing? How can fans confront their complicities in the gendered, ethnic, and economic forms of inequality that make up media culture? My only solution, a partial, debateable solution, is to look at how *Hetalia* fans confront these issues by forming collaborations that involve mutual criticism as well as mutual support.

When it came to the Anime Boston incident, some bloggers met hatred with hatred, verbally abusing the cosplayers online to let off steam. Some declared that they would leave the fandom or give up cosplaying in it. Others, however, took a more measured reaction. As happened on the SamBakZa bulletin board, they used the controversy as an opportunity to discuss just how fans should react when their favourite program contains discriminatory elements, and to link to resources that address these issues. Rather than gathering on a single bulletin board, however, *Hetalia* fans dealing with this incident more often worked through multiple and multidirectional channels, such as interlinked blog communities with numerous comments threads. It is difficult to summarize their discussions precisely because they take place through hyperlinks to other blogs or websites in an elaborate weave of cross-referencing. Still, the proliferation of these channels allows for the expression of diverse opinions on sensitive issues.

To take one of the more straightforward examples, an identified female LiveJournal user going under the name “Aquatic Banditry” responded to the Anime Boston controversy in a post titled “three thoughts on racism, fandom and being

offended.”³³ The first thought is that “People have a right to be offended.” Those who express concerns about issues such as racism or sexism in a show should not be dismissed by fellow fans as being “oversensitive” (a common tactic among English fans commenting on Korean criticisms of *Hetalia*), but should be “treated with respect.” The second is that “our fandom is important to us.” It is both “an escape from the ‘real world’” (as Galbraith says of fujoshi fantasy) *and* a way to engage with it, “a chance to be creative and meet people from all over the world.” Fans respond to texts from a position of emotional investment, so that it hurts when “characters you love and have invested time in become mouthpieces for cheap, offensive gags.” So what do *Hetalia* fans do when faced with such “ugly feelings” (Ngai 2005)? Some may react to offensive elements or controversies by defending the show they love; others may try to ignore the issue; and others may try to deal with it. For the last group, Aquatic Banditry’s third point provides “Resources” that can help fans move from affect to action. She links to another fan community’s collection of websites and blogs about how to handle thorny issues of racism, sexism, homo/transphobia, and so on that arise in the media and in online discussions about it. These links are provided “For those of us who weren’t aware of our privilege before we got on the internet... Maybe this way, we can be better informed next time something like this rolls around.”

The page of resources she links to is hosted by Scans_daily, an online journal community “founded by girl geeks and members of slash fandom” with a dedicated anti-oppression stance. In their “community ethos,” it is explicitly stated that “Calling out other members or creators for discriminatory or oppressive behavior is encouraged for the

³³ This public post may be found at <http://thewaterbandit.livejournal.com/42601.html?format=light>

good of the community.”³⁴ The site provides links to a wide range of anti-oppression resources written by both academics and fan bloggers. The point is not that fans should opt out of the media or perpetuate cycles of silencing by calling for bans on texts they find offensive. It is rather that they need to engage with the most problematic elements of texts and of their own readings of them self-consciously. In practice, many online debates still descend into unreflexive recriminations and insults. But such debates also make possible different kinds of re-imaginings across difference.

In the specific case of *Hetalia*, such re-imaginings take the forms that fujoshi are most adept in, namely fan fiction, videos and art such as *dōjinshi*. Numerous LiveJournal communities have sprung up on the Internet dedicated to creating characters that supplement Himaruya’s “worldview,” which mainly depicts the global North while ignoring the South. For instance, the twin LiveJournal communities Latin_hetalia and Hetalia_latina are the respective Spanish/Portuguese- and English-language communities devoted to writing about originally-created South and Central American characters from local and globally diasporic perspectives. Some fans feel free to break up the monolithic or “unisonant” quality of Himaruya’s nations, which assumes each nation is everywhere the same, by creating characters representing individual states or provinces. Others “genderbend” the *Hetalia* cast, making males into females to create a myriad of straight and queer pairing possibilities. Even in their representations of Himaruya’s existing nation-characters, fan artists may work to bring out the history that is elided in the official version of the manga and anime.

For instance, while Himaruya depicts Canada as a peace-loving, easily forgettable nation-character who began as a “child” of France and England and goes to America for

³⁴ See the Scans_daily “Community Profile” page at <http://scans-daily.dreamwidth.org/profile#ETHOS>

advice on developing a multicultural population, Toronto-based medical illustrator Sherry Lai provides a slightly different picture. In her fan comic “History of Canada,” she gives a lengthy, text-dense, and sometimes critical account of Canadian multiculturalism,³⁵ including incidents such as the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway with an immigrant Chinese labour force whose surviving members were discouraged from settling in Canada through discriminatory head taxes. It ends with an illustration that Lai says is “inspired by my friends (and our ethnicity) in Toronto,” using the Asian nation characters to depict both diversity and community in contemporary Canada (Fig. 6.3). In this way, she places Himaruya’s characters in a new light by using her own renditions of them to tell a story grounded in the troubled history of multicultural Canada, and to connect her experiences of Canadian life to the global issues raised by *Hetalia* fans.



Fig. 6.3: An example of *Hetalia* fan art: “Canada –Mind Your Asians” by Sherry Lai. Represented left to right are Lai’s interpretations of Taiwan, Hong Kong, Canada, China, Korea, and Japan. Used with the artists’ permission, obtained Dec. 8, 2010.

³⁵ Lai’s comic may be viewed at <http://ctcsherry.livejournal.com/4311.html>

Hetalia is not an ideal text, and its communities are not ideal communities. The problems of fujoshi's "subordinate" status as counter publics, of their commercialization as consumer/producers in a contents industry that systematically limits women's opportunities, and their complicity in supporting works with racist and historically questionable elements have not yet been solved. And yet, it seems to me that if a work such as *Hetalia* can cause international outrage, it can also generate a transnational community that works through alternative "structural avenues" different than those previously available to mass media consumers. Some (if not all) fans online can identify where there are gaps in the text of *Hetalia* or problems in their own community's responses to it, and take action out of their passion for the series. They can share their own texts based in local experience with others in many parts of the world, and link with anti-oppression groups that provide resources for addressing difficult issues that arise in fandom. The collaborations of *Hetalia* fans thus hint at the socially transformative potential of working across immanent, horizontal avenues of online linking, rather than the vertical avenues in which pop culture must "percolate upwards" to promote an "international intervention" dependent on governmental or diplomatic power.

Like *Hetalia* itself, the kinds of mediated community available online cannot be celebrated as entirely liberatory. The Internet, as demonstrated in the beginning of this section, is often taken up through older discourses of cinematic imperial internationalism and televisual economic postnationalism. And yet, it is impossible to say that *nothing* new has come of digital animation and communications technologies. 2-channeru contains much racist ignorance, but it also prompts genuine attempts at linguistic and cultural exchange such as the "Japanese Online Idioms" conversation. Flash animation

both remediates hatred and generates new spaces for acceptance and awareness, as on SamBakZa's bulletin board and fujoshi's LiveJournal communities. Character-based web anime like *Hetalia* both promote stereotypes and propel their re-imagining in new contexts. As Mihara says "the Internet is the ambivalent site of confrontation and cooperation" (2009, 158) between fans, texts, and animation industries. This kind of community is cohesive and corrosive. It is flows and frictions. And by these processes, it is transcultural, with all the risks and opportunities that entails.

Conclusion

From out of the film screen a parade is emerging. It is an animated parade so saturated in vivid colour, so dense with motion, so full of intricate uncanny life that it must be watched wide-eyed, gaze casting around a visual field layered with detail. The sheer immediacy of it is astonishing. No establishing shot to ease you in, no view from a distance, it is *there*, head on, coming directly at you. There, center screen: a refrigerator swaying like a dancer, its door open to reveal a tape deck propped at a jaunty angle inside. And here, a round-cornered television tumbling along, the proverbial rolling stone. The air is all confetti that seems to fall right before your eyes as everything that shouldn't be moving draws near. Household goods and technologies mingle with Japanese cultural icons. Look, just behind those frogs playing musical instruments, aren't those statues of *tanuki*, the folkloric transforming raccoon-dogs? And there's a bunch of *oni* with their spiked clubs and tiger-skin loincloths, just like the ones Momotarō fought! But what's this? Marching next to a towering red Shinto shrine gate is the Statue of Liberty. The empty armour of a European knight jostles alongside an equally empty samurai set. Various Buddhist statues hover at the back of the crowd. Let's move back and put this scene in perspective. In extreme long shot, the parade can be seen winding through the desert, an immense, dazzling assemblage of Japanese myth, modern commodities, and bits of American, European, and Asian iconography. There is nothing else in the desert but dunes and the parade. It is a world of things animated. A world of animation.

