

Violence and Desire in Japanese Popular Culture: Anime Capitalism

2-4pm

MIT

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Professor Anne Allison (Duke University) on Pokemon Capitalism and Desire

John O'Donnell (founder, Central Park Media) on Otaku Entrepreneurs and Anime Distribution in the US

Professor Ian Condry (MIT) on Fansubs, Piracy and Global Media

Ian Condry - MIT

Violence and Desire in Japanese popular culture and let's put it loosely organized around that but also focusing on several different aspects of animation, anime from Japan.

Yesterday we had a panel with three speakers looking at religion, art history, and also issues of nature, environmentalism in anime. Last night, we had an anime screening of a contemporary TV show called Samurai Champloo which mixes hip hop and samurai themes in an animated TV series. And, today, we have another panel, we'll run today from 2 to 4 o'clock and the panelists today I'll just introduce them briefly and then also, what I'll do is ask each of the panelists to introduce themselves as well and talk about their own interests and relationship with Japan Popular Culture. I should say I am Ian Condry, I'm an assistant professor of Japan Cultural Studies here at MIT in the Foreign Languages and Literature Section. I've been teaching here since 2002, and also a cultural anthropologist by training with work on popular music, especially hip hop in Japan and now I am interested in anime as well. I already gave something of an introduction yesterday, I don't want to go over it again, but the one thing I do want to make sure I do is thank the sponsors for making this all possible, that's Harvard's Edwin O. Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies provides support as well as the MIT Japan Program. We also receive support from Foreign Languages and Literature at MIT as well as Comparative Media Studies. So please join me in thanking the sponsors.

So, today's session is going to focus on primarily on thinking about the intersections of culture, economy, I've called this session "The Anime of Capitalism," sort of one way of thinking of about it. And we have three people, I am going to be one of the speakers. The three speakers are Anne Allison, professor of cultural anthropology at Duke University, John O'Donnell, who is the is founder of Central Park Media, one of the big anime distributors in the US, based in New York and I'll be talking a little bit on my anime research on fans. And so the idea is that we will each speak about 20 minutes or so, and we are not going to have a discussant. We will rely for you, in the audience, to generate discussion and I think that worked pretty well yesterday and I am hopeful that that will be good format for today as well. So first of all, join me in welcoming Anne Allison of Duke University.

Anne Allison - Duke

Thank you. I would like to thank Ian Condry for inviting me to Cool Japan Workshop and to all of you for being here on a beautiful day. And, I say to Ian when he introduced

me that he shouldn't mention Duke too many times because what I really wanted to talk about desire and violence.

So the topic is Violence and Desire. And since I haven't worked on violence recently, I am going to kind of talk this out. My most recent, I've done a lot of work on desires on hostess clubs, and business and capitalism, on white collar work in Tokyo. Also, I have also done a lot of work on domestic relations, motherhood, comic books, pornographic comic books, and the relationships involved in that. My most recent work has been on globalization of Japanese kids entertainment, four ways that have crept over into the global marketplace. Power Rangers, Sailor Moon, Tamigochi and Pokemon. So, and I've written a book that is coming out next month called *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination*. So things kind of popped from that in terms of themes that I expanded on about desire. So I have a few things I want to go through. I did field work for a project between the United States and Japan. I got a Fulbright in Japan in 1999 and 2000. I left in June, no I think it was early July 2000 and the day after I left, and I had been doing a lot of one particularly Poketo (Pocket) monsters, how to produce and create it in Japan, it was still a fad at this time. In fact, I got introduced to this through Ted and Vicky's son who was much more an expert I was and he sat me down, in fact, and gave me my first interview and instructed me how I had to think about this, so I am deeply indebted to all of them for that introduction.

The day after I left, there was a story in the Japanese newspapers about a boy, and I think he was 17 years old, who had taken a baseball bat, and he had beaten a few of his teammates, I don't know if any of you remember this case, so these are not all together clear. He had a haircut, that he was teased about his haircut, he attacked these boys all of whom survived. And he took the bat and went home and attacked his mother and killed her, killed his mother. And, he was on the way to Hokkaido, I believe on a bus, when they confronted him. And when they discovered him, they opened up his rucksack and in the back of his rucksack he had Pokemon cards, a Gameboy and a number of the Gameboy games. So, I thought that this is very interesting, whatever it is in the conditions of postindustrial millennial Japan, that have cultivated and fostered something like Pokemon which a lot of people think of as cute and cool, we were talking about that this morning, fun, benign, is also cultivating something like this. This behavior which in fact a movie was made of last year about trying to understand what his motives possibly would have been.

So let's start there, trying to think of a justification of things that are inspiring desire, the things that are also inspiring a certain kind of violence. And, in Japan today, in fact when I was doing this year of field work in Japan, there were lots of incidences that were talked about in the mass media, and under the word 少年犯罪 "shonen hanzai", youth violence, and a lot of people were trying to figure out what was going on with youth and a lot of the commentary was that it seems what we have is a characteristic of a new formation of youth violence was that it seemed to come out of nowhere, and that often it was good kids, ii-ko who all of a sudden broke, and did something incredibly violent.

But, also there were other things about youth behavior that were troubling, that have been picked up by the mass media, that continued to pique the interest of the public in Japan. And they include things like the 情交際 joukousai the behavior of schoolgirls who do what precisely, we don't know, have something to do with sex, something that is sexualized, transaction with money, so it's developing whatever it is it's not good, and it is a form of violation, but who's getting violated here. Are the girls violating someone or are they being the subject of violence?

There's also collapse in the schoolroom, again a lot of talk about what's happening in the school room, some kids seem to be locked in chaotic behavior that becomes uncontrollable by the teacher. There is also 引き籠り "hikikomori", a phenomenon that often starts with kids refusing to go to school and then they retreat ever further into their own bedrooms and do not want to enter into communication with the rest of the world. Again it is a form of violence? Violence against the kids? Often it starts to children in middle school years around that period when they have to prepare for entrance exams. 80 percent of boys, so right around the time they are preparing for entrance exams is also when 苛め "ijime", bullying seems to increase, there again, is the social violence against kids, perpetuated by the educational system? It erupts into a certain kind of social violence often done by a group of kids against a single kid and then kids who wind up retreating to the bedroom, again are they are the ones who are being violated again because they can't emerge into society.

And, of course there is the incredible commentary on フリーター "friitaa", or the kids who wind up not preparing to go into the circus of what has been in postwar Japan, different for boys, a salaryman, to become part of a company. Friitaa are workers who don't want to or can't or are refusing to go into that fulltime permanent work and a lot of the commentary, at least the commentary that I have read, is that they don't quite have what it takes to constitute the future of Japan. So there is also a lot talk about where Japan is now, what is the future of Japan. Of course, there have been a lot of books about this, too, including the book by Yamada Masahiro 希望格差社会——「負け組」の絶望感が日本を引き裂く』 "Kibou Kakusa Shakai" the differences of however you define kibou, would you define the desire. Also Murakami Ryu, one his most recent book is called 希望の国のエクソダス "Kibou no Kuni Ekusodasu" Shuzai Nouto', The Exodus of a Country of Desire. So desire, violence, hopelessness, these all lead into the investment of the future, lack of maturity, becomes things we hear about happening in Japan. Of course, this is not only happening in Japan, Larry Grossberg has written a book I think is incredibly brilliant called *Caught in the Crossfire: Kids, Politics, And America's Future* where he talks about the same things. He says there is a war against kids in America and he says because kids are being caught in the crisis of modernity. It used to be that we believed in progression towards the future and it seems that now with the liberalism there is much less investment in the future, much more investment in spending in the present. Of course he isn't the only one who has said this, about this particular moment.

