

# **“ FINNISH FANDOM OF JAPANESE POPULAR CULTURE ”**

*~What are the Finns doing for anime, manga, and J-rock?~*

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## JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>It has not been many years since the popularity of anime, manga and J-rock has risen in Finland. Especially, despite of limited availability of materials and small-scaled markets in Finland, there is a fascination among fans which has grown through the fan community via conventions and virtual networking.</p> <p>This paper will examine Japanese popular culture fandom, including situation of anime and manga, and J-rock in Finland. When/How they became the fans ? What the fans in Finland are doing, are they categorized as just “fans,” or “otaku” etc..? This research is not only because I am used to be fan of manga, J-rock but also it is fascinating to observe the Japanese popular culture fandom since this subject has not yet been well-researched in Finland. For comparison and precedent, culture theory from similar studies in the U.S.A. can be used and this research will specifically focus on analysis of the interview with Finnish fan. The question this paper shall seek to answer is: What does it mean to be manga-anime-J-rock fan? How are the Finnish fans expressing their fandom? Moreover, among with fan activity, it shall focus on the virtual community and networking. Though there real-life meetings through conventions are common, using modern technology (the Internet) is a potential tool to make fandom grow. It especially is a place where information and opinions can be exchanged through fan forums, including sharing work and downloading materials which creates a group community. Therefore this paper will approach what the role of virtual networking and virtual community means for fans in Finland.</p>	
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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Animen, mangan ja J-Rockin suosion noususta Suomessa ei ole kulunut kovin montaa vuotta. Materiaalien rajoitetusta saatavuudesta ja Suomen pienistä markkinoista huolimatta, kiinnostus fanien keskuudessa on kasvanut faniyhteisön välityksellä fanitapahtumien ja virtuaalisen verkostoitumisen kautta.</p> <p>Tämä tutkimus tarkastelee japanilaista populaarikulttuuriyhteisöä käsitellen animen, mangan ja J-Rockin tilannetta Suomessa. Milloin ja miten faneista tuli faneja? Mitä suomalaiset fanit tekevät? Luokitellaanko heidät vain ”faneiksi” vai ”otakuiksi” jne. Tämän tutkimuksen taustalla ei ole ainoastaan oma kiinnostukseni mangaan ja J-rockiin vaan sen lisäksi on myös erittäin mielenkiintoista havainnoida japanilaista populaarikulttuuriyhteisöä, koska aihetta ei olla vielä tutkittu paljon Suomessa. Vertailuna ja taustatietona voidaan käyttää kulttuuriteoriaa samanlaisista tutkimuksista Yhdysvalloissa. Lisänä on myös haastattelu suomalaisen fanin kanssa. Tämän tutkielman tarkoitus on vastata kysymykseen: Mitä tarkoittaa olla manga, anime tai J-Rock fani? Miten suomalaiset ilmaisevat faniuttaan?</p> <p>Lisäksi tutkimus keskittyy vituaaliyhteisöön ja verkostoitumiseen fanien kesken. Vaikka tapaamiset fanitapahtumissa ovat yleisiä, moderni teknologia (internet) on potentiaalinen työkalu faniyhteisön kasvattamiseen. Tietoa ja mielipiteitä voi jakaa internetforumien välityksellä. Tätä ovat esimerkiksi omien töiden jakaminen ja materiaalien lataaminen. Näin ollen tämä tutkimus käsittelee myös virtuaalisen verkostoitumisen ja virtuaaliyhteisön roolia, sekä niiden merkitystä suomalaisille faneille.</p>	
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## 1. Introduction: Overview

It has been many years since anime, or Japanese animation, and manga, Japanese comics, have become well-known as an element of Japanese popular culture. This popularity has emerged not only in the United States, but also in Latin America, Southeast Asia and Europe, particularly the United Kingdom. The country of Finland is not an exception to this trend; the degree of popularity of anime and manga there is astounding, despite of limited availability of materials and overwhelmingly small-scaled markets. It seems, rather, that there is a fascination among fans which has grown through the fan community via conventions and virtual networking.

For instance, Japanese animation has risen to prominence at Finnish film festivals. Three of the films voted “Most Wanted” over the past eight years at the Helsinki Rakkautta & Anarkiaa (R & A) festival were anime. This international film festival, which celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2007, drew 45,000 people year 2008, and its audience continues to grow annually.

Moreover, Japanese animation films have been voted the Most Wanted film for two consecutive years in 2006 and 2007, proving the degree of their popularity. The R & A film festival of 2007 also invited director Miyazaki Goro<sup>1</sup> from Japan, and his presence was a source of wide-scale anticipation at the event.

Since the popularity of anime and manga has risen in Finland, J-rock fandom has also become an element of Japanese pop culture worth examination. J-rock refers to Japanese rock music whose songs are often used in anime TV, films, and game. Thus it is widely believed that the beginning of the popularity of Japanese rock is related to rise of anime and manga. The media often reports upon the particularly early appearance of especially long queues of fans at venues where J-rock is going to be played, stressing their popularity with their fan base. In Finland, despite high-priced tickets, fans are still highly devoted, and this style of queuing seems to continue to increase over time. This phenomenon has caused an increasing number of J-rock bands to travel from Japan to tour Finland in the past few years.

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<sup>1</sup> Director of anime “Tales from Earthsea”, son of Hayao Miyazaki director

Anime and manga conventions, or local fan meetings, are organized in many Finnish cities. Many fans at conventions participate in cosplay, short for “costume play,” in which they wear clothing imitating their favorite characters, often handmade costumes. During the well-known Cosplay Tour, fans vote on best costumes, and later the winners are publicised via the Internet. The activity of cosplay and the rise of conventions are related to not only to manga and anime, but also to the popularity and prominence of J-rock.

This paper will examine Japanese popular culture fandom, including anime and manga, and J-rock, in Finland. Whether the fans in Finland are categorized as just “fans,” “otaku”<sup>2</sup>, “maniacs”, “collectors”, or “nerds”, it is fascinating to observe the Japanese popular culture fandom since this subject has not yet been well-researched in Finland. For comparison and precedent, culture theory from similar studies in the U.S.A. can be used.

The question this paper shall seek to answer is: What does it mean to be manga-anime-J-rock fan? How are the Finnish fans expressing their fandom?

Moreover, among with fan activity, it shall focus on the virtual community and networking. Though there real-life meetings through conventions are common, using modern technology (the Internet) is a potential tool to make fandom grow. It especially is a place where information and opinions can be exchanged through fan forums, including sharing work and downloading materials which creates a group community. Therefore this paper will approach what the role of virtual networking and virtual community means for fans in Finland.

Furthermore, the Finnish market for anime and manga is quite different from the markets in English-speaking countries, instead exhibiting qualities more similar to the German market, according to Jonathan Clements<sup>3</sup> lecture at Animecon. This means that effects on the anime and manga markets in Finland will differ significantly from those on the American and British markets, where the impact of Japanese pop culture has been most studied. Chapter four of this paper presents the “ Popularity of Japanese Popular Culture in Finland ”, including when it started, how it has grown, and the situation of Finnish market nowadays to analyze trends in the Finnish market which continue to today.

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<sup>2</sup> Original meaning is “your home” and since 80's it can be used as slung for person who is devoted much money/time on own hobbies, especially manga, anime, video games etc.

<sup>3</sup> British author and scriptwriter. He is also the co-author of anime, Japanese television drama.

Finally, I would like to mention a note about the origin of this paper. When Japanese anime and manga came to mind as my topic, I was curious to find out whether there was much similarity between Finnish and Japanese fans who refer to themselves as otaku. The word is well-known abroad for those people who are fans of anime and manga. However, the origin of the term otaku appeared as a product of popular culture since 80s in Japan, and it has many different layers of meanings. The perspectives on otaku are greatly varied, and sometimes the term carries discriminatory connotations. Thus, I slightly shifted the aim of this paper from that idea. Instead, I will approach how Finnish fans have understood the term otaku and what it currently means in Finland.

## 2. Description of J-rock, Anime, and Manga

### 2.1 J-rock

J-rock is a shortening of the original name “Japanese rock music,” and its popularity has rapidly grown in foreign country in the past few years. It began as an outshoot of the punk and New Wave movements in Japan during the 1980s, when independent music labels and music magazines began gaining popularity and power. At that time, Japanese rock upsurged gradually in the entertainment field in Japan, where only “popular songs” or “pops” previously were significant. The age of the Japanese rock band finally boomed in the latter half of 80s.

J-rock is originally a generic name for any Japanese rock band, including the subgenres of garage rock, beat rock, punk rock etc. The type of J-rock which has gained awareness abroad in recent years, is specially categorized as the “visual kei” subgenre. Visual kei is characterized by it’s a visual impact, with much costuming and make up, with hair dyed or sprayed in ways. These visuals are sometimes more emphasized than their music. According to Wikipedia, Visual kei “has enjoyed popularity among independent underground projects, as well as artists achieving mainstream success, with influences from Western phenomena, such as glam, Goth and cyberpunk.” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visual\\_kei#\\_ref-LATimes-Pop\\_0](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visual_kei#_ref-LATimes-Pop_0)) Though visual kei had emerged in the late 1980s in Japan, its popularity had not extended worldwide until recently. However, it did launch in European and American markets in early 1990. According to Wikipedia, “during the 80's, Japanese rock bands gave birth to the movement known as visual kei, represented during its history by bands like Buck-Tick<sup>4</sup>, X Japan<sup>5</sup>, Luna Sea<sup>6</sup>, Malice Mizer<sup>7</sup> and many others, some of which [have] experienced success in the recent years.” The usage of the word J-rock to describe visual kei has emerged abroad in past a few years, because visual kei bands alone have reached foreign countries. Indeed, within J-rock, the popularity of visual kei is growing, and it is uniquely represented

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<sup>4</sup> Japanese rock band, formed since 1985, later they are called as visual-kei

<sup>5</sup> Visual-kei artist, formed since 1982. They are influenced by rock band “Kiss “.

<sup>6</sup> Japanese rock band, formed since 1989-2007

<sup>7</sup> Visual-kei band,, formed since 1992-2001.

abroad as a part of Japanese popular culture. Finally, visual kei has received its reputation mainly from abroad, rather than from its own country of origin. In fact, because of their unusual visuals and less attention to musical elements, they general take an active part only in the Japanese underground scene, so they are rarely seen in Japanese mainstream media.

The first performance of a J-rock band in Finland was launched by the band “Blood”<sup>8</sup> in 2005. Ever since then, J-rock bands have continued coming to Finland due to growing popularity of J-rock and demand from Finnish J-rock fans. One band that performed in Finland proved their popularity as following: “The album [Withering to Death] also managed to achieve Dir en grey's<sup>9</sup> first non-Asian chart position, reaching #31 in the Finnish album charts. The subsequent single, “Clever Sleazoid”, later climbed to #15 on the singles charts in the same country.” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dir\\_en\\_grey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dir_en_grey))

These appearance of J-rock band in Finland seems to have hit its peak in 2007(see figure 1), but Finnish fans and the Finnish media are paying attention to more J-rock bands; more about this phenomenon and its details will be described in chapter 4.6.

## 2.2 Anime and Manga

The cultural and social meaning of anime and manga differ between Japan and many other countries. In the first section, the definition of anime and manga and distinctions between countries' meanings will be approached. In the second section, their historical dimensions will be examined.

First of all, since the latter half of 1990, Japanese animation, which is called “anime,” has received increasing attention as a popular culture element that represents Japan. Author Nobuyuki Tsugata insists in his writing that the word “anime” is a term that indicates a Japanese animation, and is not an abbreviation of the English word “animation”. Anime is to be understood as a Japanese term and does not apply to any foreign animation. Moreover, the element of a close relationship and long history with manga, or Japanese comics, that anime exhibits creates a clear distinction from overseas animation.

However, the given definition of anime often depends on the country of its origin. Napier

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<sup>8</sup> Japanese rock band which is formed since 2002.

<sup>9</sup> Japanese rock band which is formed since 1997.

states from a non-Japanese point of view, “...the Japan of the 1990s began to develop a new export, animated films and videos – anime, a Japanese abbreviation of the English word ‘animation’.” (Napier 2008: 5)

Animation films are created by producing the movement of still images via continuous projection of a progression of images, called “frames,” into scenes. Technically, the word “anime” might be taken from “animation”, but animation, as described above, is meant to indicate the mechanism/technique of the film, while anime describes a genre of film. In other words, as Gilles Poitras defines, “anime as defined by common non-Japanese fan usage, is any animation made in Japan.” (Poitras 2001: 7)

Secondly, as aforementioned, one important characteristic of anime is its long relationship with manga, or Japanese comics. In the 1980s in Japan, the number of anime telecasted in one week approached 50, most of which were based on manga. It can also be established that most popular manga in Japan eventually become anime. This means that there is also a long history of interaction and influence between anime and manga that is not shared by other countries' forms of animation, and it can be said that the development of anime and its recent attention worldwide is very much related to the development of manga.

Here, exactly what manga is should be addressed: it is a Japanese comic similar to an American “cartoon”, “comic book”, or “comic strip”. According to Frederik L. Schodt, “As a medium of expression, manga [...] exist in a niche somewhere between film, records, novels, and television.” (Schodt 1996: 29)

Indeed, manga is a Japanese comic which consists of text, pictures and narration. The format consists of divided panels with balloons which tell a story from panel to panel, page to page, much like other countries' comics. So what makes them differ? Unlike other countries' comics, manga is usually published in five or more volumes. In just one series of manga, the reader might read over 2000 pages all together.

Moreover, manga and anime have a long history in Japan, though they did not gain recognition abroad until anime films hit the charts in the U.S.

For instance, “Ghost in the Shell”(see image 1) by Mamoru Oshii was ranked 1st place in the

home video section of American “Billboard” in 1996. Hayao Miyazaki's film “Spirited Away”(see image 2) also received movie awards in foreign countries in 2002, which evidenced the recognition of anime abroad.

Image 1: “Ghost in the shell”



Image 2: “Spirited away”



However, there are still misunderstandings in foreign countries surrounding anime and manga. For instance, there is controversy in that manga and anime are criticized as dangerous media with sexual content, violence, and nudity. The same claims are not made in Japan, since specific subgenres exist for these topics, such as the adult market.

Different countries have different norms of acceptability in the arts. This is true both for national culture like Japanese and religious cultures, like Muslim, Christian, or Buddhist. (Schodt 1996: 49) Therefore, the decision of whether one interprets a specific work as art or pornography is actually a reflection of their cultural perspective. Frederick states that “many non-Japanese who perceive manga to be pornographic and violent are often unaware of how biased their perspective is.”(Schodt 1996: 51-52)

Furthermore, it might be a stereotype in countries outside of Japan that manga and anime are only meant to be read by children. In Japan, manga is published weekly, biweekly, monthly, or bimonthly in paperback or hardback books and magazines, which are sold in huge numbers. It is common to see readers between ages 6 and 60; if these media were only for children,

they would not have grown such a huge market. Frederick also comments that “what most American visitors to Japan fail to realize that manga today are no longer a medium for children alone and that manga have become a mass medium of entertainment as common as novels or film.”(Schodt 1996:52)

As this states, since manga and anime exhibit so much variety in topic or theme, including science fiction, fantasy, horror, comedy, crime, romance, sports, adult, and gay, each should be considered a medium, such as novels or films.

### **2.3 History of Anime and Manga**

Japanese anime and manga have a history that extends back nearly 90 years before the first domestic production was released to the public. This chapter will present that history.

It has been assumed that the first animation in the world was produced outside of Japan around the beginning of the 1900s. Although it is uncertain when animation was first brought to and shown in Japan, it is considered around 1906. (Nobuyuki Tsugata 2005:56)

In the following years, animation was imported from abroad, and the first Japanese animation was created around 1916-17(Meiji era<sup>10</sup>). At this time, the most popular techniques in foreign countries, cutting paper anime and paper animated cartoon, were also employed in Japan. Three main Japanese creators arose, two of whom had been manga cartoonists. The anime productions they created were short stories, roughly ten minutes long. In the 1920s, from the end of the Taisyo Era<sup>11</sup> to the beginning of the Syowa Era<sup>12</sup> in Japan, popular manga began being made into anime for children.

Interestingly, during the Pacific War, the Japanese military invested an enormous budget into anime so that technical improvements could be used to further Japanese national development. According to Tsugata, it can be considered that there have been three anime booms in Japan, as following: (Tsugata 2005:181-182)

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<sup>10</sup> The period in Japanese history 1868-1912

<sup>11</sup> The period in Japanese history 1912-1926

<sup>12</sup> The period in Japanese history 1926-1989

1. 1960s - Osamu Tezuka's "Astro Boy" introduced the idea of using manga with narratives and the first use of cinematic angle since 1950. It caused the first anime boom in Japan
2. The late 70s to late 80s – These years saw an expansion of the genres being made into anime, as well as further development of storylines, and improvements in technique, such as in "Space Battleship Yamato", "Galaxy Express 999" by Leiji Matsumoto, and "Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind" by Hayao Miyazaki. Another cause of this boom may be the spread of original video animations, or OVAs (anime made specifically for home-video release) for the VCR in Japan in 1980s.
3. Late 1990s to present – This period has been characterised by the popularity of "Princess Mononoke" by Miyazaki's film and the use of the word "anime" being generalized in foreign countries. The number of anime production companies has risen in Japan, as well as the distribution of anime to foreign countries. As a result, anime has become more globally recognized as popular culture element from Japan.