This surreal parade has travelled from the screen into the conclusion of my thesis by way of the late Kon Satoshi's 2006 anime *Paprika*, a meta-film about the processes of movie production and consumption. In the diegesis of the film, the parade is both dream-

image and screen-image. It represents the converging dreams of patients who have undergone therapy with a new technological wonder, the DC Mini, a device which allows psychiatrists to enter, record, and re-view patients' dreams like digital film. As *Paprika* opens, the DC Mini has been stolen by supposed "terrorists." It must be recovered by its developers, the cool-headed scientist Dr. Chiba Atsuko (who manifests in the dream world as a spunky, sensual redhead called Paprika) and her overweight, otakuish colleague Tokita, along with the police officer Detective Konakawa. As they chase the DC Mini down, they discuss it and cast it in different lights. It can be seen as a generator of connections, a machine that unites people by allowing them to "share the same dream." But it also risks becoming a technology of domination, as the convergence of dream-images it unleashes threatens to overwhelm all other realities and place everything under the controlling authority of the development board's chairman, Inui.

If the framing of media technology here sounds a little familiar by now, it is no wonder. The DC Mini and the parade it creates are reflections of the kinds of discourses around emerging media, from film to television to the Internet, examined so far. In *Paprika*, Kon reflexively draws attention to the links between media technologies and imagination, to the point of having his characters deliver expositions on film, the Internet, and their relation to the social imaginaries of the "collective dream" represented by the parade. Because Kon makes these issues so clear, I will use an analysis of the recurrent parade scenes in *Paprika* to sum up the arguments I have made over the course of this thesis, and to suggest some directions for future study.

As an image of film itself, the very first scene of the parade in the desert has striking parallels with some of the earliest cinematic animation created at the start of the

twentieth century. As Crafton has shown, one of the first things that animators in the West did was simply to make ordinary inanimate objects move, to reflexively highlight the lively, mobile quality of the medium of animation. And as I demonstrated in my first section, in depicting mobility film animation has itself been an internationally mobile medium since its inception. Traded and taken up in many specific contexts, it has been reworked in response to existing animation technologies and to changing social conditions and ideas of modernity in different parts of the world. Kon's parade, for instance, recalls not just a general animated modernity, but the specific handling of intra- and international influences in Japanese anime that began the 1930s. In his screen/dream, *oni*, *tanuki* and other such folkloric figures march alongside a vast array of icons, goods, and toys, as traditional and modern Japanese and American cultural icons, from *tengu* to Betty Boop and Momotarō to Bluto, appeared side by side on the Japanese screens (and merchandise) of the 1930s and '40s.

Paprika's parade of animation is thrilling in its liveliness and its cultural mixing, but it can also be overwhelming, even dangerous, in the diegesis of the film. Likewise, in my first two chapters, I tried to convey both the potential for international connections and the risks of imperial control presented by American and Japanese animated works of the "Miraculous Cinema" created between 1906 and 1945. In chapter 1, I showed how silent and early sound cartoons, from Émile Cohl's "Fantasmagorie" to Disney's "The Autograph Hound" to Ōfuji's "Spring Song" worked to animate their audiences on national levels. I also considered how animated characters such as the Fleischer Brothers' Betty Boop travelled internationally and were taken up by animators such as Ōfuji Noburō in ways that both subverted and subtly reinforced the economic dominance of

American film. In illustrating the international influences and the power imbalances generated by these works, I argued that neither American animation nor Japanese anime began as pure “national cinemas.” Rather, they were formed through juxtapositions of traditional and popular cultural elements drawn from many different cultures, as is perfectly visualized in *Paprika*’s parade. In this way, they stand as forerunners of the transcultural animation fan communities discussed in later chapters of my thesis.

Of course, the kinds of juxtapositions seen in Kon’s parade and those of pre-war and wartime animators grew out of very different historical contexts. As I showed in chapter 2, Japanese animators by the late 1930s and ’40s were working through structures of military and government funding and through articulations of colonial expansion that placed Japan among an “international fraternity of film imperialists” (Baskett 2008, 106). This became especially evident in World War II propaganda animation. Though Japanese animators worked in different ways than Americans, both drew on a similar ambivalent figure, the “cute ethnic Other.” In short and feature-length propaganda films by the Disney Studios, such as “Education for Death” and *The Three Caballeros*, and by Seo Mitsuyo, such as “Momotarō’s Sea Eagles” and *Momotarō’s Divine Ocean Warriors*, the cute ethnic Other character was used to simultaneously manage the diversity of colonial audiences and reinforce the economic and political power of American and Japanese imperialist cinemas. In this case, the fun parade of animation at once displays ethnic and cultural difference and attempts to re-absorb it into a “single stream,” a concern reflected in the vast column of *Paprika*’s animated spectacle.

Kon’s interest in the media and imaginaries of the early twentieth century is made very obvious in *Paprika* through frequent visual allusions to such Golden Age

Hollywood films as *Tarzan the Ape Man* (1932) and Disney's *Pinocchio* (1940). But the film is not limited to this period. In juxtaposing cinematic images, Kon also reworks them through references to a variety of other media, such as television and the Internet, moving beyond the international film paradigm. His remixing of media history could be seen as a kind of postmodern pastiche, evoking Appadurai's image of postmodern artists who use the past as "a synchronic warehouse of cultural scenarios, a kind of temporal central casting to which recourse can be taken depending on the movie to be made, the scene to be enacted, the hostages to be rescued" (1996, 30). In the Japanese context, this kind of pastiche fits quite well with (post)national discourses of Japan's essential hybridity—or perhaps, as Iwabuchi has argued, its corporate "hybridism" (2002b, 54). Seen in this light, the parade-as-pastiche marks a shift from the juxtapositions of the modernist era, in which each visual icon is still matched to a distinct national origin, towards a mode of postnational flow. In order to understand this shift, we will have to follow the parade out of the empty desert, where its national imagery is the focus, and into the wider worlds in which Kon implicates both media and imagination.

As the hunt for the DC Mini continues, the parade reappears time and again on-screen, winding through a changing dream scenery. From the desert, it passes through a forest of trees with broad green leaves. Here, the Statue of Liberty can no longer be seen, and colourful Japanese masks flicker in and out of view between the foliage. The only items to remain clearly framed in the center of the shot are the fluidly swaying fridge, the tape deck, and the rolling black television: what Iwabuchi would call the "culturally odorless" (2002b, 27) commodities of a new era of globalization. As the commodities pass by, a palanquin of porcelain dolls draws up. Ensnared at the top is Chiba's

supervisor Chief Shima, a spry, bespectacled little old man who has been sucked into a dream-trance by the unknown operators of the stolen DC Mini. In this scene, Chiba's alter-ego Paprika must use her considerable charm to get Shima to wake up out of the parade, and so rescue him from being held hostage in his own dream.

When he awakens, however, the parade does not end. It is no longer his dream. Whose is it? Who is controlling it? Another project member? Perhaps the culprit is Tokita's colleague Himuro, a fanatic doll collector who has been found unconscious with one of the stolen DC Mini interfaces embedded in his head. So Tokita enters the dream to confront the doll that Himuro has become. When Tokita enters, the parade is no longer in the forest. Now it is in a liminal state, seen in extreme long shot crossing a suspension bridge between forested hills and a city full of colourful buildings. Here, as the parade heads towards a dream-city brighter and more empty of inhabitants than Tokyo ever was, is where the changing nature of the dream is revealed. We learn that it is not Shima's or Himuro's at all. "It's not one person's dream any more," the dolls chorus. "The crossing of two dreams creates many more dreams." These multiplying dreams are irresistibly seductive. Tokita is sucked into them just as Shima was before being rescued, just as Himuro was before that, and becomes a toy robot.

The only one who can face the parade in that bright, empty version of Tokyo and keep her self-awareness is Paprika. She navigates the dream by transforming into a variety of animated dream-girls herself: a female version of the Monkey King from the oft-adapted Chinese classic *Journey to the West*, a Tinker Bell-like fairy, a little mermaid complete with clamshell bra. Having moved through the dream, Paprika can awaken again into Chiba and report on it. Chiba, driving in the rain with Shima, explains it

clearly: the parade is a “collective dream.” The stolen DC Mini is being used to invade the dreams of everyone who has ever used it, and as a result, their dreams are merging into one. The parade is such an amalgamation of images because “Every dream it came into contact with was eaten up in one huge delusion.” Visualizing this process of merging is an image of *flow*: two lines of rainwater on the car windshield that stream together seamlessly into one. Throughout the middle of *Paprika*, then, the parade is characterized by reducing specific cultural imagery, entering liminal and flattened spaces, emphasizing collectivity, and enabling flow between bodies and states of awareness.