So what happens to kids who always seem to be, by definition, the future, what happens when the whole economic and social order has to be organized when the future itself

becomes either off the page or discombulated somehow. So these are the circumstances which have produced things like Pokemon, but also are producing other behaviors associated with children. Again, sometimes children are blamed, very often in the US the way kids are reported on, we have less faith in kids today, we are more dubious about kids, so kids are at risk and we kind of define riskiness and they are the object and subject of these times that are repeated out fragmented and risk also becomes venture capitalism. We're investing, well what happens with kids in the social order, especially this one. So that's a break point, I want to say that we are in an age now that is increasingly prescient, there is a lot of hand-wringing about this, there's a lot hand-wringing all over the world, including Japan about the place that children occupy.

So, the second thing I wanted to point out is that Pokemon, and I had some slides, oh I do have slides, I forgot. One thing that we were talking about this morning is that Pokemon and other characters like Hello Kitty constitute kind of a boom now, some people call them J-Cool or J-Pop. (Slide of Pokemon jet shown.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Ana.b747.pokemon arp.750pix.jpg>) Here is the ANA airlines poketo project. It's a jet that is flavored by Pokemon and literally flies all over the world. It becomes the carrier and vehicle for carrying Cool Japan and Pokemon. (Slide of November 1999 New Yorker cover of children on Halloween with a Pikachu running off with a sack of money) So again, here you have a Pikachu, those are American kids trick or treating, Pikachu has a whole bunch of money, whole bunch of American money. It seems like a fun image but is it a fun image that also is revealing a certain kind of fear that Japan is coming in to the playground with American kids and taking away precious dollars. Again these things that we need to think about are kind of flow and lead into one and other ways that aren't often clear.

The creator of Pokemon is Tajiri Satoshi, who spent six years creating the first game, the Gameboy game in 1996. It was never predicted to be a global phenomenon, he made it for Japanese boys, and it was thought that it wouldn't do very well because it was a Gameboy game. Gameboy technology at the time it came out in 1996 was on the wane so they thought that maybe it would be around for a couple months and then it would go away. But in part because it is Gameboy technology which is very portable, which is kind of in sync with our times, it looked like it would be a fad. And so, they produced it in a lot of different venue. Coco came out with a the manga version in the summer, then the trading cards in the fall, there was a television anime show in the spring, there were movies, Tie-in merchandise like the ANA campaign, and so then it became a global fad.

Starting in around 1998, it came to the States in 1998. Tajiri himself had a couple of quite utopian aims about this game. One, was that he wanted to make a game more for young kids. He said that increasing that games were becoming something targeted at older kids. And so, indeed games targeted at older kids also perpetuated an atomistic, solitary enterprise. Kids were playing on their own. He wanted to open it and one of the tropes that you continually hear about if you read about Pokemon in Japanese public discourse is that it is an opening up kind of game, it opens up of your universe. And he wanted to open it up to kids, he thought that kids three and four would stick to the game and

successful in the game. He wanted them to feel that they were successful at a game so that. One of the things to overcome the atomistic impulse in the game industry.

His second objective was to come up with a game that would also overcome the atomistic impulse that kids were being projected to Japan, for some of the reasons we talked about, that I talked about earlier. We had kids increasingly in 1990s Japan, were subjected to too much pressure to perform in entrance exams, their lives were too over-regimented, they were spending too much time going to 塾 "juku", not nearly enough time to be creative and to think. They were under a lot of stress and they weren't spending enough time with their families and some of these things that we said are typical of Japanese culture something we were talking about this morning good social ties were collapsing. And he thought that this was really victimizing the kids. And, he also wanted to come up with a playful way, a creative way to allow kids to connect to other people and also connect with imaginary things beyond the here and now: school, work, pressure, capitalism. So, in a sense, he thought that this was gonna be a counteractive and an antidote to capitalism and post industrialism and I really don't have time to go into it, maybe we can go into Q&A how successful he was, how hopelessly naive he was and because of that Pokemon is incredibly capitalistic. They spread all over to ever and ever more venues of fans. They have spread from country to country and it is a capitalistic success, but ironically, but not ironically, that in fact, it wouldn't be that that, it would be kids playing it would be something that would allow them to again play with other kids. And one of the technique of the very first Gameboy game, I don't know how many of you have played the game Pokemon. Have any of you played the Gameboy game? Okay a few. In the first Gameboy game, there are 151 monsters that you "get" so the aim is that you get those again so you keep thinking about capitalism, capitalism and violence, violence from capitalism, the very impulse of the game. And, you are getting monsters that start off wild, you get them, they become domesticated, you pocket them, they become yours, they become yours in the sense that they are your thing, your property, your capital but they're also like your friend, your pal, your buddy. So you also have this universe where you're connected to things that are both your possessions but also your friends. So again is this violence or is this fun, is this community or is this isolation? I mean, again, it just raises interesting questions that are not easy to definitively answer. But in the first 151 monsters, 11 he designed so that you could only get them by exchanging with another child by literally linking up, hooking up two Gameboys by the communications cable, and communicating with another person in order to acquire. So in the book, actually I do a lot with gift exchange, a commodity culture. And I say, in a way, it is kind of a merging and blending of these two kind of economic logics so that it's both capitalistic and not capitalistic and it's about both friends and things, and that relationship and acquisition. In a way, it is both confusing and interesting. So that, again, we can talk more about in our Q&A period.

So, that's kind of Tajiri's impulse on doing something like Pokemon. Well, Pokemon is only one of many products now that are going into an industry that Japan has become quite invested in and quite known around the world and Douglas McGray has called it a term that some of us are not crazy about, he called it GNC: the Gross National Cool and how Japan is now marketing itself in terms of cool goods, cool properties, cool fantasies, cool desires that wind up capturing and piquing the imagination of kids around the world,

sort of interesting and disturbing. And this has led to sort of an investment on the part of people or only half the people in the Japanese government are convinced that this is the thing that they should pay attention to. But, Joseph Nye's whole notion of soft power, that soft power is a complement to or uses it as a substitute for hard power. It is something that, perhaps, could be put Japan on the map, at least a lot of people in the Japanese government are hoping that it will be true. So that a way of thinking that the capitalism, the global capitalism of Pokemon, I mean, I call it in my book "Pokemon capitalism" half playfully, is something that often has incredibly serious implications. I was in Japan when the first Pokemon movie came out in the United States in 1998 and it had record sales in the United States. It was regarded as front page news back in Japan. That this was a sign of soft power, they call it cultural power, it's a marker of Japan's now upcoming globally successful in a way that happens it carries that kind of imprint or impact for a while.

So this is big business on a global scale. What happens when Pokemon went into other markets? In my own work, I only look at the United States and Japan, those are the two sites. When Pokemon came into the United States, again I will just speak about this just briefly, it was incredibly successful launched in the heartbed of America, because they wanted it to be greeted as something that was Japanese, something that the Japanese would not consider foreign. So in order to do that there was a lot of timing here put into on how to market this. It was launched in Kansas, in Topeka, but was renamed The Pikachu. So if any of you, I usually don't go to this topic, I don't usually talk about violence, but if any of you don't know what Pokemon is, this is the lead boy, called Ash in English, Atochi in Japanese. Pikachu is his lead Pokemon. Pikachu is the only Pokemon that doesn't go into a ball, so you always see Pikachu like this, it never gets converted into what I call its exchange value. Never turns into a ball. All the other Pokemons do.