### **3. Earlier Research on Fandoms within Japanese Popular Culture**

In this chapter, I would like to approach the relationship between English-speaking countries and manga and anime, and also to focus on the early fandom of the Japanese popular culture in the U.S..

#### **3.1. Hybridization**

Anime and manga have long been exported to foreign countries, but recognition of them as elements of Japanese popular culture only emerged in the late 90s.

Nevertheless, Japanese anime and manga have been influenced by American comics and animation. For instance, artist Osamu Tezuka has used cinematic techniques which were said to be inspired by American Disney animation in late 60s. Tezuka's creation "Astro Boy", 193 episodes of anime, were translated to launch on the U.S. TV screen in 1964, at the same year Tezuka met his hero, Walt Disney, in N.Y.(Roland Kelt 2008:44). Tezuka is an important creator in today's Japanese anime and manga industry, and his American background is a significant influence. Schodt states that, "the modern Japanese manga is a synthesis, a long Japanese tradition of art that has taken on a physical form imported from the West." (Schodt 1996:21)

Indeed, the Japanese creation of anime and manga contains many Western sources represented with original Japanese characters and plots. It has become a hybridization. Thus a medium (animation) imported from the U.S. has been reproduced or recreated by Japanese creators, and exported to foreign countries as a purely "Japanese" culture element.

#### **3.2. Fandom in different generations**

The boom periods for anime and manga in Japan can also be considered as "generations," and there are trends that correspond to these groups, such as similar favourite characters and titles. Likewise, English-speaking countries also have different fandom generations as following:

- The 1960s period may be called the "Astro Boy generation," who watched many Japanese

anime on TV since Astro Boy launched in its translated version. Although the fandom was not large, this generation introduced anime to the next generation.

- The early fans in late 70's to mid 80's may be called the “Yamato generation” or the “Robotech generation”. A pattern of very consistent viewing within this generation – sometimes jokingly referred to as “addiction” - emerged when the “Space Battleship Yamato” (Uchu Senkan Yamato) series was shown during the late 70 and 80s. A second generation during this boom appeared, known as the “Akira generation.” When the film “Akira” (see image 3) launched in 1989, it had significant differences from earlier Japanese anime and this generation grew out of the new fans acquired outside the existing fandom.
- In previous anime, heroes were almost always male, or robots. However, in the 90s, an anime with a female heroine, “Sailor Moon”, was launched. For this character, many high school girls and even younger were attracted to watch anime. This group of new fans could thus be called the “Sailor Moon generation.”

Image 3: “Akira”



According to Poitras, there exists an “Otaku generation,” which is composed of fans of Pokemon and Hayao Miyazaki anime. However, this term of use may not be appropriate, since “otaku” is particularly used for individuals, but not whole groups. I propose that those fans following the Sailor Moon generation may instead be referred to as the “modern high-tech anime generation,” as American animation companies have shifted to using computer graphics in animations such as “Toy Story” in 1995 and “Monsters Inc.” in 2001, while Japanese anime “Pokemon” in 1996 and “Spirited Away” in 2001 have appeared.

### **3.3. Success of Anime and Manga in the U.S.**

In the early 80s, more anime and manga were brought into the cultural environment in the United States. According to Frederick, aspects of this phenomenon are as following:

- A few subtitled Japanese animation started to show on Ultra High Frequency television channels in the U.S. in areas with many Japanese-speaking people.
- Some dubbed and edited Japanese anime appeared on cable and local channels. Although shown with new scripts, they were recognizable as Japanese animation, which caused the medium to receive new interest.
- In 1977, a local organization in Los Angeles started regularly screening Japanese anime.
- Japanese anime and manga creators started to visit American comic conventions.

In addition to the aspects listed above, the most significant interaction between manga or anime in America and the rest of the world started with recording anime on video cassette recorder. This meant that Japanese animation was enabled to be seen in other languages via fans applying subtitles or dubbing the originals. The narratives could be worked out more clearly in voice over because of the dialogue and tone present in animation that was not available in manga, and thus the medium could be interpreted by more viewers. As a result, more fans copied and edited their favourite anime, and more anime spread to share between fans and friends.

Once computers were available to the general population, many fans could easily learn to do subbing and copying; thus, with this modern technology, the fandom was able to grow even faster.

### **3.4. Lost in Adaptation**

The number of translated manga is increasing and their popularity is rising. In the U.S., in 1999, the number of sold copies of the translated version of the Japanese children's manga "Pokemon" exceeded a million. Despite this popularity, there are many aspects of concern that may be lost during the process of translating from original Japanese-made manga.

As per cultural tradition, Japanese texts are written vertically, from the upper side to down, and text in the manga world has appeared in the same way inside of balloons. Likewise, the

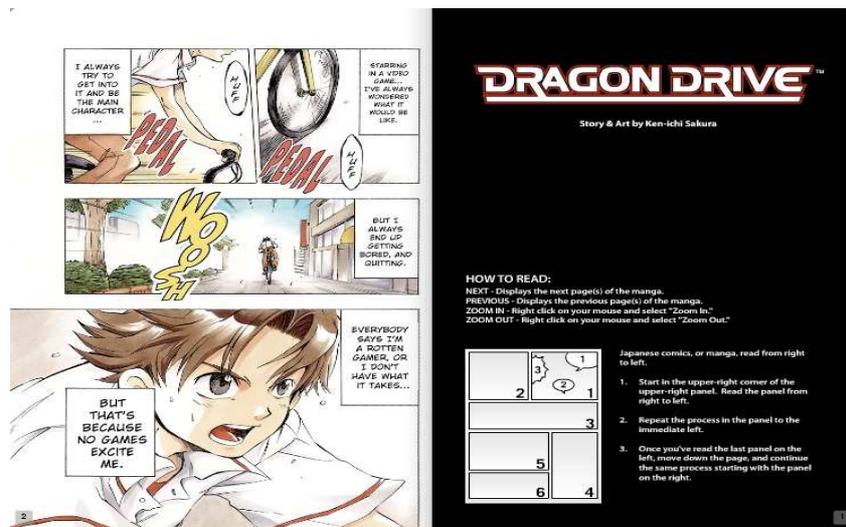
sequence of image flows from right to left, instead of left to right. In other words, the narrative begins at the top right frame and shift down to the left, which is a reversal of the Western way. This means that when manga is published in Western country, it may be dramatically changed. For instance, text balloons must be redrawn in order to make horizontal text fit, and all pages have to be flipped. However, the reversing of the format may create problems, such as right-handed characters becoming left-handed, and car handles being shown on opposite sides, so that it is not always easy for Japanese publishers to adapt these images.

Moreover, sound effects are totally different, such as dogs barking, humans gasping, or rain pouring. When changing to English sounds effects, sometimes it becomes necessary to change the format of the page and drawings, and an American publisher may prefer more traditional American sound effects over the original Japanese emphasis. Thus, despite the popularity of Japanese manga in the U.S., original Japanese manga are reconstructed by American publishers in order to be adapted for the American market.

Although some manga are available in both “unflipped” (right-to-left) and “flipped” (left-to-right) formats, unless readers have opportunity to read both versions, sometimes they become much less recognizable after a local publisher has completely edited and changed from an original. The image 4 gives an example of how American publishers have shown how to read Japanese manga.

Furthermore, another issue to concern about publishing is that colourization. While most American comics are printed in colour, Japan made manga is monotone. This can be disadvantage that if Japanese manga is published as it is, it wouldn't fit American mainstream market.

Image 4: An American publishers show how to read Japanese manga  
<http://www.shonenjump.com/onlinemanga/sjom.php?chap=dd-hi-preview>



### 3.5 Phenomenon in U.S.

Before anime emerged into the mainstream in the period the 1970s and the 1990s, the United States anime fandom began as a very small underground group. As modern technology such as the internet did not yet exist, the growing popularity of video recorders (VCR) in the late 70s gave fans the opportunity to begin trading video tapes with the Japanese. Both Japan and the U.S. using the same broadcasting system facilitated the trade.

According to Sean Leonard, “in November 1977, fans from the Cartoon Fantasy Organization (CFO) in LA started corresponding with other Japanese animation fans and clubs [...]. As a result, fans began to trade videos with Japanese fans who wanted to Star Trek and Battlestar Galactica.” (Leonard 2005: 286)

In 1985, when Commodore-Amiga, Inc., a personal computer company, began to sell hardware with the newly-developed Generator Lock (genlock) system, which allowed the advanced computer owner to subtitle videos. Fansubs first appeared in the United States in 1989, and were produced by small groups who consisted “of one or more translators, editors, typesetters, timers, and first-tier distributors.” ([http://groups.csail.mit.edu/mac/classes/6.805/student-papers/fall03-papers/Progress\\_Against\\_the\\_Law.html](http://groups.csail.mit.edu/mac/classes/6.805/student-papers/fall03-papers/Progress_Against_the_Law.html))

These groups would organize local underground screenings to show their subtitled films, as they were technically illegal. These clubs often organized meeting and screening to show

illegal subtitled anime in local college/university. Since these subtitled versions were not available anywhere else, the popularity of the screenings and clubs grew quickly, which created a ripple effect, introducing more fans to more anime and more anime to more fans - even more so because one generally had to be a member of a club to be privy to the screenings.

There were some ethical restrictions placed on fansubbing, such as:

“A: A title will cease distribution in fansub form once the title is legitimately licensed for distribution in the U.S., even if that distribution may be far off in the future.

B: No cash for fan sub shall change hands; instead, the acquire will send the fansubber a new blank tape and a self-addressed stamped envelope so that the copied tape can be returned.”(Poitras 2001:74)

Generally, these clubs held meetings at local colleges and universities, using school facilities such as Audio-Visual (AV) equipment, and available meeting space. Magazines or newsletters were often created as well, in order to inform members of the club's events. Now, they may be used as documentation of the clubs' activities, and a historical record of the growth of the fan community in that area. (Poitras 2001:77)

### **3.5.1 Convention**

Conventions, or large-scale meetings of fans, have been the most effective source of information and opinion exchange for fans of anime and manga. Though modern technology may provide one with information and allow local fans to make connections worldwide, conventions allow people who share the same hobby to discuss and debate their interests and make new friends face-to-face. It is therefore a very meaningful event for fans who desire to connect with one another and explore their chosen activities. Conventions in the United States typically present many different types of anime and host artist interviews as well as panel discussions. There are also dealers' rooms, where fans can buy merchandise including CDs, DVDs, posters, cels (short for transparent celluloid sheets on which characters are inked on one side and painted in on the other), model kits, and figurines.

The first AnimeCon -“the first International conference on Japanese Animation” - was held in 1991 for four days in San Jose, California, and other major conventions in the U.S. include Fanimecon (California), AnimeExpo (California), Project A-Kon (Texas) and Otakon

(Maryland). During conventions, one highlight is “cosplay”, or costume play, in which fans wear clothing themed like their favorite characters, most of which is handmade. Some fans will dress up together as groups of characters from one series of manga or video games. Poitras states about cosplay fandom in the U.S. that “At U.S. Cons there is always a capacity crowd at the masquerade. Here cosplayers make a variety of presentation, from simple walk-ons to real performances, both musical and theatrical.”(Poitras 2001:82) Cosplay in America has been performed as early as the late 1960s, at Star Trek conventions in both the United States and in Japan. Dressing up itself is not an unfamiliar custom, as it already exists in such American traditions as the celebration of Halloween.

### **3.5.2. Dojinshi vs. Fan Fiction**

Non-commercial literary works by amateur artists are called “dojinshi”, translating roughly to “publications among friends”. (Poitras 2001:67) More specifically, dojinshi are underground publications of written or drawn Japanese works such as manga, novels, etc. The publications are usually created by fans, and there are many different genres of dojinshi. For instance, they may be categorized as manga, anime, games, literature, novels etc. However, the creation of dojinshi mainly began within the field of literature with novels from the early 1800s in Japan. Now it is typically used with manga and anime, and games, since those markets have grown rapidly.

Dojinshi first appeared in the U.S. in 1993, though the body of literature termed fanfiction was already in existence, and the two styles share many characteristics. In the U.S., fanfiction is unauthorized, non-commissioned publications in which authors create alternative stories based on published characters, settings, or other elements of story. Both are read primarily by fans of the series they were based on. However, dojinshi is mainly of Japanese works. Also, dojinshi are often, though not always, sexually explicit. As dojinshi, when they were first introduced to the American market, were being distributed in an underground fashion, adult-oriented dojinshi did not receive much attention. However, since technological advancements allow the rapid creation and distribution of dojinshi via the Internet, this has changed. Dojinshi creators have begun to publish on digital media and to provide printable versions via the web, and this new media gives creators the ability to explore the industry. Fanfiction has also benefitted from this technology, becoming widespread thanks to the Internet, and using the Web as a method of publication.

## 4. Popularity of Japanese Popular Culture in Finland

### 4.1 International market

First of all, I would like to comment on the manga market in other nations than Finland, such as in Asia, other parts of Europe and the U.K., and the U.S. Then I will focus on the Finnish manga market.

As Schodt states, whenever manga and anime are distributed to be translated into local languages, they generally are first translated from Japanese to English, especially American English, then from English to the local language. (Schodt 1996:308) Because of the time required to translate from two different languages to the final language, it is understandable that there is a notable publication delay, and often less availability of titles. The price of the products, too, generally becomes significantly higher than in the previous versions.

Regarding the popularity of manga in Asia, the region was manga's first large-scale market, beginning in the early 70s. It became especially popular in countries where Japan had previously established colonies or otherwise maintained tight cultural ties.(Schodt 1996:305) However, in other Asian countries besides Japan, manga may be approached differently.

For instance, Korea shares a similar manga magazine “omnibus” style, which was first popularized by and produced in Japan in the late 50s. Korean animations have also been recently advertised abroad, notably “Aachi & Ssipak” (see image. 5), which was shown at the R&A Film Festival in 2007.

Image 5: “Aachi & Ssipak ” ([http://www.hiff.fi/elokuvat/elokuva.html?elokuva\\_id=104](http://www.hiff.fi/elokuvat/elokuva.html?elokuva_id=104) )



But Korean animation has not yet proved to be as influential a phenomenon as Japanese anime, possibly partially because of the exclusivity of South Korea. In the near future, South Korean animation may receive much media attention. Many Japanese manga and magazines are also translated under their publishers' licensing into other Asian languages, including Cantonese, Mandarin, Hokkien, and Thai. This was especially notable in the case of “Doraemon” (image.6), and “Dragonball” (image.7), which received much popularity in Taiwan and Southeast Asia.

In 1995, the Japanese weekly manga magazine “Shonen Magazine” by Koudansya, first was published as translated into Taiwanese Mandarin with only a three-day delay. Though there are strong historical ties between Japan and many other Asian countries, the demand for manga here implies that it has made the greatest impact and inroads into Asia.

Image 6: “Doraemon “

(left image taken from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doraemon>)

(right image taken from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dragon\\_Ball%28manga%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dragon_Ball%28manga%29))

Image 7: “Dragon ball”



Europe has also seen the development of markets for anime. For instance, in Italy, anime and manga emerged as media for children, and the girls' manga “Candy Candy” became particularly popular in the early 80s. Besides “Candy Candy” (image.8) and martial arts series, adult and erotic works have also gained popularity in Europe, especially in the 1990s. (Schodt 1996:308) France has also experience similar popular growth patterns; for example, in Bastille, there exist shops which are named just by the French owners' favorite manga characters.

Image 8: “Candy Candy” (picture taken from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Candy\\_Candy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Candy_Candy))



So how do these markets compare to that of Finland? Finland is located in Europe, and the Finnish manga market does follow many of the trends of general Europe. Jonathan Clements states that the Finnish market differs from those in primarily English-speaking countries and shares more characteristics with European countries, especially Germany.

#### **4.2. Local Finnish Market**

As compared to other markets worldwide, the Finnish market exhibits a degree of disadvantage in the potential growth of anime and manga. Primarily, there is not much availability of manga and anime in Finland, either by genre or series. Unless fans live in large cities, most titles are only available via Internet. However, one may occasionally find anime and manga in local shops, including R-Kioski, Anttila, Suomalainen Kirjakauppa, and Akateeminen Kirjakauppa.

City libraries may also carry some manga and anime titles. It is also significant to mention that “Library availability world #1- is a boast to Finland, and the calculation where the people of population about 5.2 million are borrowing 21 books per person a year.”