Flow, as I described in the second part of my thesis, has been a key metaphor for describing the medium of television and postnational globalization in North America and East Asia in the second half of the twentieth century. Beginning in the 1960s, the old ideas of bordered nation-states and distinct media economies no longer seemed as important as the flow of images and commodities across a deterritorialized, disembedded world of media. In chapter 3, I highlighted the kinds of flowing programs and compliant young audiences that commercial television animation was thought to create in the 1960s and 1980s. I showed how the representation of a “typical American TV-type family” in *The Jetsons* attempted to make a particular idea of white, middle-class American culture into an unmarked, universal “space of flows” from within its own national broadcasting frameworks. In this vision of the future, even the more disruptive aspects of television fandom performed by the Jetson children were reincorporated into a conservative Cold War discourse on the American family/national structure. In different ways, Japanese animators also tried to create regional and global flows that were unmarked or “culturally odorless.” Tezuka Osamu tried to remove Japanese elements from *Astro Boy* and add in

certain Western elements in order to make it palatable to foreign markets (though not with total success, since his ideas of what must be removed or added to make a program “odourless” and the ideas of his editors outside of Japan were shaped by differing cultural contexts.) The flow of the parade as a single mass dream which eats up all the others is a perfect emblem for the fears of media theorists who saw television as a culturally colonizing and emotionally desensitizing force.

At the same time, media flow has also been conceived as a channel for affect and even community-building. It is something in which people can participate actively by taking it up for their own purposes, just as Paprika moves freely in dreams by adopting various cartoon forms while still maintaining her sense of self. My own experiences as a childhood fan of *Astro Boy* in Canada caused me to seek a more engaged style of fandom, one that grows out of local experience to become a cosmopolitan “set towards the world” (Tomlinson 1999, 183). In *Paprika*, too, the “collective dream” of the parade is not shown to be all bad, or even as all-effacing as I’ve portrayed it so far.

Back in the “real world” of the film, between the dream-scenes of the forest and the city described above, the characters voice some of their most deeply-held aspirations and their harshest critiques of the DC Mini as a dream/screen technology. Tokita, framed against a blue-sky background, praises the DC Mini as a way for friends to “share the same dream.” His stirring description of the DC Mini’s communicative potentials calls to mind the “community of sentiment” put forward by Appadurai. After all, difference need not be completely effaced in global communities. When Kon’s parade finally does enter the city in *Paprika*, it is shown through the exact same sequence of shots as in its first appearance: fridge, *tanuki*, *oni*, Shinto gates, Lady Liberty and all. Elements of

national/cultural iconography do return. Now, however, the focus is not on each individual element, as in the international model, but on the new context in which we understand all these elements *together*, or, the ways in which “The crossing of two dreams creates many more dreams.” In this way, *Paprika* recalls Watanabe Shinichirō’s 1998 series *Cowboy Bebop*, which I argued in chapter 4 also uses the tactic of reflexively referencing many media and ethnic cultures to build a diverse “community of sentiment” among fans around the world, rather than acting as a “culturally odorless” commodity.

Still, Tokita’s enthusiasm is not accepted without critique in the film. At one point, Chiba lashes out at him for his blissfully irresponsible attachment to the DC Mini technology. She calls him the “King of Otaku,” drawing on the Japanese perception of otaku as people who pursue their hobbies to the exclusion of all other social responsibilities. In doing so, she raises concerns about the human, real-world effects of media similar to those Tulloch brings up when he insists that we must look beyond postmodern emphases on play and ecstasy to reconsider the “risk society” that media technologies are creating. Kon’s final use of the parade, a scene in which dreams literally enter reality, illustrates the kinds of intricate negotiations between self and society, collaboration and complicity, consumption and production, which make up *transcultural* animation fan communities.

In the streets of waking-life Tokyo, dream confetti is falling. A grinning salaryman in a brown business suit proclaims to the camera in English: “Now, it’s show time!” With that, he dives gracefully off the edge of a building, followed by another man, and another, a whole Busby Berkeley diving team of smiling suicidal salarymen. Below them, the parade enters the bustling streets of the real city of Tokyo. It is the same

sequence of shots seen in the desert and in dream-Tokyo, but now when the fridge comes straight at the camera, ordinary people in the foreground rush to get out of the way, or to transform and join the parade themselves.

Following the suicidal salarymen, more and more satirical elements commenting on contemporary Japanese society enter the picture. A row of high school girls with cell phones for heads proclaims that “It’s most valuable while it’s still in the bud” and lift their sailor skirts for camera-phone headed men, a clear criticism of the sexualization of school girls in Japanese society,¹ and also, perhaps, in some *moé* anime. In a scene of political satire, a giant round-bodied doll (*daruma*) asks the dissatisfied populace to “place a vote in this eyeball,” while a caricatured politician on a crowded palanquin proclaims “I am the Emperor, chosen by God himself!” This results in an outbreak of squabbling as everyone shouts “I didn’t choose you!” while scrabbling to get to the top of the pile. Meanwhile, girls with cat heads and sailor-suited bodies appear in the parade chanting the nonsense protest verse “The happy and mundane world will vent their anger!” Tellingly, our protagonists enter this chaotic scene through media itself. Detective Konakawa turns off his computer only to turn around and see the same dreamlike images he witnessed on the Internet now outside his window. Even more literally, Chiba gets to the parade by leaping through a television screen and emerging from the camera on the other side. In this way, the parade both transforms and is transformed by “reality,” revealing the entwining of media and social life.

¹ I am thinking in particular of the practice of “*enjo kōsai*” or “compensated dating,” in which high school girls are hired by much older men to go out on dates with them. This practice generated a moral panic in mid-1990s Japan, along with the moral panics of other such “troublesome” social groups as *otaku*, *hikikomori* and more recently NEETs (those Not in Education, Employment or Training).

In my third part, I likewise pointed to the places where social relations enter into the virtual world and vice versa by looking at Korean and Japanese Internet animation since the year 2000. The mutual interpenetration of life and media is not the same as everything merging or flowing into one channel. In contrast to discourses of postnationalism, physical networks and borders, along with the frictions and asymmetries they generate, are recognized to persist in transnational media culture. Kon's parade may seem to swallow up reality much as it swallowed dreams and minds, transforming people bodily into musical instruments and golden good-luck charms. But now, the parade itself is transformed by the world it encounters. The repeated shot sequence of the fridge through to the Statue of Liberty is radically opened up as the scene continues on from it in new ways, gaining critical elements that were not present before. My final two chapters also turned to the ways in which online spaces continue to be riven with offline historical and social conflicts, even as those issues are worked through by fans engaged in the mutual yet asymmetrical relations of transcultural animation fan communities.

In chapter 5, I looked at the ways in which differences in nationality, ethnicity, and language shape online interactions using the case study of SamBakZa's *There She Is!!* series and the bulletin board devoted to it. Here, I focused on the collaborative and connective properties of online transcultural interactions, where linguistic frictions still exist, but do not present insuperable barriers to the formation of fan community. I argued for the power of affect to join fans across difference. But I also presented my concern that the commodification of such cute Flash cartoons may induct viewers into a "community of consumers" (Chua 2006, 27) which limits their scope for effective international action.

In order to address this concern in chapter 6, I presented a case in which web media *did* enter into public spaces and international arenas, just as Kon's dream parade enters into the social world. This was the media-mix series *Hetalia: Axis Powers*, which was paraded on banners in Ikebukuro and decried by diplomats in Seoul. In particular, I looked at the resistances and complicities of female fans of *Hetalia*, who participate in the Japanese style of "convergence culture" known as the contents industry. I showed how the new media texts favoured by fujoshi can "remediate" stereotypical imageries and divisive global imaginaries of the past, particularly when it comes to "cute ethnic Other" figures. But I also suggested how the mutual, multidirectional conversations enabled by the Internet provide some new avenues for fans from many different backgrounds to re-imagine and critique the contents of animated texts and their uses. Like Kon's parade, *Hetalia* fandom thus acts as a microcosm of media globalization in the twenty-first century, revealing the discriminatory, consumerist, and neo-imperial ideologies still present in new media networks, and also the potential of new media to allow critical, reflexive conversations about these problems.

I have argued throughout this thesis that imagining transcultural animation fan community is a process of forming connections across difference. It has not always taken place in the same way in every era and area. Nor is it something I can encompass completely here, certainly not through a reading of a single text such as *Paprika*. To paraphrase postcolonial scholar Homi Bhabha, understanding transcultural animation fan community is not about "adding up" all of these texts and arguments into a single holistic vision, but a process of "adding to" that is continually ongoing. So, what are the challenges that remain after the parade has returned to the dream world, as it does in

Paprika, leaving its marks on the city, the characters, and the viewers? What further directions are there for the study of transcultural animation?

My recommendations for future study in the rest of this conclusion fall into two categories: those concerning the method of transcultural research, and those concerning possible subjects. I would like to speak about method first, because during the course of researching in Canada, the United States, and Japan I encountered many challenges in doing scholarship transculturally, as well as in studying transcultural fandom. In talking about the challenges I faced and how I (at least partly) overcame them, I hope to provide some small insight into how future scholars of animation or other global media might approach their own studies, either by following my method or contesting it.

