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The Japanimated Folktale: Analysis Concerning the Use and Adaptation of Folktale Characteristics in *Anime*

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THE JAPANIMATED FOLKTALE: ANALYSIS CONCERNING THE USE AND ADAPTATION OF FOLKTALE CHARACTERISTICS IN *ANIME*

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For Tom, who introduced me to *anime.*

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Directed by: Timothy Evans, Ann Ferrell, and Lindsey Powell

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In this thesis, I examine the relationship between folk tales and Japanese animation, or *anime.* In spite of the popular association between animation and adolescence, animated television series and films have a dynamic and compelling relationship with various age groups and nationalities. Additionally, *anime* and animation draw liberally from a number of folk tale traditions. Consequently, in this essay, *anime* is understood as a global phenomenon that draws on international cultural elements and is consumed in several international markets.

Before entering an analysis of the use of folk tales in *anime*, a history of animation and the place of *anime* within a Japanese and global matrix is provided. This history not only looks at the development of *anime,* its connection to Western cinema and animation studios, but also its connection to other Japanese artistic genres, such as *manga.* Once this foundation is established, it is possible to connect *anime* with folk tale scholarship in chapter two. This chapter explores this connection in three ways, namely similar content, structure and function.

Chapter three builds on the analysis in the preceding chapter and examines the ways *anime,* as a visual, televised, episodic series, builds on and alters the folk tale tradition. This is primarily explored through the use of visual storytelling techniques and the proliferation of advanced technology. Additionally, this chapter addresses a major

point made against the use of folk tales in mass media, specifically the loss of variation. The final chapter concludes and summarizes the ideas, and analysis through out the thesis. It is in this final chapter that suggestions for further research can be found.

This thesis looks not only at the use of folk tales and folk tale characteristics in new media, such as *anime,* but how these new media contribute to and help to pass on folk tale traditions. Ultimately, this paper suggests *anime* is an example of a contemporary form of tale telling, which draws on traditional elements as well as catering to a contemporary audience.

Introduction

I cannot remember a time when I haven't been interested in cartoons. As with other children, I was an avid consumer of animation and I never missed an opportunity to experience a new show or movie. Even when I was growing up, I remember waking up early on Saturday mornings to watch the cartoon line up with my dad. This was part of our relationship and our weekly ritual, even into my college years.

When my family eventually upgraded to satellite television and got access to all the additional programing that came along with that, I discovered Cartoon Network. It was through Cartoon Network I was able to experience an animation aesthetic vastly different from animation I had previously experienced. Every weekday from 4 until 6, I was invested in the Toonami block of programming on Cartoon Network that specialized in airing *anime* or Japanese animation. The first series I remember experiencing during this time was *Sailor Moon*, an anime classic which Drazen describes as "the biggest breakthrough [in the sense of acceptance of *anime* by an American audience] up to that time" (1995) (Drazen, 2003: 11). As I began to appreciate the diversity of story lines in *anime* and the aesthetic of the animation style, I started to broaden my exposure to the genre. I became interested other series such as *Ruroni Kenshin, Dragon Ball Z, Astro Boy, Inyuyasha, Yu Yu Hakusho*, and the various others that Cartoon Network aired over the years. While I realize these examples of *anime* provided only a limited familiarity with Japanese animation, they were very essential in developing a basic understanding of the animation genre as well as stimulating my continuing interest. When I discovered the possibilities for viewing *anime* online and the increased exposure that could be attained

through alternative channels, I developed a greater knowledge base for terminology, fan culture, and cultural significance pertaining to *anime* and its development.

Because my interest in this genre originates from a long held appreciation of animation and is intertwined with several other aspects of my personal, academic, and professional life, it is not surprising that it bears a certain level of complexity. Not only does it have an impact on many aspects of who I think I am, and reflections on childhood memories, but also the assumptions and self-image that shape who I am now. Viewing cartoons was not only a significant part of the relationship between my dad and myself, but it also firmly placed me within a group of individuals who enjoy the same interests. Through out the years, my interest in the topic and growing familiarity with it allowed me to became a part of an *anime* fandom which could communicate with shared knowledge and terminology. Even now, my relationship with *anime* shapes a significant aspect of who I am, influences the professional relationships and contacts I make and determine the research I find compelling. Because of these reasons, and many others that cannot be explained, the interest, opinions, and connection I have with *anime* exemplify the core elements of me.

My interest in *anime* and cartoons is not the only reason, albeit a major one, for my decision to research the relationship between *anime* and folk tales. I also have a strong interest in folk tale scholarship and folk tales themselves. Additionally, I believe it is important to continue to look at the ways this tradition changes and is re-invented beyond its original parameters. This is an important task for a folklorist who enjoys looking at tradition and how cultures utilize their traditions or adopt, alter and adjust those traditions to suit their purposes. In this thesis, I aim to not only investigate the ways

in which *anime* utilizes elements of folk tale scholarship, structures, and tradition but also how *anime* takes those elements and reflects them back to an audience. I am interested in how *anime*, as a product of the modern world, with an emphasis on technology, visuality, naturism and globalization, blends together the modern and traditional. By exploring the ways that *anime* sutures these elements, I hope to discover aspects of how folklore becomes revitalized and re-visioned.

Terminology

The study of folklore is often fraught with discussions and negotiation of terminology not only about the discipline as a whole but also within genres. Discussions concerning the naming of the discipline are continually at the forefront of debate. While some scholars prefer to stick with the term folklore coined by William John Thoms to describe their discipline, others believe it is an outdated term. These others would replace folklore with nuanced terminology, such as folklife or similar others. The debate concerning appropriate terminology is also apparent in various genres. Narrative, and especially tales, is one such genre that generates provoking and stimulating discussions concerning naming and delimitation of categories. Labeling of the genre itself proves more than a simple assigning of a term. In some ways the German Märchen, which means magic tale, is the most appropriate. Sometimes the term fairy tale is used to describe these tales, but that term also presents problems. Fairy tale suggests the presence of fairies and many of these tales have nothing of the sort. On the other hand, the term folk tale suggests these tales have a certain rural origin and negates the widespread use and spread of tales. Because of this abundance of names and terms and a lack of definite consensus among scholars concerning what word should or should not be used, I find it

necessary to discuss the terminology that I intend to make use of and what specifically I intend that terminology to refer to.

Jan Harold Brunvand in *The Study of American Folklore* talks about the plethora of terms used in the study of this genre. Brunvand writes:

> "Fairy tales" is a poor term for such stories, because they almost never are concerned with the "little people," or fairies, of legendary narratives. "Nursery tales" is an equally inappropriate term, since mostly adults have circulated them. 'Wonder tales' is a reasonable term that has some currency among folklorists, but the German word *M*ärchen is the most widely adopted scholarly term (1998:230).

Because of the different terms being used within the discipline and also the popular terms being used by the general public, I have decided to adopt a set of terms that I will use through out this paper. When speaking about this genre in general, I will also feel comfortable in simply using the term tale. For tales that have no magical or fantastic elements I will simply use the term folk tale. I will only use the term fairy tale when it is specifically used in other sources or in reference to materials that fit the description, such as the Disney canon of princess movies.

This approach deviates somewhat from a typical folklore analysis. Many folklorists adhere to a separation in terminology for different types of narratives. This has roots in the article by William Bascom where he discusses the different qualities of three major types of folk narrative: folk tale, legend, and myth. Much of the material I draw on in this thesis, specifically the Japanese material can be considered legend, where negotiation of belief takes places, or even mythological. I do not distinguish between these different categories within this paper, but rather adhere to the model used by Carl Lindahl in *American Folktales from the Collections of The Library of Congress.* In this two volume series, Lindahl expands the definition of folktale. He writes:

> Although many people regard a "folktale" as a fictional form, I use the term here to apply to any traditional tale, whether its tellers consider it true, or false, or both. Thus, the scope of this book extends far beyond fiction to encompass belief tales, personal experience stories, and accounts of major historical events (Lindahl, 2004: xlvii).

While Lindahl acknowledges the practice of labeling narratives based on the element of belief, he also realizes the inherent story within each and the tendency of storytellers to use a little fiction and a little nonfiction in crafting their stories. Lindahl uses this terminology to put the focus on the storytellers themselves and help the reader to recognize the relationship between tale and teller. The narratives I use in this thesis do not take a storyteller centered approach. However, I will still follow the example set by Lindahl in using the term folk tale to cover a wide range of narratives. I do this not only to focus on the elements contained within the narratives, such as characters and structure, but also because many of the stories contained herein blend the real and not real. Like Lindahl, I see this mingling a natural part of tales and something that should not dictate their relevance to an analysis concerning the relationship between tales and mass media.

In addition to being clear about the terminology that I intend to use in regard to folk tales, it is also necessary to establish a clear vocabulary referring to *anime* studies. The culture of *anime* has a specialized vocabulary that consists of mainly Japanese terms. While these words are primarily Japanese in origin they have also gained currency among other audiences, such as Americans, who are regular consumers of this media. These terms have become synonymous with what they refer to in this form of animation. However, those who do not regularly watch *anime* will not be familiar with these terms and would have difficulty understanding some of the references made within this thesis.

Therefore, in this section, I aim to describe some of the basic terms used by *anime* fans and in the *anime* industry.

The most basic term used in the study of Japanese animation is *anime.* While *anime* is short for animation, the shortened form has become particularly associated with the animation material that comes from Japan or displays a Japanese aesthetic. This is true on an international basis and not simply within Japan. Audiences all over the world that consume animation from Japanese animation studios use the term *anime* to reference this type of media. Okuhara in *The Japanification of Children's Popular Culture: From Godzilla to Miyazaki* provides an example of the use of this term and type of animation on an international scope, specifically America:

> Having gone to graduate school in America, I am well aware that Japanese *anime* has become extremely popular in the last decade. Beginning with the tremendous hits of *Pokemon*, a story about children who control small monsters called Pocket Monsters, and *Sailor Moon,* a story about high school girls who fight evil to save the world, Japanese *anime* has taken over children's popular culture of America. On the Cartoon Network, I recently found more than ten Japanese *anime* programs, including such hits as *Pokemon*, *One Piece, Naruto, Yu-Gi-Oh!* and *The Prince of Tennis* (200).

With the spread of Japanese animation abroad and its distinctive animation style, a term to signify this distinction was needed to refer to this specific genre of animation. This term was found in the term *anime*.

An important aspect of researching *anime* to keep in mind is that significant portion of its audience is not Japanese. When Japanese animation is consumed by an international audience, it is normally done in two ways: either through subtitles or full translation. The series that are aired on Western television have been translated into English and utilize English voice actors. Additionally, a majority of *anime* can be found online that have not been translated into English but which have English subtitles. This

makes up a significant part of the fandom and viewing culture surrounding *anime.* These two types of translation have been given shortened terms that are used when referring to them. Shows that have English voice actors are commonly distinguished as dubbed and those with subtitles are called subbed. Often these terms have distinct sentiments attached to them and are used to refer to differing levels of knowledge of the genre. Those fans who are most dedicated to the genre and want to explore it more thoroughly generally watch subbed versions. Often this is due to the greater availability of subbed versions in contrast to dubbed. Subbed *anime* can be found in abundance online and in a greater variety of types than can be found on television. Additionally, there is a general acceptance among fans that subbed *anime* has a greater level of accuracy to the originals than dubbed versions. Through out this thesis, I will be using these terms as I have described them here to describe various *anime*.

In addition to these terms, there are also several terms used for categories of *anime* with specific plot elements or aimed at particular demographics. Here I will give a brief description of a partial list of terms used to describe the genres of *anime*. The first of these terms I intend to discuss is *bishojo*, which refers to *anime* that have young, beautiful females as the primary protagonists. This category generally have a very specific aesthetic and drawing style that make it recognizable. Often this variety of *anime* is associated with the type designated *shojo*, which refers generally to the viewing audience. *Shojo* has "certain stylistic elements […] such as beautiful or pretty male characters, abstracted layouts and dialogue, an emphasis on the feelings of characters, and exotic settings, usually European", which make it particularly appealing to adolescent girls (Poitras, 2005: 87). These two genres are also related to the category

titled *harem*, which refers to a cast of characters primarily consisting of young females grouped around one male lead protagonist. Generally this arrangement is a platonic relationship and in many cases the female characters act as protectors of the male lead.

Another important term to be aware of is *manga*. *Manga* is the name for Japanese comics, which often act as the source material for anime. Patrick Drazen in *Anime Explosion!: The What? Why? & Wow! of Japanese Animation* states:

> Many Japanese anime begin life as comic books …This has several advantages, including the good will and familiarity of an audience that already knows and cares about the characters. It also enables the viewer who is familiar with the *manga* story to fill in blanks; the animator can glide over some story details, confident that the intended audience will make sense of it" (Drazen, 2003:13).

The influence of *manga* on *anime* is extensive and the number of *anime* that have been based on *manga* constitutes a large portion of the genre. *Manga* itself has a long and dynamic history which has a significant influence on the development of *anime.* Additionally, *manga* artists and animation studios share ideas, storylines, aesthetics and inspiration between the mediums. Throughout this thesis *manga* will make several appearances and be utilized in the analysis of the relationship between *anime* and folktales. A brief history of the development of *manga* and how *manga* artists assisted in the development of *anime* will be touched on in chapter one.

Finally, there is a term that is widely associated with *anime* fandom and studies which must be explained. While this term doesn't make a significant appearance within this thesis, it is still intimately associated with this animation style and, in some ways, very influential on fans and non fans alike. The term I am referring to is *Otaku.* As Hiroki Azuma notes in *Otaku: Japan's Database Animal*, this term, "simply put, […] is a general term referring to those who indulge in forms of subculture strongly linked to

anime, video games, computer, science fiction, special-effects films, anime figurines, and so on" (Azuma, 2009: 3). While this term has the original meaning of referring to participants in this subculture, it also gained a severely negative connotation following the 1988-89 capture, rape, and murder of several young girls by Miyazaki Tsutomu, who was an avid consumer of *anime* and *manga* (Azuma, 2009: 4). This event was terribly detrimental to the public image of not only *anime* and *manga* but also those who engaged in watching it, creating fan fiction based on their favorite shows, or participating in cosplay. It ostracized those people and created a fear among the general public of those who were associated with *anime.* Since the 1990s *otaku* has been gaining better press and is slowly over coming the negative connotations of this event (Azuma, 2009: 5). It is beginning to become less negative and more accepted among the general public. This undoubtedly has allowed the genre to grow and develop. While fan culture and the public perception of *anime* fandom is not a significant part of the material contained in this work, it is still important to mention these ideas and opinions. It has had an impact not only on the consumers of *anime* but also the developers, writers, animators, and animation studios, not to mention the marketability of *anime* to international audiences. While I will not explore these impressions in any sort of detail, I want it to be understood that even though I create a fairly positive perception surrounding this media, *anime* and associated materials do not always enjoy that same sentiment.

While these are but a few of the terms used to describe *anime* and *anime* studies, it gives an idea of the way in which genres, fandom, and scholarship are described. Through out this thesis I will use these terms as I have described above when they are applicable. It should also be noted that when possible, I will use the Anglicized version of

anime titles. This is simply to assist in readability for my audience, which will be largely unfamiliar with Japanese pronunciation. If, in the course of writing and research, I happen to use terms that I have not described here they will be contained in the footnotes or glossary.

Material

The material that will be used in this endeavor will primarily include subbed *anime* in episodic format. By utilizing subbed, episodic *anime*, I hope to widen the material from which I can draw. While there are several series that have been translated into English and appear on American television, it is still by far a minority of the available titles that have been created. Additionally, I must admit that this choice also stems from a personal preference. I have seen many dubbed series that have aired over the years, but by far the most significant portion of series I have watched have been subbed. Furthermore, by focusing on episodic shows, I hope to avoid animated movies, which often garner more notice by scholars, such as *Akira* and the works of Hayao Miyazaki. In addition, I will primarily utilize shows that have not been taken up by mainstream American culture, such as *Pokemon* and *Dragon Ball Z*. This will allow me to avoid shows that have been censored by American regulations and therefore deviate from the original story created by the animators. However, on occasion, I may use these shows to illustrate a point or when they are used in the material I reference.

Methodology

With advancements in technology, international relations, and the development of new forms of entertainment, many traditional cultural forms have been altered by these modern modes of expression, such as television, radio and the Internet. While modern

advancements can alter the nature of traditional cultural material, it can also assist in the adaptation of that material to suit the differing tastes of new generations. This material is recycled or taken apart and reassembled into new arrangements that can have the affect of making it seem new or more appealing to modern generations. By observing this perspective and its relationship to cinema, it is obvious that the introduction of cinema and television created a means for the presentation of various traditional cultural material in a manner that allowed it to maintain prevalence and take on new dimensions. For example, traditional stories, plot elements, character types or morals are plucked from their original contexts and make appearances in new television shows or movies which, on the surface, may appear to have very little to do with the tales they were inspired by. This phenomenon is true for many different genres of entertainment media. Of particular importance to this thesis is the relevance it has to *anime.* It is the argument here that *anime* not only acts as a conduit for traditional tales but does so in a way that interacts with the oral tradition. Through research concerning the relationship between folktales and various *anime,* I argue this genre creates shows that act as animated tales which have the same characteristics and functions as traditional folk tales as well as demonstrating a new storytelling aesthetic.

Barre Toelken, in *The Dynamics of Folklore,* describes the "two forces, or qualities-the one dynamic, the other conservative" of folklore, which has become a significant quality of modern folklore study (Toelken 1996: 39). Toelken explains that "conservatism refers to all those processes, forces and attitudes that result in the *retaining* of certain information, beliefs, styles, customs, and the like, and the attempted passing of those materials, essentially intact, through time and space in all the channels of

vernacular expression" (Toelken, 1996: 39). Dynamism, on the other hand, "comprises all those elements that function to alter features, contents, meanings, styles, performance, and usage as a particular traditional event takes place repeatedly through space and time" (Toelken, 1996: 40). By applying the twin laws of folklore that allow for both the change and retention of traditional elements, I aim to explore the relationship between traditional tales, and modern Japanese animation. The traditional context within which folk tales were told has changed through the years, but the dynamic nature of folklore allows for the presentation of conservative material, such as folk tales, in new mediums, such as animation.

The creators of various *anime* series borrow heavily not only from Japanese folkloric material but also the folkloric material from other geographic regions such as Europe and China. The use of folk and fairy tales in the widely popular medium of *anime* provides an example of the dynamic nature of folklore material and the modern fulfillment of folkloric needs. By utilizing academic scholarship within Folk Studies, Anthropology and other disciplines along side nonacademic magazines, websites, and books, I seek to compare *anime* to traditional tales as a means to determine their connection. This will serve to prove that *anime*, like tales, "are reflections of the social order in a given historical epoch, and, as such, they symbolize the aspirations, needs, dreams and wishes of common people in a tribe, community, or society, whether affirming the dominant social values and norms or revealing the necessity to change them" (Zipes, 1979:7). *Anime* consists of and is representative of folklore. The dynamic nature of folklore allows for the change and adaptation of folklore materials, which ensures the continued and lively use of traditional knowledge and materials. Japan, as a

highly visual culture that widely utilizes pictorial representation of cultural knowledge (Drazen, 2003), has found anime an easily consumable and contemporary medium for their folkloric material. The success of this development has not only created a method for modern exposure to traditional folklore content but it has also been successful in the dissemination of Japanese cultural knowledge, ideas, and perspective to other audiences. By demonstrating the similarities between the functions and nature of *anime* and folk tales, it becomes apparent that *anime* functions as a modern reinvention of the folk tale tradition.

It is inevitable that I will draw on the various shows and movies that I have watched, both consciously and unconsciously, to develop conclusions about the nature of the relationship between *anime* and folk tales. However, I intend to primarily draw examples and information from the series that have been placed in the genre of fantasy. Each of these shows I am including I have either watched in its entirety or am continuing to watch currently. In some cases these shows can run for several episodes and span multiple plots, such as *Fairy Tail*, which is currently on its 102nd episode. Others simply consist of twelve episode seasons that last only two seasons, such as *The Black Butler*. For the purposes of this thesis, I intend to review episodes contained within these *anime* and allow my familiarity with their content to guide my investigation rather than re-watch them in their entirety. Other than my own knowledge of these shows, I intend to utilize scholarly articles, and books concerning the subject in addition to websites, blogs and listservs to gain a fuller picture of the material contained within this genre.

In regard to tales and folk tales, I aim to use tales that are recognized as being a part of a collection. This would include the Grimms' collection of *Kinder und*

Hausmärchen, Perrault's *Les Contes de ma Mére l'Oie*, and Hans Christian Anderson's *Fairy Tales Told for Children*. I will avoid obscure tales or collections and opt for those that are recognized by a majority of individuals. These will include those tales that have been traditionally thought of as originating from an oral source, such as the Grimms and those that have been entirely created within a literary tradition, such as many of those in Anderson's work. I will also look at Japanese folktales that have been collected and published. This will be limited to those that are widely available and have been published in English. These two traditions, while drawing from different cultural perspectives, still bear similar motifs and structures and can be widely seen in anime productions. Primarily I will draw on Western scholarly sources and folk tales for this comparison. This decision is based on the assumption that *anime* is an international phenomenon. This assumption will be discussed in greater detail in subsequent sections.