([www.yomiuri.co.jp/kyoiku/renai/20050323us41.htm](http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/kyoiku/renai/20050323us41.htm) / translated by myself)

Especially since manga and anime in Finland are quite expensive due to translation and shipping, and often draw in fans of young ages, using a library would be a very reasonable alternative to consumption. Though it is unlikely that libraries have vastly improved the

growth of the anime and manga fandom, at least they can provide a welcoming environment to those who want to start reading manga or watching anime without spending money. As an example, one city library in Helsinki, Finland, HelMet, returns 2,399 hits when “mangat” (the Finnish translation of manga) is searched. If the search word is changed to “manga” 1,499 hits are returned.(searched by July 2008). Most of these, however, overlap. All series have been published between 1995 and 2008, and most are available in the U.S. English version. Age recommendations are clearly marked, which are only suggestions. Also marked is whether or not the manga are in Japanese format. For an example, they indicates like “ Note: In keeping with the original Japanese format, this book reads from back to front and from right to left.”

According to my internet research of an availability of manga in the city library in the Helsinki region, the statistics cannot tell much about the overall popularity of anime and manga in Finland though they do illustrate the role that certain very popular titles play. The same effect can be seen in cosplay characters at Animecon as well, which I will discuss in greater detail in chapter four.

The table (see figure 2) shows the entire collection of anime DVDs in the Helsinki library. It should be noted that the Finnish term for anime is “animet” which can impact proper collection of research. Figure 3 displays the Hayao Miyazaki collection from the same library. It may be noticed when analysing these collections that certain titles of manga and anime very popular in Asia and other parts of Europe are not present. These collections therefore demonstrate the differences in the Finnish market as opposed to other countries, as well as the similarities and commonalities in terms of what titles are commonly read. For instance, “Candy Candy” is particularly popular in France, Italy, and Southeast Asia, while “Doraemon” is popular throughout Latin America, the Middle East, Europe, and Southeast Asia. (Schodt 1996:219) However, both titles are hardly known in Finland. In contrast, titles such as “DragonBall”, “Ranma” and “Naruto” are overwhelmingly popular in the U.S., and Europe, as well as in Finland, and many characters from those anime and manga often appear in Finnish cosplay contests.

The release of anime DVDs in Finnish began in 2002, with the formal release of “Metropolis” from Egmont Entertainment. “Akira” was also released in 2002, though it was a version translated via Manga Entertainment, a U.K. company, and it has been more than 14 years

since its original production. According to suomi-anime.net (Suomi is the Finnish word for Finland), the release of anime DVDs with Finnish subtitles was steadily increasing to 2006, where it hit a peak, and fell in 2007. (figure 4)

It appears that the availability of anime DVDs in Finland is growing; on the other hand, it may be said that Finland has been falling behind in terms of total titles released in comparison with the U.K. For instance, there are three large-scale distribution companies in the U.K., and for one of those companies, MVM, the total number of titles released from 2002 to 2005 is almost equal to the sum of all published DVDs in Finland from 2002 to 2007. The U.K. market is on an entirely different scale than the Finnish market.

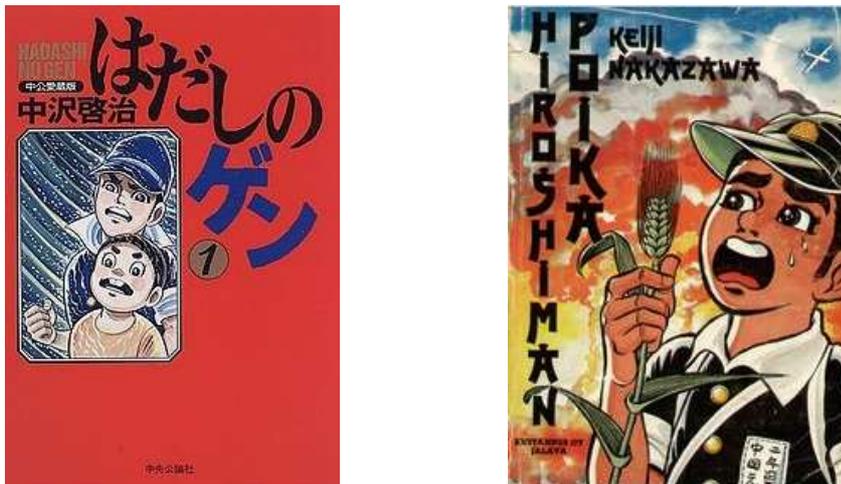
This unfortunate situation is not only present in the anime DVD market, but also in the manga production market. The manager of Sangatsu manga comments that the “manga situation in Finland is obviously falling behind that of Sweden by about two or three years, though there exist no big differences between those market. However, there is a risk for a small company when it starts publishing manga. This is because it is necessary to go to the publication company in Japan before publishing the manga in Finland, to get a license. And those titles to be published have to be popular in order to achieve good sales, and make profit out of it.”(2008)

In other words, if never broadcasted on TV as an anime series, a manga is unlikely to become popular enough to be translated into a Finnish version manga book. Therefore published manga titles can almost always also be found in their anime versions, and, unless publication companies make a conscious change, the Finnish market will continue to be considerably narrowly limited.

Moreover, there are local publishing companies which produce Finnish-translated manga such as “Barefoot Gen(Finnish Title:Hiroshiman poika)”(see image 9) by Jalava since 1985, “Akira” by Like since 1996, “Ranma” by Egmont since 2003, and “DragonBall” by Sangatsu Manga since 2003.(see figure 5) Then, I noticed that before the recent fandom caused in Finland, earlier fandom had already existed in around 80's when “Hiroshiman poika” was published. I will approach this earlier fandom in chapter 4.3

Furthermore, in order to analyse the characteristics and complexities of manga publishing in Finland, I will describe one manga publisher in the following section.

Image 9: “Barefoot Gen” and “Hiroshiman poika”



#### 4.2.1 Publisher Company ~Sangatsu Manga~

Sangatsu Manga company belongs to the third largest publishing company, Tammi oy, in Finland. According to the manga manager of Sangatsu Manga, they started printing “Dragonball” in 2003, and since then they have produced Finnish translated manga at about 80 books a year. He said, “We mainly choose series that are popular in Japan and also abroad, but sometimes have tried series that are not much known outside Japan. We have now published about 186 titles [including different volumes of the same series.]”

Now, let's take an example of how many popular manga titles have been published in Japan in a single year. For instance, “One Piece” at 44 volumes is approximately 2,200,000; “Nana” at 16 volumes, 2,000,000; “Vagabond” 24 volumes, 1,240,000; “Detective Conan” of 55 volumes about 1,000,000. According to these figures, the highest popularity seems to be maintained by Japan. However, according to the “Publication Index Annual Report,” sales of manga magazines keep falling 10 years in a row in 1997. ([http://www.cyzo.com/2007/09/post\\_40.html](http://www.cyzo.com/2007/09/post_40.html)) In contrast, Sangatsu Manga company has already sold 450,000 books of “Dragon Ball,” and projects that will reach 500,000 by the end of year. 2008. According to the Sangatsu Manga Manager, though the scale of production in Finland and Japan is very different, popularity of anime and manga in Finland seems steady which should continue for at least a few more years.

When looking at the categories of the manga publication of Sangatsu Manga, boys' manga accounts for an overwhelming 80% of sales, while only 20% are accounted for by girls' manga. This can be explained in part by girls being interested in both boys' and girls' manga, yet girls' manga being largely only read by teenage girls. Publishers seem to continue to publish boys' comics because of their more certain sale outlook, thereby avoiding risk. Fans of boys' and girls' manga also reflect their different preferences in habits, which I will discuss in greater detail in the interview section.

The Sangatsu Manga company has its own website at <http://www.sangatsumanga.fi>. The site greets the reader with “manga for everyone!” on front page, offers an introduction to manga on the “mikä on manga” (What is manga?) page, let fans join the fan club “Liity klubiin”, displays more information about conventions and manga news in “uutisia”, and review in “arvostelut”. This information may only available to site visitors who can read Finnish. As it is mentioned, the “sangatsu klubi” is organized for young ages between 13-18, and for those people who want to talk and to meet more friends who are interested in manga. This age range represents the major manga reading population in Finland.

Moreover, they always give notification about age and manga as following, "Sangatsu Manga books always have a suggested age limit marked. The purpose of it, is to inform young people and their parents, what age group the book is aimed for. However, this is only a suggestion, not an actual age limit!" (translated by Jaana Penttilä, <http://www.tammi.fi/alue/965/navi/Uutuudet>)

This proposed age range seems to be related to past events. As an article mentions, “...when manga (Dragonball) appeared in the shop, it was criticized that the series advertised the child pornography on two weeks in the place. Next, when the story was improper, media raged, and became the sales discontinuance the book.”

([http://www.moonlight.vci.vc/misc/world\\_anime2.html](http://www.moonlight.vci.vc/misc/world_anime2.html))

(<http://www.kvaak.fi/naytajuttu.php?articleID=19>)

(<http://www.mtv3.fi/uutiset/arkisto.shtml/arkistot/mediait/2003/05/169760>)

At that time, when manga was just entering the mainstream, it was regarded with a certain amount of suspicion. Naturally, parents were surprised to see nude pictures in a manga advertised for children. This is especially true in Finland, where advertising for children's commodities faces strict regulations. It was therefore quite a sensitive case, and the publishing company decided to voluntarily replace the page. After this event, the company controlled the sales of “DragonBall” more closely, according to the manager of Sangatsu Manga company.

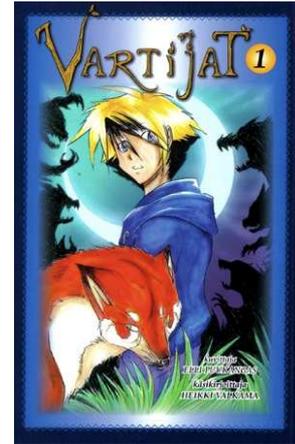
The image below is from an original page which was criticized as having problems in the upper frame (the girl with some nudity), and was replaced with a different page. In my point of view, whether this can be considered as a child pornography or not depends less on the drawing itself, or exactly what is being shown, and more on the intent and context. (e.g. girl is just widely spreading her skirt or flapping it to show off her bottom to old men.)

Image 10: Dragon ball (Left image is a original and right image is a replacement. copy taken from Sangatsu manga)



This company not only produces manga, but also supports conventions such as “sarjakuvat festivaali”, “Tsukicon” and organizes the “Naruto” drawing competition. They have also started to publish “Vartijat” by Heikki Valkama(see image 11), which is first-ever Finnish manga to be professionally produced. This indicates that the degree of popularity of manga and anime has finally reached a tipping point of the first Finnish manga artist appearing. Although Finland already has popular comic strips, such as “Viivi ja Wagner”(see image 12), this manga “Vartijat” has a Japanese style is clearly distinct.

Image 11 (right) : “Vartijat” by Heikki Valkama  
(image taken from  
<http://www.suurikuu.fi/PublishedService?pageID=9&itemcode=9789521610301>)  
Image 12 (below) : “Viivi ja Wagner”(image taken from  
<http://www.hs.fi/viivijawagner/>)



### 4.3. Earlier fandom

Though the history of manga and anime in Finland begins in the 1970s, it is only in recent years that they have infiltrated Finnish popular culture. At the time when the first anime productions were on TV, including Little Heidi, Maya the Bee, and Nils Holgersson, they were very well received. (<http://koti.phnet.fi/otaku/jorina/animeinfinland.html>) However, it was not understood until the 90's that those productions were specifically anime.

The first Japanese manga book to be published in Finnish was only the initial volume of the series “Hiroshiman poika” in the late 80s, translated by Kaija-Leena Ogihara ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barefoot\\_Gen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barefoot_Gen)). More volumes were planned, but in the end these subsequent volumes were never published.

According to Jussi Nikander, the period of earlier fandom in Finland was from 1980-1994 and the market was initially small. However, “Hiroshiman poika” was remarkable for existing fans, not only because it was the first published manga in Finnish but also because the themes were about power, hegemony for anti-war.

The next period of fandom was from 1995-1999. Finnish fans started making communities and clubs, such as “Otakut”, which was established by TKK (Helsinki University of Technology) in 1996. Otakut organized video evenings and showed Japanese anime and TV series' at all night events. There was another club called “FAMS”, which stands for Finnish

Anime and Manga Society. Their main activity was making fansub (fan created subtitle) video's at the library. The common features of earlier fandom's are that most of the members could be described that they were over 20 years old, male, and were university students or workers and wore black jeans and t-shirts with leather jackets, and didn't socialize. (Fandomhistoria 2008: Nikander)

However, the more recent fandom era, from 2000-2004, finally caused the big boom of Japanese popular culture. Anime and manga started being broadcasted, very early productions of Miyazaki's were being screened on TV, such as "Porco Rosso" and "My Neighbor Totoro".

They were received well and gained positive reputations almost immediately. Meanwhile, Anime conventions started in Finland and this more recent era of fandom is seen as being different from the earlier one, as gender and age were increased from men to female and from older to youth. From the year 2005 onwards can be called the current fandom.

#### **4.4. Description of Convention**

Anime and manga were first introduced to Finnish conventions in Turku in 1999 as a part of Finncon, an annual science fiction and fantasy convention. The influence of anime and manga grew larger, gaining more fans, over the years, and finally an official Animecon began in Finland in 2003. (<http://1999.finncon.org/ohjelma.html>) That was the same year that "DragonBall" and "Ranma," began to be published in Finnish editions. Since then, various anime and manga events have been held in many cities, and clubs have grown. (see figure 6)

When compared to the history of conventions in the U.S., it may be said that Finland was considerably more delayed; the first U.S. Animecon was held in 1991. However, the appearance of the convention in Finland appears to differ in some respects from that in the United States. For instance, Schodt states that the participants in the U.S are generally in their late teens, twenties, thirties, or older, and most are males. (Schodt 1996:331) In contrast, the participants in Finland are mostly teens and some university ages, but hardly seen are participants over thirty. In particular at the convention where cosplay is held, the majority of the participants are teen girls; otherwise, males and females in attendance are quite equal.

## ANIMECON

Animecon is Finland's largest anime and manga event, which is held over a weekend during the summer. It was started as a part of the largest science fiction event, "Finncon," in Finland. Though Animecon grew out of Finncon, it is said that the popularity of Animecon is increasing in such great numbers that it will likely eclipse Finncon. (<http://koti.phnet.fi/otaku/jorina/animeinfinland.html>) The program consists of panel discussion, lectures, workshops, several competitions (including cosplay), and hosting foreign guests from all over the world. The event is entirely free to attend, and participants visit from many different cities. Approximately 3,000 – 9,000 people are in attendance, depending on the location site. Most of the program is held in Finnish, though there are some speeches and interviews conducted in English and Swedish.

At the convention, I have seen some friendly cosplayers who are walking around with signboard on which is written "Free hug!" to offer a hug to meet people. Napier, the U.S.'s leading scholar on Japanese popular culture, described in her experience at Animecon U.S. of seeing a shy young girl whose T-shirt said that "Talk Nerdy to Me." Animecon can be seen not only as a gathering of anime fans, but also a place where they can ultimately explore their own interests and meet other enthusiastic people to exchange knowledge and inspiration.