When preparing a transcultural study, I believe the first thing to acknowledge is that nobody, not even the most cosmopolitan of us, lives without some kind of positioning. For scholars as well as Internet users, there is no place like MCI's utopia without gender, race, age, or disability. To do a transcultural study is to first acknowledge one's *own* cultures of nation, generation, gender, education, and academic discipline (among many others), and to understand how these influence the kinds of arguments one is prone to make. I have tried to do this consistently by telling stories about my own life growing up as an animation fan in Eastern Canada and about researching abroad for this project. Using both literary and ethnographic methods of studying global media has also been important to my self-positioning. Close-reading animated works allowed me to develop my own ideas of what animation "does" at technical levels and what various American, Japanese, and Korean animators have tended to do with the medium over the years. My fieldwork then exposed me to interpretations of animated works and practices

of fan community beyond those suggested in my own initial readings of films and academic articles. During the course of my participant observation, for instance, I often found it helpful and rewarding to speak from my experience as a Canadian female fan, and to hear others respond from their experience, so that each of us gained a view of animation fandom that included the others' ideas and changed our ideas of ourselves. This personal approach is one I would like to pursue further, and one I would recommend for future transcultural animation researchers.

While we do speak from our own positions, it is also important to recognize that nobody is *locked into* a certain kind of scholarship because of their background. As Spivak says, scholars (especially those in hegemonic positions) have an ethical responsibility to overcome their "sanctioned ignorance" and attempt to form a kind of "critical intimacy" with those who hold different positions and opinions. This does not mean, as Tulloch has noted, simply trying to "find in the postmodern condition an ecstatically pleasurable diversity of audience readings" (2000, 17), or falling into what Spivak calls the "instant soup syndrome" of speaking about diversity from a position of privilege, in which you "just add the euphoria of hot water and you have soup, and you don't have to question yourself as to how the power was produced" (1990, 9). Scholars do need to remain self-conscious and self-critical. But in order to keep from falling into solipsism, self-consciousness needs to be supplemented by a concerted attempt to engage with others ethically and imaginatively, in terms not purely restricted to the comfort zone of hegemonic assumptions.

The biggest challenge of avoiding sanctioned ignorance is recognizing where one is being ignorant in the first place. Often, such recognitions happen in retrospect. I must

admit that at first my research on animation history and anime fan cultures tended to rely heavily on English-language, and especially American scholarship, simply because that was what was most available to me. I have experienced the “gravitational pull” of scholarship, where having many easily-accessible sources on some texts or experiences leads to writing *more* about those texts, further marginalizing others. It is for this reason that canonical American works such as Disney films and major translated Japanese series such as Tezuka’s anime have such a strong presence in my thesis.

Likewise, I designed my survey and recruiting methods on the pattern of Western sociology textbooks and samples of surveys done in North America, assuming that these would be appropriate in Japan. As a result, my survey returned much stronger results in the English language than in Japanese, in part because I did not know how to take into account the different structures of the Japanese Internet and otaku/fujoshi sociality. (Of course, time limits and limitations on the number of recruiting sites I could access in Japan were another factor besides survey design.) Working at first from within the North American academy, my research was framed in certain discursive and linguistic assumptions about how I should conduct research and where I should focus my attention.

As I discovered during the course of my research just where my early assumptions were limiting me, I took the “standing shifting” approach of adapting my methods to suit the situations I encountered. I tried to the best of my ability to read more sources from outside the Anglophone academy, particularly Japanese-language resources acquired during my fieldwork. I also decided to highlight works beyond the twin “techno-Oriental” poles of America and Japan, such as the Canadian version of *Astro Boy* and the Korean series *There She Is!!* which required extra research on broadcasting history and

reception in those areas, but which were eventually very valuable for providing multiple regional perspectives on media globalization, rather than a dualistic/nationalistic view. I further made an effort to meet others doing transcultural scholarship inside Canada and abroad in Japan, America, and Europe. For instance, since 2008 I have been working with members of Heidelberg University's research cluster "Asia and Europe in a Global Context: Shifting Asymmetries in Cultural Flow" to publish a group of papers on transcultural trends in various historical and geographic contexts. Through such collaborations, I was able to learn from others who are dealing with some of the same challenges as myself, and to share my own research methods and results with them.

Given this experience, I fully agree that scholars of animation today need to participate in the kinds of movements towards "de-Westernizing media studies" or "internationalizing Internet studies" put forward by authors such as James Curran and Myung-Jin Park (in the first case) and Gerard Goggin and Mark McLelland (in the second). In Anglophone film and media studies, it is still often assumed that one can teach or write about a given media work while having no in-depth knowledge of the culture or language out of which it was produced. Dozens of studies of anime alone have been written by those who do not understand more than a few words of Japanese or know anything about Japan's *contemporary* popular culture (beyond the traditional "culturalisms" which so often turn up as explanations for a text's Japanese-ness.) Of course, no one should be shut out of conversations about works in translation just because of their linguistic capabilities, and not every study needs to be a "cultural study." But to really engage in transcultural scholarship, I do believe, as Spivak says, that one must do one's "homework" (1990, 62-3) and make the effort to learn about where the media text

came from and how it has been interpreted in different linguistic contexts. Hillenbrand has argued for a similar translational and transnational scholarship in East Asian studies, but I would say that such scholarship need not be limited to “area studies” disciplines. It can be very productively adapted to interdisciplinary work—hence, my transcultural and interdisciplinary thesis on global media done for an English Literature degree.

The final methodological issue I must address is how to both study and participate in fandom. Over the course of this thesis, I have spoken as an “aca-fan,” a stance that requires careful thought about how to “do” scholarship and fandom. When transcultural fandom is added to this, the situation becomes even more delicate. I have criticized otaku studies for not representing my experiences as a female fan or a transnational fan, and I have been criticized myself by fans from different parts of the world, who sometimes responded to the survey by saying “I can see why your topic interests you, but it doesn’t match up well with my experiences.” In short, I have faced some “cross-talk” (Brydon 2004) between scholars who have studied anime fans, myself as a fan/budding researcher, and those I hoped to study.

As is the case with frictions between fans, however, I have found that the frictions I faced while working between academic and fan positions have been productive. On one hand, having been a long-time fan has allowed me to critique discourses of media industries as inherently oppressive by drawing on my own experiences and my acquaintances with fellow thoughtful, engaged fans. On the other hand, being an academic in training has given me some of the tools necessary for developing a “*critical intimacy*” (Spivak 1999, 119) or “*critical utopian*” (Jenkins 2006a) approach to fandom. I would like to see more animation scholars identify as fans and use that experience

strategically, and more fans embrace those who take critical stances using academic theory rather than rejecting them as kill-joys or elitists. Third-generation fan scholars such as Matt Hills are well on the way to developing this stance in Anglo-American fan studies. The challenge now is to combine it with the kinds of transcultural tactics outlined above.

In terms of subject matter, I will speak more briefly. If more animation fans begin to work as scholars, and more scholars to admit their fandom, then they will likely work from their own passions as I have done. Dictating topics is hardly an incentive for good research. What I hope to do now is just to touch on some of the gaps in animation scholarship I have identified thus far, as potential avenues for future study.

As mentioned in chapter 1, there has been a small swell of interest in the past five to ten years in pre-1945 Japanese animation among distributors and conservators. A few scholars have also begun to write about early anime, such as Tsugata Nobuyuki, Daisuke Miyao, and Thomas Lamarre (for instance, in his articles on “speciesism.”) As far as full-length studies go, Abé Mark Nornes and Aaron Gerow state in their 2009 *Research Guide to Japanese Film Studies* that Yamaguchi Katsunori and Watanabe Yasushi’s 1977 *Japanese Animation History* remains the most reliable book-length source on early animation, and it is now slightly outdated when it comes to new works and approaches. Perhaps because so little is known about it, pre-1945 animation is often omitted from studies of “anime.” Now, however, with more pre-war material becoming available on DVD, rich opportunities are arising to uncover how Japanese animation and its communities have changed over time, and what influences early works continue to have on animation production and exchange today.

Another much-ignored field, as indicated in chapter 3, is children's television animation of the 1960s–80s, which has suffered (more so in the West than in Japan) from a poor reputation as disposable entertainment for the “moppet market.” Due to continuing assertions that there is no value to TV cartoons besides economic value, they have not been studied as seriously as they deserve. Articles on children's TV cartoons tend to appear in collections on fairly scattered works and topics, and focus on more recent programs. George W. Woolery's 1983 study *Children's Television: The First Thirty-Five Years, 1946-1981* provides many details of early American television airings, their plots, and occasionally their reception, but little in the way of analysis. The material contained in this volume could be an excellent guideline for selecting programs that provide a survey of themes in American children's animation, including how imported and re-edited Japanese anime were made to fit into this field. Further research on early television animation, perhaps in dialogue with children's literature and youth culture studies, could provide a more nuanced historical and social view of animation's production, distribution and reception than the polarized theorizations of TV cartoons to date have suggested.