Anime as a form of cinematographic production needs to be analyzed in conjunction with film studies. Therefore, I will draw on a number of works and scholarship within the realm of film and literature studies. This will be particularly necessary when looking at the development of *anime* and its relationship to a larger world of cinema and film. In order to explore this path I aim to primarily look at works that utilize a folkloric perspective, such as *Film, Folklore, and Urban Legends* by Mikel J. Koven and *The Anime Machine: A Media Theory of Animation* by Thomas Lamarre. While Koven doesn't necessarily deal with *anime* or tale scholarship, it is still useful to examine the ways in which folklore becomes a part of television and movies. In addition, I will also take into consideration *Fairy Tale Films: Visions of Ambiguity* edited by Pauline Greenhill and Sidney Eve Matrix. This collection of essays doesn't deal

specifically with *anime*; however, it does explore the ways in which fairy tales and folk tales have been used in film. This will provide an example of the ways tale traditions have entered into film and media. Other than this I will only draw on film studies when it specifically relates to the development of *anime*. As to literature studies, these works become useful when thinking of tales as being re-situated within an *anime* context. Much scholarship dealing with folklore and literature deals with the ways in which folklore becomes a part of a literary tradition. This is explored with a very broad definition of literature that can include novels, but also comics, theatre productions, and visual arts. This scholarship will be useful in examining the ways in which traditional folk materials, such as folk tales, can find a place in new media, such as *anime*.

Limitations

Firstly, while I am familiar with and have been introduced to Japanese culture and history, I am not an expert in this area. I also do not have an understanding of even an elementary level of the Japanese language. While these skills are beneficial and would add a dimension to any study of Japanese culture, I feel that they will not be a great burden to the work that I endeavor to pursue here. The focus of my thesis is the relationship between tales and *anime*. As a student of folklore and an avid *anime* consumer, I have grounding in the two major foci of my study. This has an inevitable influence on the perspective that I bring to the study. I do not aim to argue that Japanese culture, folklore and tales do not play a significant part in *anime* (it is obvious that these areas are inseparable from this medium), but that *anime*, as a growing consumable product in westernized countries, has similarities to and builds on the tale tradition.

This is largely based on aspects of *anime* that provides an argument for it being an international phenomenon. While *anime* is Japanese in origin and primarily created by Japanese animators, it is influenced by a number of things from an international perspective, such as film, literature, and pop culture. Often *anime* is set in European countries (one of the *anime* that I plan to use in this thesis is set in Great Britain), utilizes different international elements, such as Greek mythology, or Chinese literature (such as *Journey to the West*), and often *anime* deals with international politics and interrelations (such as *Code Geass: Lelouch of the Rebellion* that presents a world where European powers have returned to imperialism and sectioned the rest of the world off into zones). *Additionally, anime*'s internationalism can be seen in other areas besides content. It has become an international consumable product that finds a fertile market not only in Asian countries but also Europe and North America. More recently this popularity can be seen in the hit *Pokémon.* Patrick Drazen argues *Pokémon* was not only a success in itself but also because it was instrumental in opening the way for other Japanese animation. Drazen states, " the success of *Pokémon* in the West, scoring the kinds of numbers that the monied interests of television dream about, opened the door for other similar Japanese series" (2003: 14). The international character *of anime* can also be seen in the sources of inspiration that it draws from. Susan Napier comments on the hybridity that surrounds the production of Japanese entertainment. Napier states:

> For most Japanese consumers of anime, their culture is no longer a purely Japanese one (and indeed, it probably hasn't been for over a century and a half). At least in terms of entertainment, they are as equally interested in and influenced by Western cultural influences as they are by specifically Japanese ones. A similar process is happening in the West as many youths open up to a more international entertainment culture (Napier, 2001: 22).

In addition, *anime* imported for Western audiences, including *Sailor Moon, Yu-Gi-Yo!, Dragon Ball Z, Cardcaptors, Digimon, YuYu Hakusho, Ruroni Kenshin,* and *Bleach*, as well as others which can be found online, play a central role in the development of non-Japanese animation. In a recent interview, Michael Dante DiMartino and Bryan Konbietzko claim the productions of Hayao Miyazaki (one of the most widely recognizable Japanese animation directors) were crucial as inspiration for their widely popular show *Avatar: The Last Airbender* (London, Hamessley, 2010). Aesthetically, Japanese animation studios do not simply create a look that remains purely Japanese. Rather, they borrow from international sources and, in turn, serve as sources themselves for international animation studios. Though a significant portion of the discussion so far concerning the international scope of *anime* has focused on the relationship between Japan and the United States, there is also evidence that suggests it has a relationship with additional international markets. For example, Natsume Fusanosuke in "Japanese *Manga* Encounter the World" explores the rise in *manga* and *anime* in Germany in the late 90s as a result of importation from the United States (2002).

In short, a remarkable feature of the production and creativity within *anime* exists as a consequence of international culture sharing, economics, and globalism. The construction of animation narratives in Japan is not done in a vacuum. Ideas, artistic styles, and techniques are applied in a multiplicity of strategies, originating in a diverse global environment, and are selectively engaged according to the preferences of the animators. Diverse ideas, motifs, themes, tales, plots, scenes, and elements from a heterogeneous global interchange are blended into an assembled product. These qualities have led to an ever-increasing international audience for the consumption of *anime*

together with an increased use of Japanese animation as inspiration for other animation studios. Throughout this thesis, I will be working from this position of *anime* as an international artistic creation that blends themes from several geographic and political entities. While I acknowledge the Japanese origin and material used in *anime* and draw on it to some degree in this work, to a greater extent, I will explore the relationship between *anime* and folk tales in an international vein. I believe this does justice to the medium because of its international influence, inspiration and consumption.

Chapters

Beyond this introductory chapter, I have divided this thesis into four additional sections. Chapter 1 will focus on providing a history of *anime* and, by extension, animation and *manga*. By providing a brief history of the genre, I hope to establish a foundation for the development of *anime.* I want to explore how this animation style was created, who were some of the prime figures and innovators within the field and how animators were influenced by one another. It is also within this chapter that I will connect the development of other mediums, such as *manga,* to the growth of Japanese animation, which will theorize on possibilities concerning the unique artistic style portrayed in *anime*.

Chapter 2 will introduce folk tale scholarship as I compare it to assorted *anime.* This chapter will be subdivided into three separate sections titled structuralism, functionalism, and content. The section titled structuralism, addresses the similarities present in structuralist folktale scholarship and compares those conclusions to *anime.* The fuctionalism segment follows the same pattern as was used in the structuralism part but with a focus on the function of folk tales in society. Finally, content identifies key

reproductions of folkloric material, such as tale types, and folk tale characters, as they are represented in *anime.* Mikel J. Koven in *Film, Folklore, and Urban Legends* labels this activity motif spotting and describes its practice in negative tones. While I agree with Koven that motif spotting is indeed limited in academic rigor, I also believe this type of pursuit is necessary to a certain degree in any academic endeavor. Acknowledging that any work should not be completely devoted to the act of motif spotting, it is a useful enterprise in familiarizing an audience with commonalities, reproductions, and, specifically for this thesis, an infrastructure for further analysis. I feel that in writing this thesis, had I not provided the section pertaining to parallelisms between Japanese folklore and *anime,* I would have denied readers an essential feature required for understanding the relationship between folk tales and *anime.* Consequently, I have given this section its due and have endeavored to maintain an appropriate scope for its contents.

Chapter 3 will focus on the ways that anime builds on or alters these folk tale characteristics. Specifically, I will examine the way in which the visual nature of animation facilitates its storytelling aesthetic and creates a set of visual cues for its audience. I will explore visual clues and visual representation of not only tale motifs but also situational understandings and emotional dialogue. I want to explore visuality as a means for creating new forms of symbolic understanding by audiences. This also relates to a second partition in this chapter relating to the use of modern and futuristic technology along side traditional elements found in folktales. I will explore the uses of modern inventions and motifs in the shows and how they interact with the traditional motifs that can be found in the anime. I want to explore how traditional tale themes are utilizing these elements in what is a traditional mode of expression. I hope that this will

allow me to explore the ways that traditional genres, such as folk tales are revitalized and repurposed in a world where storytelling is not a predominate mode of expression and technology is a very dominant and pervasive element in daily life. Additionally, this chapter will address critiques of mass mediated folklore as it relates to variation. While some folklorists regard putting folklore into media forms a type of canonization that eliminates the varied nature of the folklore, I believe, as do other scholars, that variation can exist in these forms as well. All in all, this chapter will be an initial look into the transformation of traditional storytelling techniques, plots, and elements in *anime* and how *anime* develops new factors to add to its storytelling repertoire.

Finally, chapter four will be a conclusion that draws together themes and arguments made in the preceding sections. It will comment largely on the ways that anime interacts with, utilizes, and alters folk tales themes and motifs. Additionally, I will touch on areas that could be investigated in greater detail relating to the use and presence of folklore in mediums such as *anime.* Developing analyses in these areas will allow for greater understanding of how we stay connected to tradition.

Folk tales are more than just bedtime stories told to children. They are complex creations that constitute a significant part of our shared cultural and folkloric knowledge. While these tales do not occupy the same dimensions as they once did, they continue to have an important role and function in society. Folklorists understand the dynamic and conservative nature of folklore and this allows them to recognize the adaptation of traditions through time and space, such as folk tales into modern animation. While this adaptation is not exclusive and there are many *anime* that have no strong or evident connection to traditional folk tales, these *anime* still play a role in the storytelling matrix

of our current global society. Therefore, the lack of a perceivable use of traditional tale elements in these *anime* does not influence the storytelling technique, process, or function they have in relation to folk tales. In addition, the influences of other folk tale collections and traditions have also made a ready and persistent appearance in these shows. By investigating the influence of tales on Japanese animation, I aim to support the claim that *anime* acts as a conduit for traditional folklore knowledge and as a method of creating stories that possess the same characteristics and functions as those traditional tales.

Chapter 1:Disney, *Manga* and the Introduction of *Anime*

Animation, as a genre, is often associated with innocence, children and childhood. Often, as Americans, we think of the works by Walt Disney and shows that air on Nickelodeon or Cartoon Network when we imagine animation. Most individuals have a preconceived notion of the aesthetic of these cartoons and the audience they normally attract. This popular preconception consists of simple and humorous interactions between fairly simple characters. Rarely do people think of animation beyond these terms and when they do it is usually related to satirical programs, such as *Family Guy, The Simpson* or *American Dad.* It is fairly uncommon to think of animation as a serious genre that depicts intricate storylines and complicated character development that deals with consequential themes, such as political intrigue, societal concerns, or environmental issues.

Beginning in the 1960s and reaching a high point between the 1990s and 2000s, an animation style originating in Japan began to challenge the long held views and assumptions held by Westerners concerning not only the audience of cartoons but also subject matter, plot, and animation style. This animation genre was aimed at several age groups and consisted of more developed plots, scenery, and characters. For the most part, Westerners were familiar with cartoons that very rarely exhibited storylines beyond each episode. Each episode dealt with a set of actions which were normally forgotten when the next episode aired. Actions seldom had consequences which often-resulted in events that should have killed characters or caused bodily harm. However, come next episode, they were back to their previous behavior. Additionally, animation familiar in the West generally exhibited an animation style far different from that created in Japan. With the

introduction of *anime* to other audiences, such as the West, animation and its fandom were greatly altered.

This chapter aims to provide an introduction to Japanese animation (hereafter interchangeable with *anime*) and a partial history of related genres. Framing *anime* within its historical context and its relation to other media is essential in establishing a connection to Western folk tale scholarship as well as creating a foundation for the study of animation for readers. This additionally necessitates a context of *anime* in the global market from both a modern and historical perspective. As will be discussed later, *anime*, within this paper, will be treated as a global phenomenon not only through sales to foreign countries but also in the subjects and issues that are explored by Japanese animators. This chapter will not only give an introduction to the development of *anime* in Japan but also its growing influence and popularity in the West, particularly America. These two foci will be framed by a brief contextualization of *anime* in terms of its relationship to other animation and *manga*.

The historical account contained here will begin with the growth in popularity of American animators and animation studios. While the scholarly work investigating the importance and societal role of *anime* often looks at the relationship between Disney and Japanese animators to the point of tedium, it is nearly unavoidable to take into consideration this relationship due to the close reciprocation of cultural material between these two societies. This close connection allowed for greater exportation success and allowed *anime* to be exchanged on a global level. The connection and exportation of entertainment media between Japan and the West was augmented in the 1970s and 80s due to United States television politics that left broadcast networks fractured and weak.

This resulted in many affiliations between U.S. and international companies (Selznick, 2008:14-15). Furthermore, the United States was able to increase its influence through media and entertainment globally due to its dominance in the movie industry. As Gorham Kindem points out, "as a general tendency, U.S. firms have dominated their own domestic market as well as global markets since at least World War I" (2000:328). The command exercised by the United States' entertainment industry in the global market has an inevitable impact on the spread of American aesthetic and Western notions of narrative, mass media, and cultural knowledge.

The rise of these industries and markets on a global level has a significant impact on the development *of anime* in this thesis. David Desser writes, "following the *Meiji* Restoration of 1868, Japan embarked on a virtual campaign of modernization that became inextricably linked to Westernization" (2000:7). This campaign advocated the adoption and importation of "Western sciences… Western literatures, and even Western models of education and child rearing" (Desser, 2000:7). After this significant period of isolation, Japan sought to rapidly and drastically attain a level of modernization that was very much tied to a Western model of modernity. During this dynamic period of change, many elements of Western culture were imported to Japan such as cinema, which was introduced in 1897 (Desser, 2000:8). This importation was very much tied to the ideal development of Japanese culture and society as it was linked to a Western model. Desser comments, "though the Japanese would pioneer many important consumer and electronic technologies in later years, they had little to do with the 'invention' of the cinema. Thus cinema was an import, associated with the 'Western' world Japan wished to enter" (2000:8). The advent of cinema in Japan lead to strong Japanese film production culture.

Though motion pictures and the equipment used to create and view them was a Western import, the Japanese did not passively consume the material created in the West. The Japanese developed a film industry that was inspired by the West but developed material suited to their own cultural background and artistic preferences.

During the 1950s and 60s, Japanese cinematic creativity reached a climax. Some argue the decline of the Japanese film industry can be attributed the growth of television. Donald Richie is one such historian, who notes:

> Television, something which damaged the Japanese film industry much more than had either the 1923 earthquake or the 1945 fire-bombings, officially commenced in Japan in 1953, but it ravages were not apparent until a decade later. Indeed, in 1958, when over one billion tickets were sold, the Japanese film industry reached its financial peak. The record for the most productions was set in 1960, with 537 Japanese movies being released in some 900 theaters. This may be compared with the figures for 2000: 282 films released in approximately 300 theaters (2005: 177).

Following the climax of the Japanese film industry in the 1950s and 60s, filmmaking and movie theaters started disappearing from the Japanese cinema scene (Desser, 2000:18). In contrast to the less well-known commercial cinema production, Japanese animation has become increasingly popular and widespread. Richie provides discussion on this topic as well. He writes,

> One ought perhaps to attempt to account for the enormous popularity of both *manga* and *anime* since they have come to dominate all visual markets and even (in box-office figures) to represent Japanese filmmaking as a whole. It is maintained that *manga* accounts for a third of all books sold in Japan, and that *anime* accounts for half of all Japanese movie tickets sold (Richie, 2005:257).

The preference for animated productions instead of their live-action counterparts Richie connects to the drive to Westernize following the Meiji era. “Bent on achieving the goals of modernization and Westernization, the Japanese, in rejecting their own history and traditions, have sought to become *nihonjin-banare* (de-Japanized) – generally a

complimentary term, implying that one looks and acts more like a Westerner than a Japanese" (Richie, 2005:257). It is in *anime* and *manga* that Japanese and Western characteristics can be combined "into a natural-looking human being" (Richie, 2005:257). Richie goes on to note that *anime* and *manga* "are the only two media capable of portraying reality the way Japanese feel it should be" (2005:257). Therefore, *anime* has been successful in not only creating a significant market for itself in Japan but it has done so due to its utilization of important cultural values.

The globalized nature of *anime* can be witnessed in places other than its connection to Western cinema production. Susan Napier comments on *anime* as a global commercial phenomenon by writing,

> [*Anime*] is… a genuinely global phenomenon, both as a commercial and a cultural force. Commercially, it is able to play a significant role in the transnational entertainment economy, not only as an important part of the Japanese export market, but also as a small but growing part of the non-Japanese commercial world, in terms of the increasing number of non-Japanese enterprises that deal with anime (2001:8).

Additionally, she explores *anime* as a form of cultural globalism in the following:

> It brings insight into the wider issue of the relationship between global and local cultures at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In a world where American domination of mass culture is often take for granted and local culture is frequently seen as either at odds with or about to be subsumed into hegemonic globalism, anime stands out as a site of implicit cultural resistance. It is a unique artistic product, a local form of popular culture that shows clear indications of its Japanese roots but at the same time exerts an increasingly wide influence beyond its native shores (2001:8-9).

International exchange between the United States television and movie industries, as well as the growth of Japanese cinema, largely based on Western models, provides a basis for the study of *anime* as a global industry as well as providing an introduction to the development of Japanese cinema as a forerunner to Japanese animation. Where Japan

was originally a recipient of Western cinematic productions, it has in recent decades been part of a global media interchanges. The *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Culture and Society* comments of this connection in the following:

> The recent spread of Japanese *anime* and video games throughout the world has relied upon mergers, partnerships , and other forms of cooperation with multinational media corporations based in developed countries, principally the United States. That is, without US distribution networks, *Pokemon* (distributed by Warner Brothers) and the *anime* films of Miyazaki Hayao (distributed by Disney) would not have been released worldwide. What is more, the *Pokemon anime* series and movies seen by audiences around the world – with the exception of those previously seen in some parts of Asia – have been "Americanized" by Nintendo of America and Warner by removing some of their "Japanese odor" to make them more acceptable to American and global audiences, as so deemed by American media producers. This illustrates neither the demise of American cultural power nor American domination of Japanese culture. Rather, it is evidence of an emerging trend: the restructuring of patterns of global cultural power from unilateral national rule to the dispersed and diffused transnational alliances of media industries, centered on the United States and other advanced countries (Bestor, et al, 2011: 265)

What is evident is that *anime* is a medium impacted by global cultural influences as well as being spread by a global consumerist market. This market is ran by an intricate set of relationships that weave together numerous nations.

The early twentieth century saw the beginnings of rudimentary animation. In comparison to other animation styles, "much of anime is, however, unabashedly low tech. Its novelty does not derive from its use of cutting-edge technologies of imaging per se (such as computer-generated imagery and digital animation). Rather it is the dynamism of interactions that arise between viewers and animations that makes for the novelty of anime" (Lamarre, 2009:xiii). In many ways this is similar to early Western cartoons prior to the popularity of computer generated cartoons. Before the advent of computer generated animation, cartoons were created through stop-frame cinematography. This process involved a sequence of images that differed slightly from the image preceding it,

which gave "the illusion of movement when frames are projected in rapid succession" (Dirks, 2001). The earliest animated film, *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces* by J. Stuart Blackton, was created in 1906. This was followed by Emile Cohl's *Fantasmagorie,* a collection of "simple line drawings (of a clown-like stick figure) that blended, transformed or fluidly morphed from one image into another" (Dirks, 2011). Emile Cohl was influenced by animators Stuart Blackton and Albert E. Smith, who "stumbled upon the technique of stop-action animation, in which three-dimensional objects or drawings are shot frame-by-frame, slightly adjusting the position of the object between frames – thus creating the illusion of motion" (Mittell, 2003:3). Blackton and Smith used this technique in several shorts, which eventually led to the development of a live action film titled *The Haunted Hotel,* in which haunted "effects were created via stop-action," (Mittell, 2003:3). This film would greatly influence Emile Cohl, who Mittell writes is considered "to be the first "true" animator" (2003:3). These attempts and those of other early animators developed the foundation for animators that followed, such as the first color cartoon by John Randolph Bray titled, *The Debut of Thomas Cat* in 1920 and the oldest surviving feature-length animated film, *The Adventures of Prince Achmed* by German film-maker Lotte Reiniger in 1926 (Dirks, 2011).

However, the innovation and pioneering developments of these artists are often shadowed by the prolific and pivotal career of Walt Disney on the genre of animation. Through works such as *Steam Boat Willie* and a series of additional cartoons, Disney "was fast becoming the most influential pioneer in the field of character-based cel animation" (Dirks, 2011). One of Disney's earliest and most serious competitors were the Fleischer Brothers, who were responsible for the first animated film featuring a sound

track (Dirks, 2011). Max, Joe and Dave Fleischer would make a significant impact in animation with cartoons such as *Betty Boop* and *Popeye* (Mittell, 2003:4). They would also form "Red Seal Distribution … to circulate their catalogue of *Koko the Clown* shorts, documentaries, comedies and live-action shorts" which helped to spread their brand of animation (Mittell, 2003:4). They would also be influential in the distribution of *Song Car-Tunes*, which "provided animated texts for audience sing-alongs" (Mittell, 2003:4).

The 1930s also saw the introduction of the well-known animation studio, Warner Brothers. Their major animation contribution was the popular *Looney Tunes* series. "Animators at Warner Bros. Studios began to challenge the style, form and creative content of Disney's pastoral animations in the early 1930s and after. Their cartoons were characterized as being more hip, adult-oriented, and urban than the comparable Disney cartoons of the same period" (Dirks, 2011). Additionally, the critics' preference of Warner Bros. cartoons over Disney was based on associability with cinematic time periods. Kevin S. Sandler in *Reading the Rabbit: Explorations in Warner Bros. Animation* comments:

> Warner Bros. cartoons were seen as similar to the European art films that, coincidentally, gained favor at the same time. Disney's work, on the other hand, was too much like the classical Hollywood cinema, which could be defended only when, through "rereading," it could be compared to the European films playing at the local art house. This complaint about Disney could be seen as early as 1945, when John Mason Brown, a staunch Disney defender, admitted that the studio's products were not what they had once been; he found *The Three Caballeros* (1945) "disquietingly bad," "violently inartistic," and, significantly, "cheaply Hollywood." (1998:42).