## TSUKICON

Tsukicon started in Helsinki 2007, and is a two-day event which is organized for Japanese popular culture fans. Its subjects include popular items such as manga, anime, and music, but also extend to customized decorations, mobiles, maid-cafes, para-para dances<sup>13</sup>, dance mats, Lolita fashion shows and cosplay shows. The first year, 1,300 people attended, and the following year, attendance reached more than 2,000 people on Saturday and 1,400 people on Sunday. (<http://www.tsukicon.fi/>)

## NEKOCON

Nekocon is held in Kuopio region, and its program consists of cosplay contests, dance mats contests, anime and manga discussions, and presentations of Japanese martial arts. This event is also free entrance. The first year, 2006, had 1,500 people in attendance, and the second time

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<sup>13</sup> Different Choreography in each tune to dance which follows specific preset movement and usually performed as group

in 2008 was attended by 3,000. (<http://2006.nekocon.fi/>)(<http://2008.nekocon.fi/>)

### KIRSIKANKUKKACON

This convention was held for the first time in Turku in 2005. The program consists of history of Japan and Japanese animation lectures, cosplay contests, music, and para-para dancing. It is said that 2,000 people attended. The second time, the event was held over two days in May 2008, and the program was more diversified to include origami, martial arts, J-rock, showing of Japanese martial arts and presentation of Japanese student lives of boys and girls. (<http://kikucon.animeunioni.org>)

### TAMPERE KUPLII

This event is a comic book fair in Tampere, whose purpose is to introduce Japanese popular culture but also comics and cartoon in general. Tampere Kuplii started as a one-day event in 2007, and about 3,000 people attended. In 2008, the event was extended for three days, and the program consisted of more various contents such as cosplay contests, manga panel discussions, anime screenings, and even an adult Japanese manga discussion. The attendance for 2008 was 4,167, and for 2009 increased to 6,733. (<http://www.tamperekuplii.fi/>)

### SARJAKUVAFESTIVAL

This is the largest comics event in Finland, which has been held 23 times in Helsinki. The aim of this event is to offer interesting items for everyone who is interested in comics, animations or graphic novels. The program consists of lectures, discussions, signings and interviews with foreign guests of honors from Europe and Japan, as well as cosplay contests and a manga drawing contest. More than 6,000 people attended in 2008. (<http://sarjakuvafestivaalit.fi/>)

### KEMI SARJAKUVAPÄIVÄT (The Arctic Comics Festival )

This comic festival started in Kemi 1981, and became international in 1985. Like other comics festivals, they invite international artists, critics, and researchers from all over the world, as well as Finnish comic artists. According to my research, as this festival turned 27 in 2008, and it is the oldest Sarjakuva festival in Finland. The program carries on for three days and consists of Nordic comics competition, and comics panel discussion, as well as anime music video showing, cosplay contest, and otaku panel discussion. The president of Finland, Tarja Halonen, acted as a patron at the 20th anniversary festival 2001. (<http://www.kemi.fi/sarjis/>)

## ANIMESEMINAARI

Animesenimaari started in Oulu 2003 and is organized by Oulun Manga and Animekerho. The programme consists of very intensive anime lectures; for example, in 2003, the lectures included History of anime and manga, Genre of manga, Music in anime, SF in anime, Osamu Tezuka and Walt Disney. Every year, the content includes Japanese popular culture elements such as origami and Japanese horror movies. (<http://omake.animeunioni.org/>)

## TRACON

Tracon is held in Tampere, and began in 2005. It is organized by Anime-Mangayhteisö Hidoi company and the Tampere University role-playing group. The programme includes role-play games, Final Fantasy fight shows, as well as AMV (anime music video) history, and cosplay. J-rock was first included in the program in 2008. The attendance was 1,079 in 2005, 1,813 in 2006, 2,835 in 2008, and 3,600 in 2009. (<http://2008.tracon.fi/index.php?page=yleista>) (<http://2009.tracon.fi/index.php?page=ohjelma>)

## DESUCON

Desucon is an event for anime and manga fans which was organized the first time in June 2009. The convention is held in the Lahti convention center Sibeliusstalo by the Kehittyvien conien Suomi ry (KCS) sponsoring, and is organized to present Japanese popular culture in Finland. Attendance is approximately 3000 people. The programme consists of interesting features such as lectures, cosplay, video screenings and game corners. (<http://desucon.fi/en>)

## BAKACON

Bakacon is a new convention which was first held in Pieksämäki on 25-26.4.2009. This event is held for Japanese popular culture hobbyists, and the programme consists of cosplay contest, anime screening, lectures, panel discussion, workshop, anime karaoke, and dance lessons. About 800 were in attendance, and it was already held again in 2010. (<http://www.bakacon.fi/>)

## KITACON

Kitacon will be a two-day festival in the southern region of Finland, satisfying a huge demand from manga fans in Sarjakuvapäivä. The program will include anime and cosplay contests, panel discussion, and anime screenings. The events was first held on 23-24.5.2009. (<http://www.kemi.fi/sarjis/>)

Figures 6, 7 and 8 also show an increasing number of conventions (up to 2009) as well as an increasing number of participants since 2003. It signifies that the popularity of anime and manga in Finland is rising.

#### **4.5. Cosplay Phenomenon**

Although the CFT (Cosplay Finland Tour) officially started in 2006, cosplay events such as contests, panel lectures and discussions had already been appearing at conventions since 2003.

The figures. 6,7 and 8 show that as the number/places of conventions has spread, the events related to cosplay increased as well. As long as these figures are seen, Animecon has led the cosplay phenomenon and also it has given a chance for other cities to extend other conventions among Finland.

During the conventions, Finnish cosplayers/performers dress up and parade around with costumes to meet/show off to other performers and even to make friends. Thus the town center in which the convention is held often gets crowded, even in public transport, which is because some participants travel a long way to participate. The cosplaying in conventions in Japan, however, can be seen in different. As Roland Kelt states, “Tokyo fair's performers and models may be costumed though its visitors are not. Cosplay - dressing up as anime and manga characters - is prohibited in public areas.”(Kelt 2008:148)

Moreover, Shinichi Kiyotani also mentions that conventions in Japan have limited areas in which they can perform cosplay.(Kiyotani 1998:257) This is because cosplay events in the town or on public transport is seen as an object of trouble and consideration of the residents of the surrounding area is the reason for the restriction.

These different aspects are seen not only in the environment of cosplay but also in the different attitudes towards cosplay in Japan and the U.S. So I am going to describe here the idea concerning cosplay in Japan and the United States, and compare these to Finland.

According to director Nishijima, of cosplay site “cure” in his report on AnimeExpo 2008 in L.A. In Japan, “Become it completely” and the United States are “Perform it.”.

“ 'Make it the same' thought given to the character is the foundation in the cosplay of Japan,

and in the United States cosplay seems to be a “Disguise”, thought of as a form of expression and of performance at its foundation.” (translated by myself from Japanese website- [http://blog.livedoor.jp/ld\\_directors/archives/51070155.html](http://blog.livedoor.jp/ld_directors/archives/51070155.html) )

In other words, Japan is a “Become it completely” culture in that cosplayers tend to make exactly the same type of character as their favorite. By contrast, cosplayers in the United States tend to appeal to other people as more like a “Perform it” culture rather than a “Become it completely” culture.

However, Finnish cosplayers, for as long as I have seen them, have a performing style that looks like a cross between Japan's and The United States. Some cosplayers try to be their favorite character as close as possible, while others try to perform and act as if they are theater actor/actress when they are on the stage at the cosplay contest.

According to a report on American cosplay, it is said that the Cosplayers of Japan tend to concentrate on the detail of clothes and stage properties. By contrast, the United States based fans tend to be anarchic and bring realistic weapons in full costume. This is due to the difference of the population and the over crowdedness rate of events. For instance, in Japan, clothes and large equipment/stage gimmicks are greatly limited, because there are a lot of participants in Japan and the space in cosplay event halls is limited.

On the other hand, in the United States, besides of a large scale of convention center, the majority of people come to the hall in their costume by their own car so that they can bring stage properties of a large size. Likewise to Japan, cosplay in Finland seems similar to Japan in that they are more concentrated on increasing the detail and authenticity of their clothes, enjoy showing off their own characters rather than making spectacular stage gimmicks or properties. Besides, most of Finn cosplayer are teenagers, so they only prepare the tools within the range/appropriate size or less where it can be carried by themselves via public transportation.

Moreover, the way of interacting with other cosplayers is seen also different. Cosplayers in conventions in Japan rarely hang around the venue and do not socialise with other cosplayers, but rather seem to enjoy the event within their own group and take pictures of each other's costumes.

By contrast, cosplayers in Finland tend to go round the event site and are more sociable in finding/meeting more interesting cosplayers to take pictures of them or to start making friends. This might be similar to the conventions in France; Kiyotani describes that cosplayers are open minded, easygoing, and a magnanimity atmosphere has been seen. (Kiyotani 1998:257)

These differences are related to race, character, lifestyle, and culture. This fragmentation of subculture identities are often modified by notion, race and ethnicity. (Sarah Thornton 1995)

So, then what is the pleasure of cosplaying at a convention? Napier states that, “The pleasure is not simply in creating the costumes or even posing for photos, although that is of course an important element in convention cosplay. There is also the excitement of getting into the persona of the character one admires.” (Napier 2008:161)

Indeed, and I would suggest that the pleasure of cosplay would even already start since they chose admired character, design a costume, buy a materials and so on. When I had an interview with a Finnish cosplayer girl whose age was 17, she was excited to tell me how she created her costume - searching the internet on how to make costumes, drawing patterns, looking for materials, and sewing by herself. This process can be totally different from simply “dressing up” in western traditions such as Halloween or Easter. Because the cosplay is not just as simple as dressing up, but the cosplayers’ emotion and passion for their admired character is shown and they devote many hours to their character in order to successfully complete their own transformation.

Napier suggests that “...Cosplay is more than simply dressing up. Of course, the transformation and the motivations behind the desire to transform are perhaps more complex than simply “dressing up” suggests. To transform is to change one's identity, to become other, if only for a little while.” (Napier 2008:161)

Although cosplay is quite a new thing for Finns, it could be already be the central trend of sub culture in Finland. This trend could be a way to redefine the existing notion of what is fashionable and aesthetic (Yuniya Kawamura 2006:787) and Finn cosplayers seem to find pleasure in transforming into their favorite characters, if only temporarily.

### 4.5.1 Cosplay Finland Tour

The Cosplay has expanded in Finland which is officially organized as Cosplay Finland Tour (CFT) since 2006, that has made Finnish cosplay history at first time. The tour introduce next competition event which has carry on through a year. Best dresser of manga and anime, and game characters are nominated from each convention, such as Tracon, Tampere Kuplii, Kirsikankukkacon, Kemin Sarjakuvapäivät, and Animecon. Those winners can be seen via internet and they can enter to final competition at Helsinki Kirjamesut. Three winners are finally chosen for going to “World Cosplay Summit” that is held in Nagoya (Japan) year 2008. (<http://2008.cft.fi/>)

### 4.5.2 Lolita Fashion

Firstly I would like to describe Lolita fashion. Lolita fashion is a mixing of Rococo and Victorian's style, which is known as a subculture amongst the fashion scene in Japan since the late 80's. The girls dress up as a baby doll, which consists of girly motifs such as laces, ribbons, petticoats, and knee high socks etc. The environment of Japan where such Lolita fashion is centered often appears to express an individual idea for fashion or details. This fashion, however, started to spread in Finland among those fans who consume Japanese popular culture. It is considered that due to the degree of anime and manga, and also J-rock popularity, those influences extend it to the field of the fashion. Especially those girls with Lolita fashion outfits that are seen at J-rock concerts, Animecon and the Kamppi<sup>14</sup> area occasionally. Thus Lolita fashion can be the one that has already penetrated and become indispensable among youth.

According to Wikipedia the relation with J-rock of visual kei is, “Lolita was influenced and popularized by the imagery of more feminine Visual Kei (or "visual art") bands.” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lolita\\_fashion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lolita_fashion))

Moreover, the Lolita fashion in Finland has spread to not only the fans of the visual kei band, but also manga, anime fans or even Lolita fashion itself. According to the “Lolita” girls I met at conventions, they were ordering most of their garments through a web site. This is because such materials cannot be obtained in Finland or there is very little variety.

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<sup>14</sup> Name of metro station which is located in center of Helsinki

There is one event called “Yoyogi Park” which was organized in Helsinki in August 2008. This actual “Yoyogi Park” is located in Harajuku, which is known as one of the fashionable districts in Tokyo where the Lolita girls, the play music and the art performances can be seen. This event in Helsinki also included a band playing music, dance performances, Lolita crickets and a store for Japanese products.

Image 13: Lolita girls from Yoyogi park” event in Helsinki



From my attended this events, I saw most girls who appeared in Lolita outfit (see image 13) although there is no Lolita contest nor fashion show at this event. This Lolita outfit shows as a visible group identity and their interest. Kawamura states that, “The distinctive looks function as a visible group identity for the teens and become shared symbols of membership affiliation. A symbol is the vehicle by which humans communicate their idea, intentions, purposes and thoughts, ie. their mental lives, to one another.” (Kawamura 2006: 788)

Although this Lolita fashion demonstrates their interest to Japanese popular culture, my question rises that what it means for them to transform such outfits, even try to obtain expensive garments from overseas? I would come back to this issue in interview section. Through the conventions in Finland, it is not only seen anime and manga fantasy world, but it would also notice that how those fans are engaged to Japanese popular culture meaningfully into their world.

#### 4.6. J-rock Phenomenon

In this section I am going to describe how the J-rock phenomenon started and what Finnish J-rock fans are doing in Finland. Similar to the anime and manga phenomenon, the popularity of J-rock has spread in Finland in recent years; ever since the local J-Rock music organization was established in 2004.

J-rock Suomi, the J-Rock music organization states how they started:

“J-rock Suomi was founded during summer 2004 by a group of enthusiastic of Japanese rock fans who were sick of being treated as outcasts and who wanted something to actually happen.”(<http://www.jrocksuomi.fi/index.php?english>)

Their dedication and commitment to J-Rock was what actually helped establish the organization. After they were registered as an official association, they had the ability to better action public demands, such as arranging events, promoting J-rock, and bringing bands from Japan to Finland. In the past a few years before J-rock Suomi was established, the market of J-rock was quite small, with limited availability of products as compared to the case of anime and manga.

Whilst anime and manga fans could have the opportunity to meet other enthusiastic fans and possibly purchase merchandize from a stall at the convention, J-rock fans have not had a chance to meet other fans and to share their passion for bands/artists; no place to have a practical experiment unless the concert have been organized.

Kelts states that “If there is a rock concert equivalent for fans of anime and manga, it is the anime expo or comics convention.”(Kelt 2008:147)

In other words, J-rock fan could have a practical experiment at the concert while anime and manga fans could share their passion in the convention.

If conventions could be a potential place to make fandom grow, then the J-rock Suomi association could be said to be a starter of fandom of J-rock. They have made the J-rock phenomenon grow by leaps and bounds. J-rock Suomi states about this growth:

“The J-rock fandom in Finland has been growing steadily during the last few years. According to J-music Europe, Finland is the third largest J-music market in Europe. The fan-

base is approximately 2000 fans and growing fast.”(<http://www.jrocksuomi.fi/index.php?english>)(<http://www.jrocksuomi.fi/indexenglish.html>)

As far as I have researched, J-rock fandom has extended among Europe - especially France, Germany, Britain, and Finland are thought as of the potential countries where a lot of J-rock fans exist. (<http://www.jame-world.com/>)

According to my internet research at <http://www.jame-world.com/fi>, for the year 2008, six concerts were organized in Finland, while France had thirty-seven concerts. Germany had seventeen concerts and the UK had nine concerts in total. Despite they have a short history of association, they are meeting fan demand.

At first, their effort succeeded since music stores in Finland finally started to sell products of J-rock and also Japanese artists have gained the opportunity to spread in Finnish media. Moreover, it is unique to be seen J-rock phenomenon in Finland, such as the Visual kei band in particular. As J-rock Suomi states, they promote Japanese music, especially visual kei, because of a high demand from the public. At the beginning, they organized a concert of a J-rock band called “blood” which was a successfully sold out concert in 2005 in Turku.

However, the situation of visual kei bands in Japan is that they exist amongst the indie scene since they belong to underground non-major production groups and usually are supported by hardcore fans. For this reason, some of the bands which are playing abroad are unknown in the own country. Nevertheless, for bands which has no recognition in their home country, once they come to play in Finland, there is always seen a long line in front of the venue. It was astonishing that people started to line up for the concerts three days before they were due to start.

The local newspaper (see image 14) said that, “People were queuing the whole night to get good seats for Dir en grey band gigs on Sunday or Monday in Tavastia. Similar queues was previously seen less than week ago when Japanese band 'the Gazette ' was playing in Tavastia.” (Translated by Janne Ratilainen)

Through the media, it became an opportunity for those people who are even not fans to know

about this phenomenon.

Image 14: article on the local newspaper  
(Uutslehti100 -5.11.2007)



When the band; Dir en grey(see image 15) concert was held at Tavastia in Helsinki on Sunday, queuing up was seen from Thursday night, it is because the fans want to have a good place to view the band at the concert. This phenomenon, however, it was not the first time but also when the concert of the Gazette<sup>15</sup>(see image 16) which is held one week earlier than these gigs at Tavastia. After that, this phenomenon is seen every time when there is a J-rock concert held in Finland, which are rather seen to participate in the queue like a kind of the big event. During my observation at this event, I met one group who came from Turku. According to their comments, they did not mind joining the queue for nine hours and rather enjoyed waiting to see the band, because the band was not being able to be seen in Turku.

Image 15(on the left): “Dir en grey”

Image 16(on the right) : “Gazette”



<sup>15</sup> Visual Kei band, formed since 2002

As the picture on image 17 shows, some people stay on the street with sleeping bags for a whole night or for more than two days, even though the nights were especially cold and were below zero. The fans spent and devoted enormous time to explore their fascinations and even traveled from other cities, to see the band. I would state that these phenomena come from “Fan power”.

Moreover, I have also seen the fans are not only interested in J-rock but also like anime and manga as well as Japanese culture in general. These fans participate in other Japanese culture, such as martial arts, either before or after they find out about anime and manga. It might be seen as a feature of the Finnish fan. I will discuss this more in the next chapter.