The gamers try to be the world's greatest Pokemon master. That is pretty colonialist. They go around the world to ever more virtual vistas trying to find Pokemon to conquer in conquest and to possess. So they are always on the move as you can see, they are always in movement and there is a feeling they never quite get there. So you never quite get to the end of Pokemon, you get the 151 but then onto another Gameboy game. So just like capitalism, you are always in pursuit of something that can never be sated. I mean desire is endless. I mean it's always exciting but it is addictive, you are addicted to the quest of having something in the end that you never quite have or you aren't just able to say that I'm at the end of it. Here, is a representation of part of a virtual parade that you go on. You go wandering in, searching for ever more wild Pokemon to add to your collection. This is an example, they are endless guides that can help you master Pokemon on your Gameboy. So, I'll just leave that, this is the last one, that's just an example of another Pokemon. And in the Gameboy guide they ask what exactly is a pocket monster? And, they say it's not a really race, it's not a really a natural species, it's a thing that helps you get along in life. So, it has qualities that helps human beings lives be even better. So this is the category for Pokemon.

So, when Pokemon came into the United States, it did very well, very quickly. We were captured by Pokemania as many of the news reports said. When the first movie came out it did so well, many Americans were caught by the Poke bug. Poke flew because it was launched on a Wednesday, so the kids played hooky to go see the movie. And, again, it did incredibly well. And, people have asked me so was there any resistance to Pokemon in the United States? Did American parents or American educators feel that it was something to we had to worry about? Interestingly enough, in the early 1989 when there was a lot of Japan bashing, the American economy was not as strong and the Japanese economy was incredibly strong when Sony took over Columbia. There was a lot of worry that it would be taking over the minds of American kids. By the time Pokemon came out, I found very little of that. Most people thought it was cute, that it was sweet, that it was benign I think in part because Pikachu looked so cute. And Pikachu was not part of the original Gameboy game. The original Gameboy game had 151 monsters. Pikachu was one of those, but when they expanded, they made it into a cartoon, Pikachu became the leadoff character in part to cuteify the entire property to appeal to girls, younger kids and mothers. The Japanese mothers are incredibly important in order to make something popular. So, a lot of Americans thought there was nothing violent about it. When you capture, when you are trying to get another Pokemon, you take one of your Pokemon and you put it in a ring in a battle with other Pokemon. So, there are battles and Pokemon get whipped by Ash but they never die. And when you have a sick Pokemon, you take him to a Pokemon clinic to get healed. And so again, parents thought that it was sweet and charming. I also found that most parents were actually clueless, unlike Japanese parents who knew very much what their child was playing with. Most American parents seemed absolutely clueless, they would say, "I just don't get it, I'm like what is it?" What are those things? I mean are they cute are they animals? But nonetheless, it didn't ring as anything potential dangerous. It didn't look like violent, it all came out right after Columbine when there was a lot of attention paid to American violent media. Columbine was, yeah, was that spring, I think it was the spring of 1999. What you did find was that there was a lot of competition around the cards. There were a lot of kids throwing and having trades with other kids. A lot of kids having been duped by someone else and having a bad trade. There were some violent incidents around that. There was one father who got mad that he didn't get the Burger King Happy Toy and knocked out the cashier who didn't give him the toy. The tale of the kid who stole Pokemon cards from other kids. I mean so there were violent episodes. And I tracked them pretty carefully, but I that found most of the commentary on that was that it was basically still a good thing because it was encouraging kids to learn about property. And, it was a good socialization being like a future stock broker. So, again, if you think about capitalism and violence it's kind of interesting. When you think about what are the combinations there so even when the desires have a good set of cards did erupt into violent acts. Nonetheless, it was often thought about in the context of America in the particular moment there is one thing that we are teaching kids valuable lessons about property and about trade. And also, this kind of concentration on the trading aspect of cards, I don't see nearly as much in Japan. That seems to be a characteristic of Pokemon culture in the United States and not Japan.

So to conclude, this is not really, I am not really giving you a bit of an argument I am just thinking about how we might think about something like Pokemon in terms of violence

and desire. I'm reminded of, these are books by Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, these are two books, one is *Empire*, the other one is *Multitude* where they are trying to talk about this specific moment. And, particularly *Multitudes*, they say that this moment in capitalism is really a moment when you find not only labor becoming displaced, and again they are hardly the only people who are saying that, but they say when you find more concentration on something they call effective labor, and what they mean by that is but they increasingly, what is getting marketed, what is getting produced and what is getting consumed is three things: cooperation, communication and effective ties. And however we think about this and again, we can talk about it later, seems to be also operating in something like Pokemon. You have these effective ties with these virtual things, entities, these pocket monsters that are also a form of communication. I mean if you play you have to be incredibly smart about learning all these massive details, and information about charts and evolutionary stages and power points and kids are so much more brilliant than the average adult who works real hard to penetrate the universe. So there is a lot of that information. So if you think about informational capitalism, this is kind of the template for the capitalism that I do think this movement is all about. But then to think about any ties that are both effective and you're in control, I mean, you're acquiring something that's yours but you have to communicate again and can break it down into information. What they also say in this book and I don't quite know how this falls into what we are talking about, but they also talk about war. And they say we are at a moment right now, where war has become not only exceptional it actually has become constant and constitutive of the very body politic we live in. And, thinking about, again, about what precisely they mean about war you can go back again to something like Pokemon where you are in constant quest to acquire more things that acquire a certain kind of war you are always putting your Pokemon into a battle in order to do battle to acquire something else. So again this seems to be very constituent of both a form of violence, a violation, a form of attribution, accumulation and a form of effective ties of things that are virtual. That if you look at Pokemon I think it can reveal quite a bit about the moment we live in.

John O'Donnell asked to not be recorded for his presentation.

Ian Condry- MIT
Dark Energy of Anime Fans

Thank you, John, thank you, Anne, too. What wonderful presentations. And, I am sure after this we will have things to talk about. I will keep my presentation short, I am Ian Condry, professor in foreign languages and literatures here at MIT. And I have studied, am studying, I'm a cultural anthropologist studying media and popular culture also as it relates to globalization. So, my first project was looking at hip hop music in Japan and that book will be coming out this fall. It's called *Hip Hop Japan: Rap and the Paths of Cultural Globalization*.

And, it was really actually being here at MIT and teaching that got me interested in anime. That I would ask my students, some of whom are here, thank you for coming, "Why are you taking a class on Japanese culture?" And, almost universally, the answers were,

"Anime, anime, anime. I went to Japan once, and anime." So, it became this kind of thing, that if I was going to understand where some of the students were coming from, their interest in Japan, that I need to know something about anime and that was one of the things that drew my interest.

And, then, of course, one of the students turned me onto Samurai Champloo which is the hip hop samurai anime that I became engrossed by. But, of course, when it first came out and the students were talking about it, it wasn't available in the US, it hadn't started airing in the US. So, I also needed the students' help to show me how to use BitTorrent and find out how to download these things. And, I had already become interested in copyright issues and peer-to-peer file sharing through my interest in the music industry. It's true I had learned a lot about it through Sean who has written about these topics as well.