Last but not least, there is a need overall for more attention to the diverse conditions under which animation is produced and received in the twenty-first century. I have made some attempt to address Korean animation and to a much lesser extent Canadian commercial broadcasting, but both are fascinating areas deserving more in-depth study. Along with production, studies of the transnational reception of non-American animation, and of particular genres within it, are only just beginning to get off the ground in volumes including John Lent's edited collection *Animation in Asia and the Pacific* (2001) and Antonia Levi, Mark McHarry, and Dru Pagliassotti's *Boys' Love*

Manga: Essays on the Sexual Ambiguity and Cross-Cultural Reception of the Genre

(2010). What animation scholarship requires most of all is more people willing to work across languages, national academies, and levels of professional/amateur status, be it through translations, sharing primary materials, or through artistic and intellectual collaborations. In short, we need more transcultural, transdisciplinary scholars.

My thesis is an attempt to meet this need, and to work between some of the polarizations that continue to divide fans from scholars and critics from boosters. In tracing the kinds of exchanges that have taken place in North American and East Asian animation between 1906 and 2010, I have demonstrated that animation cannot be defined in one way, or be seen to have a single effect in all times and places. At various points in history, it has been used to unite and divide groups along ethnic and gendered lines. It has been implicated in imperial internationalism, postnational capital, and in transnational media economies that remediate the images of the past even as they allow us to re-imagine what we may do with animation in the future. Transcultural animation fan communities are (to paraphrase Henry Jenkins) more than just a marketing concept, but less than a utopian semiotic democracy. Finally, they provide a way for people to negotiate the tensions and complicities of media globalization's complex connectivity, acting as one small example of a world of new experiences.

Appendix 1: English-Language Survey Questionnaire Form

Animating Transcultural Communities Questionnaire

Welcome to my survey on animation fan communities. The aim of this study is to find out how people make connections across national and cultural borders by sharing an interest in animation. It includes fans of Western animation and fans of Japanese *anime* between the ages of 18-30. Your participation involves answering a series of questions about your experiences and opinions of animated films, television series and web-cartoons. The questionnaire will take between 30-60 minutes to complete, depending on how much you choose to write.

I will be using your answers to help me write my doctoral thesis. Parts of my thesis may also be presented as conference papers or published as articles in scholarly journals. Anything you write here will be kept in strict confidence, and I will not use your real name at any stage in my thesis unless you specifically request it, so your anonymity will be protected. If you are interested, I can send you a report on the overall findings of the research when the study is complete.

If you agree to participate in the study, please read the following form and click the appropriate boxes. Please be assured that your identity will be kept in strict confidence and that your participation is completely voluntary: you do not have to answer any questions you don't want to answer, and you are free to stop doing the questionnaire at any time.

This study has been approved by the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba, Canada. If you have any complaints regarding any of these procedures, you may contact the Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Arts (204 474 9912), or the Head of the Department of English (204 474 9756) for referral to the Research Ethics Board.

Thank you,

Sandra Annett, Doctoral Candidate
Department of English, Film and Theatre, University of Manitoba
umannets@cc.umanitoba.ca

Consent Form

This form is only part of the process of informed consent. It's a standard requirement for research at my university. If you would like more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to email me and ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

By answering "yes" below, you indicate that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

This research has been approved by the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project, you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 204-474-7122, or e-mail [margaret_bowman\[at\]umanitoba.ca](mailto:margaret_bowman[at]umanitoba.ca). You may print a copy of the consent form to keep for your records and reference.

I affirm that I am between the ages of 18-30 and can participate in the study without the permission of a parent or guardian.

- Yes**
- No**

I agree to participate in the study on Animating Transcultural Communities conducted by Sandra Annett. I understand what the study entails, and I have been assured that my participation will be kept completely confidential.

- Yes**
- No**

OPTIONAL

If you would like me to provide you with feedback on the research project, please enter the email address you would like results sent to here

Questionnaire on Animating Transcultural Communities.

There are four parts to this questionnaire, with a total of 34 questions. Some are multiple choice and some are short answer questions. In the short answer sections, you can write as much or as little as you like, from one word to a whole page.

And remember, you do not have to answer any question you do not want to, for any reason at all!

A. Animation Viewing

1. Do you like Japanese animation? If so, please list your top five favourite anime films, tv series or web-cartoons. If not, write “none” in the first line.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

2. Do you like American or other Western animation? If so, please list your top five favourite animated films, tv series or web-cartoons. If not, write “none” in the first line.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

3. Are there certain directors, series, or studios whose new works you look out for? If so, please tell me which ones, and why they appeal to you.

4. What kind of animation would you say is your favourite? (For example, science fiction, comedy, action, romance, *moe*). What do you enjoy about it the most?

5. Do you enjoy watching animation from certain countries more than others? Please tell me why or why not.

6. In an average week, how often would you say you watch animated films, tv episodes or web-cartoons? Please check **one**:

- less than once a week
- one or two days a week
- three or four days a week
- five or six days a week
- every day

7. I'd like to know if you watch mainly the most recent animated releases, or if you like older animation too. In the past 30 days, have you watched any "retro" or "classic" animation made before the 1980's, like Betty Boop, early Disney movies, Looney Tunes, or the first Mobile Suit Gundam series? If so, please list the titles.

8. Please rank the following technologies you use to watch animation, with number 1 being the technology you use the most often and number 6 being the technology you use the least often.

- DVD, HD-DVD or Blu-Ray
- Internet (streaming and downloads)
- Mobile device (cell phone, iPod)
- Projected film in a movie theatre
- Television
- VCR tape (including television recordings on tape)
- Other

9. Think about the last time you got a new copy of an animated film or series, a copy you can keep and rewatch. How did you acquire it? Please check **one**.

- Purchased it new in a physical or online store
- Purchased it secondhand in a physical or online store
- Rented it and made a copy
- Downloaded it free from a file-sharing website
- Downloaded it free from a licensed website (e.g., the animation producer's site)
- Received it as a gift
- Recorded it from television
- Other (please specify)

10. When you watch animated films, tv series or web-cartoons made in a language you do not speak, do you prefer to watch them:

- with subtitles
- with dubbed spoken dialogue
- with no translation at all
- I don't watch any foreign-language animation

B. Fan Experiences

11. In general, what kinds of activities or personal qualities do you associate with “fans”? Try completing the sentence “A fan is someone who...”

12. Would you consider yourself to be an animation and/or anime fan?

Yes

No

13. How dedicated a fan do you think you are compared to others you know?

Extremely dedicated –like, hardcore!

Very dedicated, a definite animation lover.

Somewhat dedicated. I like it well enough.

Not very dedicated. I could take it or leave it.

Not dedicated at all. I don’t really care for animation.

14. Are you aware of the Japanese term “*otaku*,” which is sometimes used to describe anime fans? If so, please tell me how you define *otaku*, and whether you would consider yourself an *otaku* or not.

15. Are/were you a member of any local anime or animation fan clubs in your city or at your school? If so, please list the club names, places, and years of membership to the best of your recollection. (For example: UManime, University of Manitoba, 2006-07)

16. Are/were you a member of any animation-related email lists or other online groups, such as LiveJournal communities? If so, please list the names and years of membership to the best of your recollection. (For example: NAUSICAÄ mailing list, 2007-present)

17. Do you write animation or anime-based fan fiction, or make fan art, crafts, costumes, videos, etc.? If so, please tell me about what sorts of things you make and how you share them with others.

18. Would you say you feel a strong sense of community with your fellow animation fans? Please tell me in some detail about your sense of animation “fandom.”

19. Has your interest in animation ever allowed you to make friends (or enemies!) with someone you might not have met otherwise –for instance, someone living in another city or country? Please tell me about your most memorable animation relationship.

20. Have you ever tried to learn any foreign languages or studied another country's history or culture because you like its animation? If so, what have you studied?

C. Related Media

21. Do you read Japanese *manga*? If so, please list your top 3 favourites.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

22. Do you read American or other Western comics? If so, please list your top 3 favourites.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

23. Do you play video games using platforms such as Wii, PlayStation or Xbox? If so, please list your top 3 favourites.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

24. Do you play computer games, or participate in any online RPGs, MMORPGs, MUDs or similar virtual environments? If so, please list your top 3 favourites.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

25. Do you collect figures, cels, clothing or other items related to animation besides DVDs or books? Please tell me about what you collect and why you enjoy collecting.

D. About You

26. What is your age now?

27. In which country were you born?

28. Where do you currently live?

29. Which language(s) do you speak?

30. How would you describe your ethnic or racial background? Please use the term you most prefer. (For example: African-American or black; Anglo-Saxon or white; Asian-Canadian or Chinese-Canadian)

31. What gender are you? You may include sexual orientation if you like (For example: male; female; straight female; bisexual male, etc.)

32. Please check as many as apply. Are you currently:

employed full-time
employed part-time
working in the home
at school
other

33. Please write the highest level of education or training you have achieved to date (e.g. high school grade 12, vocational training course, 2nd year BA in English, etc.)

34. Do you have any more stories you would like to tell, or questions you think should be added to this survey? Please add any other thoughts, feelings and questions you have about animation and its ability to connect or divide people around the world today.