Image 17: Local news paper (“uutislehti100 ”/5.11.2007)

# Hyinen jonotus kannattaa

► **Japanilaisbändi Dirun fanit haluavat kuulla mahtavaa musiikkia hyviltä paikoilta**

**HELSINKI** On kolikko marraskuinen sunnuntai-iltapäivä. Tuuli käy luihin ja ytimiin. Urho Kekkonen katu Tavastia-klubin kulmalta pitkälle Fredrikinkadulle on kansoitettu värjöttelevillä tyttöporukoilla. Dirun keikalle on saatava illaksi hyvät paikat, vaikka pienten kärsimysten kautta.

Diruksi tai Dirpaksi kutsuttu japanilainen rockbändi Dir en grey on aivan mahtava, sanovat **Noora, Mimmu, Hanne ja Isania**. Noora ja Mimmu ovat Jyväskylästä, Hanne Karkkilasta ja Isania Tampereelta. Tytöt ovat jonottaneet kadulla suunnilleen 15 tuntia.

– Yöllä oli kylmä, mutta aamulla vasta kylmä olikin sanoo Noora.

Tytöt ovat yhtä mieltä siitä, että tässä jonotetaan nimenomaan siksi, että halutaan kuulla hyvää musiikkia hyviltä paikoilta. Dir en grey oli vuoteen 1999 tai 2000 visual kei -bändi, joka hurmasi lavaolemuksellaan ja tyyllillään. Sen jälkeen yhteite muutti suuntaa.

– Nyt se soittaa sekalais-ta rokkia. Siinä on punkkia, rokkia ja metallia sekaisin, Noora luonnehtii.

Mimmun jonotusennätys, kaksi päivää, syntyi visual kei -bändeihin luetun Ayabin Suomen-vierailulla.

Dir en grey esiintyy Tavastiällä kahtena iltana: sunnuntaina ja tänään.

**Heli Sinkkonen STT**



**Japanilaisbändien keikoille jonotetaan yötä myöten. Jonotuspalkka on hyvä paikka konsertissa.**

## **5. Analysis of the Interview**

In this chapter I will analyze the interviews and discuss the phenomenon through the fan's activities. The interviews were held during the summer of 2007 in Jyväskylä university library, cafe in Helsinki. These questions are based on what I wanted to find out from Finnish fans, and were briefly prepared prior to the interviews. Each interview was recorded on Mini Disc and lasted about 30 – 70 minutes. There were recorded so that I could later listen to and examine them. The interviewees are randomly chosen from Animecon, a local club meeting, and university students who have studied Japanese. Their ages are between 17-27 in both genders. While I observed the interviews, I found that there were many similarities between the interviewees. Therefore, I have chosen to analyze not by each person, but rather I have combined those similarity by each theme to seek clear trend on Finnish phenomenon.

### **5.1. Methods and Materials**

The research performed for this paper included meeting fans, hearing their stories, and analyzing their interviews as a way to more deeply pursue the topic. Thus, a qualitative research methods theoretical frame work will be applied to this research. In particular, I have referred to Alasuutari's 1995 book "Researching Culture: Qualitative Method and Cultural Studies."

I collected practical data from communicating with fans at conventions I participated in, and also obtained information from local communities and clubs. I first joined the local manga/anime club "Tsukiai" in Jyväskylä, Finland, and attended "manga night" meetings. I also joined another club called "Otakut" in Espoo, from whom I would receive mailing news weekly and attended members-only events such as video screenings. These observational research methods were only the first step for me to get closer to the subjects in the local area, in order to become familiar with this Finnish fandom world.

For the highlighted theme of this paper, I used ethnographic research (participant observation and pre-structured interviews) in which I went to conventions, club meeting and interviewed

those who are engaged in Japanese popular culture. The main principal of participant observation is that it could observe the fans directly within their world and at the same time the researcher could participate and see an “insider” view of what is happening. This means that researcher not only sees what is happening there but also I could feel that as if I am a part of this fandom. By being an insider, it became an advantage that a part of the phenomenon could be experienced. However, it could turn to weakness if the researcher fails to have an observational “eye” as an outsider at that same time.

The interviewees were chosen at random from Animecon and Japanese language class, and seven interviews were carried out between June and August 2007. Primarily, I analyzed the interviews and their implicit relations to gender, sex and the social world. I then performed recorded interviews formally and informally. This ethnographic research helps establish the social context of local fans.

The reason I chose interactionist approach rather than static approach such as using questionnaires is that interactionist approach examines the fans face-to-face individually, then possibly to leads to more information being divulged and relationships established through communication. There are many advantages to this method; however, there are also inevitable issues that may arise within this type of approach, including the degree of subjectivity. Especially as the nature of ethnographic research, my background, nationality, gender and age are reflected upon this work.

Findings in this study may further be refuted by the empirical world. Therefore, it is important to study subcultures to understand of human behavior by the genders, ages, and social classes which affect the interviewees' comments.

## **5.2. The beginning of fandom**

My questions started by asking them when they begun to be interested in anime and manga. Were they already within these circles, these clubs before this popularity arose? Or are they just follower of this phenomenon?

Q: When did you start reading manga?

A: I started reading in 1997, like 10 years ago, before that, I played some video games that have a similar kind of art style, such as “final fantasy”. In 1997, there was no any Finnish language manga, many titles are not available, we only had “Akira”, “Barefoot Gen(hiorshiman poika) by Keiji Nakazawa” a classic manga...  
(Boy, 26, Pori)

A: I started it in 1998 or 1999, it was so different..  
(Boy, 24, Jyväskylä)

A: well, I think when I was 13 years old, now I am 20... so it is a long time ago..almost 10 years ago.. when my friend was watching this anime called “Ranma”by Rumiko Takahashi and I was watching with her and I became interested in that and they were also watching “Salor Moon” and I also became interested in that, because it was more for girls and I was very excited about it and then I got to know more..my friend was downloading anime from internet so we got episode from our friends who burned the CDs because we could not get anime anywhere else, only on the internet because there was nothing tapes or anything you can get from shops..  
(Girl, 20, Helsinki)

The average age that Finnish people are when they start to read manga is around 13-15. However, I have noticed that the ages are related to whether they would be able to read an English manga. Travel back 10 years and the availability of manga was only in English, so those readers' age groups were inevitably higher than now. One commenter points it out as follows:

“The fan has been changed from nerd guys to younger...like junior high school girl, like this average fan nowadays. I guess average fans would be 14-15 years old, which is much younger than 10 years ago..10 years ago, average would have been closer to 20 years old, because they would have to know English in order to be able to read an English translation.” (Boy, 26, Pori)

The earlier study of youth culture suggests that the age of youth interested in these things is

from sixteen to twenty-one. However, Bennett and Kahn-Harris argue that “This quality of 'youth' has become more noticeable in recent years as subsequent generations of 'youth' have reached adulthood yet refused to 'grow up', using music, style and various forms of memorabilia as a means of retaining a sense of 'youthfulness' even as they approach middle age.” (Ross 1994, Calcutt 1998, Bennett 2001, Bennett and Kahn-Harris 2004:10)

I would add on that this youth grouping age is also related to the way in which globalized culture transform “glocal”, how cultural products are re-formed with local meanings in a local setting. (Bennett 2000; Bloustien 2004:149).

For instance, the average age of a fan of youth culture, the suggest reading age for manga, the meaning of cultural words(otaku, hentai etc.) and style/tastes of cultural products are re-setting in order to be accepted in a local setting.

Moreover, after manga become wide spread, it might be natural that manga become generalized as a contemporary youth culture within the youth age layer.

In a sense, it could be said that once subculture is acknowledged by youth, those meanings are generated at the level of everyday things through the collective meanings. (Bennett and Kahn-Harris 2004:13)

On one hand, earlier fans are displeased that the popularity has increased, since anime and manga became too well known in general. The boy comments as follow,

“And also some fans do not like if it becomes too main stream in Finland, you can get the title so easily and cheap... Usually they tend to say that some of popular series which are not good, because there are too many fans, like “Naruto”, for example. Many people hate it, because it’s too big, too many fan like it. Their field which are not main stream which are special and they want to enjoy the series which are not so much main stream, at least theater...” (Boy, 26, Pori)

It is because a lot of fans have attached to anime and manga now though it was used to be like “fan is only me” before popularity extends. However, things have changed since anime and manga became wide spread, those own favorite characters have become collective commodity

for everyone.

Moreover, back in 1997, there were no anime conventions and no such anime/manga materials could be found at any stores in Finland. Therefore, it might have been quite self-satisfying to have obtained a special hobby which is not known by most people. It means that it could give them a special hobby different from other people, as it is categorized, not to be isolated fans, but it is a sense of own superiority for them as “elitist taste”. Bertha Chin suggests that, “...take their interest, whether in anime or in East Asian cinema, as a sign of ‘elitist taste’ that is different from the norm that the West is familiar with, an accumulation of popular cultural capital that will set them apart from their peers and from ‘official culture’.”(Chin 2007:218)

In Finland, the cartoon such as “Aku Ankka”, “Viivi ja Wagner” are generally known as “official culture”. In contrast, interviewees state that “we know *high culture*” since they are getting to know Japanese popular culture. In this context, the meaning of high culture is different from the traditional concept. It would be meant as the nobility of knowing another culture which distinguishes them from ordinary people.

One boy explains that he could even obtain benefits by reading manga as follow,

“Although I have to say that thanks to playing Japanese games and reading Japanese comics my English has become much better..when I got first comics, I needed to have a dictionary in my hand. If you just start to learn an English at school, you don't use it anywhere else, for example, the vocabulary is much more become bigger if you actually read on your spare time..it was a kind of unintentional learning language for me when I read an English translation...” (Boy, 26, Pori)

Although anime and manga were misunderstood in Finland at that time, his intention to read manga is totally opposite to how ordinary people think and this “alternative” culture could extend to “elitist taste”. Moreover, the interviewee describes how having a non-mainstream hobby made him feel in the past:

” I wanted to be different, I got into it so much although none of my friends did

it...nowadays it's not special to be an anime or manga fan anymore since there are so many other people the same way...but ten years ago, it was only individual fans...maybe getting in touch sometime...I found other fan through a fan-subbing mailing list, and exchanged an e-mail..but nowadays we have anime clubs almost every town, it's so easy to meet other fans..”(Boy, 26, Pori)

This “elitist taste” among non western popular culture could make him feel different from ordinary people when its 10 years ago. But it has changed since anime and manga have emerged in general.

The below is the comment from other fan, how the situation was in the past time,

“ I remember in the mid 90's.. it was hard to get anything. It was back then that I lived in Kuopio, where there was just one really small used books store that had manga in it and that was the place to get anything..it was more expensive then... nothing at all..you had to know where to get it or you did not get it. The change started in 1999-2001, that was when it started being easier to get..” (Boy, 24, Jyväskylä)

“I got interested in anime and manga when I was about 10 years old. I saw studio Ghibli films and was influenced by the style and how it was different from Western cartoons. And then when I was about 15, I started to find out more by myself from the internet, from the local library. I borrowed manga. I saw my first anime films and series when I was 15. I joined *Tsukiai* when I was 16 and since then I have dubbing ... Japanese popular culture - I do a bit of cosplay...I like making costumes by myself, very much.” (Girl, 19, member of *Tsukiai*, Jyväskylä)

“In Finland, they started after manga and anime became more popular, let's say in 2003, when 'dragon ball' started showing. Now we can find 20 titles of manga available in stores, so much easier to get and cheap. and also look the fan in 1997, mostly they were guys, it was more like science fiction fans.” (Boy, 26, Pori)

As far as I have examined, those individuals or small groups of fans have existed from the middle to the end of the 90's, while people in general have no idea what anime and manga are. Because it is an underground habit, outside of fans it is misunderstood as dangerous: manga is

dangerous, contains nudity, violence, and unless otherwise they gain the true knowledge of it through their friends, people can think of it as bad.

Some years after, anime has shown on TV such as the studio Ghibli film “Princes Mononoke” which was shown in Finland in 2001. This broadcasting anime over television could have helped to increase anime and manga's following in the population.

So how were the individual fans coping with that situation?

Q: So you just started to become fan by yourself?

A: I was only the one in our group who started reading, watching...(Boy, 26, Pori)

Q: Do your friends also like anime and manga?

A: I was only one that into it...but when I was high school, there was this one guy who was also really into anime and manga, we had a lot of fun during that time.

Just reading manga, watching anime... it was so nice to have someone that was the only guy who is really interested in it with me. (Boy, member of Tsukiai, Jyväskylä)

“...I really had not any friends who were into it, into anime and manga until I met people from Tsukiai - now I have a couple of friends who are into anime and manga, but usually most of the people who I hang around with, who don't even know about anime, manga...they ask “ is that a porno cartoon or..?” hahaha... ”

(Girl, member of Tsukiai, Jyväskylä)

This “only one” status does not mean isolated loneliness; rather it seems they found a way in which they can express their own identity and attach their feelings into their world. Peter J Martin proposes that, “while individuals may thus be seen to 'make' their identities, and their 'worlds', this does not mean that they have the ability to define meanings or construct selves just as they please.”(2004: 35)

Similarly, one girl explains how it was difficult to meet people who have same interests as her, how small the group of fans was;

” It was a kind of underground culture in Finland, coz people didn't know about it. It

was a small amount of people who knew about this and when they told friends, they became interested in and so on. But it was not on the mass media. At that time I think there was no event like Animecon, there were nothing..(..) It was like we just got together with friends and watch anime episodes on the computer so that's how I started I think...". (Girl, 21, Helsinki)

As the popularity of anime and manga in Finland has increased, most interviewees think that it is no longer an underground culture. Besides modern technology such as the internet came to be able to obtain information and materials quickly and easily for everyone. Thus, it is seen that fan activity is different between earlier fans and recent fans, and they could be called "digital age" or "pre-digital age".

For instance, earlier fan claimed that recent fans have never known how they used to trade video tapes and shipping them in from U.S. Because all those activities can be done quickly by electronic format nowadays.

Moreover, the way of interaction has also widely changed from offline to online and as it is readily accessible, recent fans frequently use virtual communities instead of face-to-face physical communication.

As Bennett describes the role of internet is: "the internet is giving rise to new expressions of 'community' based not on face-to-face interaction and shared local knowledge but rather around regular exchanges of information via online discussions facilitated, for example, by chat-rooms, fan-sites or one-to-one email communications."(2004:164)

Anime and manga have spread in general and seem to infiltrate by internet. However, the majority of fans on the web think that anime and manga are not yet mainstream in Finland, this is according to the discussion board on Finnish website; Kupoli.

This web site is published for all anime and manga fans since 2002, so that it seems slightly before the phenomena come to Finland. This site consists of three main sections. The first one is "anime and manga" which includes a description of key words in manga and anime(anime ja manga sanasto), and the second one is a "message-board"(keskustelu) where any information related to Japanese popular culture can be exchanged. And the third one is "drawing section"(piirtolaodat) where the fans can send their own drawing manga to receive

comments and feedback on the website. The message board, especially, seems frequently to be used to exchange all kinds of necessarily information and has provided a discussion space about certain topics. I noticed topics about “Mainstream or underground?” which was discussed and the result has appeared on the web. (<http://keskustelu.kupoli.net/index.php?topic=1295.0>)

As long as I observe this result, it could be said that recognition of anime and manga for Finnish is still difficult to categorize as mainstream, but majority fans think that boundary between mainstream and underground. In similarly, my interviewees responded that;

A: And I think it's not as unusual to like anime, manga anymore like it was before..

Q: So you think its not underground culture anymore..?

A: Yeah not that much, a little bit. Before if I told my friends I like anime and manga, they were like “what is it ? ” and they didn’t know anything, but nowadays it's different. I think its maybe 60 - 70 % people they know what it is, maybe they don’t have it as hobby but they know what it is. so.. Some people may think it's weird but I think in Finland with its individualistic culture, you can express your personality its usual so maybe in Finland, people are tolerable about different looking, so its ok to be interested in different culture.. In Finland I think people are tolerate different culture so maybe that is the reason its becoming popular...(Girl, 21, Helsinki)

“Actually anime, anime is rapidly becoming major, it was underground maybe in the 90's but not anymore.. ” (Boy, member of Tsukiai, Jyväskylä)

Q: Do you think the anime and manga situation in Finland is still underground?

A: I think its not really an underground situation anymore, because there are a lot of stuff: shops like Blippo<sup>16</sup> ...haha...stuff is spreading; people know more...I think it's like fashion comes and goes...(Girl,17,Vantaa)

I would suggest that character of this subculture has gradually shifted from the underground level and it seems the cultural identity itself may be getting blurred and there is no boundary to be spread. In the case of Finland; because manga and anime market are considerably small,

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<sup>16</sup> Blippo is a store which is located in kamppi shopping center in Helsinki. They sell Japanese,Asian clothes, toys, accessories and CDs etc.

the influence on the network of the Internet is huge and it would be a potential opportunity which can be extended “for cultural participation”. (Bennett 2004: 168)

### 5.3 Different from Western

Most fans say Japanese manga and anime has a different style and storyline, thus, here I present their actual responses about how they think about differences.

Q: How do you think it is different?