So, what I want to talk a little about today is some of the fan side of the anime boom, some of the things John was referring to and then go into a little bit more detail in thinking of this world of anime fans who download anime. I have this title, *The Dark Energy of Anime Fans* and I will try to explain what that's all about.

First of all, one of the things I think it is important to keep in mind when thinking about downloading of music or the downloading of Japanese anime is that it seems to me it's caught up in the debate in a certain way that pits these two diametrically opposed views of what's going on. On the one hand, there's one way of talking about the downloading of media as piracy, piracy pure and simple. It's stealing, people want to get something for free and that it's a question how you stop people from stealing. And, there's this language, culture of piracy. And, in fact, I wrote a paper about the culture of piracy comparing the culture of piracy in Japan and the US in relation to music, that there's very different ways it plays out. Downloading music actually wasn't very big in Japan, in part because most people access the internet through their cell phones, also not so good for downloading music.

So on the one hand you have this question, "Is it piracy?" And the other hand there is this question of, "Is there another way to make a business model out of it?" And sort of this opposition between piracy and commodification that tends to define the debate. Some people say you should have to stop piracy, some people say no, you don't you just need to find a new way to commodify this business model to order to take advantage of this. People also contrast the opposition between the content industry, the people who sell the content, and people who sell the technology of communication. So that the people who sell the technology lighten the flow, because that draws people to broadband, draws people to buy hard drives, it draws people to buy better and faster computers versus the content providers who say no, we need more protection, we need ways to lock it down.

It seems to me that in these oppositions, something's been missing. We are missing something in this debate. The piracy, or commodification, the viewer content or communication, there's something missing. And what I want to propose is that what we are missing is maybe we can call something like dark energy.

And before we get into that I just want to give an example for those of you who were at the movie last night, you can see, you saw some Samurai Champloo, and I want to show another brief clip from Samurai Champloo to get us into the mood a little bit.

<clip from Samurai Champloo fansub shown>

Now one of the interesting things about this clip is that this was translated by fans and distributed by fans, and is not part of the DVD release which came out much later. But one of the things that is to me symbolic, I'd like to think about in terms of this clip, is the way that Mr. Big here, Nakamitsu, Mr. Big stands for kind of big media and as he's pulling out his sword and crashing down on who, what he thinks the enemy is, he is crashing down on the wrong person. And it seems to me that this might a metaphor for the way that big media is really attacking the wrong enemy and looking at the problem in the wrong way and that is what I want to suggest. While there maybe losses associated with this downloading and the question of whether it helps the market or hurts the market, it may be ultimately impossible to prove one way or the other. In some ways, that may not be the important issue.

Okay, and so rather than trying to figure out, you know, how we can stamp out piracy, that I think that there's another way to really look at the problem. Okay, because one of the things that's happening right now is that we are seeing an intellectual arms race. On the one hand, you have entertainment companies developing new digital rights management tools, some of them not ending very well, as when Sony makes this CD that puts this little bit of secret software on your hard drive and it ends up being able to track and even being a back door for viruses. You have education things going on in school. In my son's fourth grade class they got a little cartoon, a little manga in fact, about teaching the importance of copyright protection. Gerrett the Ferret visits a fourth grader who is copying his friend's CD and says, "You know that that's stealing?" and the fourth grader say, "Oh yes and my friend's father just lost his job and maybe it is because of this." And, then you get the little Gerrett the Ferret pin and then they make them answer why copyright is important to protect. And it's really something, you know, that that's going on one side.

And on the other side you have this technology that keeps ramping up, too. It started with Napster, goes to Kaaza and each level of battles back and forth, ramp up but it really never quite resolves. And one of the things that's happening that even with all these new technologies, is that right now peer-to-peer file sharing traffic is in fact the bulk of what's passing through the pipes of the internet right now. And that this is a graph showing sort of what is, the yellow is FTP, e-mail is the blue on the bottom. You can see the web was huge for a little while, but then in 1999 with the start of Napster you start to see how peer-to-peer file sharing is actually now making up the bulk of the traffic that's going through the internet and so the bulk of that traffic also has now recently become video. And so it just is, whatever is going to happen, the fact is video is being passed around the internet right now and it's not likely to go away any time soon.

The other thing that is happening is that the US companies are having many lawsuits, the record companies have almost 20,000 lawsuits none of which has gone to court. They are almost always settled out of court for about three or four thousand dollars. A few of them are slowly working their ways through the courts, it seems some people were accused wrongly. It will be interesting to see what happens with those cases. But despite massive lawsuits on the part of the American media companies and, well, especially the Recording Industry Association of America and a little bit the Motion Picture Association of America, that they share hostility that seems to be growing quite rapidly.

But what I want to propose is a different way of thinking about this problem and to use a metaphor from cosmology. It's just a metaphor. But for those of you that know, dark energy refers to this antigravitational force that is pushing the galaxies apart. We know that the universe is expanding, but what's been discovered somewhat recently is that the rate of expansion of the universe is increasing and so that there is some kind of a dark energy that is pushing apart the galaxies faster right now than it was several billion years ago.

And it seems to me that this is an interesting kind of metaphor for the energy that pushes apart the universe of anime culture. It's dark, it's, again, it's just a metaphor, but it's dark in part because it operates through this dark net of peer-to-peer file sharing, but more importantly, it seems to me, is that it's dark because it is not an energy that's captured. It's neither this notion that it's stealing nor this notion that it's something that can be bought and sold.

And, that's what I want to suggest is that a link of violence and desire is that this downloading is seen as a kind of violence against the business, a violence against the culture, it's stealing, it's robbing, it's bringing down the potential for the business to develop. And, yet what seems to me to be important that it also represents a deep kind of desire, and instead of desire it's that energy of circulating of the anime culture that seems to me is really the key point here and that's what I want to draw attention to.

Okay, and to give an example, just through the example of Samurai Champloo. The TV broadcast in Japan began in May 2004. And, within weeks you could download the episodes, by going, for example this is taken from one of the fansub websites, AnimeStation. Here they're doing a couple different shows. This is early on in the downloading of Samurai Champloo episode 1 and episode 2, were both available. You could download them using this peer-to-peer software BitTorrent.

Now one of the things that's important is that when you download the stuff, the quality is actually very good. It's not quite broadcast quality, but although it's only 150 megabyte file size, which can take a few hours, sometimes it can take up to a day to download, but the quality actually looks pretty good on television.

So the other thing is that, one of the questions is how can you see what this desire does? And, one of the things that happens is that you can see in the ways that they, the fansubbers translate this media, there's actually a lot of attention and a lot of importance

given to the quality and depth of the translations. So the way, this works is that, about ten people that work in teams to encode, first they get the raw digital file, translators, there's editors that go through the translations, timers that put timing in, and then encoders who then put it back into a single file which you can download later through the distribution, people who have distribution.

One of the interesting things you can see is that the way fansub groups go into greater detail when they do the translations. So I have a couple of examples here, one is that they provide background information. Mugen, Jin and Fuu at long last reach Edo. Here in the fansub they explain that Edo is the old word for Tokyo and even in the episode that we watched last night, Episode 18, they explained when they were in the restaurant when they are having the food, they explained what the different foods were, the **omajiki** and so on.

They're also examples of where they explain these hidden jokes. They're going on as well, one of the episodes in Samurai Champloo involves this eating contest. I do think it's interesting that eating contest now stand for Japan. The hot dog eater now two years running in New York. So, of course the big eater contest appears in this as well. And, there's jokes hidden there in this all you can eat tournament, but it's sponsored by Anago which is also the name of the eel which is also the name of the food that they have to eat. and so on. And, the name of the temple means Full Stomach Temple, something they explain as well.