However it was Disney that released the first full-length animated film, *Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs* in 1937 (Dirks, 2011). This would prove to be a highly successful venture for Disney, earning eight million and launching Disney's golden age in the 1940s

and 50s. This period saw classics such as *Pinocchio*, *Dumbo*, *Bambi*, *The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad*, *Cinderella*, *Alice in Wonderland, Peter Pan*, *Lady and the Tramp,* and *Sleeping Beauty* (Dirks, 2011). The 1960s through the early 1980s saw the release of major Disney productions such as *The Sword in the Stone*, *The Jungle Book* and *Robin Hood* (Dirks, 2011). This period of popular productions was followed by a series of average productions such as *The Fox and the Hound*, *The Black Cauldron* and *The Great Mouse Detective* (Dirks, 2011). It was also during during the 50s and 60s when there was a turn from animated feature films to televised shows. Jason Mittell begins his chapter in *Prime Time Animation: Television Animation and American Culture* with the following:

> Animation underwent a drastic transformation in the 1950s and 1960s. From the rise of film animation in cinema's early years to its establishment as part of the cinematic bill in the studio era, the first half of the twentieth century saw animation on a steady rise in cultural, aesthetic, and economic viability. But at the midpoint of the century, the animation mainstream was dealt a nearly-fatal blow – the Paramount Decision that broke up vertical integration within the film industry sent animation units into a steady decline over the 1950s. As longer theatrical bills gave way to single-bookings, animated short cartoons found themselves without an exhibition home on the large screen. As the film industry retrenched, cartoons were relocated onto the medium that was often scapegoated for cinema's decline – television (2003:15).

Cartoons during this era lost some of their significance and the move to television certainly lost them a portion of importance reserved for major motion pictures. Mittell goes on to note,

> It is clear from these remarks that by the mid-1950s, the Hollywood cartoon seemed long past its 'Golden Era' – arguably, the period between Disney's *Steamboat Willie* (1928) and Hanna-Barbara's Tom and Jerry classic, *Mouse in Manhattan* (1945) (2003:16).

While there is evidence that cartoons lost part of their standing during this time, they would eventually move beyond the limitations of this period and gain new artistic styles, plots and audiences.

The late 1980s and 1990s once again saw a return to the grandeur of Disney's animation success of the 1930s and 1940s with classics such as *The Little Mermaid, Beauty and the Beast, Aladdin* and *The Lion King* (Dirks, 2011). Dirks notes that *The Lion King* is believed by some to be inspired by *Kimba the White Lion*, originally a comic published between 1950 and 1954 that was later turned into the first color *anime* in 1965 (2011). This created a certain amount of controversy. In *Disney Theatrical Animated Features,* the author comments on this controversy:

> *The Lion King* was the first Disney animated feature to be an original story, rather than being based on an already-existing story. The filmmakers have said that the story of *The Lion King* was inspired by the Joseph and Moses stories from the Bible and William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. However, certain elements of the film bear a resemblance to a famous 1960s Japanese anime television show, *Kimba the White Lion*. One similarity is the protagonists' names: Kimba and Simba, although the word "Simba" means "lion" in Swahili. It is also noteworthy that in *The Lion King,* two of the three villainous hyenas who are confidants of Scar have Japanese Names: Shenzi and Bansai. Many characters in *Kimba* have an analogue in *The Lion King* and various individual scenes are nearly identical in composition and camera angle (Muljadi, 2010:242).

The turn of the century saw continued dominance of Disney animation with the release of *The Road to El Dorado, Atlantis: The Lost Empire, Monsters, Inc., The Incredibles, Cars,* and *Finding Nemo* (Dirks, 2011). This period would also see the creation and growing dominance of computer generated animated movies through the partnership of Disney and Pixar as well as 20th Century Fox, which created the widely popular *Ice Age* series and DreamWorks' *Shrek* movies (Dirks, 2011). The development of 3-D animation was of paramount importance and Pixar was one of the most influential pioneers of this

technique. Scott Kirsner in *Inventing the Movies: Hollywood's Epic Battle Between Innovation and the Status Quo, from Thomas Edison to Steve Jobs* comments on the popularity and success of Pixar. He notes:

> At Pixar, Catmull and company weren't trying to make animation a faster or cheaper process, like Disney was; rather, they wanted to introduce a fresh look. "We believed that we could create these made-up worlds that had the look of the real world," he said. "The goal was to do something totally new." (2008: 74).

One of the last 2-D animated movies released by Disney, *Home on the Range*, raised questions concerning the continued popularity of traditional, cel-animated films and the likelihood of their being "non-existent and outdated relics of the last century" (Dirks, 2011). This was true not only for Disney but other studios.

> By the time 2000 arrived, the 2-D movies both studios were releasing were playing to empty theatres. DreamWorks' last 2-D animated movie, *Sinbad: Legend of the Seven Seas,* cost $60 million to make, $30 million to market, and earned just $73 million in its worldwide theatrical release. Disney's last, *Home on the Range,* cost $110 million to produce and sold $103 million worth of tickets worldwide (Kirsner, 2008:74).

This idea would be challenged with Disney's release of *The Princess and the Frog* (2009), which would earn $188 million worldwide and received three Oscar nominations (Dirks, 2011).

The growing importance and prominence of the animation genre would pressure the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to create a separate Oscar category for animated cartoons in 2001 (Dirks, 2011). This was a significant milestone in the development of animation. In order to be considered a candidate in the Best Animated Feature Film category a film must "be at least 70 minutes in length, have a significant amount of major animated characters, and be at least 75% animated" (Dirks, 2011). The first film to win this Oscar was DreamWorks *Shrek* (Dirks, 2011). Prior to this year, the

only animated film to be considered for an Oscar was Disney's *Beauty and the Beast,* which was considered in 1991 (Levy, 2003: 55). Emanuel Levy, in regard to the nominees for the first Feature-length animation Oscar category, writes,

> For decades, the term "animated film" referred to traditional cel animation, but with new innovations in the medium the definition new is much broader. The nine features offered a wide range of styles; only two are completely cel-animated; *Marco Polo* and *Trumpet of the Swan*. *Jimmy Neutron; Monsters, Inc.;* and *Shrek* are computer animated. *Final Fantasy* is a hotorealistoc computer-animated toon, and *Osmosis Jones* blends live-action sequences with cel animation (2003:55).

Japanese animator Hayao Miyazaki would make a major stride forward for recognition of Japanese animation when his creation, *Spirited Away,* won the 2003 Oscar. The growing importance and acceptability of animation in the U.S. and the West in general would create new innovations in cinematic production and provide exciting modes for storytelling. With this brief introduction to animation in the United States and the major animation studios in the field, we can now examine the history of animation in Japan and the way it was and is influenced by these animators and animation studios.

Patrick Drazen in *Anime Explosion: The What? Why? & Wow! Of Japanese Animation* begins with the following: "as they did with automobiles, the Japanese have taken an American creation and reworked it into something far beyond what its creators considered to be the state of the art. Toontown, like Detroit, has to play some serious catch-up if it wants to stay in the game" (2003:3). Japanese animation was birthed by Japanese animators looking to the West for inspiration and infusing it with unique characteristics that made it something Japanese. However, before Japanese animation history is discussed in terms of television shows and feature films, it is important to discuss an essential aspect of the animation genre, specifically comics or *manga.* Jason Mittell notes that the West provides a source of inspiration for Japanese *manga* artists. He

writes, “post-war manga artists, ironically were influenced themselves by American comic strips featuring Superman and Batman” (Mittell, 2003:27). While some American cartoons are based on literary sources, toys and even stand up comics, “most modern American animated series, however, are based on original ideas”, which is in contrast to Disney’s tactic (Drazen, 2003:13). On the other hand, Drazen notes “many Japanese *anime* begin life as comic books”, which provides a number of advantages, such as familiarity of the audience with the story and the tendency of the animator skipping over certain details due to the familiarity of the audience (2003:13). Due to this close kinship between the print version of animated shows and their cinematic brethren, it is prudent to give a short description of the development of *manga*.

Hokusai, a Japanese artist who lived between 1760 and 1849, is responsible for coining the term *manga*, which resulted from the description of his work containing the words “*man*” (in spite of oneself), “*lax*” (whimsical) and “*ga*” (picture)(Sharer, 2001). Natsu Onoda Power gives a fuller exploration of the meaning of this term *in God of Comics: Osamu Tezuka and the Creation of Post-World War II Manga.* He writes:

> According to *Kanjigen, man,* the first of the two characters that make up the word “manga” denotes (1) to proliferate or to cover a large surface; (2) long and continuing; (3) rambling, loose, idle, or lax; (4) wonderingly or unconsciously. The second character, *ga,* is a pictograph that depicts the borders of a rice field, signifying borders, divisions, to create a border, or to divide an area into smaller areas. From these definitions, the character *ga* subsequently came to denoted picture, painting, drawing, and film, as well as the act of drawing and painting (2009:10).

Powers also connects the development of the term to China and Chinese *manga* artists. He notes, “the word ‘manga,’ which combines the two characters *man* and *ga,* was invented in Japan, and was later appropriated in the Chinese language during the early twentieth century”(2009:10). This is particularly connected to the work of Lu Hsun,

whose "use of the term 'manga' in 1918 reveals the term's association with journalism and rebellion" (Powers, 2009:10) In addition, Powers argues,

> The Japanese term for 'cartoonists,' *manga ka,* was coined by cartoonist Okamoto Ippei (1886-1948) during the Taishõ period (1912-1925). Today, its usage in the Japanese language is identical to the term 'cartoonist' : Tezuka Osamu, Walt Disney, and William Hogarth can all equally be called *manga ka* in the Japanese language. The term can be written in any of the three forms of writing, though the *kanji* (ka) within one word, which is also a common variation (2009:11).

Some of the earliest "*manga*" date to the 6th and 7th centuries and were picture scrolls created by Buddhist monks (Sharer, 2001). These used stylized images, such as cherry blossoms to represent certain elements of a story, in this case the passage of time (Sharer, 2001). During the 17th century, woodblock prints would rise in popularity, primarily the *ukuyo-e* or portraits of the "floating world[1]"(Sharer, 2001). Sharon Kinsella explores the San Francisco Cartoon Art Museum exhibit titled *Visions of the Floating World: The Cartoon Art of Japan.* The exhibit, which displayed 120 framed samples of well-known *manga,* "suggested that contemporary manga was part of the canon of eighteenth and nineteenth century woodblock prints, otherwise known as *ukiyoe* or 'pictures of the floating world' (Kinsella, 2000:93). *This* would evolve in to the *kibyoushi* or "yellow-covers" of the 18th century that depicted adult orientated stories with illustrations surrounded by text (Sharer, 2001). On the other hand, Jeet Heer and Kent Worcester in *A Comics Studies Reader* notes:

> The visual regime of the *kibyõshi* seems to derive primarily form the representation of the popular stage in woodblock prints, whereas the visual regime of the modern manga series primarily from Western genres like the comicbook and the cinema. Any apparent similarity or overlap between the two is, more often than not, coincidental, and epiphenomenal effect of the comicbook medium itself that one might just as easily observe in comicbooks appearing in isolation

[1]The red-light district (Sharer, 2001).

> anywhere around the world, not evidence that the *kibyõshi* poured continuously into the modern manga (2008: 237).

Power in *God of Comics* describes some of the history of the development of *manga.* Powers discusses the work of Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) who is known for his "Edo-period serial ink-drawing monographs" (2009:10). Powers goes on to note:

> Hokusai's works started out as loose sketches of humans, animals, and plants, and later transforms into satiric arts that parodied and criticized the feudal government. Because of this historical association, the *kanji* terms manga emphasizes the satirical function and is preferred by manga scholars with art history background (2009:10).

The opening of Japan to the outside world, particularly Europe, would greatly influence the genre. Through contact with European cartoonists, Japanese artists were introduced to new ways of "shading, perspective and anatomy. They also introduced word balloons and separate sequences" (Sharer, 2001). The end of the 19th century saw comics gaining much success in Japan, as European comic strips made their way into Japanese newspapers (Sharer, 2001).

However, the flourishing of Japanese comics would reach a period of heavy censorship in the 1920s and 30s when the Japanese government pressured newspapers and magazines to edit the material they published (Sharer, 2001). After the beginning of the war with the U.S., "the Japanese government demanded cooperation from the manga artists, who were forced to draw pro-war manga" (MacWilliams, 2008: 34). During World War II, these governmental policies resulted in the seemingly absolute control of cartoonists by the government, which created the existence of only three types of strips: ones about Japan's enemies, those concerning family home life, and propaganda cartoons (Sharer, 2001). Mark Wheeler MacWilliams in *Japanese Visual Culture: Explorations in the World of Manga and Anime* notes, "as the war and the U.S. embargo progressed,

materials such as paper became scarce, and newspapers no longer allocated space for manga" (2008:34). Following the war, the cartoon industry, as many other industries in Japan, was in shambles with the large dominating studios of the pre war period severely weakened (Sharer, 2001) Additionally, "the Allied Powers, nevertheless, gave Japanese political artists more freedom than ever before" (MacWilliams, 2008: 35). This opened the way for new animators to develop and grow, resulting in the publication of cheap, illustrated books called "red books" (Sharer, 2001). Following the red purge in June 1950, "it was the children's and youth manga [that] were produced by artists such as Osamu Tezuka, Eiichi Fukui, and Shigeru Sugiura" (MacWilliams, 2008:35).

Osamu Tezuka, an early creator of these "red books", would eventually earn the title *manga no kamisama* ("God of Comics") through his career as not only a cartoonist but also his pioneering work in the medium of *manga* (Drazen, 2003:5). While *Manga* resembles Western comics in many ways, they both partner graphics with text in order to tell a story, it is, however, a term specifically used to describe comics that exhibit a particularly Japanese style. Kinko Ito in "A history of Manga in the context of Japanese Culture and Society" describes *manga* in the following:

> *Manga* has humor, satire, exaggeration, and wit. The comic art includes caricature, cartoon editorial cartoon, syndicated panel, daily humor strip, story-*manga*, and animation. Like any other form of visual art, literature or entertainment, *manga* does not exist in a vacuum. It is immersed in a particular social environment that includes history, language, culture, politics, economy, family, religion, sex and gender, education, deviance and crime, and demography. *Manga* thus reflects the reality of Japanese society, along with the myths, beliefs, rituals, tradition, fantasies, and Japanese way of life, *manga* also depicts other social phenomena, such as social order and hierarchy, sexism, racism, ageism, classism, and so on (2005: 456).

Manga is, therefore, a comic, but it is also a comic that expresses a specific Japanese aesthetic and subject matter. In terms of the contributions of Osamu Tezuka, Drazen

notes, “his forty years as a cartoonist saw massive changes in the form and content of Japanese comic books, changes that usually traced back to innovations by Dr. Tezuka himself” (2003:5). Tezuka was heavily influenced not only by Disney but also the cinematic work coming out of France (Drazen, 2003:5). The French New Wave cinema influenced Japanese *manga* artists with “their use of panning shots, extreme close-ups, time-lapse, flashbacks, and other cinematic devices” which resulted in “Japanese comics literally explod[ing] off of the paper they were printed on” (Drazen, 2003:5). However, the work that Tezuka is most known for and one of his greatest impacts came with the creation of *Tetsuwan Atomu* (The Mighty Atom) known in the U.S. as *Astro Boy*. Drazen writes, “while Mickey Mouse, Tom and Jerry, and Bugs Bunny were created for the movies and then found life on American television, a robot that looked like a young boy moved from the comic-book pages directly to the small screen, and promptly became one of the most memorable characters of all time, on both sides of the Pacific”(2003:5).

Astro Boy demonstrates both the fascination of Americans with Japanese animation as well as the tendency of Japanese animators to borrow from American sources. Fred Ladd and Harvey Deneroff argue, the “successful English language version of such TV series as *Astro Boy* played a key role in jumpstarting today’s Japanese animation industry, which has proved to be the only effective counter to Hollywood’s traditional hegemony” (2008: 2). Drazen comments on this reality by writing, “unlike Disney features, which didn’t try to be topical except for a few pop culture references, Tetsuwan Atomu consciously and deliberately mirrored the American civil rights struggles of the day” (2003:6). While *Astro Boy* differed from American shows in the tendency to have topical subjects, it is still noteworthy to recognize the choice of subjects

for the topical *anime* originating in Japan mirrored issues and events in America. *Astro Boy* and *anime* in general depicted an artistic style with characters that lacked ethnic specificity and often seem American (Drazen, 2003:7). This allowed "characters [to] … be renamed, relationships and motivations juggled, and plots rewritten with relative ease" (Drazen, 2003:7). Ultimately, the introduction of *Astro Boy* to an American television market between 1963 and 1964 paved a way for other *anime* such as *Gigantor, Johnny Socko* and *Evangelion* to gain an audience in the U.S. (Drazen, 2003: 8). Tezuka increased his influence on *manga* and *anime* through shows such as *Ribon no Kishi* (*Princess Knight*), and *Mach Go Go Go*, which was known in the U.S. as *Speed Racer* (Drazen, 2003: 8). Following this period of rapid and intense importation of *anime,* there would be a sharp decline in the late 1960s (Drazen, 2003:8).

Anime would enjoy a second wave of popularity in the United States following the release of *Star Wars* in 1979 (Drazen, 2003: 8). This second wave was "initially powered more by individual fans and the general dynamics of popular culture than by institutionalized networks of distributions" (Mathijs, Sexton, 2011). A couple of years prior to the release of *Star Wars*, a meeting between Sandy Frank, American television producer and the three Yoshida brothers who ran a small Japanese animation company called Tatsunoko Production Co., Ltd. at the Cannes Film Festival would result in the release of *Kagaku ninja-tai* Gatchaman, known simply as *Gatchaman* in the U.S. (Kelts, 2006: 17). The show had already become a hit in Japan and,

> Spoke directly to Japan's cultural values: the "hero" is in fact a team whose members must rely upon one another and not stand out as individuals; while there are distinct villains, a sense of evil tends to permeate the atmosphere, as though evil could emerge from anywhere, even from within the flawed and sometimes selfish heroes themselves; the ramifications of war are tragic (the father of one of

> the characters dies); and the heroes' ultimate mission, to defend the earth from complete annihilation and restore peace and stability, justifies their need to fight (Kelts, 2006:17-18).

Roland Kelts writes that *Gatchman,*

> Emanated from the imaginations of what the artist Takashi Murakami now calls the world's first postapocalyptic society—the offspring of two atomic bombs, whose subterranean traumas, he believes, force them to see the world anew, and whose vision is best expressed through the underground and censor-free media of manga and anime (2006:19).

Sandy Frank immediately saw the possible success of *Gatchaman* and its potential as a successful television import. However, there were several problems that arose when trying to adapt Japanese animation to an American audience. Not only was it not produced in America but it also "featured violence, blood, death, sexual innuendos, and morally questionable and sometimes visibly mortal heroes—which could all be found in the more daring and sophisticated American cinema of the 1970s, of course, but not in what mainstream Americans called cartoons" (Kelts, 2006:19-20). However, the release of *Star Wars* revolutionized the popularly held beliefs concerning cinematic production and left "media producers scramble[ing] to capitalize, scouring the United States for similarly sophisticated sci-fi storylines and equally arresting graphics"(Kelts, 2006: 19). Japanese animation would provide an ample source of material for this objective.

In terms of technological advancement, this period also saw the introduction of "two revolutions in American broadcasting: the explosive growth of cable, and consumer videotape recorders", which benefited the growth and spread of the *anime* industry (Drazen, 2003:9). The growth of cable was particularly influential in the increase of Japanese animation in the United States. Drazen states,

> The proliferation of cable channels—some of which specialized in showing cartoons—meant that large blocks of airtime were suddenly opening up on America's vast wasteland, and something unique, or at least different, had to be plugged into the space. More than a few Japanese anime series moved in to fill the void (2003:9).

The development of the videocassette recorder assisted in the spread of *anime* in an additional way by providing a means for animation to be available for purchase in the U.S. (Drazen, 2003:10). Drazen notes,

> Direct-to-cassette animation (known as "original animation videos" or OAVs) started in Japan in 1983 with a space opera called *Dallos*. The ability to create direct-to-viewer animation not only stretched the content envelope, but stretched the fan base literally around the world. As soon as unedited, unadulterated Japanese animation became just another offering on the American video-store shelf, word began to spread" (2003:10-11).

These advancements in television and recording along with the already established animation and cultural exchange between the U.S. and Japan allowed for the growth and shared influence of these two countries on the medium of animation.

Throughout the history of *anime,* successful shows generally fell within the genre of space travel, robots or mecha (short for mechanical). However, 1995 saw the introduction of *Sailor Moon* a break through series by *shojo* artist Naoko Takeuchi (Drazen, 2003:11). The series "part magical fantasy, part romantic comedy, and part science fiction" would garner a dedicated fan base in numerous countries outside of Japan, including the U.S., Canada, Poland, Philippines, and Brazil (Drazen, 2003:11). The popularity of this show would create a movement to continue the production of episodes in English when English dubs stopped mid way through season two (Drazen, 2003:10). Following this widely popular franchise, the extensive *manga Dragonball Z* (weekly between 1984 and 1995) by Akira Toriyama was turned into an equally long

lasting *anime* series. This show following the life, death, life and death again exploits of Goku and his relationship with the Dragonballs, a set of golden orbs that grant a wish when gathered together. This is paired with the martial exploits of Goku, his family and friends.