A: Maybe female character is sexier than..for example, Walt Disney and American comics. Also when I started reading manga, I noticed that many artists put much detail and comic book pages look cinematic, like camera angles for example.

Although I like many European comics such as Tin Tin, they are different, and that is so short only one story one to six pages, but one manga has like 50 books or something. It was quite expensive hobby that I had to import almost everything.

(Boy, 26, Pori)

Q: Could you tell me why you like anime, manga so much?

A: Well, I don't know..the drawings are beautiful, I like the story there are so many of them, many different kinds..I think its much more of it than western comics.

(Girl, 17, Vantaa)

When anime and manga were still unknown in Finland, this “different“ perspective of orientalism had the power to make the fans not only have a superiority complex but also absorb them further. In particular the visual images of manga, their drawing style and details are said to be beautiful and artistic. Napier describes these differences in her research, “The ‘look’ of anime is very significant. Fans frequently mention the aesthetic pleasure they find in the visual images presented to them. Another visual aspect that is important is the fact that these are, after all, cartoons in which characters are depicted in a distinctive ‘anime’(or manga) style. Some commentators feel that anime and manga characters look ‘white’, but in fact they exhibit quite a range of characteristics that are not really Caucasian or Japanese, such as the huge eyes and often strangely colored hair that have come to be visual trade marks of the media.”(2008:137)

Although, in actual fact the visual image of the anime and manga is actually far from Japanese appearance - it would be rather western looking with huge eyes and colored hair as is above mentioned. However, I claim that is to represent of the antithesis of Japanese since Japanese has fundamental inferiority to the European and American. Apart from the drawing style, it is said that the content of the fantasy story in which the reality parts is also attractive. Or is there something else to explain this?

“..Then why I am interested in anime, manga of course is that there are so different from western cartoon and comics. Of course anime you can do a lot of different things you could do in live action series or movies, its not..how should I say..its not clumsy..even if plot might be little a bit silly or so...there is some anime has a lot of violence but it usually belongs to genre. And nudity such.. There is a lot of series and movies but I don't know why but some reason..”

(Boy, Japanese1 class, Jyväskylä)

As they say, Japanese anime and manga may often contain violence and sexual nudity which could supply significant aspects. I could suggest that is “Japaneseness” which gives the impression of something “different”. Napier suggests this so-called “exoticism” and that is different from the “mainstream” that they are familiar with. Thus this non-Western popular culture could start to enchant them. Another thing I could consider is the relation between games and anime. Since anime characters are attached to games in general, gameplayers are naturally involved anime and unintentionally accustomed to seeing anime characters every time they play games.

Particularly one boy commented from own his experience on how much manga and game has connection each other.

“ ...But the good thing about games is that of following story of comic almost exactly, even though I don't understand Japanese text, I could finish the game. Because its kind of connecting with manga, so when something happens in the game, I remember how it went in manga, so I knew the way the story goes. This was the first time I finished a game without understanding the text. I am so much a fan of the manga which I had played the game too.”(Boy, 26, Jyväskylä)

I especially point out that Finnish male fans are frequently engaged in games before getting into anime and manga. I would illustrate those boys' fandom in next section.

## 5.4 Boys Fandom

According to researcher Nikander, the earlier Finnish fandom on Japanese popular culture had existed in late 80's among boy fans. Now I will take a sample of current boys fandom and analyze their activities.

### 5.4.1 Activity : Collection

From my observation, I have noticed that there are some different aspects between girl and boy fans in Finland. According to their interview, the boy seems to be collecting the manga and the figurines mostly.

Q: How many figurines do you have?

A: I have about...this small...about 20 of them. I bought them in this very largely used anime and manga shop called *Mandarake*..there are maybe 5 euro for 10 of them. Of course I have to buy them, because I wanted to ...it was cheap to buy a lot...mainly I bought a very cheap models which are 200-600yen.(...) I try to buy the models that I really like.(Boy, 24, Jyväskylä)

Q: How many manga books do you have?

A: About 500 books is what I have collected, because I have not throw away or sold anything. So all of these couldn't fit my apartment, half of them are in my parents place. I know it's different from Japan, many people just read manga and not collect them. It's also cheap so you can throw it away.. (Boy, 26, Jyväskylä)

It is a quite general activity that to collect figurines of anime characters among anime fans in Japan, and the Finnish fan do so similarly. Thus, it is not peculiar to hear that Finnish fans also possess figurines, since those anime figurines are usually bought by male fans and they tend to collect for own favorite series. However, there are not anime figurines stores in

Finland, those fans are either ordering via internet or buying them from abroad. I also noticed that the place is called Akihabara in Tokyo, which is well-known as shopping place for games, anime and manga as well as huge electric shops, thus most boys have pointed it out to the place where they want to visit in Japan.

Moreover, Boys collect not only figurines but they also they tend to own manga book collections by their favorite authors. For instance, an advancement of technology helps a lot to download manga and anime though there is still some reasons for fans to have own favorite manga with paper books.

Finnish male fans say:

Q: How about reading manga?

A: Although I read manga a lot I don't buy it..it's very expensive..if it cost the same price as Japan, or same price as Finnish translation, I would buy it. There are less than ten titles in Finnish...haha...but I read manga on my computer, I download it from the internet...yes. some people buy the manga from Japan and they scan it to the computer and other people translate text and some other people edit it so that they replace Japanese text to English text...many groups are doing that. and the different subbing groups have different styles, different quality...and you can find not quite everything but a lot of translated manga from the web, (all the popular one)...but I still enjoy reading manga more on paper..I don't have much money so that I only buy those series that I really like.. (Boy, 24, Jyväskylä)

Q: How many manga books do you have?

A: Quite a lot, I have collected manga over 10 years, so I have most of "Masamune Shirow" works and ..maybe I have about 60 – 70 or even more... its still growing because I just started collecting which is 18 volumes long, still going on 16 books in Japan...I don't have DVD that much, its more expensive. That is one reason why I like manga more. Its easier to take with you and just read. But with anime you really have to concentrate on it, and for each episode of the series you have to have at least half an hour to dedicate to it. But you can read manga anywhere.  
(Boy, member of Tsukiai, Jyväskylä)

“...am more into manga more nowadays, because you can read it anywhere, you don't need to sit down to watch DVDs for many hours..also you can read while you sit on the train or bus...” (Boy, 26, Jyväskylä)

Favorite manga books are collected in paper form, although they are expensive and these features are seen especially among male fans. These particular habits are revealed as different gender consumes collective culture in different ways. The male fans tend to possess their own favorite materials or figurines, besides reading manga on the train. One hand, girls fans seem to more radically express their activities in their social world. For instance, not only cosplaying seen at the conventions but also with the “para-para” dance, and activity dominated by females. Besides this, the lines in front of concert venues are occasionally formed by female fans. As Sian Lincoln describes on her studies on bed room culture:

“Girls are often involved in a number of different activities at any one time, accessing both the public and the private spheres.” (2004:106)

It could suggest that different gender roles cause different activities and habits, which is inevitable in a social world.

#### **5.4.2 Activity: Games**

Among Finnish anime fans, I could state that especially males are involved in games before they get to know anime and manga. Some boys say,

Q: What kind of Japanese video game you do...

A: I like fighting games (DOA, tekken), role-playing game such as Final Fantasy...(...)

Q: So you started with games first then and anime comes later...

A: Yeah, because many game has similar anime character.. because game magazines talk about the series... (Boy, 26, Jyväskylä)

“ ... and addition to anime, manga, we are also interested in Japanese games like Final Fantasy, but also many others ...we used to search for the games via the internet and play them to have some fun...for example..(he took Nintendo DS from his bag and shows to play..) I ordered this from Japan, I also have other games which were

ordered straight from Japan. (I) usually buy games via the internet, it's much cheaper and there is a good selection.” (Boy, member of Tsukiai, Jyväskylä)

These boys were enthusiastically talking about games, and they especially mentioned the “Nintendo-DS” and the “Final Fantasy” series.

The game of Final Fantasy has a high popularity throughout Finland and the popularity degree is proved by the fact that those characters are seen at any convention in Finland.

Final Fantasy is one of the most popular series of RPG(role-playing game) and it is said this series has caused the huge influence in the game market in the world, thus the popularity of Final Fantasy is not limited in Finland.

Moreover, while this game of Final Fantasy has to be played with friends and need to have console with it, Nintendo-DS has different future from it. For instance, Nintendo-DS can allow user to play and complete the game by alone and it is handy size to carry anywhere with you, it has a similar future to manga books.

Below is a comment from a girl who explains how Finnish role-play fans are connecting to anime,

“ many of those who play role-play games also become interested in anime and manga. I think these are connected.. For example, if you go to ‘Ropecon’ its a role-playing event and there is also cosplay even though they role-play, cosplayers still go there. Because it's the same people who are interested in role-play who is also interested in anime and manga. There is a connection I think - in Finland it's a clear trend that the same people who are interested in anime are into manga and that's the reason a lot of boys watch anime in Finland. Because they are using internet, computer very much and usually boys are more interested in computer than girls does.. and when they spend much time internet, they become familiar with anime, manga. So I think they just don't go to event so much, they don't want to cosplay, because they would just embarrassing....(hahaha)” (Girl, 20, Helsinki)

Particularly at the conventions I have attended such as “Ropecon”, the majority of attendants' are male gamers who also like anime and manga, and on one side girls who do cosplay. Thus,

as these conventions, male dominated style and genre are seen mixing gender as a cross cultural phenomenon.

I would state that this multicultural, combined “style mixing” phenomenon could lead to the growing fragmentation of youth culture. (Bennett and Kahn-Harris 2004: 2)

For instance, boys have grown up playing games and becoming interested in electronic products, whilst on the other hand girls play with dolls and doll figurines. Since they have grown up, their hobbies have started to explore and take on traits of the opposite sex, for instance girls would start playing games and boys start collecting figurines.

Another example would be the objects of Cosplay. Usually girls dress up and cosplay in women’s outfits, and boys dress up as male characters.

However, some girls have started to dress up as male characters and some boys have started to dress up as female characters, so to style-mix or gender mix has become a phenomenon and this causes fandom to grow. Actually this cosplay of cross gender performing is even started to be called “cross play”.

Therefore, this could be proof that existing phenomenon can lead to new phenomenon.

Moreover, I would like to examine similarities and interconnections between digital gaming, anime and manga.

Digital gaming often provides experimentation with alternative identities (Turkle 1995; Kerr et al 2004; Crawford & Rutter 2007:276) where gamers engage with “in-game” worlds. Similarly, fans of anime and manga could conceive of themselves in different situations/socially while they are involved in media “text”.

Furthermore, both of these fan activities can extend physical communication. For instance, gamers experience that “these social performances can extend beyond face to face communication, as the Internet has proved a useful medium for gamers to construct and share gaming solutions, add-ons, updates, and mods, as well as fictional stories or ‘fan art’ based upon gaming narratives.” (Garry Crawford & Jason Rutter 2007: 279)

Indeed, I suggest that anime and manga fans could also frequently extend their enthusiasm by discussing their favorite characters or stories and exchange information by face to face communication.

## 5.5 Girls Fandom

In this section, I will discuss female fandom culturally and socially through their different activities.

Likewise the Teddy boys in the 70's can be a case study of subculture, where this cosplay could suggest a symbolic way of representation which allows them to redefine own identity.

Bennett & Kahn-Haris quotes that “dress represented a symbolic way of expressing and negotiating with their symbolic reality; of giving cultural meaning to their social plight.” (2004:6, *ibid*: 86)

Next, a Finnish girl describes her first performance as cosplayer and that although she did not know how to sew, she asked her cousin to help her out and even her mother, who was excited about her cosplay contest. Besides this, she said that it took her three hours to get ready for being “Salor Moon”. So, what is her pleasure for this ?

“A lot of people came to take pictures...maybe that is also an interesting point about cosplay that when you make a good costume, you can get a lot of attention..yes, everybody is coming with their camera’s...and when I was in ‘manga päivä’ cosplaying for my first time in Tennispalatsi<sup>17</sup>, I was really feeling a bit stared at when people where coming to me with cameras, I couldn’t even move around, coz everybody wanted to take pictures...its a really weird feeling, because I have never experienced like that before, its also something exciting I think...” (Girl, 20, Helsinki)

From a male perspective,

“ I really do not mind if they(girls) start to dress up in cosplay as the Japanese style, its normal for fan’s to see ‘Goth-Loli(Gothic –Lolita)’ in real life, its not just anime convention.” (Boy, 24, Jyväskylä)

This female dominated activity may challenge to get paid attention from the male-dominated world or the social world.

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<sup>17</sup> It is located in center in Kamppi, Helsinki. It has movie theatre, the Art Museum and small shops

Kawamura, who is a researcher of Japanese street fashion, proposes that “The teens are in search of their identity and a community where they feel that they are accepted.”(2006:787)

I could propose that the social backgrounds of cosplayers in Japan and Finland are distinctive although the way they pursue what is “kawaii”(cute) could be similar. In other words, this cuteness “kawaii” could be the same component among popular culture in different cultures. Napier states that, “Cuteness is also an attribute that can be found cross-culturally.” (2008:129)

I will illustrate about Lolita fashion in the next section.

### **5.5.1 Activity : Lolita fashion**

This Japanese street fashion has risen to popular in Finland since anime, manga and J-rock first started spreading there. This fashion is seen on the streets whether there is convention in progress, or not. This Lolita style has become one of female fashion/styles in Finland, in which they seem they try to obtain 'kawaii' characters from different cultures and interpret it in their own way. A Finnish girl comments that:

“I have seen many girls wearing Lolita style at Kamppi shopping center..I think the Lolita used to be underground, but nowadays its becoming popular - some of them will be seen everyday, its amazing.”(Girl, 20, Helsinki)

“ ...its kind of strange that because in Finland nowadays its like everybody is doing cosplay...it has also become a fashion trend, because, for example, in magazines for teenage girls in Finland there are big articles about J-rock, visual Kei style, gothic Lolita and also cosplay. ‘Demi’, ‘Suosikki’, ‘Mixx’ are the three major magazines in Finland. Goth-Loli is really popular. For example, in Helsinki and Tampere there is really a lot of J-rock girls...I just do cosplay, just dress strangely enough..” (Girl, 19, member of Tsukiai, Jyväskylä)

In the Helsinki area, there can be easily found girl clothes stores which offer Lolita clothes, shoes and accessories. Particularly when there is a J-rock event or convention, the Lolita outfit girls hang around and there is an article about this phenomenon in the Helsinki Sanomat. I would assert that these groupings of girls are showing their “exclusive” identity, what it is in

common between them and what representative of their “kawaii-ness”.

More over, I would like to mention about the popular Burlesque scene in Finland. The first festival for Burlesque occurred in Helsinki 2008 and since then the scene has expanded to have delightful Burlesque scenes in other cities such as Turku and Tampere since then. (<http://www.helsinki-burlesque.com/>)

As long as I have seen the gallery of this Burlesque website, it has contained performative art, theatrical act, gaudy visuals and grotesque expressions and even shows striptease. It has emphasized sexuality and exaggerated adults’ contents to perform entertainment such as comedy, parody and dance with colorful costumes.

If we compare this Burlesque scene to the Lolita scene - it has totally different phenomenon since this Burlesque has no sense of cute “kawaii-ness”.

However, I shall say that Burlesque is more for adult people who is interested in theater and art performances, rather than anime and manga although there are some similarities. For instance, the fans are trying to do/perform as someone else they like and it can be distinguished by one’s own identity while they perform.

### **5.5.2 Activity : Library**

The situation for manga is very different between the U. S., Japan and Finland. Firstly, the price of manga books, and secondly variety of titles. There are more English translated titles than Finnish titles, but these are imported from U. S. which cost them twice as much as the Finnish versions. Therefore, this observation can not simply state that how number of manga books they own would be equal to how passionate fans they are. However, as I mention in an earlier chapter about the high usage rate of libraries in Finland, they frequently use the library for borrowing manga.

In addition, most popular titles are available in the library. For instance, some girls state how they rely entirely on the library,

“I remember that it was the turn of the millennium when I got interested in anime and

manga and when I went to public library. I just suddenly found out that it was like a few months that place was no manga at all, and then it was ten of volumes. And I was really surprised because it was really hard to get and I did not know any place to buy it so I had to trust the library..” (Girl ,19, member of Tsukiai)

Q: So even Finn TV has not got any anime showing at that time?

A: No back when I was 13, nothing on TV but there were some manga “Ranma” at the library that is all we have and I was borrowing each books from the library and reading them that’s how I became interested in. but basically we had to get everything from the internet at that time, because there was nothing in the shops. Nowadays more and more anime and manga is also in shops but not back when I was younger... (Girl, 20, Helsinki)

For as long as I have examined the library about availability of manga in Finland, popular titles are mostly American versions which are the most commonly read among anime and manga fans. Therefore, common characters are naturally well known among manga fans and those characters are also often seen in cosplay contests.

## 5.6. Common Features

While I interviewed, I realized that one should in particular is mentioned by everyone and it must be a significant place to obtain materials. Their responses are pointed out as follows:

Q: Where do you normally buy from?