This is actually from the episode we saw last night, and what's on the DVD version we saw last night where one of the character is learning hiragana, in the DVD version they just write out the hiragana in romanji, but in the fansub version they actually include the hiragana as well. And, it seems to me, that's also part of this, you see a lot of this in the anime fansub where they are explaining words, especially words that beginning Japanese students would be interested in seeing. One of the most elaborate parts of the fansub world is the karaoke versions of most opening and closing songs that have in romanji, in English, and in the kanji and the hiragana and also the romanji and the hiragana/kanji version, it's a follow the bouncing ball and often very elaborate. The graphics are used for that as well. Again, something you would rarely, if ever, find in the DVD. And then, even some of the fan sub releases include these notes explaining different aspects of it, and again, this is from last night's episode where it explains how Mugen is learning to read hiragana, we put the hiragana in. The graffiti artists use numbers in their art. When spoken in order to keep the numbers sound like a word, you know that scene where "yo", "roku", "shi", "ku" is 4 6 4 9 becomes yorokushiku and so on. And at the time the dojo is very important, the dojo is challenged and loses the match. Challengers remove the signboard to shame the losing dojo and that is one of their things that comes up in the story last night, is that in order to avoid having the sign taken down, he kills himself, the dojo master kills himself.

So, on one hand what you have this extra effort. I mean, that on the one hand that you feel part of this talk of this downloading is caught into don't they just want something for free, don't people, aren't people just stealing. And, there is that aspect to it and I can't

deny that sometimes people are downloading in order not to buy their goods. But on the other hand, you'll see something more, there's something added onto that. And that is what I am trying to get at, is dark energy. And then an energy to go to this extra effort in order to make these translations which they make for no pay. In fact, they often these are released, generally they are released with a little note that says, "Not for sale, rent or e-bay" and in fact when some time in the anime forums, somebody will mention that he bought some fansubbed stuff on e-bay. And the flames will just come, and say, "Oh, that's terrible, you can't do that, that's really immoral." And so, on the one hand, there's this interesting effort that goes on, and then on the other hand there is this ethical commitment in terms of desire to support anime culture.

So one of the things that happens is that one of the websites that keeps track of these fansubs releases is Anime-Suki.com but they will only list anime that fansubbers have translated that has not been licensed. So, if you go to look for Samurai Champloo now this is the note you get: this series has been licensed and removed from the site. And interestingly, I was following a few other series as well, and the reaction is within hours. There will be an announcement on one of the big anime news websites and within an hour or so AnimeSuki will have taken it down and put up this notice on the website. And so the fansubs, so they remove links once the show has been licensed, and there's also been one example, at least, of the lawyers, law firm in Tokyo sending a letter to these websites asking them to remove some material. The material is actually not posted on the websites, but remove the link that allows access you to the material. And, there was a quick response. There was some debate about whether they should do that among the fans who are on the discussion boards. But in general, the voting was, well, if they ask, it is important to remove the material as well. Now there are other ways that, sometimes the fansub groups will remove the link or there is sort of a gray area where AnimeSuki will remove the links as soon as the show is licensed. But, some fansub groups will keep the links alive until the DVD itself has released. And by, this logic is that sometimes companies will license the material but be a little bit slow in getting it out in order to encourage the companies to keep good faith promises for licensing and releasing. This is one of the strategies, at least one of the explanations of Shinsen Subs, one of these fansub groups was gradually, here this as the releases are coming out. "Shinsen Subs is removing its links up to the point where the DVD is available, so this is up to, I think, volume four has been released at the point I took this screenshot. Volume 5 is now in stores. Now we are going to keep access there. And moreover, they have there's another fansub group here who's explaining, why they decided to, they talked about fansubbing one particular show and why they decided not to. And one of the things they said is that because the company had moved up the release date for the official version of the show, "We decided that there's no need to fansub it. We encourage you to buy this DVD as well."

So one of the things, it seems to me, is that this kind of energy that is going on that is part of the desire to buy and to steal is not so different, I guess, and that is one of the things that I want to draw attention to. That there is a kind of dark energy that reinforces the links between the producers, the content, the technology that is the conduit and the fans. And, it seems to me, it is that energy that circulates, that is the key thing to promote if you want to expand the universe of anime. And that, it's driven by certain by things, there

is a status competition among subgroups to make the best translations. That they say there's noncommercial motivation, that fansubbers don't want to be paid they take donations for the bandwidth cost but otherwise they will not get paid for the fansubs themselves, the files themselves.

And, it is interesting that one of the strategies for the media companies is to say that we need to teach people about copyright law, they need to know about copyright law. But the fact is that these fansubs groups know it's against the law. It is not a matter of recognizing the copyright law is there or not but rather sort of what's ethical and that's a different argument, and it seems to me that's been one of the big shortcomings, shortcomings especially of the record companies is it's not be willing to go to that ethical argument. That they, it's against the law therefore it's wrong.

So well, you can say driving 60 in a 55 is against the law too, but that's different than driving 90 and so on, and so what these fansubbers want to say is well releasing unlicensed fansubs is not so bad, but if I am selling bootleg tapes, that is bad. And, I think it is that kind of distinction that is very important to these fansub groups and which also needs to be incorporated into the debate in order to have any kind of grounds to convince this group.

The other thing I'd like to just add is that this fansubbing predates, it predates internet technology. In fact, and this is one of the things that Sean has detailed very nicely in one of his articles is the way this grew out of VCR, passing out tapes, linked-up VCRs one after the other in order to dub these at anime cons was part of the early days but then migrated to the internet as well.

Okay, it seems to me that it suggests something to do about online piracy, too. That the key thing is not such to stop piracy or develop new business models but also to think how you build on fans' dark energy. And quite a bit is to maintain relationships between fans and the industry. And this I feel is very interesting because there has been lawsuits. It will be very interesting to see if this kind of ethical behavior can migrate into bigger business or whether people just learn to download things for free. It seems to me that is an open question and it will be interesting to discuss as well, to hear what people up here think.

But, at least it's interesting that the anime industry, so far, is taking a very different approach from American record companies. And, finally, I seems to me, that they're some lessons here for Japan studies as well and one of the things is that these fan cultures, you know and that is one of the things I am experiencing in my class as I am working on the current generation of students, is that these fan cultures help define what Japanese culture means in a global, digital era. And, it seems to me, that this is also important especially because I think a lot of us Japan studies folks have not had so much experience with anime, and certainly not to the extent that a lot of our students have and it is something to learn from and build upon. And, it also seems to me, that that the authority of the Japan expert is changing somewhat and that this just maybe analogous to the ways that having a blog is changing the status of newspapers and the ways that, the initial idea was this would revolutionize or replace newspapers, replace journalism and that hasn't

quite happened. But, there we are seeing a shift, a shift in the role of bloggers in relationship to newspapers and, it seems to me, we should also be sensitive to the way that are these grassroots Japan experts, and they really are, some really are Japan experts who don't have any institutional backing, the title of professor to stand up, but nevertheless who are part of the communication about what's contemporary Japan is all about. I think that is important to recognize.