Even considering the immense success of *Sailor Moon* and *Dragon Ball Z*, 1997 saw the introduction of the widely successful *Pokemon,* which reached a level of popularity that had not been seen by any *anime* previously. Cary Elza writes,

> Parents hated it, children loved it, older kids loved the merchandise, and even middle-aged men were enraptured with the Magic-esque card game. Without a doubt, *Pokemon* became a phenomenon on an international level during its peak years of 1999-2001, and it even continues to exert influence over American children's culture today. The show, infamous for giving kids seizures when it was introduced in Japan, has become a multi-billion-dollar industry, complete with video games, eight feature-length films, countless toys, and a mania-inducing trading-card game (2009:53).

Pokémon would be an immensely popular franchise that began life as a computer game for Nintendo and quickly sprouted into a diverse set of products and merchandise. Joseph Tobin comments on the commercial success of *Pokémon* in the book *Pikachu's Global Adventure: The Rise and fall of Pokémon* with the following:

> *Pokémon* is the most successful computer game ever made, the top globally selling trading-card game of all time, one of the most successful children's television programs ever broadcast, the top-grossing movie ever released in Japan, and among the five top earners in the history of films worldwide (2004:3).

This Japanese creation would wash over the world and make nearly every individual in America and abroad aware of Ash Ketchum's attempt to become the world's greatest *pokemon* trainer. The success of *Pokemon* would open the door for many other *anime* from Japan and make them much more accepted by a western audience (Drazen, 2003:14). Shows such as *Digimon, Yu-Gi-Oh!,* and *Cardcaptors* would all find a place on

American television. Several additional shows have been aired that deal with much more complex issues, have longer more intricate story lines and (based on their late night air times) are aimed at older viewers, such as *.hack sign, Bleach, Full Metal Alchemist* and *Ghost in the Shell*.

What I have attempted to accomplish through this discussion is the brief outlining of not only the strong, reciprocal relationship between Japan and the West in terms of culture and specifically animation but also the growing fascination of the West with the entertainment exports of Japan. This relationship resulted in a truly unique animation style that has been slowly expanding the definition of who is an audience for cartoons to include teenagers and even adults. This evolution can best be seen through a look at the history of not only cartoons but also the importation of *anime* to the U.S. Once again, looking at the major players in Japanese animation importation it is obvious that there has been a steady relationship between the U.S. and Japan that has, since the introduction of *Pokemon,* created an environment for that relationship to grow and increase the acceptability of this animation style for viewers in the West. However, it should be recognized that the *anime* described here are only a small fraction of the shows that have made it on American television. The *anime* mentioned here have been the most commercially successful or the most pivotal in the introduction of this genre to the West by far do not represent a vast portion of the total amount of Japanese animation.

Chapter 2: Borrowing from the Tale Tradition

Jack Zipes in *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk & Fairy* Tales writes,

> Both the oral and the literary traditions continue to exist side by side today, interact, and influence one another, but there is a difference in the roles they now play compared to their function in the past. This difference can be seen in the manner in which they are produced, distributed and marketed. Profit mars their stories and their cultural heritage. Folk and fairy tales as products of the imagination are in danger of becoming instrumentalized and commercialized (Zipes, 2002:2)

Zipes publication focuses largely on the role of folk tales in a globalized society, where industry and production have replaced a largely rural landscape and commodification of culture is a constant subject for scholars. In many ways, this book looks at the ways in which folk tales, and culture in general, have been removed from their original context and their creators and are used as a means to placate society and promulgate a consumerist state. While in some ways this assessment can be labeled radical, and Zipes himself makes this connection by subtitling his book "Radical Theories of Folk & Fairy Tales", it is still blatantly obvious folk and fairy tales are being actively used by television writers, movie producers, marketing specialists and generally any person or company interested in selling a product or idea. This is not necessarily a negative consequence. In fact, it is a very essential element in the continued vitality of folk tales in the modern era. The proliferations of folk tales in new media, such as television or movies are heavily commoditized but they also preserve and reinvent narratives. However, to separate commodification from this process is a complicated matter that may not be entirely possible. In this chapter, I will look at this very practice by examining the

use of tales in Japanese animation. I do not make claims that *anime* is designed solely with commodification in mind but that it simply uses various elements from tale traditions in its production.

I will provide examples of various tales, as well as tale structures, and similar functions by drawing comparisons between *anime* and the work of scholars pertaining to the study of tales. Therefore this chapter will be divided into three main sections titled: content, function and structure. While these categories cannot entirely cover the span of all things related to the study of folk tales, they can begin to demonstrate the existence of a relationship between *anime* and tales. Ultimately this chapter will argue that not only does *anime* draw heavily on traditional Japanese tales as well as tale traditions from various other geographical regions, but also that *anime* exhibits similar characteristics, structures and functions as tales.

Content

This section will require the least amount of scholarly analysis in terms of investigating the use of tale material as sources of inspiration in *anime.* Largely this subsection will point out the blatant use of material from the tale traditions of Asia and the West in *anime* and provide examples of shows where they can be found. I will focus on three major subject areas associated with tales that can also be found in *anime*, namely creatures or supernatural entities, the use of traditional tale types or culturally significant accounts, and finally the use of certain motifs. These three major categories simplify the relationship between *anime* and tales but also provide a useful means to clearly see the way tales provide inspiration to modern animators. However, this process of building a bridge between Japanese animation and traditional tales is daunting and picking out every

instance where tale elements have been used in *anime* is simply impossible. The examples I provide in the following are just samples and serve to instill an idea rather than aim to be comprehensive.

Antonia Levi in *Samurai from Outer Space: Understanding Japanese Animation* explores the sources of inspiration for *anime* when she writes,

> The largest number of stories are drawn from Shinto, Japan's indigenous religion. Shinto is an animistic form of nature worship which provides *anime* with over eight million deities and their legends from which to draw on. Shinto itself is quite alien to the Judeo-Christian concept of organized religion. Indeed, Shinto could best be described as disorganized religion. It has no official theology, no set scriptures, and no moral code beyond cleanliness. What Shinto does have, however, is stories, over 2,000 years worth of stories about gods and goddesses, heroes and scoundrels, noble souls and tricksters (1996: 34).

What Levi is arguing is the strong connection between animators and the indigenous folk tale tradition of Japan. To begin looking at the use of elements from traditional Japanese folktale perspectives in *anime,* I will first explore the presence of *yokai* in *anime*. Michael Dylan Foster writes that the word *yokai* is often translated as "monster, spirit, goblin, ghost, demon, phantom, specter, fantastic being, lower-order deity, or, more amorphously, as any unexplainable experience or numerous occurrence" (2009: 2). These "others", as can be deduced from Foster's list of definitions of the word, consist of creatures, inanimate objects and even occurrences outside the realm of the real and concrete. They belong to a different realm than that of humans but at the same time they are very much present and influential in the physical world. They are both the monsters that are dangerous and should be avoided and also those helpful spirits that bring information or assistance. With the strong cultural presence of these creatures and characters it is natural they would occupy a significant place in the folk tales of Japan.

With the connection between Japanese folktales and *anime*, these *yokai* come to be a significant part of the shows created by Japanese animation studios. One of the more recent and popular *anime* to utilize *yokai* is the 2010 release of *Nurarihyon no Mago* based on a *manga* written and illustrated by Hiroshi Shiibashi, which was first published in 2007. This *anime* focuses on Rikuo Nura, the partial human grandson of the *yokai* leader of the night parade of one hundred demons. Throughout the story, Rikuo faces various demons, people and rival households that threaten his family and friends while attempting to grow emotionally and physically for his eventual position as leader of the clan. Rikuo is surrounded by all the *yokai* and *yokai* clans that have sworn their allegiance to the *Nura* clan and therefore holds a place of importance among the world of *yokai.* The *yokai* that are typical characters in this show are usually carefree and jovial while their adversaries normally exhibit twisted logic and villainous goals. Therefore, *yokai* come to represent a majority of the characters in this *anime* and occupy significant roles within the plot. Of particular interest in this *anime* is the character Yuki-onna, who is part of Rikuo's guard and accompanies him when he attends human school. Yuki-onna has an affinity for ice and often uses ice or snow based attacks when fighting. This character is a direct representation of the Yuki Onna from Japanese folklore, who is known "in the higher mountains, which are continually snow clad in the winter"(Smith, 2008: 307). Yuki Onna come from "all those who die by the snow and cold become spirits of snow, appearing when there is snow; just as the spirits of those who are drowned in the sea only appear in stormy seas" (Smith, 2008:311). Frederick Davis in *Myths and Legends of Japan* describes her as "the Lady of the Snow [who] is very far from being a benevolent and attractive spirit" and whose "mouth is the mouth of Death,

and her ice-cold lips draw forth the life-blood of her unfortunate victims" (1992:149). While Davis looks at this character through the lens of myths and legends, this character is also the subject of Japanese tales. This complex relationship between narrative genres was given more consideration in the introduction to this thesis and therefore will not be further investigated here. The Yuki Onna of Japanese folktales is depicted and described as a dangerous being who pairs her malevolent, dangerous demeanor with the pure, white beauty of the snow-clad Japanese mountains. In the *anime* we see a different picture of Yuki Onna as a jealous, innocent, slightly clumsy young girl who certainly does not inspire dread or fear in other individuals. In this respect, *anime* comes to be a contemporary medium for the retelling of this traditional folktale figure, but also represents a key notion in this thesis, which is that *anime* draws heavily and is based on traditional tales and tale structures but also re-envisions them to suit animators and current consumers.

Another important creature from Japanese folk tales that has made its way into *anime* is the fox, which can and is often thought of as a *yokai*. Davis describes the power of foxes in the following:

> The fox takes an important place in Japanese legend, and the subject is of a far-reaching and complex kind. … All foxes possess supernatural powers to an almost limitless degree. They have the power of infinite vision; they can hear everything and understand the secret thoughts of mankind generally, and in addition they possess the power of transformation and of transmutation" (Davis, 1992: 93).

Foster also notes the importance of the fox as *yokai* in terms of its shape changing ability. Foxes or *kitsune* are often noted because of their ability to transform into a human. Michael Bathgate in *The Fox's Craft in Japanese Religion and Folklore* begins his book with a recounting of a tale about the rule of Toba-no-in an emperor of Japan during the

first half of the 12th century (2003:1). One day a beautiful woman who excelled all other women in womanly arts came to the palace and soon became the emperor's favorite (2003:1). However, the emperor and his reigning son grew ill and an astrologer was summoned to determine the problem. The astrologer determined that the royal family was under the spell of a malevolent spirit and put the blame on the woman who had recently became the emperor's favorite. The emperor of course wouldn't believe a word of it but through the cunning of the astrologer the lady's true identity as a nine-tailed fox became known. The presence of the fox in *anime* is also wide and apparent. Several *anime* series use this well-known folk tale character as inspiration in their own works. For instance *Naruto,* a very popular recent *anime,* which has also been widely successful in America portrays a main character that acts as the host and container for a malevolent and powerful nine-tailed demon fox.

Figure 1: Nine-Tailed Demon Fox from the *anime Naruto*. (Screen Shot)

Yu Yu Hakusho, an *anime* based the *manga* by Yoshihiro Togashialso contains a fox character named Yoko Kurama, or simply Kurama. Kurama was original a demon world thief who, following a nearly fatal wound, had to flea to the mortal realm and fused his soul to that of an unborn human child. On occasion he reverts to his original fox form in order to do battle. Even in the already mentioned series *Nurarihyon no Mago*, the most recent villain has been a fox who, through several reincarnations, has been attempting to birth her evil child so as to begin an *ayakashi* dominated realm.

While the *kitsune* plays a significant role both in traditional tales and modern *anime* it is by far not the only *yokai* that can be found among the myriad animation creations. In many cases these creatures are not given a specific name or for that matter specific dimensions. Often they take the shape of undistinguished monsters or inhabitants of forested areas. For example, Miyazaki's *Mononoke-hime*[2]is filled with various *yokai* creatures, such as forest spirits, the large wolves that raise the forest girl protagonist San and the great Forest Spirit himself who embodies the relationship between life and death.

[2]Known as *Princess Mononoke* in the U.S.

Figure 2: Forest Spirits from *Mononoke Hime.* (Screen Shot)

Figure 3: San and Wolf spirit from *Mononoke Hime*. (Screen Shot)

Figure 4: Great Forest Spirit from *Mononoke Hime.* (Screen Shot)

Miyazaki uses demon, spirit creatures, as well as other Shinto inspired practices in his other works, such as *Spirited Away*, which is set in a bath house of the spirits, *My Neighbor Totoro* that depicts the relationship between two young girls and a spirit being called Totoro, and *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, which focuses on the ability of a young girl to understand the giant insects that plague the Earth. In any case, it becomes obvious that *yokai*, *oni* or what ever name these supernatural beings are called by in traditional Japanese tales, legends, mythology and beliefs have an important role in the modern creation of *anime* and serve as an important source of inspiration for characters, stories, plots, events and settings.

As well as the various uses of characters from folk tales and other genres of folk narrative, *anime* also draws on a variety of folk tale plots that are re-created and adapted to suit the purposes of the animator. Patrick Drazen outlines three different ways that these traditional tales have been used in *anime*. The first that he explores is the *hagoromo* tale that centers on a heavenly being or *Tennyo* that wears a feathered cloak or *hagoromo*.

These heavenly beings occasionally come to earth and remove their cloaks in order to bathe in the rivers. In these tales, a local fisherman happens across these beings bathing and steals one of their cloaks and ultimately forces the beautiful maiden to become his wife. This tale fits into the Aarne-Thompson tale type classification as tale type 400 (Swan Maiden) and has variants worldwide. For instance, the Irish and Scottish Isles have arguably one of the most well known variants of this tale, which features seals instead of heavenly maidens. These versions depict seals that come ashore, remove their seal pelts and dance near the water. Once again a young fisherman happens across these beautiful women and snatches a pelt, thereby forcing the owner of the pelt to become his wife. In both the Japanese and the Scottish/Irish versions the maiden bears the children of the fisherman and regains control of the lost pelt/cloak after her child reveals the hiding place and she returns to her natural element.

Drazen connects this tale to the *anime Ayashi no Ceres*, which centers on the Mikage family that has become prosperous due to the acquisition of a *hagoromo* from the first matriarch of the family. The *Tennyo* owner of the *hagoromo* was furious with her mistreatment by her husband and life on Earth in general so she became devoted to bringing revenge on the family that trapped her. In each generation, the *Tennyo* is reborn into a female child of the family and reaches full manifestation when the girl turns sixteen. When a girl shows signs of being the *Tennyo*, she is immediately killed in order to prevent the destruction sought by the *Tennyo*. The *anime* focuses on the twins Aya and Aki who are the embodiment of the original *Tennyo* and the original Mikage who stole the *Tennyo*'s *hagoromo* in the first place. This *anime* uses this traditional tale as

contextualization for a continuation of the tale beyond what is given in the original narrative.

In addition, Drazen also explores the use of the folk tale *Momotaro* the Peach Boy in the *anime Magical Princess Minky Momo*.This tale focuses on an elderly couple that wishes for a child. One day the old woman was near a riverbank and saw a giant peach floating downstream. When the peach was split open a baby appeared that grew up to be kind, smart and brave (T543.3). When the boy grows up, he goes on an adventure to rid the land of demons that are tormenting the people. He is aided by three animals, a dog, a monkey and a bird and eventually defeats the demons, returning home a hero and rich with treasure. Drazen notes that *Magical Princess Minky Momo* is a modern female version of this tale. Minky Momo is depicted as having the same three animals as pets and constantly aiding her parents out of scrapes (2003). In addition, *Beezelbub* an *anime* based off the *manga* by Ryuhei Tamura also contains elements similar to the *Momotaro* tale. This *anime* centers on a high school student, Oga Tatsumi, who is attending a high school for delinquents. While Oga was standing near a river, a strange man came floating along and split open revealing a baby named Kaiser De Emperana Beelzebub IV or simply Baby Beel the second son of the demon king. Baby Beel was sent to Earth in order to find a human host/parent so that he could eventually destroy humanity. While the earlier story arcs focus on Oga trying to find an alternative "parent" for Baby Beel and fighting other delinquents at his school, in the more recent arc Baby Beel and Oga have been attacked by the demon army of Baby Beel's older brother. Baby Beel and Oga, along with the delinquents attending Ishiyama (the high school for delinquents) all face off against these new demons. *Beezelbub* resembles the folk tale in a number of key

instances. The most obvious is the similarities between the arrival/birth of the Peach Boy and Baby Beel. Both arrive through a water way and inside a strange vessel that must be opened for the child to emerge. In addition, both actively engage in battles with demons that have become a nuisance.

In addition to these two specific tales that have made their way into *anime*, animators have also explored additional tale types in the creation of their stories. What fans of *anime* have un-doubtedly noticed is the prolific use of Christian imagery and religious markers. In many cases this Christian imagery was cut from the Japanese animation directly imported to U.S. markets. For example, certain episodes were edited in the *Sailor Moon* series in order to remove scenes, such as the imprisonment of the Sailor Scouts on crystal crosses, which the producers thought would cause discomfort in American audiences (Drazen, 2003: 142). Christian parallels can also be seen in the scene from *Beezlebub* discussed above and the story of Moses. In any case, Christian imagery, along with Christian-esque plot elements can often be found in *anime*, which bears similarities to Western religious folk tale traditions. One specific example can be seen in the *anime Black Butler* based on a *manga* written and illustrated by Yana Toboso. This show centers on Ciel Phantomhive, the twelve-year-old head of the noble Phantomhive family. When Ciel was very young, his parents were killed causing Ciel to make an agreement with Sebastian Michaelis, a demon butler. The agreement stipulates that Sebastian will assist Ciel in finding his parents' murderers while in exchange Sebastian will get to eat Ciel's soul when the murderers have been found. This *anime* bears similarities to the Aarne-Thompson tale type 756B or Deal with the Devil, which describes tales about pacts between a person and Satan or demons. In many ways this

type of connection demonstrates the internationalism of *anime*, as well as the tendency of animators to draw, intentionally or unintentionally from folk tale traditions.

In this section, I have sought to demonstrate that *anime* draws on folk tales, not only Japanese but also on a more international level, as sources for inspiration. They draw not only on the tales themselves and characters and creatures but they also adapt and alter these traditional elements to suit their own storytelling needs and preferences. These elements can be explicit in their connection to folk tales, in some cases nearly replicating the original story in its entirety, while others merely hint at their folk tale connection. In any case, from these few examples it becomes obvious that Japanese animators in their creations have consciously used folk tales and other genres of folk narrative from different geographical regions.

Structure

Scholars of folk and fairy tales noticed early on that the tales they studied and investigated had certain structures and wide reaching tendencies inherent in their makeup. While these tendencies are not necessarily universal nor are they present in every tale, they still provide a useful tool in looking at the elements that make tales and ways of identifying them in new and different mediums. As in the case of recreating plots and motifs, the recreation of structure in *anime* can be found in varying degrees. Some series faithfully, either consciously or unconsciously, recreate the structure of traditional tales while others take pieces and blend them with others or invent entirely new means for telling the story. In this section, I will look at the ways traditional tale structures or characteristics of the tales can be found in *anime.* The analysis that I will apply to *anime* regarding the inherent nature of folktales within these shows will be largely European

and from a Western perspective. This is due to the strong internationalism inherent in *anime* as well as the general lack of studies available concerning the nature and form of Japanese tales that do not incorporate a Western perspective. I will look at two specific examples that will help to illustrate this point. Firstly, I will look at a syntagmatic structural approach through the work of Vladamir Propp. Secondly, I will look at the form of folktales in *anime* through the work of Max Lüthi. Both of these scholars investigate the underlying makeup of tales and I will explore how their findings are both similar and different than the inherent characteristics of *anime.*

Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* was the result of Propp's structural investigation of one hundred Russian magic tales. From this investigation, Propp postulates a series of thirty-one functions and seven dramatis personae that are present in magic tales. Function, as the term is used by Propp, is a certain event or element that he found present in the tales he studied. In Japanese animation, many plots, imagery and characters can be compared to magic tales and incorporate a number of the same characteristics, particularly those categorized as fantasy. The nature of these characteristics generally involves fantastic elements that normally take place in a fantastic setting. While *anime* covers a wide range of genres that do and do not include fantastic elements, a large amount of *anime* involves fantasy to varying degrees, which makes this comparison informative. Though Propp's analysis can be found in *anime* it does not necessarily always use all these elements (Propp himself stated that it is entirely possible for any tale to exclude any one of the functions but that the ones used must be done so in the order he devised) or use them in the way Propp outlined. In this section I

will compare Propp's analysis to *anime* and suggest ways in which they share characteristics.

Fairy Tail, an *anime* based on the *manga* written and illustrated by Hiro Mashima, focuses on a magicians' guild, called Fairy Tail. In-between fighting evil and opposing those who try to break the bonds of their guild, members of Fairy Tail complete commissioned magical quests from non-magical members of their world. The main characters include Lucy Heartfilia, a celestial mage who can call spirits from the spirit realm to battle for her, Natsu Dragnell, a dragon fosterling that practices dragon slayer magic, Happy, a flying cat and the constant companion of Natsu, Gray Fullibuster, practitioner of ice magic, and Erza Scarlet, a wizard who has a large selection of armor that she can alternate between in a split second. These five individuals constitute the core characters but there are often several secondary characters both within the guild and without. Currently the series is on episode 102 and has gone through several "arcs" that have new villains who present seemingly insurmountable odds that the main individuals must overcome. Each of these arcs can be seen as a series of "moves", using Propp's terminology, within the larger story of the *anime.* Each move consists of a complete tale with a problem, and resolution of the problem.