Thank you very much for sharing your ideas, opinions and experiences with me! ^_^

Appendix 2: Japanese-language Questionnaire Form

「Animating Transcultural Communities」 アンケート

私のアニメについてのアンケートへようこそ。この研究は世界中のアニメファンとの繋がりや創り方を調査するものです。18歳から30歳までの日本アニメとアメリカのアニメーションが好きな人が対象です。この研究には、アニメに関する意見と体験についての質問が含まれています。30-60分程時間がかかります。

質問に対する答えは、主に博士論文のために使用されますが、学会での発表や学会誌での出版に使われることもあります。回答者からの要望がない限り、調査は匿名で行われ、個人情報が出ることはありません。ご興味がありましたら、アンケートが終わった後に結果を送付致します。

アンケートにご協力頂ける様でしたら、次の同意書を読んで、必要な項目にご記入してください。アンケート調査において、答えたくない質問がある場合には、それらの質問に答える必要はありません。また途中で、いつでもアンケートを中止することができます。

この研究と同意書は、マニトバ大学研究倫理委員会によって許可されています。苦情、ご意見、ご質問等がありましたら、下記までご連絡下さい。

英文学科長: +1-204-474-9756
倫理事務局: +1-204-474-7122

どうもありがとうございます。

サンドラ・アネット、大学院生
マニトバ大学英文学科
umannets@cc.umanitoba.ca

同意書

この同意書はマニトバ大学で研究をする際に必要な書類です。詳細が必要な場合は、私宛に電子メールでご連絡下さい。本同意書をよく読み、十分ご理解頂く様お願い致します。

「はい」と答えることで、回答者は、この調査の内容を理解した上で参加することに同意したとみなされます。回答者の権利が侵害されることや、研究者、スポンサーまたはこの調査に関わる団体が法的または職業における責任を放棄することは決してありません。回答者はいつでも調査を中止することができ、答えたくない質問に答える必要はありません。継続して調査に参加する場合、初回と同様、回答者は参加に同意する必要があります。また回答者は説明や情報を求めることができます。

この研究と本同意書は、マニトバ大学研究倫理委員会によって許可されています。苦情、ご意見、ご質問等がありましたら、下記までご連絡下さい。記録や参考のために本同意書をコピーいただいても結構です。

倫理事務局: +1-204-474-7122

マーガレット・ボマン : margaret_bowman[@]umanitoba.ca.

18歳以上 30歳未満で、保護者の許可を得ずに参加することができます。

- はい
- いいえ

私は上記を読み、匿名で調査が行われることを理解した上で、サンドラ・アネットのアニメアンケートに参加することに同意致します。

- はい
- いいえ

任意: 結果が必要な場合、こちらにメールアドレスをご記入下さい。

アンケート用紙

このアンケートには4つのセクションがあり、全部で質問は34あります。選択問題と記述式問題があります。記述式問題には、好きなだけ記入して下さい。

答えたくない質問がある場合には、答える必要はありません。

A) アニメを見ること

1) 日本のアニメが好きですか。一番好きな日本のアニメーション映画やテレビアニメ、OAV、Webアニメを5つあげて下さい。

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

2) アメリカやヨーロッパのアニメーションが好きですか。一番好きな外国のアニメーション映画、テレビアニメ、Webアニメを5つあげて下さい。

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

3) どの映画監督、スタジオ、シリーズが特に好きですか。その理由を教えてください。

4) どんなアニメーションが一番好きですか。（例えばSF、ラブコメ、アクション、萌え系アニメ）。その理由を教えてください。

5) どの国のアニメーションが他国のものより好きですか。その理由を教えてください。

6) 一週間にアニメを何度見ていますか。一つだけ選択して下さい。

- 一週間に 1 回未満
- 一週間に 1-2 回
- 一週間に 3-4 回
- 一週間に 5-6 回
- 毎日

7) 主に最近のアニメを見えていますか。あるには、昔あるには、昔のアニメも見えていますか。過去 30 日間に、1980 年以前に作られたクラシックアニメ（例えば、ディズニーのクラシック映画、「ベティ・ブープ」、「ルーニー・テューンズ」、「鉄腕アトム」、「機動戦士ガンダム」）を見ましたか。もし見ていたら、見たタイトルをあげて下さい。

8) アニメを見るのに、どんな方法を使いますか。次の方法を順位付けして下さい。1 位は一番よく使っている方法で、7 位はあまり使っていないものです。

- DVD、HD-DVD、BD（ブルーレイディスク）
- インターネット（ダウンロードとストリーミングビデオ）
- 携帯電話
- 映画館で見る映画
- テレビ
- ビデオテープ(テレビの録画も)
- その他（具体的に書いて下さい）

9) 最近得たアニメ映画またはシリーズはどのようにして手に入れましたか。一つだけ選択して下さい。

- お店やオンラインストアで新品を買いました
- お店やオンラインストアで中古品を買いました
- レンタルの DVD をコピーしました
- 無料ファイル共有サイトでダウンロードしました
- 無料の合法サイトでダウンロードをしました（例えば：アニメーターのサイト）
- プレゼントでした
- テレビを録画しました
- その他(具体的に書いて下さい)

10) 外国語のアニメーションを見る時、以下のどれが一番好きですか：

- 字幕スーパー
- 吹き替え
- 未訳
- 外国語のアニメーションを見ません

B) アニメファンとオタク

11) 一般的に、アニメオタクという人はどんな活動をして、どんな人間だと思えますか。次のに書き込んで下さい：「アニメオタクという人は. . .」

12) あなたは自分自身をアニメオタクだと思えますか。

- はい
- いいえ

13) 知り合いに比べると、あなたはどれくらいアニメが好きですか。

- 本当にオタクです。
- アニメが大好きです。
- アニメが好きです。
- アニメはまあまあ好きです。
- アニメは好きじゃありません。

14) 英語の「ファン」と、日本語の「オタク」は、同じ意味だと思えますか。その理由を教えてください。

15) 学校や市でアニメクラブや研究会に所属したことがありますか。もし所属したことがあるなら、アニメクラブの名前、場所、年を記入して下さい。（例えば：マニトバ大学アニメクラブ、カナダ、マニトバ、ウィニペグ、2006-2007年）

16) インターネット上のアニメコミュニティやメーリングリストに参加したことがありますか。もし参加したことがあれば、コミュニティの名前と年を書いてください。（例えば：ナウシカメーリングリスト、2007-現在）

17) 同人誌やAMV（アニメ・ミュージック・ビデオ）などを作りますか。どのような物を作って、どのように共有していますか。

18) アニメが好きな人と共同体意識を感じますか。あなたにとってファンダムとはどのようなものですか。

19) アニメがきっかけで会ったことのない、例えば遠くに住んでいる人と仲良くなったことがありますか。または、不仲になったことはありますか。アニメをとおしてできた人間関係で一番忘れがたいものを教えてください。

20) 外国のアニメーションがきっかけで外国語や外国文化を勉強したことがありますか。もし勉強したことがあれば、どんなものを勉強しましたか教えてください。

C) 関連メディア

21) 日本の漫画を読んでいますか。もし読んでいたら、一番好きな漫画を3つあげてください。

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

22) アメリカやヨーロッパのコミックを読んでいますか。もし読んでいたら、一番好きなコミックを3つあげてください。

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

23) テレビゲームをしていますか。もししていたら、一番好きなゲームを3つあげてください。

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

24) コンピュータゲームやロールプレイングゲームをしていますか。もししていたら、一番好きなゲームをを3つあげてください。

1)

2)

3)

25) アニメ PVC フィギュアやセル、服、などのアニメグッズを集めていますか。どんなものを集めていて、なぜ集めることが好きか教えてください。

D) あなたについて

26) 何歳ですか。

27) どちらで生まれましたか。

28) 今住んでいる国はどちらですか。

29) 何語を話しますか。

30) あなたの民族性 (ethnicity) は何ですか。

31) あなたは男性ですか。女性ですか。(性的指向を書いてもいいです)

32) あてはまるもの全てを選択してください。今は：

正社員

パートタイマー

主婦/主夫

学生

その他

33) 学歴について教えてください。(例えば、高卒、短大生、歴史学部の二年生)

34) その他コメントや質問がありますか。またアニメについて意見や体験など書きたいことがあれば自由に書いて下さい。そうして **Done** をクリックして下さい。

ご協力ありがとうございました。^^

Appendix 3: Selected Questionnaire Data

Tables provided in Appendix 3:

Table 1: Distribution of animation fans by currently-inhabited geographical region

Table 2: Distribution of animation fans by self-identified ethnicity

Table 3: Distribution of animation fans by age (includes 2 figures)

Table 4: Distribution of animation fans by gender and sexual orientation (includes 2 figures)

Table 5: Media technology usage among animation fans

Table 6: Animation acquisition (purchase, rental, etc.) among fans

Table 7: Respondent's assessments of their level of dedication to animation fandom

Table 8: Top 15 Japanese-made film and TV animation rankings

Table 9: Top 15 Western-made film and TV animation rankings

General information on questionnaire responses:

English-language questionnaire:

Total number of people who started the questionnaire: 204

Total number of people who completed¹ the questionnaire: 125 (61.3%)

Total who affirmed their age to be between 18-30: 192 (94.1%)

Total who consented to participate in the study: 204 (100%)

Japanese-language questionnaire:

Total number of people who started the questionnaire: 41

Total number of people who completed the questionnaire: 14 (34.1%)

Total who affirmed their age to be between 18-30: 39 (97.5%)

Total who consented to participate in the study: 40 (97.6%)

¹ A completed questionnaire form is one in which the respondent has clicked the “done” button at the end of the form and submitted their responses. The phrase “completed questionnaire” does not imply that all the questions in each form have been answered, as not all questions were relevant to all respondents, and respondents were not penalized for declining to provide personal demographic information. The only required responses in this form were those in which participants confirmed their age and consent. As a result, response counts for each question vary, as is noted at the beginning of each table provided below. Statistics are calculated based on total response count per question.