And, finally, as scholars, these issues of what's stealing, what's copyright, what's the role of knowledge and information is only going to get more and more fraught in the coming years and I think what I've heard a lot from other faculty is that this is purely as stealing, kids wanting to get stuff for free and one of the things you can see in the effort that goes into the fansubs, the kind of ethical decisions they are making on whether they are purely ethical or whether they are still ultimately just rationalizations for stealing is something we can debate. But at the very least, they're making decisions and building up an ethical argument about where this can go. And, it seems to me, that to the extent that we listen, that there is an opening there for defining a new kind of approach to technology, to intellectual property, to sharing of knowledge and culture in the contemporary world. That is all I want to say. Thank you very much.

All right, I am going to invite the panelists back up here. Let's start right now, please introduce yourself.

Audience Member 1

So this is a question about your talk Professor, maybe it's for Mr. O'Donnell to answer which is so there's there are whole host of technological and legal things that are just breaking. Web 2.0 is here. On your site you may have not noticed, but there is an RSS xml button on the Shinsen site, that means you through syndication automatically trigger BitTorrent to download those files and it's kind of like Tivo, right? There is creative comments which is allows broader license for copyright issues. There's iTunes video where I can just put TV shows on my iPod, you could easily put anime onto your iPod. And, there's, you know, there is intense fan interest. One of my favorite pieces of fan produced anime is a remix of U2's "Sunday, Bloody Sunday" with the Kenshin OAV, which to me is really perfect. So I think that there's a giant opportunity for the content owners to relax and say that we are going to trust our fans...we're going to release this in a lax license, we're going to hope, have faith in humanity that we'll make profit based on this and that we realize that generating fan interest is going to work out in merchandising, people are going to buy DVD's and you don't have to be the record industry because like you said the quality of the consumers that makes up for it.

Professor Condry
Good reaction.

JOD

So the question was exactly what?

Audience Member 1

That Central Park Media's content and sometimes creative comments licensed any time in the future.

JOD

That involves a lot of layers or dimensions let me just quick come up here and see what we are doing.

Professor Condry

John is so professorial.

John O'Donnell, CPM

Let's define that question into at least four different dimensions of legality. We have a legal dimension, we've got an ethical/moral dimension to it, right? Which is the difference, what is the difference of going 60 in a 55 versus 90. We have a practical, pure pragmatic then we have a commercial dimension. Okay, so I am going to use this to answer your question. Our company, Central Park Media, has never nor will we ever sue a fansubber. Period, end of discussion. We look at those guys as the reason why we are here today. As I mentioned earlier, the fact that we saw all these bootlegs popping up in the 1980s. The one good thing about pirates and bootleggers is they will never invest for the future, ever. If they can't make money today, they won't be at the show, which means if you see them at the show, they're making money which means there's a demand for the product and it was that kind of logic that lead us to launch into this business.

Now we, from a legal point of view, are not necessarily nor is anybody in America whether it is Geneon, whether it's Viz, whether it's us owns the complete set of rights to allow you what you said. I might have the rights for some of my files for video, I might own the English copyright but not the Japanese, I might own it for a certain period of time, but not in perpetuity. Et cetera, et cetera. So, from a legal point of view, the entire package of rights that would be required for me as a rights owner to allow free distribution under legal, the commons context, can't be done most companies it can't be just because of the massive complexity of rights.

If you have an anime based on a manga and you have different levels of copyrights, the original manga, the character use, the merchandising, and then it turns into the anime, got another layer of rights space, et cetera.

Ethical, etc.. I think that what these fansubs are doing, most of them are fine, they're doing it for fun, it's a hobby, as soon as the original thing comes out, they pull it off. There's a pretty high level of morality around these guys. My dad used to tell me, assume five percent of the people in the world are going to try and screw ya, the other 95% are great. Build it into your overhead and get on with your life.

Practical, if we were to actually to try to do something it cost be a lot of money, it would be a massive amount of effort. When we do that, this is where, for example, we created an industry thing called JAIL, the Japanese Anime Industry Legal enforcement division back in the mid 90s. Our sole goal there was to go and get stores, wholesalers who were

importing and marketing in volume. We seized tens of thousands of VHS tapes from stores that were selling them as opposed to the fansubbers who were trading them at conferences, and you know, tradeshows and conventions, and things like that. Practical level, it's almost impossible to A) attack the problem and B) solve the problem by giving away the rights. This issue here is not practical.

Commercial level, At the end of the day, I will generally say that I think we're better off by having more people have access to this, and be able to see it and be able enjoy it, determine whether they like or not and then go out and buy it. You go to our website, we have ISP, I mean we have PSP downloads for the Sony Playstation portable. We have iPod downloads. We'll give away the first volume if I had the rights from my licensor I will be happy to give away the first episode of any TV series for free. Why? Because if you watch it and you like it, you're going to be interested in my DVD. If you didn't like it, you wouldn't have bought the DVD in the first place. I've got nothing to lose. Right?

Now my attitude is one of a small guy that sort of, I'd like to think, is sympathetic to the fan base, that is where we came from, but I bet Mr. Disney wouldn't be here talking the way I am talking. They can't. Right? Because of this, because of that. Does that answer your question?

Audience Member 1

Ah, yes, thank you very much.

Professor Condry

Guest lecturer. The only thing I'll add is actually I'm a big supporter of creative commons, as well. My first book, *Hip Hop Japan*, which will come out in the fall, it will be published under creative comments.

Audience Member 2

I would like to talk about Korean pop. So my question is what about Korean popular culture, is Korean, K-Pop is that displacing Japanese Pop as a sort of cooler culture. Both, it's really big in Asia, it's big in China, it's really big in Japan, it's starting to break into the US market. *The New York Times* has covered **Rain**, who is a pop singer, the film director **Park Chen Woo**, did a big story on him in the *Time Magazine*. So how does Japanese cool pop culture relate to Korean pop culture? Are they in competition, are they complementary, do they do different things? What's happening with that? You may not know anything about that.

John O'Donnell, CPM

To whom are you asking the question?

Professor Condry

Well, do you yourself, do you want to talk about how the **mangwa** is doing in comparison to manga?

John O'Donnell, CPM

We are going to do with Korea what we did with Japan, in about a ten year timeline. And when I say "we", I just mean the anime/manga industry. The, when we started in the late 90s, who was making the cool stuff, it was Japan. Okay, now ten years later, 15 years later, the Koreans have raised the level of animation to a pretty good level. They have raised the level of their books, the **mangwa** to a pretty good level.

The Korean government, right now, has targeted animation and manga as a strategic industry the same way they did steel building, steel making and ship building, semiconductors. It is now a clean industry, it's a strategic industry. They're spending hundreds of millions of dollars to fly people to Korea to tell them how to open up distribution systems in America. They are sponsoring and supporting massive amounts of kids going to graduate school and college to learn how to do it. They are then subsidizing the production companies with money for productions so that when the kids come out of school get jobs and then they are subsidizing the Korean companies to come to America to trade with tradeshows, meet with people like me. They are subsidizing companies like mine to go to Korea to attend the shows and buy their products.

So there is no question in my mind that Korea animation and Korean mangwa will increase its share of sales among the American fan base. There is no question, that has to happen. Japan, which has a monopoly, if you will in the 90s it won't be a monopoly by the end of the 2010.

Now, the next question you asked was what is the reception in America? There is no question we have two kinds of customers. Customer 1 says, "I need an anime and anime is from Japan and if it's not from Japan, it's not real and I don't want it. And, I read manga and if it's not manga, then it's not manga and I don't read anything but manga and it's a mangwa it's not manga." There's nothing you can do with those people.