In *Morphology of the Folktale*, Propp outlines his research concerning the structure of magic tales. Following his discussion of the functions and purposes of the Dramatis Personae, he goes on to explore some additional aspects of tales. Of particular importance to this discussion is his argument that "each new act of villainy, each new lack creates a new move. … One move may directly follow another, but they may also interweave; a development which has begun pauses, and a new move is inserted" (Propp,

1968: 92). Propp's description of a move fits the stylistic creation of *anime.* For example, *Fairy Tail* consists of twelve arcs that each focus on a specific obstacle that the members of Fairy Tail must overcome. In each case, the obstacle seems insurmountable and nearly results in the defeat of the members involved. However, they always manage to overcome the obstacles and problems presented by their enemies through a last ditch effort, usually involving a realization of the power of their bonds of friendship or a desire to save those that are close to them. In between these arcs, there are usually a few episodes that have little effect on the plot and normally provide humorous encounters. These humorous episodes are called filler by *anime* fans due to their diversion from the original *manga* or lack of impact on the over all story. Obviously, the presence of these arcs presents a compelling argument that *anime,* at least episodic *anime,* is structured in such a way that the story progresses through a series of lacks and acts of villainy. Moreover, contained within each of these larger moves or arcs, there can be several smaller moves that can occur within episodes. Through the presence of these layers of moves, we can assume that *anime* posses a tendency towards utilizing this structural element of tales.

The move is an important aspect of looking at the structure of tales and *anime*, but it is but one part of the analysis provided by Propp. Propp claimed there are thirty-one functions that can be found within magic tales and that these "functions of characters serve as stable, constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled. They constitute the fundamental components of a tale" (Propp, 1968:21). Additionally, the sequence of functions are always the same but each tale does not have to contain every function (Propp, 1968). A complete list of the functions outlined by

Propp can be found in Appendix A. In terms of *anime*, the same can be said. Here I will provide one example that will serve to illustrate the presence of functions, as they are outlined by Propp. *Aquarion Evol*, written by Mari Okada and directed by Shoji Kawamori, Yusuke Yamamoto, is the sequel to the 2005 *Genesis of Aquarion*. Twelve thousand years after the events of *Genesis of Aquarion*, humans are living on the planet Vega, which is being threatened by enemies from the planet Altair. Alteans use giant fighting robots, called abductors, to invade Vega and capture human women. They are attempting to find a powerful female in order to restore their dying planet. *Aquarion Evol* starts with Amata Sora working in a theatre where he constantly watches the same movie. However, on the first day we are introduced to Amata, he is also introduced to Mikono Suzushiro who is the only other person viewing Amata's favorite film. They spend the day together and it is obvious that Amata has feelings for Mikono. Their time was cut short though by the appearance of abductors. Due to the appearance of the abductors and the giant robot of Vega, Amata and Mikono are trapped under a large section of rubble. Amata was able to save them both by releasing a series of weights he had attached to his shoes which were used to hide his ability to fly. After a strange, unexplained event Amata and Mikono end up transported inside one of the pilot seats of the giant robot of Vega and as a result release the power of the legendary fighting robot Aquarion. Through out the series, which is still on going, the characters constantly fight the invaders, learn new fighting tactics and discover the truth about their past lives.

Several of Propp's functions can be witnessed through the progression of the episodes. Function one, a family member absents himself from home, plays a paramount role in the narrative. Amata's mother is abducted early in Amata's life by the Alterans

and is kept in stasis on their planet. The villains are continuously making reconnaissance missions into Vega in order to look for the appropriate female to save their planet. This is even more obvious when Jin Muso, the last son born on Altera, infiltrates Vega and poses as one of their students training to pilot their giant fighting robot. Jin is also responsible for gaining information about Vega and sending it to Altera, function five. Further, Kagura, another Alteran, is constantly attempting to abduct Mikono for his own, which causes Amata to be constantly opposed to his actions. This desire to obtain Mikono demonstrates function 8a. Needless to say, the comparisons go on. There is amble evidence to support the claim *Aquarion Evol* exhibits the functions described by Vladimir Propp as an essential characteristic of the structure of magic tales.

What can be gleaned from these two examples of the use of Propp's structuralism in *anime* is that many series follow a similar structure. At the same time these shows do not simply take the structure of magic tales as described by Propp but alter it and modify it in order to accommodate their own story telling tradition. The use of elements from this tradition is presented in this modern form and mixes with new elements to be discussed in subsequent chapters in order to create a new form of tale that mixes both the new and the old.

An additional scholar who investigated the form and structure of folk tales was Max Lüthi in his book *The European Folktale: Form and Nature*. Lüthi describes five characteristics of the European folktale, which he calls: one-dimensionality, depthlessness, abstract style, isolation and universal interconnection, and sublimation and all-inclusiveness. While Lüthi primarily investigated the ways in which these characteristics were present in a European tale tradition, they have a bearing on this

discussion because, as I have discussed previously, *anime* exists as an international phenomenon that incorporates elements of both the West and Japan. Therefore, it is appropriate to discuss the scholarship of Lüthi concerning European folktales in regards to their connection to *anime*.

The first aspect that Lüthi described is one-dimensionality, which refers to an element in folktales that presents characters having only one dimension to their personality. He writes, "an actor in a folktale, whether a hero or an ordinary person a man or a woman, deals with … otherworld beings as though he perceived no difference between them and him" (Lüthi, 1986:6). This trait results in characters who do not question the events that happen within the tale and simply respond to the events as they come. Lüthi states, "in folktales the numinous excited neither fear nor curiosity. If curiosity exists then it is of an everyday kind. It is directed toward events, not underlying essentials" (1986:7).

This characteristic also occurs in *anime*. *Beezlebub*, based on a *manga* written and illustrated by Ryuhei Tamura, and concerns the appearance of a baby demon lord and his subsequent attachment to a delinquent high school student. While Oga, the delinquent high school student, eventually comes to learn the reasons for the baby demon lord's appearance in the river and his attachment to him, he is not overly curious concerning the underlying reasons behind the baby. The entire first arc is devoted to Oga attempting to rid himself of the responsibility of childcare due to the annoying habit of Baby Beel electrocuting him each time he cries. He does not care about the strangeness of a baby that can emit electricity or about his appearance from a split in the body of a large man floating down the river. The basic lack of questions or surprise at these events as well as

Oga's general acceptance of the reality of his situation points to one dimensionality within his character. The same can be said of Lord Hugh Disward a character in the *anime The Mystic Archives of Dantalian*, which is based on a Japanese light novel series written by Gakuto Mikumo and illustrated by G-Yuusuke. Hugh, Or Hughie as he is called in the series, inherits his eccentric grandfather's estate and consequently a young girl who acts as a gateway between this world and an otherworldly library designed to house the Phantom Books. Hugh doesn't question the ability of the girl to act as a gateway nor on his own ability to act as key to this gateway; he simply acts within the story to capture harmful phantom books and oppose villains. He accepts the fantastical elements of his new life and acts as if the special abilities both the young girl and he himself has being entirely normal. Both of these examples demonstrate the one-dimensionality that occurs in *anime*, which acts as a contributing element in the analysis of *anime* as a part of this folk tale tradition.

The second element that Lüthi describes is depthlessness, which he simply explains is the state of lacking depth. In terms of the depthlessness of characters, he explains "its characters are figures without substance, without inner life, without an environment; they lack any relation to past and future, to time altogether" (Lüthi, 1986:11). There is no underlying explanation or information given for problems within the folk tale, such as disease and often attributes and sentiments are not expressly stated but occur as a result of action within the tale (Lüthi, 1986). As Lüthi states, "the whole realm of sentiment is absent from folktale characters, and as a result they lack all psychological depth" (Lüthi, 1986:13). Characters show nothing resembling personality or the inner intricacies of emotion or character. The people and places are purely surface

creations and do not possess the different levels of reality that characterize literary works. Further, "among the various characters of the folktale there exist no firm lasting relations" and there is a general lack of time in the folk tales (Lüthi, 1986: 17). Lüthi concludes from these characteristics that folk tales have a general lack of depth and exist as surface expressions.

These characteristics also frequently occur in *anime* but in certain ways they deviate and build on Lüthi's description. In many ways *anime* worlds exist in an almost timeless and placeless environment, which can most easily be seen within the genre of school life. The actions that occur within these shows, while taking place in a school environment, do not follow the general sequence of a school year. In *Beelzelbub* the series is set geographically within the high school of the characters during their high school years. Yet, we rarely see the students advancing through different grades, doing homework, or completing lessons in class. Even when they are placed in a classroom setting, characters are frequently depicted as simply being in the room with no particular activity and certainly no teachers. If any thing resembling a year event occurs it exists simply as a means to further the plot or more commonly to add filler in between arcs. In the case of *Beezelbub,* many of the major characters are students at St. Ishiyama High School for delinquents but the high school primarily acts as a setting to act out the plot, in this case, as a setting for fights between different characters. If the character ever leaves school or graduates to the next level of education, it normally symbolizes an ending or a

beginning in the story.

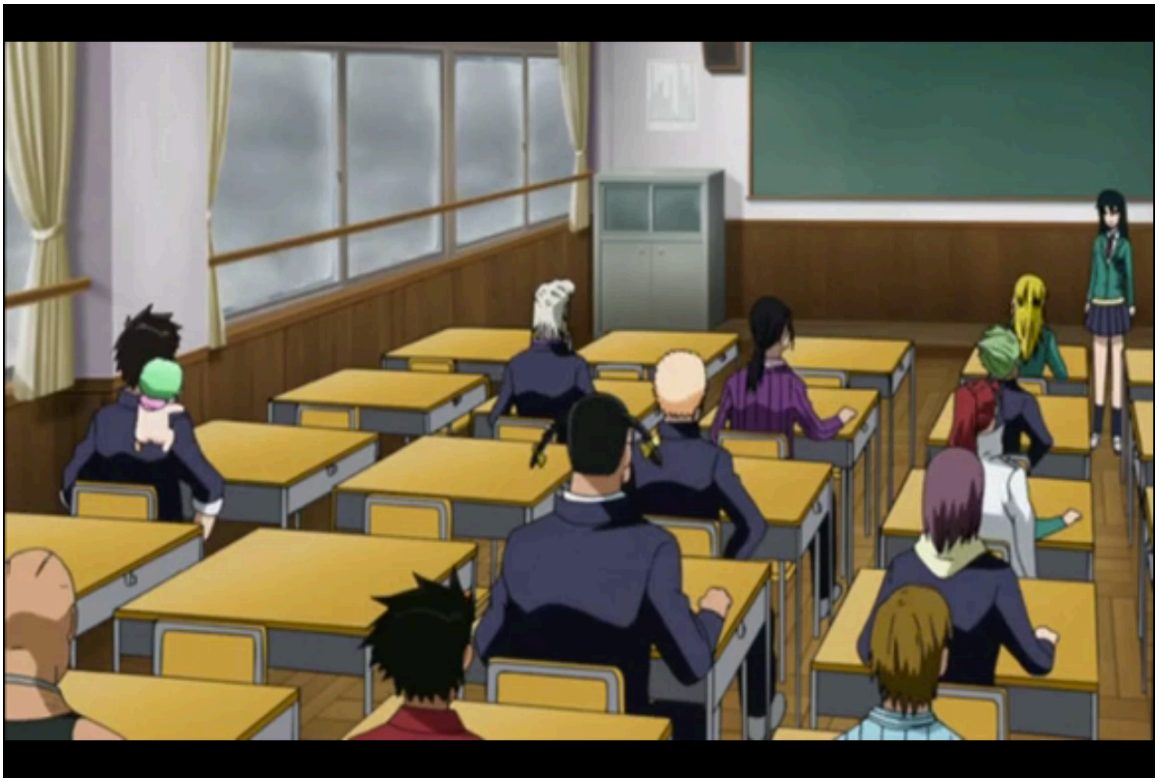

Figure 5: Classroom scene from the *anime Beezlebub.* (Screen Shot)

Lüthi connects this idea of depthlessness to what he calls abstract style and which he argues is the way that folk tales achieve their depthless character. Lüthi states, "from the outset, the folktale does not seek empathetically to recreate the concrete world with its many dimensions. The folktale transforms the world; it puts a spell on its elements and gives them a different form, and thus it creates a world with a distinct character of its own" (1986:24). He explores this notion through a painting versus sculpture metaphor where "a painting can … permit the flat quality to stand by itself and can emphasize it by means of geometric lines and stark colors. The folktale follows this … approach" (Lüthi, 1986:24). This leads to the argument that folktales do not waste time with description or elaboration of setting or characterization but rather simply states what is there and then moves on with the action of the story. The folk tale merely names things, such as the long

road, kind girl, or evil witch. Lüthi argues that any deeper description would go beyond the abstract style of the narrative and add a sense of depth, which is a characteristic absence from this genre. He goes on to note, "among the most frequently named things in folktales are objects that are distinguished by sharp contours and that consist of solid material" (Lüthi, 1986:26). In many cases this can be seen in the appearance of certain settings, such as the house of the witch in *Hanzel and Grettel* or the house of Baba Yaga which are sharply set off from their forest surroundings. These places are consistently highlighted and displayed in relief against their surroundings. In addition, Lüthi states, "the human beings and the otherworld creatures of the folktale are self-contained figures with nothing indefinite about them" which means people "are split neatly in two", "princesses are cured by means of a purely mechanical treatment: [therefore] they are cut into pieces and then flawlessly reassembled" (Lüthi, 1986: 26-27). Further, "the story line of the folktale is just as sharply defined and distinct as are the outlines, substance, and color of its characters" (Lüthi, 1986:28). In these characteristics, the folk tale is abstract it style, form and characterization which creates an over all depthless quality to the tale.

In looking at the interaction between depthlessness and abstract style, which Lüthi argues are essential characteristics of the European folktale, I find it useful to compare them simultaneously because of their influence on one another. I have already argued that there is a sense of timelessness that occurs within *anime* and there exists a certain amount of depthlessness within *anime*. In terms of abstract style, *anime* adheres to the qualities described by Lüthi, especially in terms of artistic style. This becomes apparent when looking at the drawing style used to depict main characters and secondary or background characters. It is typical to have primary characters drawn in a style that highlights their

features. They are drawn with sharp lines and their features are very apparent and distinct. Alternatively, background characters or those who do not make a significant impact on the story are generally drawn with common or dull features with no remarkable characteristics. This can be seen in the *anime Blue Exorcist*. When Izumo Kamiki first enters the exorcist academy, Noriko Park, who is a close friend of Izumo's also enters the academy but has dull and unremarkable features. Her appearance does not stand out as different from other background characters.

Figure 6: Izumo (left) and Paku (right) from the *anime Ao No Exorcist* or *Blue Exorcist.* (Screen Shot)

Further, as in folk tales, *anime* often depicts characters that have nothing indefinite about their character. When a battle commences, there is no realistic depiction of wounds. If wounds are shown at all they normally exist in three different ways: a momentary, fierce jet of blood, a single red or similar colored line down the body of a character or dirt smudges. Seldom are there any intense wounds with internal organs showing or

gruesome battle gore. There are set methods for representation of occurrences in *anime* that propel the plot forward. Therefore, *anime* exhibits an abstract style that Lüthi described as characteristic of folktales.

While I have argued *anime* exhibits characteristics that correlate with depthlessness and abstract style, an alternative argument states these characters show a sense of depth which can be witnessed in their emotional connections to other characters or a connection to personal, past event. An excellent example of this type of connection can be seen in *Phi Brain: Puzzle of God,* an *anime* directed by Junichi Sato. The story focuses on Kaito Daimon who is a high school genius with an affinity for solving puzzles. Following the premier episode, where Kaito solves a puzzle and received the Orpheus armband as a prize, he is accepted into a high school for genius puzzle solvers and given the title of Einstein. Through out the continuing series, Kaito is continually haunted by his past and the death of his parents following their inability to complete a deadly puzzle. His past is further complicated by his relationship with his childhood friend named Rook, who he lost contact with and who has recently come back into his life as a controlling member of the P.O.G., a corrupt puzzle giving organization. In any case, often Kaito is influenced by these emotions even going so far as being physically unable to complete puzzles once he is faced with remembering the horrifying manner in which his parents died or the betrayal of Rook. While these types of emotions and elements within *anime* hint at a sense of depth that would be in opposition to Lüthi's requirement for folktales, I believe this is yet another form of depthlessness. These types of emotion or hidden past become, in a sense, all that encompasses these characters. The presence of these issues or difficulties becomes the over arching characteristic of the

characters they are manifested within and that is the over arching characteristic that is displayed in the *anime.* Interestingly, this type of personal history or dominant trait can be replaced in the *anime* by an equally dominant trait, which is the desire to overcome past tragedy or issues. In the case of Kaito, his desire to solve puzzles and 'free' them from being used as destructive tools in the hands of the P.O.G. overcomes the emotional hindrances presented by the death of his parents and the betrayal of his childhood friend Rook. This desire to overcome these problems and reach a place of peace or reconciliation then becomes the over arching personality trait of the *anime* character. In any case, *anime* characters while appearing to possibly have depth often exhibit a one sided personality that brings out a single or in some cases two characteristics that might cause the character to fret over certain issues but which does not include other emotions. Therefore while seemingly exhibiting depth, anime characters are, in fact, depthless.

Lüthi also connects his concept of abstract style to his fourth category, that of isolation and universal interconnection. He described this trait as "the dominant characteristic" of abstract style (Lüthi, 1986:37). He notes characters are isolated in terms of their describing characteristics and that "folktales love all that is rare, precious, or extreme – that is, anything isolated" (Lüthi, 1986:38). Additionally, they become isolated in terms of external circumstances, such as the death of their parents, or the setting out of brothers on an adventure (Lüthi, 1986). The folktale exists as a "bare-bones story line [and] in turn, is divided into separate segments that are sharply divided from one another. Each episode stands alone" (Lüthi, 1986:38). This characteristic further explains the tendency of folktales not to refer to previous occurrences in the narrative. Therefore, if the hero obtains magical items from a certain place for the task at hand, he doesn't think

to return to the same place for magic items in his next quest. "They are acting in isolation and take no heed of the previous situation" (Lüthi, 1986:39). Each part of the folktale has no bearing on the next part of the tale and there is no need to explain or refer to the reasoning behind not mentioning these episodes. Additionally, the hero exists in isolation because of his unexplainable characteristics that make him 'just right' for the task or quest. If there are other members who have tried to accomplish the same task, such as elder brothers, they fail not so such much because they are immoral or bad, but because they are not suited for the task as is the hero. Lüthi goes on to argue that there is a sense of precision within the folktale, which can be seen in the excellent timing of events or movement of characters. He provided the example of *Rapunzel* where the blind prince who has been wandering blind for several years happens to wander to the exact place where he will be able to find Rapunzel. Lüthi points out several characteristics that point to the isolation and universal interconnection of the folk tales, such as gifts, miracles, and truncated motifs that ties the hero to "the outer world [and is] … not direct or lasting but … based on a gift, preferably a distinctly visible, isolated object that does not become part of him but that he receives, uses, and subsequently discards as something external" (1986:57).

Ultimately, "the central representative of isolation and universal interconnection in the folktale is the hero" (Lüthi, 1986:64). This is based on the observation that while every character in the story who is isolated has the ability to enter into relationship, it is only the hero who actually does so (Lüthi, 1986). This trait of isolation and universal interconnection can perhaps be best summed up in Lüthi's own words:

> The antiheros sleep away their opportunities, fail to perceive them, waste them, or never encounter them at all. The secondary characters exist on the periphery and

> are important only as foils or as partners in the plot. The story spotlights the narrow path taken by the hero. It shows him to us as he moves along in isolation, equally ready to establish any essential relationship and to break off any relationship that has become inessential. To him, the tasks, difficulties, and dangers that confront him are nothing but opportunities. As he encounters them, his fate becomes a significant one. Whatever assistance he receives does not serve to satisfy his desires-the folktale depicts anything but a land of milk and honey-but only helps him pursue his fated way (1986:64).

In this sense, there are several similarities to the stories told in *anime.* While there are several ways to discuss the ways that *anime* utilizes this characteristic, for the sake of brevity, I will explore only two, namely the disconnect between different episodes contained within the narrative and the isolation and precision of the hero. In the first case, *anime* by nature exists in episodic format. Further, as I have discussed previously, *anime,* unlike other forms of animation, follows an arc format that separates the major events within the life of an *anime*. During the progression of the series, the events or individuals are rarely mentioned in the arcs that follow it. Therefore, in the series *Fairy Tail*, based on the *manga* written and illustrated by Hiro Mashima, the earlier arcs rarely come into play in the later episodes. For instance the third arc titled Lullaby arc, sees Erza Scarlet recruiting Gray Fullibuster and Natsu Dragneel to assist her in investigating the Eisenwald guild, which is a dark guild in this universe. While during this arc the villains and events are very important and the protagonists, Erza, Gray, and Natsu have to fight what are seemingly insurmountable odds, they eventually prevail and leave victorious. However, they rarely mention the guild or their exploits fighting them throughout the rest of the series. If these events are mentioned later on they are in a non-important way and bear no great importance to the story being told within that arc.