A: Anime from videodivari, and manga from Fantasiapelit although it’s more expensive. (Boy, 24, Jyväskylä)

Q: If you want to buy manga stuff, where do you go?

A: In Helsinki or some other big city, there is a place called Fantasiapelit...and Helsinki at least I know has Fennica comics and other shops too...but basically I go to Fantasiapelit... (Girl,17,Vantaa)

“ Fantasiapelit..it’s the best manga shop in Helsinki, there is not many specialized

shops even in Helsinki. But recently they have been selling in Stockmann and Sokos as well..now it's becoming more but before it was only couple of shops used to sell. Fantasiapelit. They have really good selection many manga titles..."

(Girl, 20, Helsinki)

Q: Which shop you normally go to when you buy the manga?

A: Often I go to Suomalainen, kirjakauppa or Sokos, because they have good selection of Finnish titles. Nowadays if I want to buy imported stuff, I go to Fantasiapelit, usually they do not have much stuff in the shelf but they can order it from Helsinki for free - because they have bigger store and have warehouse over there.

(Boy, 26, Pori)

For all of the above, when they buy manga, they use same retailer which can be found in a big city in Finland. The *Fantasiapelit* is a shop that sells role-play games, board-games, card-games and figurines which has been in operation for over 20 years, and they have started selling manga successfully over the last 10 years. This might be unique phenomenon that one shop is used commonly among fans, besides that business of that shop mainly run for role-playing games. In other words, the shop that sells only manga, anime in its pure meaning doesn't exist in Finland.

According to my examination of their website(<http://www.fantasiapelit.com/>), which is partially in English(to be able to read about the online shopping products and search results) though the main navigation is written only in Finnish. This site seems to be the central buying area for all fans of anime and manga, as well as role-play games, science fiction, star wars, lord of the rings, cardboard games.

### **5.7 Genre on manga**

One of the characteristic of Japanese manga would be that they have many varieties of genres. It is just like novels have mystery, romance, thrill, fantasy, gay, and porn, manga has almost the same. Although there are all the genres, not all titles are available at shops in Finland, so fans could frequently use the internet to download. A boy describes as follow,

"Of course there is Japanese manga which has housewife manga, gay manga...manga

for every kind of people. but some of them are not good to watch, at least I think the worst kind of thing is the hentai...its for adult only, some of them are quite sick... when I was in Akihabara, all shops has hentai...every store I visited that had normal books and also had hentai manga. all Akihabara shops had hentai games (dating simulation game)...(...) but I think if some store in Finland sell this kind of stuff, they will have offended a lot of people.” (Boy, 24, Jyväskylä)

What he comments on might be justifiable as a past event happened in Finland (see chapter 4) and there are strict regulations on the products available to children in Finland.

Q: I thought that hentai manga can not be found in Finland, can it...?

A1: I think those adult stores those kinds of things you could find them ...even here in Finland...

A2: But not in those store sell normal manga..I know few people who downloading them regularly from internet and they said that those manga are really strange...

A1: I think there are those people who scan the books and they translate them into English and upload it internet, everyone can download it...

A2: Actually I have heard that type of scanning, translated is quite popular..there are a lot of people doing it..

A1: Because those books are not published in like Europe and U.S but they want to get it them so there are some people in Japan scanned them, translate them and send them...(Boys, Japanese 1 class, Jyväskylä)

Since the internet became a significant tool for everyone in their daily life, seeing underground genres or any non-official products has become possible as well.

Moreover, some particular Japanese words are well known among those anime, manga fans who even haven't studied Japanese language yet. These words are often seen in message-boards, and are topics on manga websites so that the words such as *otaku*, *hentai*, *kawaii* would be common and well known. The word *hentai* is understood as genre of manga or anime and is known abroad that is for “porn manga”, “porn anime”. Roland Kelts also states in his book “Japanamerica” that, “Hentai, the word most commonly used in the West to refer to anime and manga porn, is not the word used in Japan.” (2008:127)

Indeed, the direct translation of *hentai* would be metamorphosis but often it is used to describe people's behavior with a perverted or fetish, otherwise it means a strange transformation in Japan. Nevertheless, this hentai manga might be result of unlimited imaginations and Japanese art and it can be extremely different from western porn.

Napier illustrates this difference of Japanese manga and anime is that,

“Japanese culture contains its own traditions of extreme violence and power plays, not to mention an erotic tradition that, while arguably more creative and imaginative, is also sometimes far more grotesque than most of the sexuality on offer in American film and television.” (2008:129)

As a male interviewee said; everyone can easily obtain such an underground genres from internet even though it doesn't appear publicly. This type of manga, unfortunately I have not came across yet in Finland, regardless of it, majority of interviewees have mentioned about those underground genre.

While hentai manga or specific words are common to be known among manga fans, I have found that the “yaoi” genre has risen to be popular among female fans. This popularity is not only in the U.S but has also started in Finland. Actually I was surprised that even though none of shop sells yaoi manga in Finland, these girls have been excited to mention that,

“What is also popular among girls in Finland who like anime, manga is ‘yaoi’, its really popular, its gay manga...it’s about only men relationship drama. And also there is ‘juri’ that is about lesbian relationship...there is lecture about yaoi in Animecon. coz ‘yaoi’ is really really popular in Finland..many girls like it a lot... Those guys are good looking...” (Girl, 20, Helsinki)

“...and some of them even ordered straight from Japan, she has ordered dozen of books straight from Japan because she can not wait for the translations. And she also can get is not translated yet...like ‘yaoi’. Mostly ‘yaoi’ stuff....hahaha..”

(Girl, member of Tsukiai, 19, Jyväskylä)

The definition of this “yaoi” is:

“a popular term for fictional media that focuses on homoerotic or homoromantic male

relationships, yet is generally created by and for females.” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yaoi>)

Originally it has begun in the dojinshi market in the late 70's in Japan though it was not called as “yaoi” at that time. Yaoi manga is particularly featuring male relationships, however, it is different from gay manga since gay manga is usually created by male artist and for male readers.

The yaoi manga has officially started publishing in English speaking country in 2003, and in 2004 in Finland this genre “yaoi” was introduced to Finnish fan at a lecture at Animecon, which has started to spread among the fans.

Then I consider the reason why yaoi manga is so popular in Finland, first of all typical homosexual characters are looks like European public school boys or who has feminine faces, besides in the context they could attach more fantasy imagination to combine masculine qualities and feminine taste. Sharon Kinsella describes that “female fans feel more able to imagine and depict idealized strong and free characters if they are male.” (1998: 302)

Whereas this popularity, as I mentioned in chapter 4, this kind of genre might be difficult to be published in Finland since it is non male-dominated products. It means that the publishing company may need to challenge to uncertain sales in order to correspond to the demand of the female fans.

So, what other genres are mainly read by Finnish fans? As far as I have examined (see fig 9), some fans read stories written specifically by their favorite authors, others read by the genre - romantic comedy, adventure, action are commonly read. The genre “chambara”(sword fighting and violence in samurai epics) is exclusively Japanese and as such, it may be easier to receive fans' interest due to having this exotic component.

## **5.8 Finnish Otakut**

Finally, I will discuss Japanese popular culture products and “otaku”, and although it has a different meaning in terms of cultural exchange, I will observe what Finnish fans generally think about.

“I actually realized that when I was in Japan, I am ‘otaku’ because I could not help

myself when I bought figures...but I think there are quite few otaku in Tsukiai also...I think the meaning of 'otaku'(in Finland) is pretty much same as U.S and I think my 'otaku' is both Japanese and Finnish...hahaha." (Boy, 24, Jyväskylä)

His comments refer to American "otaku" and also draw attention to Japanese "otaku" - apparently he is an university student who is a member of the Tsukiai manga/anime club. He promotes Animecon and visiting to Akihabara(Japan) to collect figurines. Such is his enthusiasm for Japan that he could be re-inventing what it means to be called "otaku" in Finland.

Moreover, whether the image of otaku he has gained is maybe from mass-media or not, his status shows "I know a lot about manga and anime so that I am different from you(those who do not know any manga or anime)".

He mentions American otaku, however, the identity of otaku could be in a period of change as far as the trend goes. Here is an example from a previous case study of otaku, Joseph Dela Pena said that American otaku would define himself as, "I find anime and manga, I am otaku, so that I leave society because I feel I am not accepted." (2006: 24)

By contrast, this self-proclaimed Finnish otaku has social relationships with others outside their circle of interest. Thus, it is clearly distinguished from the above mentioned American one. Sharon also states that, "without social roles, otaku had no fixed identities, no fixed gender roles, and no fixed sexuality. Ultimately, otaku represented a youth who had become so literally antisocial they were unable to communicate or have social relationships with other people at all."(Kinsela 1998: 314)

That is correct but I argue that it maybe too extreme, and that since new technologies have appeared it could have been changed. I suggest that the current "otaku" could have connections with others through the virtual world.

Besides, having social disconnection may not be the only main component of otaku, but also whether in Japan, or Finland, or elsewhere, otaku can be attributed from pure immanence. In other words, they wish to have a pure experience, and tend to emphasize pure fascination

for their interests where they attempt at fitting into own identity.

As Thomas Lamarre states that, “a discourse on the powers of anime, which evokes them in terms of pure immanence.” (Thomas 2005: 154)

However, when this pure immanence goes wrong, or when they take further steps to establish their own identities, tragedy often strikes. For instance: *Aum Shinrikyo* (new religious cult movement in Japan) committed a Sarin gas attack in Tokyo 1995, as they had built their own new identities after they had disconnected from society. There are many characteristics that they could share with otaku.

Pena describes that, “they shared the same basic principles of social disconnect, and adopted the same images (and from the same sources) for construction of their new identity.” (2006:17)

Indeed, in case of *Aum*, they could not erase the boundary between fantasy and reality, they even simulated “idea” fantasy into the world of reality.

Moreover, for this pure immanence, I would define this as “naïve idealism” which tend to create “idea” fantasy worlds to exist with own identity. Pena addresses,

“otaku tend to bring reality into the real of fantasy, creating a ‘virtual world’ where they can exist without having to deal with the social pressures of the real.”(2006:21)

Since the Finnish market is a small one, the availability of products is extremely limited. If the otaku is only a result of “the excessive consumer”, it may not even be of concern in Finland.

I would suggest that the otaku identity can be also changed depending on the nature of the country in which the otaku himself resides.

One female interviewee states that:

Q: What do you think about otaku in Finland?

A1: I do not really think that there is really that kind of otaku people in Finland as there is in Japan, because you can't really get that much obsessed with things in Finland and you cant just shut yourself away from society and just concentrate on what you really really like. Because that's kind of hard but there is some I think

who are very near Japanese otaku status but not quite...

(Girl, member of Tsukiai, Jyväskylä)

I have noticed that when female interviewees talk about otaku, they seem to not particularly consider whether otaku exists among fandom or give objective point of views.

However, when interviewees are male, they have acknowledged, somewhat, that they have never met otaku in Finland. Thus, I would insist that the Finnish otaku could be also refer to gender identity. Annalee Newitz suggests that:

“otaku are overwhelmingly male, particularly in the US. (..) Americans watching anime is certainly bound up with gender identity, especially masculine identity.”(1994: 4)

This otaku phenomenon is dominated not only by the U.S male but also the Japanese male and western male too. For instance, Kiyotani's publication of “Le otaku”, in which he describes how French “otaku” are devoted to manga and anime and finally that fans have opened their own shops for anime and manga in France.

It could be considered that the different activities might actually be related to the gender though, the degree and the appearance might be diverse because of their cultural background.

Two male-interviewees describe the Finnish otaku that they have met at Neko con,

Q: What do you think Finnish otaku, do they exist?

A2: There are few Finnish otaku..but not so many as in Japan..I have seen few otaku in Finland..they were at Nekocon....

Q: How did you recognize them?

A1: Somehow I think they do not care about appearance, about how they are ...

A2: Of course you can hear it when they talk...because they mainly talk about anime, manga..

A1: There is like a whole life is anime and manga, and there is nothing else for them ...if you hear them only speaking of those subjects, you can recognize them..

A2: And if you happen to mention a series and they instantly know every voice actor, director..hahaha.. (Boys , Japanese 1 class, Jyväskylä)

During the interview they mentioned that they have watched the BBC program “otaku in Japan”. This program has shown what “otaku's” room looks like, what they are normally doing with manga and anime, and their collections of figurines etc. Thus, they could compare it with Finnish “otaku” which is based on a stereotypical image of “otaku” whom they have obtained through the mass media.

Ironically, the otaku lifestyle arose from the capitalistic consumption world, and as has been stressed, anime and manga can make large amount of money in Japan, and can have a huge impact on the economy, and those “super” consumer-otaku have inevitably become the target of the market, although the Finnish market would not consider it as this yet.

Moreover, most of the Finnish fans I interviewed acknowledge that meaning of otaku is different in Finland then the meaning from Japan.

“ ... I have noticed that image of otaku is quite idea of image which is formed out side of Japan that what people mean otaku is positive..Japan is more negative..”

(Boy, member of Tsukiai, Jyväskylä)

Q: Do you think Finnish otaku has a negative meaning also?

A1: I think not many people even know about what otaku means in here, but everyone knows what geek means like nerd..

A2: I would say Finnish otaku are not like nerd so there is not as much negative as Japanese otaku..I think most Finnish people think otaku is nerd, they do not specialize that..(Boys , Japanese 1 class, Jyväskylä)

In Finland, there is one TV program called “otakut” (otaku in Finnish), which shows how to draw manga characters, and gives discussions and quizzes about manga and anime. The remarkable thing was, to send an answer or message or a drawn character of manga, or any other participation can be done simply by using their mobile phone.

It seems that the content of programs do not particularly have anything to do with otaku though, it could be said that by using word “otaku” in the title, it is signified that it is a program for anime and manga fan.

I suggest that it could be a Finnish phenomenon that everyone can participate in the program on the television by using their mobile-phone and there is even a chat program on TV. By contrast, Japan tends to not allow the exchange of opinions in public nor chat to participants on TV programs. Instead there are some programs, in which viewers can participate to answer questions in a quiz.

A Finnish fans response to how they think about otaku in Finland,

Q: What do you think about meaning of otaku in Finland?

A: I think there are a couple of anime clubs called otakut, and especially younger people who are really enthusiastic and hard core fan they want to call otakut...  
(Boy, 26, Pori)

Q: What do you think about otaku in Finland?

A: I think they exist, and people call themselves otaku, hahaha...I think if someone is called otaku, these people want to be different or be fashionable..(Girl,17, Vantaa)

It is commonly seen as a Finnish current phenomenon among Japanese popular culture fans to show that they are different from other people, using status with the “otaku” identity could be one of fashioned or “in-style”. Especially, this self-proclaimed “otaku” identity make it easy to distinguish themselves from others and it could appear as the idea of resistance.

As Pena states that, “it exists as an ‘expression of difference’ with an ‘ideological resistance’ toward the mainstream culture.” (2006: 31)

Finally, I could see clear Finnish trend since her response as follow,

Q: Do you think otaku people exist in Finland?

A: Actually for example here in Finland its a kind of most anime, manga fan call themselves as otaku, its kind of like a sign that “we are otaku”. Its kind of word that for anyone who is interested in anime, manga understand, its kind of easy to be differentiated it. I think few anime, anime association, clubs using the name...in Japan I think otaku is more obsession...so I haven't met anyone who is obsessed

like that... (Boy, Japanese 1 class, Jyväskylä)

Overall and as I thought, otaku activities, or otaku phenomenon, cannot be easily discussed sociologically and quantitatively. Similarly Lamarre stresses that:

“otaku movement is very difficult to define and discuss because its boundaries are fluid and porous.”(2005:167)

Indeed, there is no clearly boundary between otaku or an anime fan, nothing like a typical image of otaku to describe, Finnish otaku also, it should rather refer to quality of fascination, how they engage, and to what level or degree.

## 6. CONCLUSION

When anime and manga first landed in Finland, people (stereotypically) understood that anime and manga was a dangerous commodity which should be kept away from children.

Although Finnish fans existed at that time, like many other Western countries, there was very little understanding of anime and manga which was known only at the underground level and it was hardly reported by the media market. Therefore, the first phenomenon in Finland in the 1980's did not lead a big movement.

Since the modern era has gained new technology, Japanese popular culture such as anime and manga, and J-rock have spread actively among youthful fans and particularly through the virtual world. By accessing the internet, those materials (fan-sub, information) are speedily available for everyone. It was then that finally Finland had started to have enthusiastic fans, and fandom has grown just like any other Scandinavian country.

These fans are consisted of pre-digital age and digital age users who use the virtual space to participate in virtual communities, chat rooms, discussion boards, and these digital community-building possibilities are totally different from the analog age that they are used to.