Now the other kind of otaku, if you will, fan, that I think is the majority, and they're the guys who say, "Hey, give me an interesting story, give me characters I want to meet, I'm interested, you've got me." So it, are the Koreans making good product? Yes. Are they gonna get more distribution? Yes. Is there, will there be some resistance, et cetera? Yes. Well, I have to absolutely love to hear is the way Japanese talk about the Koreans. Right? They do nothing but diss them. And when I hear them, "The Koreans don't make good stuff, they don't know what they are doing, really low labor, cheap foreign labor." I say, "You know who I just heard? I just heard Lee Iacocca in 1975 tell me Japanese can never sell cars in America because they're too small, they're too slow, they don't have enough power, they are pieces of shit, et cetera, et cetera. Right? So that's what I think we are watching. We're going to see a complete change in the industry, in the sense that Koreans will come in. India is going to come in big, China is going to come in big, it will be a 10 year process and the next *Champoo*, right, will be the Samurai/Korean/Indian Chinese *Champoo* kind of thing.

Professor Condry

Yeah, and that's one of the things I would add. I was just back in Tokyo a couple weeks ago and talking with some of the creators and one of the themes that actually came up was how likely it was that Korea would take a larger and larger chunk of the audience.

John O'Donnell, CPM
And what did you hear?

Professor Condry

They said, these were the directors who spend a lot of their time working with Korean animators to do the in between sections from the keyframes to the animation and have seen very high-quality work come out of Korea and see that there's a younger generation of animators being raised in Korea that they don't see being raised in Japan. And, that although the big directors and the big sort of visionary imagery of the things that sort of stand out as some the breakthrough moments, whether it is Miyazaki or *Ghost in the Shell* or *Akira* that they, well all of that hasn't happened yet, it's not far away. And that they really anticipate Korea to be a huge competitor and, I think one of the interesting things and maybe this is just the difference between business and the government versus the creators is that for them they don't see this as such a bad thing. That they're already recognized, that they're productions are international relying on work from Taiwan, China, and Korea and Vietnam and so that they already see it, you know as kind of international production we're interested in the art of it. And as the art keeps developing and it comes from Korea, at least for the directors, it's not, that itself, is not a huge threat. In fact it could mean healthier kinds of productions.

John O'Donnell, CPM

Do we have any Koreans in the audience? Raise your hands. Any Koreans? You saw *Samurai Champloo*? He's running around in the kimono. using a kimono? And he's got yukatas. They look cool. Samurai look cool. Traditional Japanese stuff, right, has this fashion have been seen by Americans for so long, with the Kurosawa movies, et cetera that samurais that they look really cool? And I am sorry the Korean stuff just doesn't cut it. You know it's like I'm sorry but when I look at the long hair and hat...That will be a problem.

Professor Condry

I am going to cut you off right there.

Audience Member 3

I'm a professor at Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies, I am also a cultural anthropologist. And I just came back for AAS, Association of Asian Studies conference in San Francisco last weekend I think and there were lots of panels on Korea. And, actually not only contemporary dramas, but historical dramas. We also have other stuff contemporary, like romance. But Te Jan Vu, a female medical dietician who is trying to do surveys.

John O'Donnell, CPM

Very popular in Australia.

Audience Member 3

Yeah, it's very popular in Japan, too and maybe that might change those traditional conceptions of traditional cultures.

John O'Donnell, CPM

We actually saw the animated version. We sat down with their guys and we said, you know what, this isn't going to work right now. Maybe in five years, maybe in ten years, but if we bring this out right now, in the American otaku-based mentality, they are all going to look at those costumes, there's just, there's a lack of awareness, there's a lack of familiarity and that leads to sense of distancing.

Audience Member 3

Right, we are talking about the same thing. It's just beginning

John O'Donnell, CPM

Yes, exactly. It's a matter time, and the time is starting now and will probably take ten years, you know, for the historical drama stuff from Korea to work. But a lot of stuff from Korea can work right now today.

Professor Condry

We have another question here, yes?

Audience Member 4

Well, I want to add that I think there is a longer history to this than going back to Seven Samurai. After all, there was a huge boom in the Victorian period in Japanese dress and, you know, artists like James Whistler were drawing, painting women in kimonos. So that it's more than just, it's more than just a generational of familiarity with Japanese costumes, it's part of Western culture. *The Mikado*, which has absolutely nothing to do with Japan, has for a century and a quarter has been familiarizing people with stereotypes of Japan. There's nothing comparable for Korea. So there's going to be a steep visual learning curve.

John O'Donnell, CPM

But only for the historical stuff, the modern stuff works perfectly in the American market right now.

Audience Member 5

Information is much quicker that way.

John O'Donnell, CPM

Absolutely, no question about it, it will be much faster because of all the internet exchange systems, no question about it.

Professor Condry

Question in the back there?

Audience Member 5

Yes, my name is James, I just have a couple of questions to toss out. One is in response to the first presentation, you talked about the violence in Pokemon and I found myself thinking about stamp collecting or for that matter baseball cards. And I didn't quite understand what was particularly violent about Pokemon as opposed to the desire to collect all the baseball cards for a particular team or the fact that you could be defrauded with somebody else's stamp collection, for example. Are you suggesting, are you saying that there is something distinctive to Pokemon, it has some of these characteristics more than other activities?

Professor Allison

Well, probably. What I was trying to pay attention to is the conference which was desire and violence. That I was trying to think about that where you have desire to collect things might that seep over into something we call violence. Plus a lot of the experts who talk about the trends of Pokemon in the United States said that it was sort of in keeping with these older kinds of collecting of baseball cards and stamp collecting but that there was an added dimension to it. That they had never seen a play that was so fixating, not only on the collecting but on the market value placed on them. So Beanie Babies, but Beanie Babies taken to the extreme.

So, what do we call that kind of not only collecting, but trading and trading and thinking of the money and thinking how important the money is, whether we call that a form of violence is something I wanted to just wanted to raise as a question. Yeah, I am sure that at some level you are right, but it's just an extension of collection, but also we are going to ask the question of how they circulate on the level of the desire and violence and I think we should also think about what kind of world we live in.

And it's these things, I mean, Pokemon requires a lot money. If you hooked on Pokemon, you can't really play without spending money. So, kids who didn't have money were also kind of excluded from being able to play in any kind of way because if you wanted to play with the Gameboy game, you know, you have to have \$40 to be able to buy the game.

With the cards, some of the producers were pretty savvy by putting rarity into the cards, so that if you wanted a particular card you would have to keep going to the store and getting more and more cards and you know. So, I am trying to raise that as a question, you know, how that's stimulating, particularly the desire that also makes it a violence tinged to that.

Audience Member 5

One of the other things where I was intrigued by the passing remark of the relationship between what you call the mob, Yakuza, I guess and anime I think you said.

John O'Donnell, CPM

Yup

Audience Member 5

I wonder if anyone would care to elaborate a little on that? It's in the light of things of the weekend. And, finally, there was no mention, at least in the panel this afternoon, of Japanese migration to the United States as a factor in the evolution of this world of culture, the interest in this. I wonder if anyone has anything to say about that. My father was in business in Japan and ended up marrying a Japanese woman. They now live here and she gets stuff sent to her by her family in Japan and, you know, as an avid consumer of a lot of this, and has been for years, I'm in the middle of nowhere Pennsylvania, I can sort of have an idea that that's going to play a part in this.