Figure 7: Natsu (left), Erza (center), and Gray (right) from the *anime Fairy Tail.* (Screen Shot)

While it is possible this can have a connection to the nature of television series, I also see it as an extension of the way tale characteristics are manifested within *anime*. Especially when taken with the other characteristics of tales that are present in this animation genre. Additionally, while other television series do depict this same trait, the way they are presented differs from that of *anime.* Sitcoms and other half hour television shows depict plot elements in early episodes but they are in many ways seemingly disconnected from the rest of the narrative. While story elements in *anime* rarely make additional appearances in later episodes or arcs they are still essential for the development of the narrative. They are woven into the fabric of the story in such a way that while they do not make additional appearances, they are still essential to the development of plot and characters. It is possible this difference can be attributed to the relationship between *anime* and *manga*. While other television series are often based on a general idea and subsequent story lines are written as needed, *anime* series are almost always based on a pre-existing narrative contained within a *manga*.

In respect to the hero and Lüthi's description of his/her isolated characteristics, *anime* also bears similarities. However, in *anime,* I argue that this is not limited to a singular character during the duration of the show but can be shared with others. *Anime's* heroes normally exist as something special. There is normally something particular about them that leads them down the path of a hero. In many cases they are born with a certain magical characteristic that marks them as special, such as Rin Okumura in *Blue Exorcist* who is born with his demon ancestry plainly obvious while his twin was not, or Apollo in *Genesis of Aquarion* who is born as the reincarnated soul of the hero Apollonius.

Figure 8: Birth of Rin (left), and Yukio (right) from the *anime Ao No Exorcist* or *Blue Exorcist.* (Screen Shot)

The characteristics of heroes do not always necessarily manifest in magical powers, such as in the previous examples but can manifest in a desire to be the best or protect their comrades, which allows them to accomplish things they could not previously accomplish. Often the hero is the character who follows an almost predestined path towards accomplishing his/her goals and does so through characteristics that make him or her

specifically qualified to be the hero. However, instead of only one hero that occurs in folk tales, *anime* often has several heroes who can appear in the same episode or through different arcs that exhibit the same characteristics. They may not be the over arching hero for the entire series but they possess the same characteristics of a hero in their specific situation. *Fairy Tail* is an excellent series for exploring this phenomenon. While Natsu can be seen as the major over arching hero in the series, often Gray, Erza, or Lucy become the hero and act in the specific way that is described by Lüthi. For example, during the Loke arc, we discover that Loke is in fact the Celestial Spirit Leo the Lion and is trapped in the human world masquerading as a human mage. Up until this point, we have only seen Loke as a womanizing member of Fairy Tail who has a strange fear of Lucy. During this arc, Loke is faced with his own death as a result of being out of the spirit world for too long. However, Lucy saves his life through her special characteristics (namely her concern for the spirits she uses as a mage). This depicts Lucy as the hero who possesses characteristics exactly right for the problem at hand and allows her to act in the role of a hero. Therefore, while *anime* exhibits characteristics of isolation that are described by Lüthi, which can be seen in the episodic and disconnect between different arcs as well as specific characteristics exhibited by heroes that mark them as isolated from other characters, *anime* can also deviates from and adapts these characteristics.

Figure 9: Lucy Heartfillia facing the Spirit King on behalf of Loki in the *anime Fairy Tail.* (Screen Shot)

The final inherent characteristic that Lüthi describes in *The European Folktale: Form and Nature* is sublimation and all-inclusiveness. While Lüthi gives numerous examples of the material sublimated within folktales, I will focus on the sublimation of sexual erotic matter, and the sublimation of darker psychological processes. In the first case, Lüthi states, "sexual and erotic subject matter is equally emasculated in the folktale. Courtship, wedding, married life, and a desire for children are central motifs, but there is no true eroticism" (1986:69). This is especially evident in the conceiving, and birth of children which are accomplished with no effort and no pain or in some cases with the simple performing of a charm from the hero who isn't even physically close to the princess (Lüthi, 1986:70). In the second case, folktales often depict certain "sensational and thrilling events which are as routine as the simple relationships and functions of everyday life" (Lüthi, 1986: 71). Therefore we hear of "murder, violence, blackmail, betrayal, slander, incest, and the lamentable death of the princess's numerous ill-fated suitors" in much the same way as if we were hearing the grocery list (Lüthi, 1986:71). The folk tale hides these tragic elements in tones of simplicity and normality that belie

their dismal nature. In this way folktales often hide sensational or elements of the tale, such as eroticism or disasters, in sublimated terms that clothe their true natures in the garments of everyday.

Sublimation that occurs in folktales is perhaps the most interesting connection to *anime*. This is especially true in the sublimation of eroticism. While *anime* is often known for its sexualized characters and content it still does not typically depict sexual encounters. What exists in many *anime* is a self-conscious depiction of sexual features. For example, *Fairy Tail* often shows the female characters in revealing clothing that barely covers their bodies but at the same time there is little acknowledgement of this overly sexualized attire from other characters. There is neither outward romantic advancements nor consistent awareness of these sexually blatant females. On the other hand, some *anime* are very aware of the sexualized nature of their characters. Take for example *Sekirei,* an *anime* that falls within the harem genre of Japanese animation. The show follows the male protagonist, Minato, as he obtains six sekirei who are super-powered extraterrestrial beings who bond with their Ashikabi[3] in order to obtain more power and compete in the Sekirei Plan. The adult females in this series are all depicted as having rather large breasts and are typically scantily clad. Often Minato ends up with his face planted in the bosom of one of his Sekirei, which unavoidably always causes him to sprout a terrible nosebleed[4]. Here we see a very obvious acknowledgment of the sexuality being exhibited in the *anime* would but once again there is little or no eroticism. There is

[3]Humans who have the ability to empower Sekirei and unleash their full power.
[4] A common motif within *anime* is the nosebleed, which is usually used to denote sexual attraction. According to the Anime News Network, "it is a long-standing Japanese folk belief that a nosebleed may signify sexual thoughts or arousal" (*Anime Physics: Nosebleeds*. 2012).

no consummation of love or sexual encounter. Children, if they are even born within the show, generally show up after a time lapse in the relationship.

Sublimation of dark psychological occurrences is often used in *anime* as a catalyst for the path of the hero. When Kaito Diamon learns of his parents' betrayal as members of P.O.G. who were assigned to raise him as a puzzle solving genius, he uses this knowledge as incentive to fight harder and as a deeper motivating factor in continue to solve puzzles. On the other hand, these types of characteristics, such as violence and incest often occur as a matter of course in *anime*. Many shows have violence as the main aspect of the plot, such as *Fairy Tale*, *Dragonball Z*,or *Vampire Knight* that romanticizes incestuous unions. *Anime* in general depicts these types of encounters, such as "murder, violence, blackmail, betrayal, [and] slander" (Lüthi, 1986:71) in the course of their plots. In accordance with Lüthi's description, they do not narrate them in tragic tones, but there are various ways they are portrayed. Interestingly, these psychologically dark elements can act as catalysts for further action within the *anime*, such as preservation of self and family in *Dragonball Z*, looked at with revulsion or pity, such as in *Vampire Knight*, or in some cases a means to demonstrate strength or comradery, such as in *Fairy Tail*. Ultimately, sublimation, as described by Lüthi, can obviously be seen in *anime* productions. However, it is not reproduced simply and can often have important roles in the plot. In some cases it is actively included but not entirely divergent from what Lüthi describes, while at others it is entirely sublimated. In any case, what is obvious is that *anime* follows the structural characteristics of folktales while also acting dynamically within that tradition to alter and adjust it to fit its own tastes as well as the tastes of consumers.

Function

Scholars have regularly sought the reason behind the popularity of folktales. Often they have looked for the answer to what makes these narratives so important culturally, psychologically and socially, why they exist in numerous variations throughout the world and why they persist through the generations to be re-envisioned and re-told in other forms. There have been numerous theories concerning the function of folktales for individuals and society. Because *anime* is being treated as a modern form of folk tale within this thesis, it is important to take into consideration some of the theories concerning the function of folk tales in respect to how *anime* also fulfills these functions. I will look at two works in order to explore the similarities between folktales and *anime* in terms of function. Firstly I will take the theories of Ernst Bloch as they are explored by Jack Zipes in terms of the wish fulfillment possibilities of folktales. Finally, I will look at the work of William Bascom and his analysis of the four functions of folklore as they relate to *anime.*

Prior to applying the theories of these two scholars to *anime,* I intend to present a portion of the criticism and problems associated with the application of a functionalist approach. This type of theoretical analysis presents some significant opportunities for critique. Elliott Oring in "Three Functions of Folklore: Traditional Functionalism as Explanation in Folkloristics" sums up some of the most significant criticisms concerning Functionalism and its impact on folklore. Oring begins his article with a summation of the theoretical basis of two renowned Anthropologists - A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and Bronislaw Malinowski. Radcliffe-Brown, writes Oring, based his theory on an organismic model and "drew an extended analogy between social life and organic life"

(Oring, 1976: 68). Therefore, a cultural element of society exists because the society needs it in order to continue. Alternatively, Malinowski "set up a system of biological needs to which culture responds. These responses in turn impose upon man secondary or derived imperatives (instrumental needs) and symbolic and integrative needs which culture must fulfill" (Oring, 1976: 68). In contrast to Radcliffe-Brown, Malinowski saw elements of culture functioning within society as fulfillments of biological needs, which are necessary for the survival of the individual. Oring goes on in this article to critique the work of William Bascom (whose four functions will be looked at in greater detail in subsequent pages). In the article, Oring primarily criticizes the vagueness of Bascom's propositions, the "virtually un-falsifiable" nature of his propositions, and the frequency at which "the contribution made by folklore to the stability of the culture is hypothesized rather than demonstrated" (Oring, 1976:72). Ultimately Oring points out that a significant part of Bascom's research is definition rather than hypothesis (1976:74).

Although a notable portion of Oring's article focuses on the criticism of functionalist theory, he ends his review with a comment on the continued importance of this type of analysis. He begins this section with an explanation of the work of Abraham Kaplan who outlined two models for explanation. The first is deductive and is the type of process traditionally employed by functional theorists. The second he terms the pattern model, which means, "something is understood when it can be related to a larger already familiar pattern" (Oring, 1976:78). Oring goes on to summarize Kaplan's argument:

> Thus when we describe the functions of a joke or a series of jokes in culture X, we are not deducing the necessity of the Joke in culture X but are merely identifying sets of relations that seem to exist between the Joke and other aspects of the sociocultural whole (1976: 78).

Therefore, functional analysis is an "interpretation of the phenomenon, rather than an explanation" and its usefulness "lies in its ability to provide a sense of understanding by interpretation" (Oring, 1976:79). Oring's critique of functional analysis should be kept in mind while reading the functional section of this chapter. While I provide an analysis of *anime* in terms of the work of these scholars what follows should not be considered definite but rather different methods for interpretation.

Now that I have provided a critique of functionalism, I will look at the ways in which folk tales and *anime* can be compared in terms of this type of analysis. First I will consider the work of Ernst Bloch. Bloch was a life long philosopher who advocated socialism and "endeavored to unravel the resilient latent qualities of humankind manifested in the struggle for a better world" (Zipes,2002:146). One of his primary interests is the ways in which wish fulfillment was evident in art and literature. In *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature: Selected Essays,* which was translated by Jack Zipes and Frank Mecklenburg, Bloch connects his ideas to a more modern example. He states:

> Naturally, the fairytale world of America is more of a dreamed-up social life with the kings and saints of big business life. Yet, even if it is deceiving, the connection emanates partly from the fairy tale. The dream of the little employee or even – with different content – of the average businessman is that of the sudden, the miraculous rise from the anonymous masses to visible happiness (Bloch, 1988:164).

Obviously, Bloch is connecting the events of fairy tales, where the destitute or disadvantaged hero moves up in the world and gains everything he or she ever wanted to the idea of the American Dream, where anyone can make it big if they work hard. *Zipes* notes that the work of Bloch frequently uses folk and fairy tales and Zipes goes as far as to state "it would not be much of an exaggeration to say that his [Bloch's] towering

philosophical works rest on the foundation of the fairy tale" (Zipes,2002:150). In his 1930 work, "The Fairy Tale Moves On Its Own In Time", Bloch writes, "the fairy tale narrates a wish-fulfillment which is not bound by its own time and the apparel of its contents" (Zipes, 2002:151). While Zipes disagrees with portions of Bloch's arguments, such as his tendency to simplify tales in order to find common denominators which results in the collapse of distinctions "so that the historical specificity of the folk tale and fairy tale becomes lost in socialist postulation and speculations about the power of the fairy tale," he also believes that Bloch "sheds light on the utopian function of folk and fairy tales in a manner unsurpassed by contemporary commentators" (Zipes, 2002:153, 155). Ultimately, Bloch argues, "the fantastic images and magic of the fairy tales can estrange the reader to everyday life and expectations if they are combined with dreams and wishes which lend them a new quality determined by the *Vor-Schein* of the tale which awakens a utopian consciousness that may have been repressed and needs articulation" (Zipes, 2002: 158). This results in a certain phenomenon where "the needs and wishes of certain groups of people may have been bypassed too quickly in the change of the socio-economic structure, and they non-synchronously move forward while looking and longing backward" (Zipes, 2002:158). To Bloch, "the fairy tale is the most vital artistic expression of ordinary people- their projection of how they want themselves to change and transform society" (Zipes, 2002:159).

When applying this theory to *anime,* especially *anime* that falls within the fantasy genre*,* there are some peculiar ways it is adapted and altered. In order to explore these adaptations and alterations I will primarily look at the *anime, Sekeiri*, based on the *manga* by Sakurako Gokurakuin. This *anime* introduces beings called *Sekeiri* which are super

powered extraterrestrial beings that must create a contract with an Ashikabi[5] in order to reach their full potential. The *anime* follows Minato Sahashi as he manages to create contracts with six different Sekeiri to become one of the most powerful Ashikabi in Tokyo. As described by Bloch, folk and fairy tales typically follow the youngest son or the poorest and most disadvantaged characters as they progress towards riches or the husband/wife of a prince/princess. Minato is equally disadvantaged. He is a meek, failure of a young man who has continually failed his college entrance exams. So it is rather surprising when he finds himself the center of attention for five females, each bearing supernatural powers. What is of even more importance is the manner in which Minato entered into this arrangement. He did not actively seek out a better life, nor did he attempt to make changes to his situation, rather his good fortune literally dropped on his head when Musubi, his first Sekirei, fell from the sky. His participation in this larger than life experience leads him to a life that was much greater than his previous one and promises to make him the hero of the entire series. In addition, every Ashikabi is forced to participate in the Sekirei Plan, which pits Ashikabi and their Sekirei against one another for survival. This inevitably propels Minato into a role of hero that is seeking to implement a reality where all Ashikabi and their Sekirei are allowed to remain with one another in peace, which for them would be the most ideal, Utopian future. When applying this *anime* to the work of Bloch, it can be theorized that individuals who regularly watch this *anime* use it as "how they want themselves to change and transform society" (Zipes, 2002:159). Minato begins the narrative as a nobody who has no particular talent and no ability to further his station in life. He is a failure at school and is continually harassed by

[5]Human with the ability to contract with Sekiri and allow them to reach their full power.

his mother for being a failure. Similar stresses have been documented among Japanese students and their families.

Robert Aspinall in *The 'Big Bang' in Japanese Higher Education: The 2004 Reforms and the Dynamics of Changes* comments on the tension that can result from applying to schools. Aspinall begins his chapter with an anecdote surrounding the murder of a two-year-old girl named Wakayama Haruna who was killed by the mother of another two year old who lived in the same neighborhood. The reason behind the murder was due to Wakayama's acceptance into the top-level kindergarten. Aspinall connects this incident and the need to be accepted into high-level schools to the process of being accepted to the right university. He writes:

> Of all the rivalries related to getting into the 'right' school, the most intense is the competition that surrounds university entrance. Preoccupation with entering university is not confined to the two or three years that precede the actual act of university entrance but can be, as is shown in the tragic case above, a vital factor in the minds of the parents of children as young as two. This obsession is far from irrational given that success in university entrance exams will lead almost inevitable to a lifetime of social and economic inferiority. In a sense, the university entrance system is a victim of its own success (Aspinall, 2005: 199).

Obviously entering university and gaining admittance to all the right schools is a very real pressure and stress placed on maturing individuals in a Japanese society. Minato can be seen as a reflection of the fears and desires of Japanese students in his age group. He is a young man who has failed to enter university and has no other prospects in society. However, his fate is magically and fantastically transformed in a split instant, allowing him to not only become a hero but become a hero who exceeds the goals he had previously set for himself. Therefore, it is very plausible to consider an *anime,* such as *Sekeiri,* a form of wish fulfillment.

An additional scholar who explored the function of folktales was William Bascom, who in "Four Functions of Folklore" postulated ways in which folktales function within culture and society. While Bascom associates these functions with the term folklore and applies them to the three types of narratives, which have become widely important in the study of narratives: namely fairy tales, legends, and myths, as well as the characteristics of each, it is also beneficial to look at how they apply to the function of folktales. Bascom's rejects the notion that folklore and therefore folktales are a mere form of amusement but rather suggests that folktales functioning as amusement are but one role this form of narrative plays in society and culture. Alternatively, he argues his four functions deviate from the traditional scholarly view of folklore as amusement. His first function focuses on the characteristics of folklore as a means for escape. He writes, "folklore reveals man's frustrations and attempts to escape in fantasy from repressions imposed upon him by society" (Bascom, 1954:343). He goes on to state, "folklore also reveals man's attempts to escape in fantasy from the conditions of his geographical environment and from his own biological limitations as a member of the genus and species *Homo sapiens*" (Bascom, 1954:343). Bascom's second function is as a validation of culture by "justifying its rituals and institutions to those who perform and observe them" (Bascom, 1954:344). Therefore, "when dissatisfaction with or skepticism of an accepted pattern is expressed or doubts about it arise, whether it be sacred or secular, there is usually a myth or legend to validate it; or a so-called 'explanatory tale,' a moral animal tale, or a proverb, to fulfill the same function" (Bascom, 1954:344). Thirdly, Bascom argues that the third function of folklore is education. He writes:

> Here ogre tales, like our bogey-man stories, are used in the discipline of very young children, and lullabies are sung to put them in a good humor. Somewhat

> later, fables or folktales incorporating morals are introduced 'to inculcate general attitudes and principles, such as diligence and filial piety, and to ridicule laziness, rebelliousness, and snobbishness'(Bascom, 1954:345).

Finally, Bascom argues that folklore functions as a means of "maintain[ing] conformity to the accepted patterns of behavior" (1954:346). He compares this function to the previous two, and while noting their similarities states, "more than simply serving to validate or justify institutions, beliefs and attitudes, some forms of folklore are important as means of applying social pressure and exercising social control" (Bascom, 1954:346).

Anime and other fantasy related genres, such as fantasy literature or role playing games, easily fits with the first function that Bascom postulates: escapism. Kenneth Alan Adams and Lester Hill Jr. also explore this issue, in part, in their article "Protest and Rebellion: Fantasy Themes in Japanese Comics". They state, "although there are undoubtedly countless themes to be found in Japanese comics regarding Japanese culture, one of the most common is a vicarious one, a symbolic rejection, of these conflicts and demands through an identification with protest and rebellion in the world of fantasy" (Adams, Hill: 103). When Lester and Hill mention the "conflicts and demands" they are referring to the highly structured development system in Japan, which they compare to a "journey from infancy to adulthood… [that] entails a greater psychological transition, perhaps, than that of any other society in the world" (99). This transition, for males, as described by Lester and Hill, begins in infancy, which "is (on the surface) a state of pure indulgence and freedom, a paradise on earth" but moves to "adulthood … a state of almost overwhelming pressure to conform to the wishes of the group, an iron cage of duty and responsibility" (Lester, Hill:99). In this respect, it is easy to see the connection between Bascom's function pertaining to the characteristic of escapism and Japanese

animation by noting the ability of *anime* to provide a means for escape from the tedium and enormous pressure placed on individuals in Japanese society.

Bascom's second function, validation of culture, can be seen in numerous examples and variations in *anime* but here I will focus primarily on Shinto beliefs and practices. Shinto, as I have discussed previously, is the indigenous religious system of Japan. Motohisa Yamakage in *The Essence of Shinto: Japan's Spiritual Heart* describes Shinto in the following terms:

> Shinto is often referred to as polytheistic, because there are many Kami. In the *norito*, Kami are classified in three ways: *amasukamo* (heavenly Kami), *kunitsukami* (earthly Kami) and *yaoyorozu no kami* (myriad other Kami). Kami are therefore not necessarily deities in the sense that is usually understood, but possess a wide variety of spiritual powers and attributes. Shinto can therefore be described as polytheistic in the context of its *amatsukami* , who correspond most closely to the idea of "gods". However, it is also important to remember that *all* Kami are interconnected and spring from a single source – the essence of Shinto. Kami are both many and one, both individual entities and parts of a whole. The three categories of Kami described by the *norito* are not rigidly divided, but interact and overlap. Therefore the tem "polytheism" is far from a full definition of Shinto. It is only partially descriptive, and is useful only when it helps us to understand that Shinto is a path of peaceful coexistence, in which each person's beliefs and experiences are values. It does not matter how one believes in and chooses to describe the divine power or powers, as long as that belief is not used to justify destructive ambitions, or to do evil to others (Yamakage, 2006: 56-57).