Table 1: Distribution of animation fans by currently-inhabited geographical region

Data given in response to question 28: Where do you currently live?

今住んでいる国はどちらですか。

English-language response count: 125

Japanese-language response count: 12

Total response count: 137

(Japanese-language responses are indicated in brackets with an *asterisk)

Region and country currently inhabited	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
North American region total	80	58.4
Canada	19	13.9
United States	61	44.5
European region total	25	18.2
Denmark	1	0.7
France	2	1.5
Germany	6 (*1 Japanese response)	4.4
Ireland	1	0.7
Italy	2	1.5
Netherlands	3	2.2
Norway	1	0.7
Poland	1	0.7
Sweden	1	0.7
United Kingdom	7	5.1
Asia-Pacific region total	23	16.8
Australia	4	2.9
Hong Kong	2	1.5
Japan	*10 (Japanese responses)	7.3
Malaysia	2	1.5
Philippines	4	2.9
Singapore	1	0.7
South American region total	5	3.7
Argentina	2	1.5
Brazil	*1 (Japanese response)	0.7
Chile	1	0.7
Peru	1	0.7
Middle East and South Asia region total	4	2.9
India	1	0.7
Saudi Arabia	1	0.7
Turkey	1	0.7
United Arab Emirates	1	0.7

Table 2: Distribution of animation fans by self-identified ethnicity

Question 30. How would you describe your ethnic or racial background?

あなたの民族性 (ethnicity) は何ですか。

English-language response count: 123

Japanese-language response count: 8

Total response count: 131

(Japanese-language responses are indicated in brackets and with an *asterisk)

Identified ethnicity	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
White/Caucasian total	72	55.0
Anglo-Saxon	5	3.8
Caucasian (1 specified: Polish-Russian)	9	6.9
Celtic	1	0.8
White	48 (*includes 1 Japanese response)	36.6
White Canadian	1	0.8
White European (5 specified: White British, Dutch, German, Polish, Slavic)	8	6.1
Western national/regional identifications (ethnicity not clearly stated)	14	10.7
American mixed ancestry	3	2.3
Canadian	2	1.5
Canadian American	1	0.8
Dutch	1	0.8
European	3	2.3
French	1	0.8
Italian/Spanish	1	0.8
Mixed European	1	0.8
Southern European	1	0.8
Asian	29	22.1
Asian	3	2.3
Asian-American	5	3.8
Asian-Canadian	2	1.5
Chinese	1	0.8
Chinese-American	4	3.0
Chinese-British	1	0.8

Chinese (Hong Kong)	2	1.5
East Indian	1	0.8
Filipino	1	0.8
Japanese	*6 (all Japanese responses)	4.5
Malay	2	1.5
Malaysian-Chinese	1	0.8
First Nations/Native American	5	3.8
Cree First Nations	1	0.8
First Nations	1	0.8
“Indian (but not Oriental)”	1	0.8
Native American/American Indian (US)	2	1.5
Hispanic/Latino/Latina	5	3.8
Chilean	1	0.8
Hispanic	1	0.8
Latin	1	0.8
Mexican-American	1	0.8
Portuguese-American	1	0.8
Biracial	4	3.0
Black/Caucasian	2	1.5
Filipino/Caucasian	1	0.8
Puerto-Rican/Caucasian	1	0.8
Middle Eastern/Arab	1	0.8
Middle Eastern/Arab	1	0.8
No answer	1	0.8
“?”	*1 (Japanese response)	0.8

Table 3: Distribution of animation fans by age

Question 26. What is your age now?

何歳ですか。

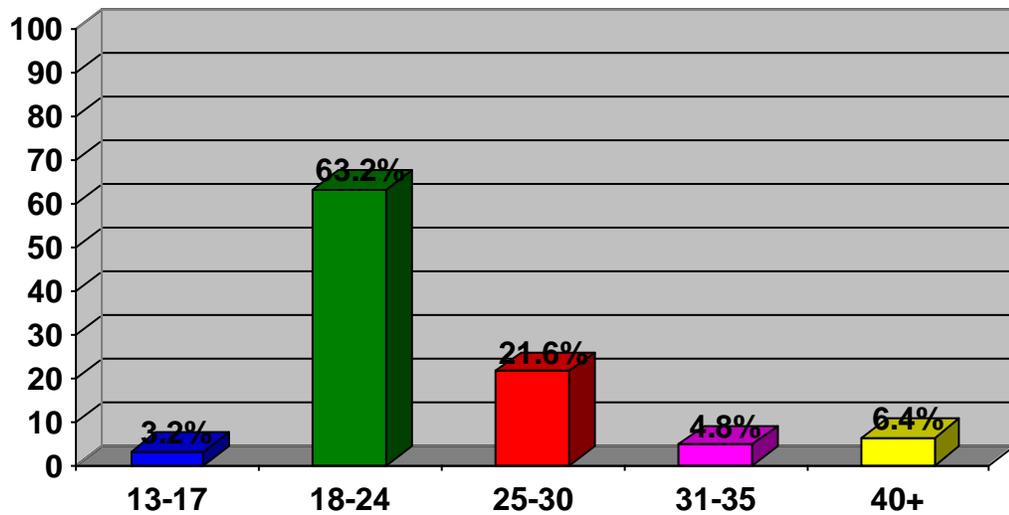
English-language response count: 123

Japanese-language response count: 8

Total response count: 131

NB. English responses include 1 respondent (0.8%) who declined to give an age

Ages of English-speaking animation fans (in percentage)



Ages of Japanese-speaking animation fans (in percentage)

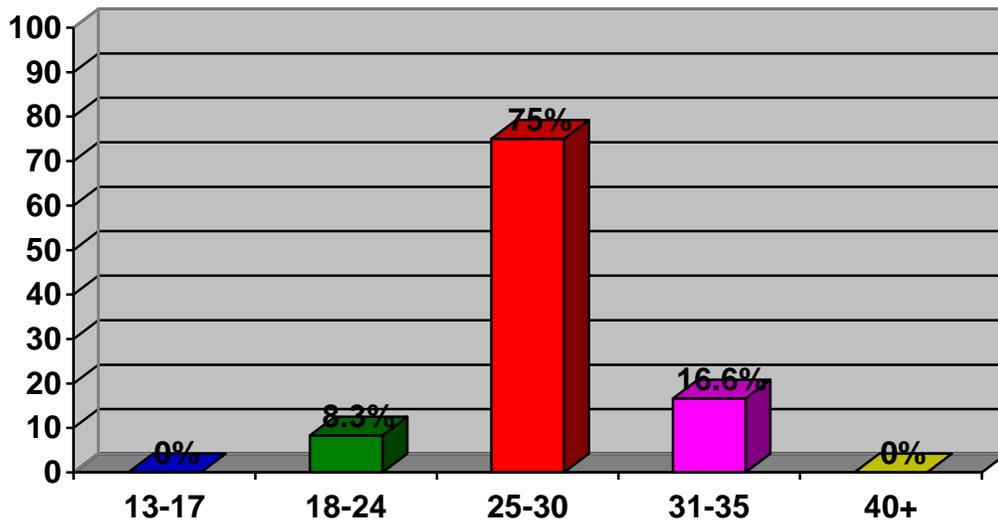
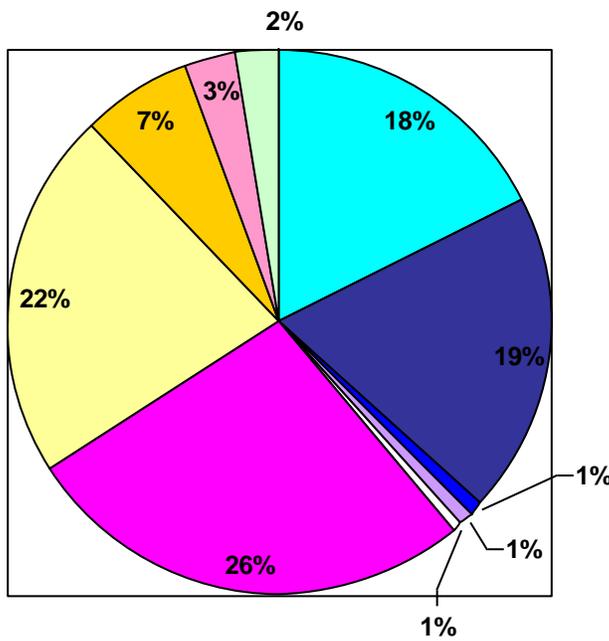