John O'Donnell, CPM

I'll take the first one. The Mob, the Yakuza in animation. Whenever you have a boom market, a product that suddenly is making a whole lot of money, you find a lot of people who are looking to invest, right? You have a lot of producers who are looking to get access to capital. Sometimes those mixtures are not necessarily, let's say, all triple A credit level transactions. Right? So it is a very easy way to launder money by investing in anime, then the anime is sold, and the anime is licensed back to DVDs, right? After that whole process, you have cleaned up your money. There are cases of production studios that have taken money from the mob to produce and then they skip town. And, then, you know all kinds of bad things happen.

So, it's part of the underbelly, it's just like America, you've got lots of businesses here, in anybody cares to read books about the comic book industry here in America you will see the exact thing I am talking about. So, that's something that you're not going to find many government people talking about, any research reports written on as no one wants to go on record butting and trapped the demise of some certain studios. Why was the president of AIC kidnapped for several months? If you ever want to research those, you will have to find your own way through.

Second, yes the fact that there was a certain amount of Asian American population that had access to this is one reason why. It was the launching pad that would have created the base in the 70s and 80s. We've had employees whose first exposure to anime and manga came when they went to the local Korean or the local Japanese store back in the 70s and 80s for like health food kind of things because they wanted unique foods like edamame and stuff. And, they found manga and that's what turned them on. So I think that if you have a world that not many Americans know at all and the world we have, right? Then obviously the market took off faster to a faster extent in San Francisco, LA, New York, the Chinatowns, the Japantowns, a certain amount of infrastructure in place that led to the start of the otaku market in the 70s and 80s, and then that was the basis which made it faster for the 90s to take off. So does that answer your question?

Professor Condry

Let's go in the back, and then we will go to Sean.

Audience Member 6

Hi I am June, a senior at Harvard, and I am not a cultural anthropologist in any way, but I have a kind of joint comment for the two last talks. First of all, I am really surprised, although I am intrigued by your analysis of the physical and cultural side of Japanese business, but I think that you missed one big thing which is the Japanese markets and exclusivity of popular culture. As someone who doesn't know that much about anthropology, but has watched a lot of anime, for a lack of a better word, a lot of American anime has been bastardized, sort of adulterated by kind of a simplicity which isn't found in the original. And so, I was wondering if you had any thoughts about that and whether or not there's also a lot of fans really not liking the subbed version of things, because I remember yesterday when we watched *Samurai Champloo*, the minute that the dubbed version came on, everyone in the room was like, "Oh my god!" The unsubbed version, I'd much rather watch the Japanese voice acting than the subbed, in terms of fansubs, I think Professor Condry touches upon this a little bit, there's just no way to have pay from the otaku point of view, the kind of obsessive perfectionism that comes with making a really good fansub, especially with all the extra details added so, in a corporate realm, how would you ever replicate this? Is there any way to do that? And are you in any way concerned with how that may impact the market.

John O'Donnell, CPM

In which order would you like those answered? The bastardization of anime takes place when anime is broadcast on American TV. All right? Our anime is primarily not on American TV. The reason it is bastardized is very simple: it is against the law in America to show things like kids, animation show that show people smoking. So if there's smoking seen in Japan, it must come off the air. No American standards and practices department of any network will allow that on the air. They are very sensitive about blood. All right, they are very sensitive when you cut something. So the rules for broadcast television, over the air broadcast television in America are very tight and that's what creates that.

Number 2, on top of that, is those shows like Pokemon et cetera, think in terms of two markets: we have a publishing business model. You take a movie, you make a DVD, you sell it, you're done with it. That's the publishing model, and you have a brand management model. You take Pokemon, and put it on TV, and advertise it and sell trading cards, and video games and apparel and pajamas and et cetera. That's brand marketing. If you are working on that basis, which almost every television show broadcast in America is working on, you have to focus on the key boy toy market. The young kids who buy toys and buys the stuff. It ends up that standards and practices say you have to be at that age group. That's why that bastardization takes place. All right.

Now the next question on dubbing. Again, we have two kinds of fans: we have fans who says if it's not the original thing, I don't want this. It must be subdubbed, and nobody can do a good dub. Well if you think about it, all anime is dubbed. All of it. In Japan, it's dubbed. In America, it's dubbed. It's dubbed into different languages. Now, in terms of sales, if you want to limit your market, make it subbed. If you want to hit the mass market, you make it dubbed. What does that say about Americans? They can't read fast enough to watch TV.

Audience Member 6
Can I make a comment about that, actually?

John O'Donnell, CPM
Sure.



Audience Member 6
I read a paper about how a lot of the dubbing takes place, was voice acting for that is from like, you know, well in America, I think most cartoons are for children, so they tailor the voices for children. Whereas in Japan that's not the case.

John O'Donnell, CPM
Correct.

Audience Member 6
So voice acting is actually more for a more mature audience. So that is why a lot of fans when they watch the American version, they kind that feel the voice acting is more targeted to children, so it's not as appealing to them.

Professor Condry
Good one.

John O'Donnell, CPM
That's why any publisher like us, all right, our idea is real simple for you and me both. You watch my DVD? Flip it. You want the subs in Japanese? Hit the button. You want it dubbed, hit the button. Take your choice. That's how we response to that market. Many Americans refuse to read anything subtitled. Period. End of discussion.

Audience Member 7
This is also an observation about the quality of the dubbing.

John O'Donnell, CPM
The quality of the dubbing is, I hate to say this, is in the eyes of the beholder. We've had line-up reviews of our titles, the same title, I can show two or three reviews that say it's one of the finest dub ever heard and I can show the same thing two or three reviews that say it's one of the worst piece of dubbing they have ever heard. That's subjective. Once you get to that level, you hire the best people you can, the best director, you spend the time in the studio. Some companies do subs much better than other companies. The same company might have one that just nails it perfectly and has that one that doesn't do as well. It's the nature of the business. Is it fair to say that American dubbing is worse than Japanese? No. Is it fair to say there are some American dubs are worse than some Japanese original? Sure. I think there are some cases when the English language dub is not equal to but better than the Japanese because they also did a lot of sound filling in, they built better Foley work, special effects. They created a better sound environment and they made the music mix better. So make your choice, that's why we offer both.

Professor Condry
Sean, you have the last question.

Sean Leonard - past president MIT Anime Club

I have a comment based on your question because I know something about the distribution of anime early, especially relating to the Japanese presence in the United States. Maybe it was something John said, was very true. Additionally, though, there were a lot of community, they were broadcast, they were a few community broadcast stations particularly in like Hawaii, LA, and New York in the late 70s, early 80s that started to broadcast anime and cartoons and other Japanese programming, primarily to Japanese Americans who were transplanted from Japan. And, science fiction fans who were able to access these channels by virtue of being on air, started to develop a fanbase for completely separate reasons.

So, I think it's very true, the mom and pop sort of were, especially there, the infrastructure in places like NY and San Francisco was there, but the key actors in the movement were not Japanese Americans or Japanese or Asian people, but a secondary class of people who happened to walk into the Japanese sort of attitude, see this material on air and thought it was cool. And that might be very different from other media forums or ethnic media forums where you see, I guess, I've heard, for example, that Indian programming in America is aimed primarily at more largely at Indian Americans and is, a cause of type to share amongst Americans, perhaps less more to the exclusion of outside cultures. But that is, you know, a topic of research and different ethnic groups can try to exclude or not incorporate different, other ethnic groups.