Shinto beliefs and practices often make an appearance in *anime*, most notably the works of Hayao Miyazaki and are most recognizable from the attention paid to nature scenes. James W. Boyd and Tetsuya Nishimura in "Shinto Perspectives in Miyazaki's Anime Film "Spirited Away"", considers these characteristics. They quote Miyazaki in this article as noting his "very warm appreciation for the various, very humble rural Shinto rituals that continue to this day throughout rural Japan" (Boyd, Nishimura, 2004:8). Not only is there an overabundance of Shinto shrines through out the visual landscape of Miyazaki's work but also in other *anime*, such as *Brave 10* that describes Isanami as

originating from a shrine and the Shinto shrine lair of an evil *yokai* in *Nurarihyon no Mago*. Shintoism can also be seen in the presence of *yokai* and characters from Japanese folklore that regularly make appearances in *anime* and which have been discussed previously. Ultimately, *anime* provides a similar function as folktales by validating the cultural tradition of Japan, which can be seen in the continued use of Shinto visuals.

Thirdly, Bascom argued for the pedagogical importance of folklore, which plays an important role in upholding morals and values. Hiroaki Hatayama in her book chapter titled "The Cross-Cultural Appeal of the Characters in Manga and Anime" looks at the popularity of these genres and how they pertain to the finding of self. She writes:

> The significance of characters in *manga* and *anime* is connected to a social, educational phenomenon in Japan. It is often noted that the older educational system used in Japan emphasized the importance of group identity, and that the central goal of this system was to educate students to be good, modest members of social groups. However, contemporary education in Japan emphasizes the importance of individuality and personality. The Ministry of Education publishes guidebooks called *Shidouyouryou* for public education. All public educational institutes – from elementary school to high school – are required to follow the guidelines in educational practices. … One of the main policies found in the guidebooks is that teachers are expected to find and develop each student's character and personality (Hatayama, 2009:197).

The shift from an emphasis on group identity and education that focused on attaining that quality to creating a society that focused much more on the individual, unique characteristics of its citizens created a dynamic in need of role models and examples of behavior. Hatayama and her work with Japanese college students believes that "for many young people in Japan, these potential role models can be found in the characters of *manga* and *anime*" (2009: 197-198). From the work of Hatayama, it is possible to see the pedagogical qualities of *anime* for instilling values and morals deemed valuable by Japanese society.

The final function outlined by Bascom focuses on the ability of folklore to apply social pressure and control. As Bascom himself notes, this function bears certain similar characteristics to the previous two. Bascom distinguished them by stating, "it is to be distinguished from the function of education, not simply because it continues throughout adult life, but because it is employed against individuals who attempt to deviate from social conventions with which they are familiar" (1954:346). From this description, it can be inferred that this function acts primarily in the capacity of shepherd for individuals who do not follow the prescribed social path. Ultimately, this function does not play a large role in the world of *anime*. With the already structured and demanding nature of societal pressures focused on educational and occupational futures (as discussed by Hiroaki Hatayama), Japanese society is largely held in place. *Anime*, through it's ability to act as a form of escapism, as well as a means to educate members of society in proper societal behavior, creates a process that fulfills this last function.

Conclusion

The content, structure and function of folktales are an important means to examine the connection between *anime* and folktales. Through the examination of several classic writers in the field of folklore who have made a contribution to narrative studies, I have attempted to demonstrate the use of folk tale characteristics, functions and structures in *anime*. While *anime* does not faithfully adhere to every characteristic described by these scholars, which was never my intention to prove, it does share many important traits. These shared traits are compelling corroboration for the claim that *anime* acts as a contemporary medium for transmitting traditional folktale material as well as a method for traditionalizing new material. In the following chapter I will further explore the role

traditional tales play in *anime* and ultimately explore the ways it handles modernity in a folktale manner.

Chapter 3: *Anime*: An Example of the Adaptive Quality of Folktales

In developing an analysis of the relationship between folktale scholarship and Japanese animation, I have endeavored to establish an argument that there is a connection between these two media. I have attempted to provide evidence that anime can be a contemporary conduit for traditional tales as well as exhibiting characteristics of tales themselves. In the previous chapter, I discussed the similarities that exist between the characteristics of folktales, as described narrative scholars, and how different *anime* exhibit those characteristics. However, *anime* is not a traditional folk tale, it is not a story told verbally, face to face, and is not told in the same context or for the same purposes as traditional tales. *Anime*, as a contemporary artistic creation, not only borrows tales and tale motifs but also reflects the time in which it is created, adapting and utilizing elements that reflect the concerns, and knowledge of the viewers and creators. At the same time, *anime* just by its nature as an animated television show, demonstrates characteristics that have been argued to be in opposition or harmful to the process of transmitting tales and tales themselves. Several scholars, who will be discussed later, have expressed concerns that putting tales into fixed forms, such as print or media, destroys their dynamism and ruins their folkloric quality (Koven, 2008), (Meider, 1987), (Zipes, 2006). I disagree with these assertions and argue that the elements found in modern recreations of tales, such as *anime*, are adaptations to the tale tradition that reflect and suit the audience they are aimed towards. In this chapter, I want to explore some of the characteristics that are most distinct from the characteristics of the tale tradition and I wish to address a major issue argued to be a harmful trait of mass media on folk tales. Considering there are

numerous differences between *anime* and folktales it would be tedious and unhelpful to list, let alone, analyze each distinction. Rather, I aim to explore three significant ways in which *anime* builds on traditional tales. These three key differences I title variation, visuality, and modernity

Variation, which is the quality of having multiple versions of the same core element, has been described as a necessary characteristic of folklore. For example, there are key elements of the Swan Maiden tale type (AT 400), such as theft of the skin or cloak, forced domesticity of the trapped woman and her eventual return to her natural element. However, there are several variations of this tale type, such as the Japanese version that focuses on a heavenly being with a feathered cloak or the Irish version that centers on a seal woman and her seal pelt. Variation is seen as a significant quality of folk tale research and its absence is often the center of discussion for folk tale scholars who worry this loss has negative consequences on the genre. Often this negativity is directed towards mass media and its supposed tendency to create fixed forms and eliminate variation. This section will examine the presence of variation within *anime* and how it uses material to create variation within a mass mediated context.

The visual section refers to the visual nature of *anime*. At one time, tales were told orally and face to face more often than they are today. Fixed forms, such as television shows or books add an additional element to folk tale analysis. Folklorists have realized that there is much sharing between written and oral accounts. Stith Thompson, one of the most readily recognizable folktale scholars, comments in *The Folktale*,

> If use of the term "folktale" to include such literary narratives seems somewhat broad, it can be justified on practical grounds if on no other, for it is impossible to make a complete separation of the written and the oral traditions. Often, indeed, their interrelation is so close and so inextricable as to present one of the most

> baffling problems the folklore scholar encounters. They differ somewhat in their behavior, it is true, but they are alike in their disregard of originality of plot and of pride of authorship (1946: 5).

While Thompson recognizes the similarities between oral and literary tales, he also notes that the "oral art of tale telling is far older than history, and it is not bounded by one continent or one civilization" (Thompson, 1946:5). Classicist, Albert B. Lord also explored the nature of oral delivery of narrative in terms of epic poetry. Lord and his mentor, Milman Parry, were interested in the ability of individuals to recount long stretches of epic narrative from memory. Lord in *The Singer of Tales* states:

> Formally, it might be described as a dynamic structure. Indeed the whole undertaking might be viewed, from some degree of distance, as an inquiry into the dynamics of poetic construction. The poem, is, by this definition, a song; its performer is, at the same time, its composer; whatever he performs, he re-creates; his art of improvisation is firmly grounded upon his control of traditional components; and the tales he tells bear a family resemblance to many sung in other countries under other circumstance (2000:xxxii).

Lord was referring to the telling epics in a certain regional context, but their findings still apply to this analysis based on the oral nature of both epics and tales in their preliterate state. On the other hand, the stories told by *anime* are told as much visually as they are orally. On top of hearing the story narrated, the viewer is presented with the story manifested visually. The tales are given a form in the *anime* in a way that gives more control of the final form of the story to its creator. Animators, in addition to giving form to the story through visual means, also utilize a number of visual indicators and symbols to impart meaning to viewers. Simmon Bronner argues this point in "Digitizing and Virtualizing Folklore", chapter one in *Folklore and the Internet: Vernacular Expression in a Digital World.* Throughout this chapter, Bronner explores the possibilities of the

Internet and modern technology as a means for transmitting folklore. When specifically referring to the visual nature of the Internet, Bronner writes:

> A key characteristic of the Internet that distinguishes it from face-to-face talking is how visual it is. Users look at a screen, allowing images and texts to be combined. Adherents to verbal communication might argue that this visibility takes away from the use of imagination to picture what is heard. Yet visualization on screen adds a level of suspicion about whether what one is looking at is "real." … The Internet's visual character gives the impression that it broadens experience. One can see off into the distance, but touch is at hand. Locality – where one lives and interacts with others – is describes in terms of touch as well as tradition – the earth beneath your feet, the feel of familiar furniture, the handshake on the street. Sight looks out on the horizon rather than feeling at home; ringing in one's head might be the expansive sense of the visual conveyed by *see the world* or *look to the future.* The Internet carries this sensory implication further by reference to the World Wide Web (2009: 29-30).

The visual nature of the Internet and Bronner's argument is pertinent because visuality is, arguably, the most important aspect of *anime.* Additionally, specifically from a Western and personal perspective, a majority of *anime* is consumed through Internet channels due to the unavailability of a majority of *anime* through other channels. I will argue, in this section, that far from being a hindrance or detracting from the tale tradition, these characteristics are a distinct, complicated means for storytelling.

In the section titled "modernity", I aim to explore the use of different works in *anime* that reflect both the contemporary and futuristic world, specifically advanced robotics, which are normally placed in the *anime* genre of *mecha*. While anime is not the only form of animation that uses advanced technology as motifs and story elements it is, however, known for such things. I will argue these motifs exist along side traditional motifs, such as the number three, magic gifts, or magical transformations and are reflections of contemporary society. Ultimately this chapter seeks to not only look at the aberrations presented by *anime* to the tale tradition but also the ways in which these

differences are indicative of the adaptive and transformative qualities of folk tales. In the development of the folklore discipline, we have moved away from the notion that folklore exists as a fixed form from a distant past that exists as a survival from this past. Folklorists believe that folklore exists as a process and manifests in all times and places. Barre Toelken discusses this tendency in *The Dynamics of Folklore, which* I have discussed previously. From Toelken's discussion, it is obvious folklore is a dynamic process. Based on these assumptions, scholars work from the perspective that folktales are dynamic, changing things that do not remain static creations of the past. By investigating how media, such as *anime* differs from and recreates traditional tales, this chapter proposes some insight into the changing nature of folk tale performance, as it exists outside the content of oral delivery and literary creativity in the contemporary televised world.

Variation

Folklorists have not been idle in realizing the need to examine elements of their discipline as they appear in various modern media. Studies have been completed on a number of topics including Internet jokes, folklore as it is depicted in horror films, as well as the folklore in popular fantasy literature, such as Heather Haas's recent article on the use of proverbs in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter novels. Additionally, Linda Dégh looks at the use of print or electronically produced folklore genres and their manifestation in the contemporary world. She states,

> It retains all the criteria by which we judge what is folklore and what is not: it is socially relevant, based on tradition, and applied to current needs. As old wine in a new bottle, it appeals to a much larger population group than ever before, in fact, to a much broader array of diverse social groups than ever before. … The phenomenon we identify as folklore permeates all society assisted by mass media;

> it is not ruled out as folklore simply because its bearers manipulate new instruments to fit the needs of modern consumers. Folklore blossoms and proliferates before our eyes as it emerges from new conditions more vigorously and forcefully, empowered with more authority and prestige, than ever before. (Dégh, 1994:1).

A major argument presented by Dégh in this book, and which is exemplified in this passage, is the power and resourcefulness witnessed in the merging of folklore and mass media. Dégh understands mass media as a modern means of transmitting folklore that suits current demands and goes on to argue its ability to "liberate folklore from its earlier confinement to the so-called lower layers of society and from the prejudice – both pro and con – that stigmatized it" (Dégh, 1994: 2). Folklore becomes, under Dégh's analysis, a "cultural property characterizing our ways of thinking, believing, and dreaming, and our modes of defining our identity" (1994:2). Obvious in this work is the assumption that folklore exists as a process or at least a set of characteristics rather than a finished, definite product which has the potential to occur in various situations. Because folklore has the potential to appear in various forms and settings, Dégh asserts mass media greatly increases the audience and importance of folklore. Dégh's work centers on the observations of Rudolf Schenda whom she quotes from his 1990 address at the 4th International Congress of the *Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de* Folklore. Here Schenda, quoted by Dégh, states,

> 'Never did folklore fare better than under the flag of mass culture' (1992:30) In fact, 'folklore reproduced and placed in new contexts produces new folklore genres, … it became evident that the mass media contributes to the maintenance and the creation of folklore (Dégh, 1994:2).

Schenda, as well as Dégh through her use of Schenda's arguments, adhere to the notion of mass media as a proliferator of traditional folklore and facilitator of new folklore forms. Throughout this thesis, I have adhered to this notion and argue that *anime* provides

a channel for traditional folklore, specifically folktales, and creates new forms of folklore.

Though Dégh presents a positive view of the relationship between mass media and folklore, some scholars are not as positive. Scholars have pointed out the homogenizing quality of mass media and it's tendency to create one fixed and all-consuming version of folkloric material. Mikel J. Koven explores the negative connotations of mass media when dealing with folktales and *märchen* in *Film, Folklore, and Urban Legends*. Koven writes, "theorists, both within folklore studies and beyond, saw the cinema, especially the Disney texts, as an attempt to become definitive, thereby solidifying a single variant" (2008:4). He goes on to summarize the arguments of Frances Clark Sayer by stating:

> The Disney Corporation's fixing of their variants into book form… clearly implicated Disney in assuming ownership of folk narratives by the creation of hegemonically "definitive" texts. This perception is that the movies fix traditional narratives into single "definitive" texts that replace the more fluid oral variants (2008:5).

Koven additionally sums up Gerald Thomas' reflections on soap operas and the Franco-Newfoundland storytelling tradition. Koven notes, "although Thomas made an important observation, the main thrust of his article was the loss of traditional performance styles, and this was in keeping with the perception of the devolutionary influence of the mass media" (2008:5). In the same vein, Koven summarizes additional arguments for the negative influence of mass media on the oral tale tradition.

> Elizabeth Tucker (1992) viewed the influence of mass-mediated versions of narratives as replacing the oral variants previously in circulation. This coincided with Sayer's point that Disney versions of traditional fairy tales replaced the original orally circulated text and thereby created a sense of canonicity (2008:5-6).

Wolfgang Mieder in *Tradition and Innovation in Folk Literature* explores some of the implications of the anti-fairy tale. He writes:

> The moment one ceases to look at a fairy tale as a symbolic expression of the idea and belief that everything will work out in the end, the cathartic nature of the tale vanishes. Rather than enjoying the final happy state of the fairy tale heroes and heroines at the very end of the fairy tale, modern adults tend to concentrate on the specific problems of the fairy tale, since they reflect today's social reality in a striking fashion (1987:6).

Therefore, "when the final positive resolution of all problems at the end of the tales is neglected, certain of their episodes come to be seen as reflections of a troubled society, as a critical view of the belief in perfect love, or as a concern with social matters" (Meider, 1987:7). Obvious in these arguments is the notion that mass-media especially the Disney corporation alter tales and as a result destroy the important elements of variation and orality.

Additionally, the acceptability of mass-mediated forms of folklore is questioned primarily due to its mode of transmission, which is not oral, or face-to-face but formulized with a known creator. The absence of the face-to-face interaction between storytellers and audience is a major concern and leads to the discussion of the role of film in tale telling. Jack Zipes in *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: The Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization* comments on Disney's use of animation as a means for telling fairy tales. He writes:

> Animation is trickery – trick films – for still images are made to seem as if they move through automatization. As long as one controls the images (and machines) one can reign supreme, just as the hero is safe as long as he is disguised. The pictures conceal the controls and machinery. They deprive the audience of viewing the production and manipulation, and in the end audiences can no longer envision a fairy tale for themselves (2006:199-200).

Zipes suggests animation deprives the audience of the ability to imaginatively view tales on their own. They are forced to accept the tale presented to them through the animated version as the 'authentic' and robs them of the ability to imagine beyond this version. Zipes also explores this idea in *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk & Fairy Tales*. Here he summarizes Pricilla Denby's and Tom Burns' observations concerning mass mediated folklore. While Zipes agrees with Denby's argument on "how mediated folklore is instrumentalized to mislead audiences and mystify the cultural system which produces images to distract and manipulate the imagination", he also points out that Denby and Burns "do not discuss in depth how the new commercial context of mass media determines the function and meaning of folklore. Once folklore is mediated, it loses the folk aspect. In the case of the folk tale, its mediated form is the fairy tale and its context is the culture industry" (Zipes, 2008:120). From these examples, it seems that scholars have painted a very bleak assessment of the state of folk tales and mass media, including animation. They suggest mass media robs folk tales of their inherent folkloric content and serve to homogenize these tales, eliminating their imaginative potential.

However, very few scholars discuss the transformative aspects of mass media, such as *anime,* beyond its ability to reach a greater audience. While reaching a greater audience is an obvious and important feature of mass mediated folklore, an additional importance can be found in examining this type of transmission in regard to the adaptive properties it provides. As I explained in the previous chapter, *anime* shares characteristics of tales as well as uses traditional tales, but *anime* is also a form of storytelling in its own right. This is the crux of my argument. While *anime* does not exhibit some of the major characteristics of traditional tales, such as orality and face-to-face interaction, it does

exhibit qualities that need to be explored. I will first address the notion of absence of variation that placing folk tales in a 'fixed form' such as *anime* creates. In order to explore this theory, I will provide two examples. The first will focus on the use of *Journey to the West*, one of the Four Great Classical Novels of Chinese literature, as it is used in three different *anime* to demonstrate variation within the medium.

Journey to the West is a classic Chinese novel that documents the journey of Monk Tang and his three disciples, Sun Wukong (Monkey King), Zhu Bajie (the Pig Marshal), and Sha Wujing (Friar Sand) as they travel west to seek for Sutra (cultural-china.com, 2010). *Cultural China*, a non profit website designed to provide information pertaining to Chinese culture to the rest of the world, notes,

> *Journey to the West* … depicts in a romantic way the vivid pictures of heaven, earth and the fairyland, and the interesting stories [that] happened there. It employs its unique novel language to reflect the social reality of the Ming Dynasty, satirizing the existing ugliness of the society, so it enjoys a very important position in the history of Chinese literature (2010).

While this literary novel is of Chinese origin and not necessarily considered a folktale, it's permeation of the Asiatic region and its story elements which are similar to those of folk tales give credence to its use in this analysis. Its usefulness is most prominently seen in its extensive appropriation by Japanese animation studios. Here I will discuss three distinct instances where this literary classic is used in *anime*. The first example looks at the series *Gensoumaden Saiyuki* that is based on the *manga* by Kazuya Minekura and is a reproduction of *Journey to the West* that differs very little from the original literary work. The second example looks at a widely popular *anime* both in Japan and in the U.S., *Dragonball*, which is loosely based on the classic novel. Finally, I will look at the *anime*

Beezelbub that does not base its plot on *Journey to the West* but aired a special episode that parodied the original Chinese work.

Gensoumaden Saiyuki or simply *Saiyuki*, focuses on the anti-heroic characters Genjyo Sanzo, Son Goku, Cho Hakkai, and Sha Gojyo as they complete a journey for the Sanbutsushin or Three Aspects of Buddha. They must travel to India to stop the resurrection of the evil Ox-Demon-King, Gyumaoh while dealing with the "Minus Wave." The "Minus Wave" is a weapon that combines science and magic with the intention of resurrecting Gyumaoh. However, a major side effect is its ability to cause all demons in Shangri-La to come under a madness, which threatens to shatter the delicate peace that exists between humans and demons. Along the way, these four heroes must overcome their own dark, troubled pasts and come to terms with the relationships that exist between them, both currently and in their past lives. In contrast to their counterparts in *Journey to the West*, the protagonists of *Saiyuki* are darker and depart from the moralistic and religious undertones of the original. While Monk Tang is depicted as "tall, refined in manner and benevolent in temper"(Cultural China, 2010), Sanzo, in the *anime,* is often short tempered, verbally and physically abusive, and cynical, especially towards Son Goku. Even with these negative attributes, Sanzo is loyal and dedicated towards his companions. Of all the members of the group sent to retrieve the Sutra, Sanzo has the least physical strength and is most often victimized, forcing his companions into the role of rescuer. On the other hand, Sanzo plays a vital role in maintaining the bond of friendship among the group. Even with these slight differences, such as the use of modern weapons, i.e. Sanzo's pistols, and the development of character personality beyond that in the original story, this *anime* still has a close resemblance to the original Chinese novel

and provides an example of the way this story line, characters, and aesthetic are reproduced through the medium of *anime.*

Figure 10: Cho Jakkai (left), Genjyo Sanzo (left center), Sha Gojyo (right center), and Son Goku (right) from the *anime Gensoumaden Saiyuki.* (Screen Shot)

On the other hand, *Dragonball* provides greatly deviated example of the use of this story in *anime*. This franchise was based on the *manga* written and illustrated by Skira Toriyama, which was subsequently turned into three separate *anime* series. The plot follows Goku from childhood into adulthood as he trains for martial arts competitions, discovers his identity as an alien, and saves the world from numerous threats. Goku begins the first series, *Dragonball*, as a small child with a monkey's tail who is training under the martial artist Master Roshi. The first episode finds Goku befriending Bulma, a teenage girl with bright blue hair, and documents their subsequent quest to gather the seven Dragon Balls. Once the Dragon Balls have been gathered, they will grant the gatherer(s) a wish. Along the way Goku meets, fights and in some cases befriends

antagonists, such as Goku's elder brother, Raditz. Goku learns that he was sent from his home planet Vegeta in order to conquer Earth, but his 'wiring' turned faulty and he never completed his mission. Through out both this series and its two sequels, Goku reaches new levels of power, first obtaining the level of Super Saiyan and progressing to Super Saiyan 4. Each new level gives him increased power and reflects an increased level of skill. In the final installment of the franchise *Dragonball GT*, Goku's body is accidently reverted back to that of a child and remains so through out the series. In the final scene, he is seen leaving Earth with Shenron, the spirit dragon connected to the Dragon Balls. Primarily, the novel provides inspiration for the creation of Goku's character as a Saiyan, which means he has a monkey's tail and can transform into a giant monkey at the full moon. This is a clear connection to the Son Goku character in *Journey to the West* who was known as the Monkey King. While the creator of this *manga/anime* admittedly draws from *Journey to the West* for inspiration in creating the *Dragonball* series it is clear that the classical story does not take a prominent role in the *anime*. Rather it provides motifs and inspiration for the creation of a new narrative.