Table 4: Distribution of animation fans by gender and sexual orientation

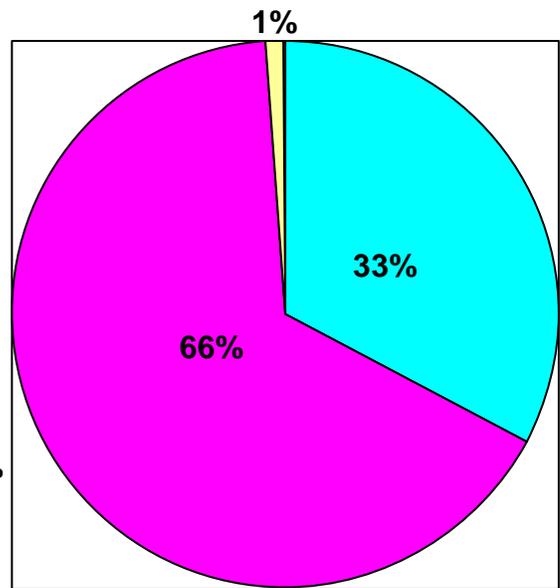
Question 31. What gender are you? You may include sexual orientation if you like.
 あなたは男性ですか。女性ですか。(性的指向を書いてもいいです)

English-language response count: 125
 Japanese-language response count: 12
 Total response count: 137

Genders of English-speaking fans



Genders of Japanese-speaking fans



- Male (orientation unidentified)
- Straight male
- Bisexual male
- Gay male
- Transgender
- Female (orientation unidentified)
- Straight female
- Bisexual female
- Lesbian female
- Asexual female

- Male (orientation unidentified)
- Female (orientation unidentified)
- Straight female

Table 5: Media technology usage among animation fans

Question 8. Please rank the following technologies you use to watch animation, with number 1 being the technology you use the most often and number 6 being the technology you use the least often.

アニメを見るのに、どんな方法を使いますか。次の方法を順位付けして下さい。
1位は一番よく使っている方法で、7位はあまり使っていないものです。

English-language response count: 118

Japanese-language response count: 14

Total response count: 132

Devices used by English-speakers to watch animation	Average rank #	Devices used by Japanese-speakers to watch animation	Average rank #
Internet (streaming and downloads)	1.6	Television	2.2
DVD, HD-DVD or Blu-Ray	2.1	DVD, HD-DVD or Blu-Ray	2.3
Television	3.5	Internet	3.1
Projected film in a movie theatre	4.1	VCR tape (including television recordings on tape)	3.7
VCR tape (including television recordings on tape)	5.2	Projected film in a movie theatre	4.1
Mobile device (cell phone, iPod)	5.6	Mobile device (cell phone, iPod)	5.6

Table 6: Animation acquisition (purchase, rental, etc.) among fans

Question 9. Think about the last time you got a new copy of an animated film or series, a copy you can keep and re-watch. How did you acquire it? Please check **one**.

最近得たアニメ映画またはシリーズはどのようにして手に入れましたか。一つだけ選択して下さい。

English-language response count: 116

Japanese-language response count: 14

Total response count: 130

Distribution channels used by English-speakers to acquire animation	Percentage %	Distribution channels used by Japanese-speakers to acquire animation	Percentage %
Purchased it new in a physical or online store	55.2	Recorded it from television	40.0
Downloaded it free from a file-sharing website	25.0	Purchased it new in a physical or online store	26.7
Purchased it secondhand in a physical or online store	8.6	Received it as a gift	13.3
Received it as a gift	8.6	Other (YouTube, theatrical viewing)	13.3
Rented it and made a copy	1.7	Downloaded it free from a file-sharing website	6.7
Downloaded it free from a licensed website	0.9	Rented it and made a copy	0
Recorded it from television	0	Downloaded it free from a licensed website	0
Other	0	Purchased it secondhand in a physical or online store	0

Table 7: Respondent’s assessments of their level of dedication to animation fandom

Question 13: How dedicated a fan do you think you are compared to others you know?

知り合いに比べると、あなたはどれくらいアニメが好きですか。

English-language response count: 114

Japanese-language response count: 14

Total response count: 128

English-speakers’ assessments of their fandom	Percentage %	Japanese-speakers assessments of their fandom	Percentage %
Extremely dedicated –like hardcore!	14.0	Extremely dedicated –like hardcore! [otaku]	0
Very dedicated, a definite animation lover	50.0	Very dedicated, a definite animation lover	35.7
Somewhat dedicated. I like it well enough	33.3	Somewhat dedicated. I like it well enough	28.6
Not very dedicated. I could take it or leave it	2.6	Not very dedicated. I could take it or leave it	35.7
Not dedicated at all. I don’t really care for animation	0	Not dedicated at all. I don’t really care for animation	0

Table 8: Top 15 Japanese-made film and TV animation rankings

Question 1. Do you like Japanese animation? If so, please list your top five favourite anime films, tv series or web-cartoons. If not, write “none” in the first line.
 日本のアニメが好きですか。一番好きな日本のアニメーション映画やテレビアニメ、OAV、Web アニメを5つあげてください。

English-language response count: 120

Japanese-language response count: 14

Total response count: 134

(Japanese-language responses are indicated in brackets with an *asterisk)

Title, director, first release date, and medium of the work	Number # of respondents who listed the work
<i>Spirited Away</i> (Miyazaki Hayao 2001, film)	41 (*3 Japanese responses)
<i>Cowboy Bebop</i> (Watanabe Shinichirō 1998, TV)	24 (*2 Japanese responses)
<i>Princess Mononoke</i> (Miyazaki Hayao 1997, film)	23
<i>Fullmetal Alchemist</i> (Mizushima Seiji 2003, TV)	22 (*2 Japanese responses)
<i>My Neighbor Totoro</i> (Miyazaki Hayao 1988, film)	22 (*2 Japanese responses)
<i>Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind</i> (Miyazaki Hayao 1984, film)	18 (*4 Japanese responses)
<i>Ghost in the Shell</i> (Oshii Mamoru 1995, film)	16 (*3 Japanese responses)
<i>Neon Genesis Evangelion</i> (Anno Hideaki 1995, TV)	14 (*2 Japanese responses)
<i>Castle in the Sky</i> (Miyazaki Hayao 1986, film)	12 (*4 Japanese responses)
<i>Grave of the Fireflies</i> (Takahata Isao 1988, film)	12
<i>Vision of Escaflowne</i> (Akane Kazuki 1996, TV)	11 (*1 Japanese response)
<i>Ouran High School Host Club</i> (Igarashi Takuya 2006, TV)	10
<i>Cardcaptor Sakura</i> (Asaka Morio 1998, TV)	9
<i>Death Note</i> (Araki Tetsurō 2006, TV)	9
<i>FLCL</i> (Tsurumaki Kazuya 2000, six-episode Original Animation Video)	8

Table 9: Top 15 Western-made film and TV animation rankings

Question 2. Do you like American or other Western animation? If so, please list your top five favourite animated films, tv series or web-cartoons. If not, write “none” in the first line.

アメリカやヨーロッパのアニメーションが好きですか。一番好きな外国のアニメーション映画、テレビアニメ、Web アニメを5つあげてください。

English-language response count: 118

Japanese-language response count: 11

Total response count: 129

(Japanese-language responses are indicated in brackets with an *asterisk)

Title, director, first release date, and medium of the work	Number # of respondents who listed the work
<i>Avatar: the Last Airbender</i> (Michael Dante DiMartino and Bryan Konietzko 2005, TV)	18
<i>The Lion King</i> (Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff 1994, film)	16 (*2 Japanese responses)
<i>Futurama</i> (Matt Groening 1999, TV)	14
<i>WALL-E</i> (Andrew Stanton 2008, film [CG])	14
<i>The Simpsons</i> (Matt Groening 1989, TV)	13
<i>Beauty and the Beast</i> (Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise 1991, film)	11 (*1 Japanese response)
<i>The Nightmare Before Christmas</i> (Henry Selick, 1993, film [stop-motion])	11 (*2 Japanese responses)
<i>Up</i> (Pete Docter and Bob Peterson 2009, film [CG])	11
<i>The Incredibles</i> (Brad Bird 2004, film [CG])	10
<i>Batman: The Animated Series</i> (Kevin Altieri, Boyd Kirkland et al. 1992, TV)	9
<i>Finding Nemo</i> (Andrew Stanton and Lee Unkrich 2003, film [CG])	9
<i>Family Guy</i> (Seth MacFarlane 1999, TV)	8
<i>Fantasia</i> (Various dirs.; produced by Walt Disney 1940, film)	7
<i>Gargoyles</i> (Greg Weisman 1994, TV)	7

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