According to Finnish fandom researcher Jussi Nikander, the breaking anime boom in Finland started in the year 2000. As far as I have observed this phenomenon, I agree with what he states and I would like to emphasize that especially when starting with publication of Dragonball at year 2003, that is same year of first Animecon in Finland, both were opportunity to bring a big boom to Finland.

Finnish manga and anime fans consist of mostly equal numbers with each gender whose ages are between that of teenage and university age. Since they have grown up with the technology era, their activities are increasingly done by modern technology which is proof that the role of the Internet made a big opportunity to this phenomenon.

In common their activities are seen as: downloading video games and anime/manga materials

by digital format, editing fan-sub's, communicating / exchanging information with other fans through the cutting edge network. On the other hand, they could fill in the gap between virtual and real world by analog communication such as attending conventions and local clubs which can not be obtained by virtual communication.

Moreover, this Japanese popular culture: anime, manga and J-rock could be just different ways of expressing what they like, how they want to be looked like from others, in this case 70's punk, hippie, Teddy boys are equivalent to those phenomena. However, those of which the CCCS ( the Centre for Contemporary Culture Studies of the University of Birmingham) is based on British youth culture that class division may not apply to the Scandinavian perspective.

Furthermore, popular culture is not that expressions of class-based cultures (while skin-heads, rap music could be the one), however, it could rather be the one that is controlled by a commercial market, media. In other words, popular culture is appropriately localized and it is mended along the local market which is consumed by public.

The case study of bedroom culture address that “the space of the bedroom is a fluid and dynamic cultural domain”(Lincoln 2004:97), likewise Japanese popular culture is operated mainly within their(your) home: *otaku*(in this case, traditional meaning as your home)-frequently use diversity of internet- to download materials, gain the information, listen to the music, subbing anime & manga, collect lyrics of songs, participate discussion board, subscribe mailing list and all of which activities are primarily developed in their home rather than physical attraction in outside social world.

Moreover, the role of internet has come up to not only grow Finnish fandom, but also to make it easier to understand other cultures - *otaku* or *kawaii* culture - and to acknowledge them. Underground or alternative culture became widespread and are growing faster as a collective culture, thus the isolated feeling could be shared with others who have same interest.

Main consumer of subculture is by disposable fan, youth, associations, communities, in which come and go. Especially digital age rely on the internet, as the feature of the internet they could join with non-real identity and possibly leave community/the group without notice.

Thus it may cause an interpersonal relationship being very instant and thin. It seems that it has become less boundary between real social world and virtual world. In fact is that it could be a social problem since frequently practicing of simulation game, some youth has lost control the distinction between virtual world and real. Likewise incident in Japan (see chapter 5.8) it executes in the real world at each mimicry by virtual, and the case that causes the event is not few either. For instance, the past tragedy event in Finland (the gunman killed at school in Jokela 2007, in Kauhajoki 2008) can be also concerned this issue that criminal boys who had also reportedly posted a video himself on the internet (video-sharing website YouTube). Besides according to Philadelphia Inquirer that before the event happen Criminal's boy had contacted the other boy via the Internet who was also planning a similar event in the United States.

The point I want to pay attention is that both boys had posted the prediction video by using the username before the event happened. As the internet has given them a place to hide their real identity, they easily participate in virtual space. In other words, they can distinguish their real identity to express, participate in virtual space where there is no necessity to have responsibility, cruel with no guilty whatever they do.

I concern that since this Finnish fandom refer to or can not ignore the emergence of new technologies; from pre-digital age to digital age, they frequently use Internet which is a tool that can tie the person to the person very casually, and also has the feature that connects with others, and can disappear very easily.

Whether those incidents are exclusive or not, it should not be ignored that feature of the internet was used such a case. (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7630969.stm>)(<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7082795.stm>)

Furthermore, Internet is the place where you can practice of reality, simulate the social world. Andy states that, "Internet offers new avenues for collective youth cultural practice which transcend both space and time." (Bennett & Kahn-harris 2004:18)

While internet offers virtual world, people can easily go and have an access to other social world. And similarly while in live action presents realistic, anime & manga are giving fantasy world with variety of narratives which could express indirect way. In other word, anime and manga contain strong Japanese expressions from robotics to daily school life, which give different impression from live-action films or television. Napier address that,

"when non-Japanese enjoys or identifies with a character, he is identifying within a cartoon

imaginary.” (2008: 210)

Indeed, People can escape from reality, besides to have fantasy world with their interests. This feature also could be one of the reason to appeal to Finnish fans.

Another reason I could consider is that Japan is the country where both tradition and modernity has well-mixed, similarly Finland possess modern technology whilst at the same time holding onto folk tradition. Japanese popular culture is not based on class division and Finland has no class system either. Thus, the Finnish could easily obtain Japanese popular culture and those features are not in the place to be seen, but it can be felt by consuming Japanese popular culture.

Another feature of Finnish fandom is that although Finland has ethnic minorities such as Sami, Romanies, Russians, Jews and Islamic which are long-established ethnic communities(Lehtonen 1999: 136), Finnish fans are seemingly not as racially diverse as much as America or other European countries are. According to Newitz's research, American anime fans consist of various multicultural backgrounds - Asian-American, Latin-American, etc; those who have accepted one another. (1994)

On the contrary, the people who are interested in anime and manga that I have met in Finland are much more homogenous.

Finally, as popular culture is gradually changing, the traditional activities are also being dynamically extended. In the 1980's, Finnish fandom of anime & manga are minority existed and now also found 21<sup>st</sup> century version which are more younger age, gender style mixing with digitalized communication. Thus, Finnish fandom could not have been extended without new technology formation, in other words, popularity of Japanese popular culture in Finland has been supported mostly by youths who have frequently used modern technology.

It would not possible to be say what the typical Finnish anime fans is, but it could portray that the educated elite Finn found the localized Japanese popular culture, which is still exotic enough, to be interesting and become enthusiastic and desire to consume this culture. They are not afraid of taking different cultures as they are a tolerant people and enjoy engaging with them.

Although it has not been long time since anime, manga and J-rock gained popularity in

Finland, I would imagine that the destination of the future of fandom seems not to be caused any further. The reason for, it has already been acquired a big phenomena.

## Appendixes

Figure 1: The list of J-rock band launched in Finland since 2005.

(<http://www.rocksuomi.fi/events.html>)

Year	Band	Place & date
2005	Blood	18.8, Klubi, Turku
2006	Blood Ayabie Plastic Tree D'espairsRay	8.4, Gloria, Helsinki 15.6, Gloria, Helsinki 11.7, Nosturi, Helsinki 26.11, Tavastia Helsinki
2007	Hagakura x Antifeminism Kana (+ a street fashion event)  Mucc Ayabie Dir en Grey  Blood Moi dix mois GazettE	28.1, Gloria, Helsinki 1.3, Gloria, Helsinki 9.12, Gloria, Helsinki 20.3, Tavastia, Helsinki 28.5, Tavastia, Helsinki 5.8, Ankkarock, Korso 4-5.11, Tavastia, Helsinki 26.8, Gloria, Helsinki 11.10, Tavastia, Helsinki 30.10, Tavastia, Helsinki
2008	Ayabie	28.5, Tavastia, Helsinki

Figure 2: The entire collection of anime DVD(Helsinki region in 2008).

(<http://www.helmet.fi/>)

Title	Author	Language	Format,year	rating
Samurai chanploo #1,2,3,4,5,6,7	Shinichiro Watanabe	Text: Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Sound track: Japanese, English	DVD 2005,2006	* * * * *
Kino's journey. #1,2,3,4	[Director] Ryutaro Nakamura ; [Script] Sadayuki Murai	Text: Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Sound track: Japanese, English	DVD 2006	* * * * *
Lupin III:the gold of Babylon	[Director] Seijun Suzuki, Shigetsugu Yoshida ; [Script] Chiku Owaya, Yoshio Urasawa	Text: Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Sound track: Japanese	DVD 2006	* * * * *

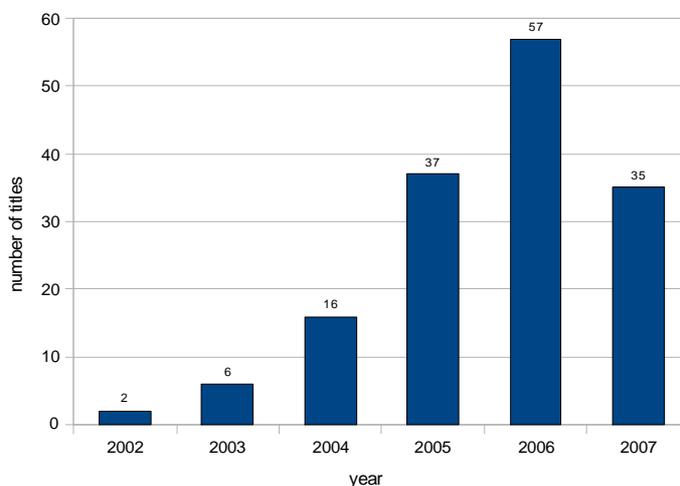
Lupin III: the Fuma conspiracy	[Director] Masayuki Ozeki [Script] Makoto Naito	Text: Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Sound track: Japanese	DVD 2006	No rating
Submarine 707 Revolution : the movie	[Director] Shoichi Masuo [Script] Hiroshi Ohnogi	Text: Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Sound track: Japanese, English	DVD 2006	No rating
Spriggan	[Director] Hirotugu Kawasaki [Script] Yasutaka Ito, Horotsugu Kawasaki	Text: Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Sound track: Japanese	DVD 2006	No rating
Paranoia Agent. #1-4	[Director ] Satoshi Kon	Text: Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Sound track: Japanese, English	DVD 2006	* * * *
Cardcaptor Sakura		Text: Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Sound track: Japanese	DVD 2006	* * * *
Beautiful dreamer	[Director ] Mamoru Oshii	Text: Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Sound track: Japanese	DVD 2005	* * * *
The secret of blue water	[Director ] Hideaki Anno	Text: Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Sound track: Japanese, English	DVD 2005	No rating

Appleseed	[Director ] Shinji Aramaki [Script] Haruka Handa, Tsutomu Kamishiro	Text: Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Sound track: Japanese, English	DVD 2005	No rating
Dark side blues	[Director , Script]] Mamoru Oshii	Text: Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Sound track: Japanese	DVD 2005	* * * *
Pokemon#5-8		Finnish	VIDEO 2004	No rating

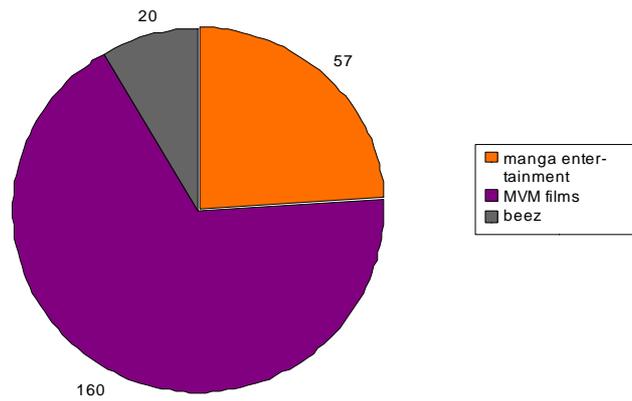
Figure 3: DVD collection for Miyazaki director in city library(Helsinki region in 2008). (<http://www.helmet.fi/>)

Title	Language	Format,year	rating
Kiki's Delivery Service	Text: Finnish, Sound track: Finnish, Japanese	DVD 2007	* * * * *
My Neighbor Totoro	Text: Finnish, Sound track: Finnish, Japanese	DVD,2007	* * * * *
Howl's Moving Castle	Text: Finnish, Norwegian Sound track: Finnish, Japanese	DVD,2006	* * * *
Sprited Away	Text: Finnish, Sound track: Japanese	DVD,VIDEO, 2003	* * * * *
Tales from Earthsea	Text: Finnish, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian Sound track: Japanese	DVD, 2008	No rating

Figure 4: Anime DVD publication in Finland (reference: [www.suomi-anime.net](http://www.suomi-anime.net) : last access in June2009)



Total number of Anime DVD in U.K.(2002-2005)



(<http://www.manga.co.uk/titles>)

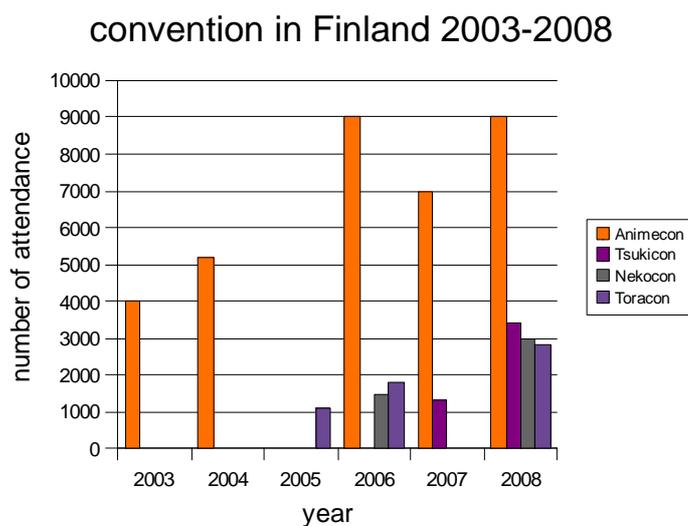
([http://www.mvm-films.com/catalogue\\_anime/index.htm](http://www.mvm-films.com/catalogue_anime/index.htm))

(<http://www.animeuknews.net/schedule.php>)

Figure 5: Manga Publisher company in Finland (<http://www.suomimanga.net/>)

Name of company	Head company	Starting of publishing year on manga	Total number of publishing finnish manga titles (up to 2009)
Egmont	Denmark	2003	22
Sangatsu manga(tammi)	Sweden	2003	22
Pauna Media Group	Finland	2007	14
Punainen Jättiläinen	Finland	2005	13
Ivrea	Finland	2008	5
Jalava	Finland	1985	1
Like	Finland	1996	1
Huuda Huuda	Finland	2009	1
Suomen Piipliaseura	Finland	2009	1

Figure 6:



([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animecon\\_%28Finland%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animecon_%28Finland%29))  
 (<http://tsukicon.fi/index4.html>)  
 (<http://www.nekocon.fi/>)  
 (<http://www.tracon.fi/>)

Figure 7: Animecon ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animecon\\_%28Finland%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animecon_%28Finland%29))

Animecon	Location	Attendance	Guest of Honor
1999	Turku	no data	no data
2003	Turku	4,000	Jonathan Clements, Yoshitoshi Abe
2004	Jyväskylä	5,200	Yoshitoshi Abe, Jonathan Clements
2006	Helsinki	9,000	Paul Gravett
2007	Jyväskylä	7,000	Jonathan Clements
2008	Tampere	9,000	John Harrison
2009	Helsinki	15,000	George R.R Martin

Figure 8: Convention & Cosplay in Finland Year 1999-2009 (<http://www.animeunioni.org/>)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Animecon	*				*Ck	*Ck		*Cft	*Cft	*Cft	*Cft
Animeseminaari (Oulu)					*	*	*	*		*Cp	*
Tracon (Tampere)							*Cp	*Cft		*Cft	*Cft
Tsukicon (Helsinki)									*Cn	*Cn	*

Kirsikankukkacon (Turku)							*Ck			*Cft	
Nekocon (kuopio)								*Ck		*Ck	
Sarjakuvapäivät (Kemi)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*Cft	*Cft	*Cft	*
SarjakuvaFes (Hki)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*Cn	*
KUPLII (Tampere)									*Cft	*Cft	*Cft
<i>Desucon (Lahti)</i>											*Cft
<i>Bakacon (Pieksämäki)</i>											*Cft
<i>Kitacon(Kemi)</i>											*Cft
<b>Total Convention</b>	3	2	2	2	4	4	5	6	5	9	10

Note: Ck=cosplay contests, Cft=cosplay finland tour, Cp=cosplay panel, Cn=cosplay fashion show

Figure 9: The manga titles which has five star rated in library collection (searched by 2009) (reference: <http://haku.helmet.fi/>)

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Genre</b>
Maison Ikkoku	Rumiko Takahashi	romantic comedy
Inuyasha	Rumiko Takahashi	adventure, sengoku era sword, sorcery
Ranma 1/2	Rumiko Takahashi	romantic comedy, martial arts
Rurouni Kenshin	Nobuhiro Watsuki	chanbara
Love Hina	Ken Akamatsu	romantic comedy, harem
Bleach	Tite Kubo	action, bangsian fantasy
Neon Genesis evengerion	Yoshiyuki Sadamoto	apocalyptic mecha
Fruits Basket	Natsuki Takaya	drama, fantasy, romance
Naruto	Masashi Kishimoto	action, adventure, fantasy
Trinity Blood	Sunao Yoshida	action, supernatural fiction
Vagabond	Takehiko Inoue	chanbara
One Peace	Eiichiro Oda	action, adventure, comedy drama
Salapoliisi Conan	Gosho Aoyama	comedy, drama, detective fiction, mystery

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