Figure 11: Goku (left) and Master Roshi (right) from the *anime Dragonball.* (Screen Shot)

The final example that I will look at here is episode forty-nine of the *anime Beelzebub* titled *Beelzebub's New Year's Special! Beelbeel Journey to the West!* From the outset, the viewer is aware that this episode is related to the classical Chinese novel. Contradictorily to the previous two examples, this version of *Journey to the West* does not present a serious, relatively identical rendition of the story, as in *Saiyuki* or the use of story characteristics in a new story plot, as in the *Dragonball* franchise. Interestingly, this episode of *Beelzebub* provides a parodied version of *Journey to the West* that places the *anime's* characters in the roles of characters from the novel. Comic relief is added through the character's awareness of the liminal state of the New Year's Special. In the first moments of the episode, Furuichi zealously recounted the events of the most recent story arc, including the dangerous appearance of Lord En's military followers and Oga's last minute victory in their confrontation. Furuichi is astounded that Oga and the others are not fully appreciating the gravity of their situation prior to this episode and are instead

wasting time reenacting *Journey to the West*. The recounting of these events by Furuichi is met with the resigned attitude of Oga who simply states, "we have to do a special for New Years". The comedic events continue with the explanation of roles where Furuchi is finally pacified with the turn of events by the assumption that he is Goku in this telling of *Journey to the West*. He soon learns that he is in fact Chohakki, or Zhu Wueng who is often referred to as Pig. What becomes obvious through out this episode is the humorous adaptation of this classical Chinese novel. The animation writers are self-consciously retelling this tale from a comedic standpoint by not only making the characters in the *anime* aware of the aberration from the ongoing story line but also associating them with characters in the novel that make a humorous parallel to their characters in the *anime*. Therefore the humorous element obtained in this narrative is achieved through self-conscious awareness of the parody occurring in the story.

Figure 12: Aoi (left), Oga (center left), Baby Beel (center right), and Furuichi (right) in *Beelzebub's New Year's Special! Beelbeel Journey to the West!*. (Screen Shot)

Ultimately, from this discussion, we see the use of literary works in *anime* that exhibit variation. The plots, characters, and story elements of *Journey to the West* are utilized in a number of ways within several different *anime*. While *Journey to the West* is

not considered a folk or fairy tale in the strictest sense, it does exhibit tale qualities that make it relevant to this discussion, such as journeying, supernatural villains, or magical gifts/helpers. In any case, the use of these elements in *anime*, while providing evidence for the variation in modern media of folkloric content can also demonstrate the evolving nature of folk and fairy tales.

Visual

In this section, I wish to discuss the use of visual clues and symbols as they are used to convey meaning and importance to the audience within *anime*. These symbols take the form of a number of different visual clues, interactions and exaggerated facial expressions. Some of these I have discussed previously, such as the sudden bloody nose that occurs as a result of sexual tension which derived from the belief that when a male is aroused his nose begins to bleed.

Figure 13: Minato from the *anime Sekirei* with nosebleed. (Screen Shot)

This can also be seen in other interactions, such as sword fights where opponents faceoff and run towards one another after which they stand still until the looser falls to the ground. Patrick Drazen notes a number of these "clichés" in *Anime Explosion!*, such as 'inside the lines' where "in moments of action or high emotion, … we see broad

sweeping lines suggesting speed or power" (2003:21). Drazen also provides a list of *anime* conventions that he states have a specifically Japanese root. These include, "scratching the back of the head when embarrassed", "the appearance of a giant drop of sweat (not to be mistaken for a teardrop) or the apparent outline of a large X on a character's temple in times of stress", "a large bubble of phlegm coming from a character's nose denoting that the character is asleep" and "extending a fist with the pinky finger stretched straight out [as] a gesture (usually by a male) to indicate that the speaker or the subject of the sentence "got lucky"" (Drazen, 2003:25). These visual clues become in a way a means of communicating to the audience, where the visual projection of the story becomes equally important to the telling as is the words themselves. Drazen himself notes, "all of these conventional gestures cue the audience not only as to what is happening (or about to happen), but also how to feel about it, by invoking similar situations in previous *anime*. Far from being "spoilers" about the plot, they are in their own way reassuring" (2003:25). The use of these elements in *anime* suggest a specialized language that connects viewers in a shared experience where they are introduced, understand and gain proficiency in reading them as part of the narrative

Richard Bauman in "Verbal Art as Performance" explores a similar characteristic. In this article, Bauman looks at the framing of performance in terms of Goffman's term for the process, specifically "the process by which frames are invokes and shifted, how performance is keyed" (Bauman, 1975:295). Bauman also draws from the work of Gregory Bateson concerning the communicative aspect of performance. Bauman writes:

> We may draw on Bateson's powerful insight, that it is characteristic of communicative interaction that it include a range of explicit or implicit messages which carry instructions on how to interpret the other message(s) being communicated (1975: 295).

This Bateson terms metacommunication. Bauman goes on to comment on Bateson's argument in the following:

> In empirical terms, this means that each speech community will make use of a structured set of distinctive communicative means from among its resources in culturally conventionalized and culture-specific ways to key the performance frame, such that all communication that takes place within that frame is to be understood as performance within that community (1975:295).

Bauman is elaborating on the points in a performance that communicate certain other messages. He writes, "one must determine empirically what are the specific conventionalized means that key performances in a particular community, and that these will carry from one community to another" (Bauman, 1975: 296). What can be understood from this article and Bauman's discussion of *keys* is that there are certain elements employed in performances that have additional meanings or communicate certain messages to the audience. This bears similarities to *anime* visual elements previously discussed. Nosebleeds sweat drops, and head scratches conventionally employed in *anime* to cue the audience to what is happening within the narrative or how they should feel about what's happening can be interpreted as visual keys. While Bauman deals more with verbal keys, such as once upon a time or the word "bunday" which "serves as a 'trademark' for old stories" to the Bahamians, the concept can be applied to the visual clues employed in *anime* (Bauman, 1975:296). Therefore, these visual clues are self-consciously used by animation studios and interpreted by audience members as elements possessing a certain meaning.

Ultimately, *anime,* as a visual form of storytelling, employs visual markers as a means to convey meaning to consumers. This is similar to traditional forms of performance, where the performer uses a wide array of techniques that have deeper

meaning in order to pass meaning to the audience. *Anime* draws on these techniques but also draws on visual elements that have certain meanings attached. Utilizing visual aspects for storytelling demonstrates the adaptive quality of folk tales and builds on our understanding of narrative.

Modernity

The final section of this chapter is devoted to the analysis of the ways in which gadgetry and apocalyptic story lines play a part in the plots of *anime*. In comparing the relationship between tales and Japanese animation, it is important to look at the ways in which new elements and motifs enter into this tradition. *Anime,* in particular, has been known as a medium where elements of modernity, such as technological devices, and apocalyptic futures are widely used. The use of these elements, I suggest, is indicative of what Wolfgang Meider notes is the adaptive ability of folk tale elements. Here I will discuss one of the uses of modern or futuristic characteristics that are found in *anime*. Specifically the use of advanced technology, such as large robots or complicated computer equipment as a representation of the adaptive ability of folktale motifs

Many of the earlier *anime* importations from Japan, such as *Speed Racer* and *Astro Boy* all have advanced technology as a central aspect of their plots. For example in *Speed Racer*, Speed drives the Mach 5, a car with several advanced gadgets that allow him to perform special techniques. Additionally, *Astro Boy* concerns a robotic boy with advanced artificial intelligence paired with advanced tech gear in order to battle the antagonists in the story. Each of these represents very archetypal ideas of technological advancement. The fascination with and use of these motifs continue even into newly released *anime*. Of particular interest is the frequent pairing of these things with the

natural world and Shinto ideologies. For example, in *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, a film written and directed by Hayao Miyazaki, we see the pairing of highly advanced technologies, such as giant robots, and air machines, with fast encroaching and dangerous forest insects. Nausicaä, the heroine of the film, bridges the divide between humans, who both fear and disrespect the forest, and the forest creatures. In any case, the use of technologically advanced equipment in regard to its importance in this thesis is its demonstration of the adaptive quality of tales. In relation to this, Wolfgang Meider notes,

> The simple telling of the fairy tales or their satirical, parodistic, or alienating changes all signify the "*Erneuerungsmöglichkeit*" (rejuvenation possibility) of fairy tales. This is possible only because fairy tales are "*welthaltig*" (world-encompassing) … . They contain universal human experiences of love, hate, fear, anxiety, and so on, as that is why they can be applied to the modern age as well, even though their symbolic language might need to be changed to express today's reality" (1987:43-44).

These elements are found frequently in tales and can be seen over vast temporal and geographical spaces. Consequently, animators use traditional motifs as a tool when creating *anime.* However, *anime* is also a product of modern society and therefore exhibits qualities that place it within that time matrix. It is my argument that the use of technological elements within *anime* can be considered similar to these magical motifs as they are used in traditional tales. Here I will explore this theory as it's used in *Genesis of Aquarion* and its sequel *Aquarion Evol.* These two programs focus on the piloting of a giant robot called Aquarion that is formed from the combination of three 'vectors' that resemble fighter planes. These fighter planes are piloted by 'elements' or young individuals who have special qualities that allow them to pilot the machines and which manifest in certain super abilities. In order to form Aquarion, the vectors must 'unite' – a process that involves not only the transformation of the vectors into the larger robot but also merging of the vectors' auras, or souls. The different combinations of these vector

planes, with different elements acting as the head of the robot, produce different versions of Aquarion. In turn, Aquarion amplifies the powers of the elements piloting it, which allows them to conduct battles with enemy robots.

Figure 14: Giant robot Aquarion from the *anime Genesis of Aquarion.* (Screen Shot)

As in tales, the consumer of the narrative only superficially understands the inner workings of these tools. For example, we witness the ability of the magic shirts in *Six Swans* and their ability to transform the heroine's brothers back into men; the spinning wheel in *Rumplestiltskin* unsurprisingly spins gold from straw or the transformation of the Beast in Beauty and the Beast. These things are magic and we feel no obligation to seek understanding of their inner workings. These technological tools or devices evident in *anime* work in the same way. We see the elements using the vectors and uniting to form Aquarion but we do not understand it. We are not informed of the complexity involved in these machines and the specifics of their inner workings. While magic itself

occurs in *anime,* such as in the series *Fairy Tail,* the argument here is that advanced machinery is used in the same manner as these motifs.

The use of this advanced machinery is not the sole property of *anime* and I do not intend to make that assertion within this thesis. The use of advanced machinery, post-human technology and explorations of its relationship with humanity has been a central motif within the science fiction world. On the other hand, I would not necessarily make the claim that other science fiction genres make the same relationship with traditional tales that *anime* does. That is not to say they do not utilize and draw from folklore and folk tale sources for inspiration – that is also obvious. But an inherent connection I have attempted to make is the development of the tale tradition into new forms, such as *anime.* It is possible, and in all probability very likely, that other media forms, such as science fiction, can be considered one of these new forms. Yet this has not been this focus of my research. I have aimed to explore the relationship of *anime* and tales and provide the possibility of considering *anime* a new, contemporary form of folktale that draws on the traditional.

In this chapter, I have attempted to demonstrate the nature of *anime* as a form of folk tale in its own right. It does not simply act as a conduit with the sole ability to spread folkloric content to wider audiences and thereby increasing its positive appearance and acceptability to the greater public. Nor does mass media, such as *anime*, restrict or destroy the elements exhibited by traditional tales. It should not even be said that *anime* simply utilizes tale motifs and types in order to create television for consumers who are ever ready to take it in with no other real connection to tales. What should be recognized is the adaptive ability of tales and their transformative capacity that allows for the

creation new tale traditions, such as *anime*, that borrow from the traditional as well as including aspects representing more contemporary elements, such as giant robots, a visual system of clues, and inclusion of literary works.

Conclusion

Anime is a complex and intricate genre of animation. There are many layers of understanding and inquiry that could be completed beyond the preliminary research I have completed here. Not only does it represent the artistic creation of one culture or nation, but encompasses the cultural, economic and political exchange of several cultures across many years. The relationship between Japan and the West, as well as its relationship between other Asiatic nations, is elaborate but compelling. *Anime* is but one dimension of this relationship. While I have only provided a minimal look at the possible importance of *anime* in terms of its cultural impact, I feel I have provided an example of the way folklorists and scholars of tales can interpret contemporary popular culture in terms of tradition.

With the contextualization of *anime* within its historical matrix as well as its relationship to animation on an international level in chapter one, I attempted to provide a basis for the remainder of the essay. *Anime* is not a medium created in a vacuum neither did this artistic style develop over night. It sprung from a mix of different traditions, such as traditional Japanese art, Western comics, and other Asian influences. Even today, when it is an established animation style, international economic, social, and cultural currents as well as its reciprocal relationship with other genres, such as manga, fantasy literature, and gaming, continually shape it. Chapter one sought to scratch the surface of these currents.

Chapter two began the investigation of *anime's* utilization and procurement of traditional tale elements. It was in this section that I sought not only to prove the connection of *anime* to tales but the strength of that connection. In order to accomplish

this goal, I drew on three major themes: content, structure and function. These three sections explored the apparent use of tale motifs, and tale types, the inherent structure of tales as they appeared in *anime* as well as similarities in function. Additionally, this chapter was designed to provide a sampling of the scholarly work completed on folk narrative, specifically folk tales. Folk tales are an important element of our cultural heritage and this importance is demonstrated through their continued use and presence in other forms, such as *anime.* Primarily this chapter was intended to demonstrate the dynamic and adaptive quality of traditional tale characteristics.

Following this chapter, I looked at the ways in which *anime* builds on the traditional elements of tales and makes something new. *Anime* is not the direct recreation of tales nor is it told in the same way as oral tales. In this chapter, I examined three categories concerning the ways *anime* builds on narrative. These three categories are variation, visuality, and modernity. Variation specifically addresses the presence of variation, an essential quality of folklore, in *anime.* Visuality addresses the use of elements to convey specific meanings and the relationship those elements have to "keys" as explored by Richard Bauman. Finally, Modernity looks at the presence of advanced technology in *anime* and its resemblance to magic motifs in traditional tales. Not only does this medium utilize conservative elements of the tale tradition, it also creates diverse new means for storytelling that are reflective of the animators' perspectives, their audiences' desires and the cultural and temporal matrix in which they were created.

While this thesis has looked at several connections between folk tales and narrative research and *anime*, there is still much research to complete. A primary area that deserves further investigation is the analysis of specific tales. Primarily in this thesis

I looked more broadly at characteristics of folk tales as a genre. I was not focused on the use of specific tale types and how they get used in *anime.* Investigation along these lines would greatly increase the understanding of the dynamic nature of folk tales. Research into this connection would also benefit from a fieldwork perspective. This thesis was entirely based on research and did not include any insight based on fieldwork. The inclusion of this aspect would be of great use in understanding the role of *anime* not only from a Japanese perspective but also internationally. By gaining a greater understanding of the consumption of *anime,* we can gain a greater understanding of how tales told through *anime* relate to tales told in previous years. By extension, this type of investigation leads to an important aspect of *anime* and similar types of entertainment – fan culture. Fan culture is a vital area of research concerning folklore and *anime.* Not only does it reveal important insights concerning folk groups, but it also serves as an interesting possibility for research into the dynamic quality of folk tales as those who consume them create new stories. In short, there is a great many areas that need further research concerning the topic of folk tales and their presence in *anime.* This thesis is but one step in understanding this connection. Hopefully, what was analyzed here provides inspiration for this further research.

There are many arguments and elements presented within this thesis that can be made concerning alternate media. One could apply the presence of folk tale structures to a number of television shows, movies or books, for example. However, it has not been my argument that these elements exist solely within *anime*. Rather I have attempted to demonstrate that *anime* is but an example of these arguments and elements, a good example, but an example nonetheless. Ultimately, my goal was to provide additional

evidence for proving the dynamism that exists within narrative, specifically folk tales. Individuals who have only experience folk and fairy tales through the lens of Disney are not fully experiencing the richness of the genre. However, I believe *anime* has the potential to at least pose a level of competition to the popularly held view of tales as Western animation studios, such as Disney, present them. We can no longer simply think of tales as a remnant of a pre-literate society. Even though scholars have recognized the potential and usefulness of mass media in the transmission of tales, I still believe there is a lingering remnant of romanticized attachment to the oral tale being told as afternoon or midwinter entertainment (even Jack Zipes, argues the modernization and mass mediating of folktales is taking something away from their original glory). In order to further the research of this genre and of the field, it is time to release these attachments and fully accept the new form of folktales.

APPENDIX A

The following is a list of the functions outlined by Propp:

1. One of the members of a family absents himself from home.
2. An interdiction is addressed to the hero.
3. The interdiction is violated.
4. The Villain makes an attempt at reconnaissance.
5. The villain receives information about his victim.
6. The villain attempts to deceive his victim in order to take possession of him or his belongings
7. The victim submits to deception and thereby unwittingly helps his enemy.
8. The villain causes harm or injury to a member of a family
    a. One member of a family either lacks something or desires to have something.
9. Misfortune or lack is made known; the hero is approached with a request or command; he is allowed to go or he is dispatched.
10. The seeker agrees to or decides upon counteraction.
11. The hero leaves home.
12. The hero is tested, interrogated, attacked, etc., which prepares the way for his receiving either a magical agent or helper.
13. The hero reacts to the actions of the future donor.
14. The hero acquires the use of a magical agent.
15. The hero is transferred, delivered, or led to the whereabouts of an object of search.
16. The hero and the villain join in direct combat.
17. The hero is branded.
18. The villain is defeated.
19. The initial misfortune or lack is liquidated.
20. The hero returns.
21. The hero is pursued.
22. Rescue of the hero from pursuit.
23. The hero, unrecognized, arrives home or in another country.
24. A false hero presents unfounded claims.
25. A difficult task is proposed to the hero.
26. The task is resolved.
27. The hero is recognized.
28. The false hero or villain is exposed.
29. The hero is given a new appearance.
30. The villain is punished.
31. The hero is married and ascends the throne.

(Propp, 1968)

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GLOSSARY

Anime – Shortened form of the word animation, which is used to specifically refer to Japanese animation.

Ayakashi – A term used to refer to supernatural beings in Japanese folklore. Can be interchangeable with the term *Yokai*.

Bishojo – Subgenre of *anime* that depicts beautiful young girls.

Cosplay – Type of fan activity where fans don costumes that resemble characters from their favorite show, book or related media.

Dubbed – Foreign television series that have been translated so that there are English voice actors speaking.

Hagoromo – Special cloak worn by a tennyo, or heavenly being. A hagoromo appears in Japanese folktales that fall under the AT tale type 400 or swan maiden.

Harem Anime – A subgenre of *anime* featuring one male lead character surrounded by several female support characters.

Kitsune – Name for Japanese folklore fox. Often attributed with supernatural powers and multiple tails.

Manga – Genre of illustrated book or comic originating in Japan. The various *manga* published in Japan typically serve as the basis for *anime.*

Mecha – A subgenre of *anime* typically concerned with giant robots.

Motif Spotting – Term used by Mikel J, Koven to negatively refer to the practice of pointing out motifs in mass media without any analysis.

Oni – Character from Japanese folklore that can be translated as demon, ghost, ogre, or any number of supernatural entities.

Otaku – Japanese term used to refer to people with obsessive enthusiasm for *anime, manga,* video games, or any combination of the three. At times this term has very negative connotations but has, in recent years, gained a more positive image.

Shojo – Subgenre of *anime* that appeals to a young female audience.

Subbed – Description of foreign language television series which still retain their original voice actors but have subtitles.

Tennyo – Heavenly being that wears a special feathered cloak, or hagoromo. Often found in Japanese folktales, where the Tennyo's hagoromo is stolen by a moral and she is forced into marriage. This type of tale falls under the AT tale type 400 or swan maiden.

Yokai – A term used to refer to Japanese folkloric beings, such as ghosts, apparitions, or unidentified supernatural beings. Interchangeable with other terms, such as Ayakashi or Oni.

Yuki-Onna – Character from Japanese folklore. A woman who appears on snowy nights or high in the mountains, she is often portrayed as a malevolent spirit.